Journal of LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

VOL. 6(1) March 2019

A social science journal published by the
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-In- Chief : Rosli Talif  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Managing Editor : Vahid Nimehchisalem  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Co-Managing Editor : Ida Baizura Bahar  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Associate Editors :

Ain Nadzimah Abdullah  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Carol Elizabeth A/P Leon  
*Universiti Malaya*

Jariah Mohd Jan  
*University of Malaya*

Kiranjit Kaur  
*Universiti Teknologi MARA*

Ting Su Hie  
*Universiti Malaysia Sarawak*
INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Antony John Kunnan
University of Macau, China

Cynthia White
Massey University, New Zealand

Glen T. Cameron
University of Missouri, USA

James Dean Brown
University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA

Martin Cortazzi
University of Leicester, UK

Scott Slovic
University of Idaho, Moscow

Thomas Ricento
University of Calgary, Canada

Editorial Office
Journal Publication Office
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia
Tel: +603-9769 3714
jlc@upm.edu.my

Publisher
The UPM Press
Universiti Putra Malaysia
43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia
Tel: +603 8946 8855, 8946 8854
Fax: +603 8941 6172
penerbit@putra.upm.edu.my
URL: http://penerbit.upm.edu.my

The publisher of Journal of Language and Communication will not be responsible for the statement made by the authors in any articles published in the journal. Under no circumstances will the publisher of this publication be liable for any loss or damage caused by reliance on the advice, opinion or information obtained either explicitly or implied through the contents of this publication. All rights of reproduction are reserved in respect of all papers, articles, illustrations, etc., published in the Journal of Language and Communication. All materials published in this journal are protected by copyright, which covers exclusive rights to reproduce and distribute the materials. Materials published in the Journal of Language and Communication cannot be reproduced or stored in electronic, optical or magnetic form without the written consent of the publisher.

Copyright © 2019 Universiti Putra Malaysia Press. All rights reserved
Journal of Language and Communication
Vol. 6(1) MARCH 2019

Contents

Editorial Board i

International Advisory Board ii

BEN OKRI’S LITERARY WORKS AND THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF POSTCOLONIAL THEORY IN AFRICAN LITERATURE 1
Ate Agera and Aondona Amough

CROSS-LANGUAGE PERCEPTION OF NON-NATIVE STOPS AND FRICATIVES AMONG MALAY AND HAUSA NATIVE SPEAKERS 11
Jamilu Abdullahi, Yap Ngee Thai, Sabariah Md Rashid, and Vahid Nimehchisalem

EXPLORING THE ADOPTION AND PRACTICE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA 27
Oberiri Destiny Apuke and Livinus Jesse Ayih

MOTHER-CHILD ATTACHMENT: EXPLORING FREUDIAN DENIAL AND AGGRESSION IN NEIL GAIMAN’S CORALINE 45
Nur Syafiqah Aqilah Ahmad Sabri

PERCEPTUAL LEARNING OF SYSTEMATIC VARIATION IN MALAYSIAN ENGLISH AMONG LIBYAN EFL LEARNERS 57
Dalal Alfadhil Attaher Salheen, Yap Ngee Thai, Afida Mohamad Ali and Vahid Nimehchisalem

POLITENESS IN LIBYAN POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS’ E-MAIL REQUESTS TOWARDS LECTURERS 69
Ergaya Alsout and Mohsen Khedri

RHETORICAL MOVE ANALYSIS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ARTICLE ABSTRACTS IN ENGLISH IN IRANIAN JOURNALS 87
Sara Seyed Paydari and Shamala Paramasivam

THE EFFECTS OF CHINESE ON ENGLISH ARTICLE USE BY CANTONESE ESL LEARNERS 103
Alice Yin Wa Chan

THE IMPACT OF LISTENING AND SPEAKING ANXIETIES ON THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: WHAT CAN EDUCATORS DO? 115
Siti Faridah Kamaruddin, Imelia Laura Daneil, Jacqueline Susan Rijeng, Mohamad Musa Bohari, Tang Howe Eng

THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES IN VOCABULARY 131
TEACHING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THREE STRATEGIES
Arjumand Ara and Sadia Afrin Shorna
ABSTRACT

Most African nation states continue to be beset with a many problems resulting from years of colonial misrule and neo-colonial capitalist exploitations. African literary artists continue to respond to their people’s dire quality of life – quality shaped by the vicious circle of colonial experience. It is no wonder then that African literary works continue to be placed within the framework of postcolonial criticism. This study will show how, in responding to the influences of the socio-political conditions on the continent, African literature has found itself continually susceptible to literary postcolonialism. We examine the various ramifications of the relationship between the colonial experience and literary production, and draws the conclusion that postcolonial theory will continue to be relevant in the study of African literature for as long as present socio-political conditions continue to maintain a link, no matter how tenuous, to the continent’s colonial experience. We use selected works of Nigerian-born British author, Ben Okri to show the concerns of postcolonialism with the hegemonic practices of the West has become an overlap from the beginnings of these hegemonic practices during colonisation, to the contemporary world. In this contemporary world, colonial and postcolonial independence ideological formations in their political and cultural manifestations continue to play a pivotal role in maintaining the power structures that differentiate the North from the South, the rich from the poor, the Centre from the Empire.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, African Literature, Hegemony

INTRODUCTION

The colonisation of Africa occurred between 1870 and 1900. While this aggressive conquest was resisted in a variety of ways, the military superiority of the more advanced invaders meant that by the beginning of the 20th century, only Liberia and Ethiopia could lay claim to some political freedom. Colonialism led to the emergence of postcolonialism, both historical and literary. Before the advent of postcolonialism, various theories have emerged as best suited at various times for the criticism of African Literature. Such theories include Formalism, Sociological Criticism, Modernism, Marxism and Feminism, among others.

Historically, postcolonialism means the rupture signifying the end of colonial rule in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and South America. In literary terms, postcolonialism is the name given to the academic conversation about “the effects of colonisation on culture and societies” (Ashcroft, Postcolonial 168).

Postcolonial criticism emerged distinctly in the 1990s, its basic concepts having been crystallised in earlier works by Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Bill Ashcroft and Homi Bhabha. Despite its appearance, and gaining ground in recent times, the origins of postcolonial criticism can be traced back to the advent of colonialism.
THE RELEVANCE OF POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Since postcolonial theory gained traction in the 1990s, several critics have questioned its relevance, its name and its objectives. Stephen Slemon sums up the status of debates within postcolonial studies when he states that, “probably no term within literary and critical studies is so hotly contested at present as is the term ‘postcolonial’” (Slemon 100), with critics advancing different definitions and taking different positions on the various issues which make up the theme of postcolonial theory. Amardee Singh describes postcolonial theory as “badly overextended… being applied in ways that make little sense, including in historical eras that predate the modern concept of Empire, or Nation” (Singh, n. pag.).

Such radical rejections of postcolonialism are misplaced, not least because no theory can claim a sense of definiteness in its prescriptions of ideas and methods, or the underlying principles by which it attempts to understand literature and society. Controversies – and – shortcomings, among others may bedevil postcolonial theory, yet it continues to thrive as a testimony to the fact that it has afforded critics a different set of lenses with which to view and understand certain literary trends.

Latter-day criticism of postcolonial theory has hinged on its lack of impact on the postcolonial world as well as its inability or failure to “engage with contemporary forms of imperialism, as well as transnational struggles/solidarity” which has raised the possibility of “alternative forms of postcolonial analysis that could engage with and transform structures of oppression and violence” (Jefferes, et al. n. pag.).

Understandably, what Laura Moss calls “a movement away from theorising resistance to a concentration on more active forms of political insurgency” (Moss n. pag.) is a desirable agenda, especially to critics with Marxist or Leninist leanings. San Juan Jnr. is one such critic who wants a more practical approach to solving the myriad of problems bequeathed onto the world by the colonial experience instead of the toothless theorising by postcolonial critics. He adjudges postcolonialism of being guilty of mystification and moralism, the very qualities it attempts to repudiate. Of Edward Said’s attempt to give ‘Europe’s silent others’ a voice and right of representation, Juan says the “attempt undercuts itself by revindicating a liberal brand of humanism on which imperial capital accumulation relies for its aesthetic ethical legitimisation” (Juan n. pag.) Juan’s disaffection with postcoloniality is summed up in one question – “where were the postcolonial gurus during the Gulf war?” (cited in Moss n. pag.)

Despite heavy criticism, even opposition to postcolonial theory, it remains a valid platform on which to discuss colonialism and its legacies, the consequences the world still experiences in social, cultural and economic contexts and to continue analysing alternating experiences of suppression, resistance, gender and migration among others. It is true that Marxists such as Fanon, Connolly, La Fargue, Guevara and Castro, among others practised what they preached and Fascists such as Mussolini and Hitler lived the part of their ideas. Yet, it is the way their ideas spread and took firm root in the minds of their followers as much as their activisms which made them the heroes and villains they are.

Moreover, what critics such as Juan mistake for a lack of active commitment can well be explained by the fact that postcoloniality seeks not to prolong the violence and confrontation that are the most visible by-products of colonialism, but to show the ways in which through unorthodox and subtle means, colonialism continues to foster conflicts we would rather avoid, by creating binaries and labels which ascribe privileges to a select few. The aim then, is to negotiate the present structures of domination through the barrel of the pen rather than of the gun.
This argument may play into the hands of those who accuse postcolonialists of complicity in the Western hegemonic strategy of globalisation (Richards 26; Dirlik, 542-3; During, 31-47; Parry, 112). One of most damming statements in this regard is made by Rumina Sethi who claims that:

While it is no doubt still seen as a subversive discipline, it is also perceived to be implicated in Western hegemony, all the more so given its compatibility with other contemporary theoretical approaches such as those of postmodernism and poststructuralism. (5)

Still, as she goes ahead to assert, postcolonialism has far from reached the end of the road (Sethi 8). It is still an engaging struggle (albeit non-violent) against colonialism and its after-effects, raising issues that are related to political practice in today’s world, particularly in Africa. Hence, several reasons abound as to why postcolonialism has and will continue to defy its critics in the foreseeable future. Jefferes, et al. make a particularly strong case in support of postcoloniality where they argue for the indispensability of postcoloniality as far as it remains “in opposition to the militaristic and market-driven agenda of our time”, and that “its conceptual tools and analytical framework” (Jefferes, et al. n. pag.) are useful for analysing the colonial past and contemporary world order. To them:

Grand assertions of postcolonialism’s finis seem to us, first of all, to overstate the position of the field within larger institutional structures, as well as, and more importantly, to downplay completely the importance of postcolonial theory and criticism as a valuable critique of a global economy in which they legacy of imperialism is still very much in evidence. (Jefferes, et al. n. pag.)

George Landow, on the other hand, states that postcolonialism is the best term we have for the discourse and although a lot has been written against the use of the term, it is a lack of appreciation of the term's signification is what leads to such objections. According to him:

Terms like “Postcolonial” or “Victorian” are always open-ended. They are never answers, and they never end a discussion; they begin it. In other words, labeling a text or event or attitude “postcolonial” places it within a category of things under discussion. It permits one to ask a whole series of questions: Do former colonies that speak French, Spanish, German, English, and Portuguese have anything significant in common, or do those that speak basically the same language – one could put three of the last four words within quotes – have more in common? What is the relation of former colonies that only learned alphabetic writing at colonisation to those that had long written traditions? Do Africans living in Africa share fundamental experiences, issues, or problems with people of African descent living in the Americas? And if so, what does that have to say about postcolonialism? (Landow n. pag.)

His argument is that whatever opposing views say about postcolonialism, it has at least provided a platform for a discussion, a platform without which such opposing views would have forever been silenced. That would indeed have been a pity given the vast amount of ideas and exchanges proponents and opponents have generated.
In tandem, Diana Brydon refutes critics such as Hardt and Negri who argue that postcolonialism has reached a dead end, as well as San Juan who states it is time to move beyond postcolonial theory. In Brydon’s view, the postcolonial project only needs to be articulated more fully in defining its goals and defining the object of study and its limits.

**BEN OKRI AND POSTCOLONIALISM**

A postcolonial reading of Ben Okri’s works proceeds from his background, not just as an African novelist, but also as a man whose life story evinces the very features that are the trademark of postcolonial aesthetics. He is a truly cross-cultural creation, being a Nigerian of Edo extraction who lived only nineteen of his years in Nigeria before heading for England where he has lived since. It is immediately obvious that most of his writings have been done in the West, perhaps with certain constraints imposed on him by the social structures of the metropolitan culture in which he has chosen to live and develop his talents. According to Roland Gwam:

His use of language indicates two things: that he has a great mastery of the English language and this is explained by the fact that he has spent and studied most of his life in London; at the same time, he asserts his belonging to Africa in his choice and use of local words. (Gwam 47)

By the time he left Nigeria in 1978, only one novel, *Flowers and Shadows* (1980) had been written. Okri has been a full-time writer, composing literary works and freelancing as a journalist. Between 1983 and 1984, he experienced hard times and was only rescued by a grant from the British Council (Jeyiifo 277-278) which helped propel his career, spewing in its wake close to a dozen powerful works.

In the course of this active career, several awards attest to the skill and ability of the author. Among his awards are the “Paris Review” Aga Khan Prize for Fiction (1987) and the Booker Prize (1991), which is open to British and Commonwealth writers (Ousby 53). This skill must, however, be recognised as a crossbreed between two societies and cultures as Brenda Cooper attests:

Okri had lived in England since 1978, leaving Nigeria for a university education abroad when he finished secondary school at the age of nineteen. This is somewhat unusual among African writers, many of whom tended to travel to the West somewhat later in their lives, retaining stronger home bases in the countries of their origins. (Cooper 67)

Ben Obumselu argues that Okri qualifies to be situated within the Yoruba (African) tradition based on his short stay in Lagos and his use of Yoruba folk characters. (27). In line with Cooper’s view therefore, Obumselu states that:

Okri’s literary affinities, as we find them in *The Famished Road*, are elective affinities. He is not bound with an umbilical cord to any heritage or creed. His reading ranges freely in world literature. He was born of Urhobo ethnic stock in the Gwari country of Northern Nigeria. He spent his childhood in England, his boyhood among the Urhobo and Itshekiri of the Niger Delta, worked briefly in Lagos, and
served his literary apprenticeship in London. He loves Yoruba oral traditions and is deeply stirred by the imaginative truth of the Yoruba god of the road. But his literary appetite is catholic. (Obumsele 37)

It is not precisely clear what influence Okri’s association with the metropolitan institutions such as the British Council and the Booker Foundation have had on his works, but as a full-time writer in Britain, one can be sure that he carried out his creative practice with material rewards at the back of his mind. Some critics, especially of the socialist realist mode, would find such a relationship with agencies such as the British Council and the Booker Foundation (which is sponsored by a multi-national conglomerate, Booker McConnell), suspect, in that the process of cultural production and reproduction in a class society is inevitably linked with certain structures of domination which in our neo-colonial circumstances turns to a process of mediating the dominance of the metropolitan culture.

Luke Strongman accuses some postcolonial writers of finding themselves uncomfortably within, and ambivalent of, the residue of power structures they are presumably in opposition to. He classifies *The Famished Road* (1991) among novels which offer themselves to the term ‘postcolonial’ by "claiming voice in opposition to the imperial process" and articulating "a stance to the presence of the settler/invader" (Strongman n. pag.). By his reckoning, *The Famished Road*:

Narrates a lyrical and local mythological response to the gradual Westernisation of a remote African village, ostensibly from the position of the pre-modern colonised. However, written in the language of the imperial coloniser and by an author living in contemporary cosmopolitan London, there is an implicit collusion in the conception and writing of the novel with the culture of Imperialism. (Strongman n. pag.)

Brahim Barhoun also sees clear evidence of this “implicit collusion” in Okri’s works, which:

Adopt(s) several viewpoints simultaneously and delight in highlighting the richness and variety of a hybrid world through fixing the gap between the most obvious polarities and foregrounding the syncretism of disparate elements. Technology and magic, modern and ancient, urban and rural, Western and indigenous, are the amphitheatre in which the novels are performed. The interplay of these paradoxical dimensions gives the novels an open form and, more importantly, reveals the writer’s concern with issues of borders, change, and mixing, implied in his famous phrase “many rivers meet in me,” which is Okri’s response to the monologic discourse of totalitarian power. (214)

Another luminous and compelling case for a relationship between Okri’s life and his works has been argued by Anca-Iona Maier:

In 1980, he left his African homeland and moved to England where he has been living and writing for over thirty years. During all this time, he has delighted his readers with novels, short stories, essays, and poems. His border-crossing from Africa to Europe echoes Azaro’s, the narrator-protagonist of *The Famished Road* trilogy. Like
the spirit-child who abandons the safety of the spirit world, Okri decided to leave the haven of his family and flee into exile, a world hostile to him. As if following his character’s example, Okri escaped into the First World out of a desire to discover and explore its mysteries. Finally, he made this world of paradoxes his home. From London, the writer has looked back at his former homeland and narrated it in most of his novels and short stories. He has also depicted his experience as a black immigrant in the white metropolis. (4)

It is clear, then, that Okri’s brief stay in Nigeria and the childhood experiences his creative mind imbibed have combined with his sojourn in a foreign land and the vast resources that foreign world can afford him to produce the Okri that is the subject of our discussion – a modern hybrid individual whose work bears the indelible imprint of his life. However, it is to Okri’s works that we must ultimately turn for evidence of postcoloniality. In *The Famished Road*, we come into immediate contact with a hybrid hero and setting. The protagonist and narrator is Azaro, an urban spirit-child oscillating betwixt the world of humans and spirits. Azaro is an Abiku, hitherto portrayed in Nigerian literature as “a puckish spirit, a bringer of doom, as a bane of the household, a harbinger of joy and as a symbol of freedom” (Ugbabe 278).

When we first meet Azaro, he is a spirit, living in a serene spirit world, faced with a dilemma of rejoining the human world, which to him and other spirit children, is a routine cycle already unwillingly completed several times. But despite disliking the “rigors of existence, the unfulfilled longings, the enshrined injustices of the world” (*Famished* 3), Azaro decides to be born again.

How many times had I come and gone through the dreaded gate-way? How many times had I been born and died young? And how often to the same parents? I had no idea. So much of the dust of living was in me. But this time, somewhere in the interspace between the spirit world and the living, I chose to stay. This meant breaking my pact and out-witting my companions. (*Famished*, 5)

Thus, Azaro lives a dual life. As a spirit and child, Azaro combines:

The bright wisdom of someone who has lived many lives with the innocence of a seven-year-old boy, and possessing both a long historical awareness and a delighted capacity for surprise, Azaro crosses boundaries on every page of the three novels (of the Abiku trilogy). (Barhoun 215)

He moves freely and fluidly into and out of both worlds at will, thus blurring their boundaries. This ability to blend into both worlds is a completely fresh dimension to the Abiku syndrome in African literature. Abiku has been cast as a harbinger of sorrow for the living, for, her place being in the spirit world, the usually brief sojourn into our world only brings pain and suffering to mothers and fathers, pain to which there is no antidote.

Thus, Azaro the spirit enables Okri to stamp on his novel a cultural orientation and style that is undisputable rooted in traditional African folklore while Azaro the urban child enables him to reflect the “extensive social fragmentation, lack of cultural cohesion, the
entrenchment of ignorance wrought on post-colonial Africa by half a millennium of sattelization to Europe” (Chinweizu 220).

This kind of juxtaposition is what Jaheinz Jahn predicts when he wrote that:

The writers at first may follow European models and find their strength in debate. But from one work to the next most of them take on more and more of African tradition, especially in recent years since the poetry of “Negritude” has lifted the ban and made the tradition respectable once more. This finally leads to the complete acceptance of African tradition, first among the lyric poets, and then also in the great storytellers, until finally the European elements are simply assimilated as necessary materials into neo-African poetry and prose. (211)

Ikenna Kamalu refers to this strategy as tampering “with the features of received written traditions by blending them with the oral traditions of the decolonised societies” (28). This results in writings which are manifestations of the experiences of marginalization, dislocation and exploitation, resulting in a quest to “salvage their rich historical values from the cesspool of imperial domination” (Kamalu 28). Cooper sees this approach as arising from “popular societies – postcolonial, unevenly developed places where old and new, modern and ancient, the scientific and the magical views of the world co-exist” (Cooper 216).

In two of his short stories, namely Incidents at the Shrine (1986) and Stars of the New Curfew (1988), Okri, plagued by the density and morbidity of societal ills like other African novelists of his time, rises to the challenge of reflecting the socio-historical realities of chaos and disorder he observes in the Nigerian society. Okri depicts thriving corruption resulting from the nation’s weakened moral fabric, with the celebration of avarice, materialism, a get-rich-quick syndrome and glorification of ill-acquired wealth – social vices which have become symbols of national life. We shall consider his two war stories from the collections Incidents at the Shrine and Stars of the New Curfew to illustrate.

“Laughter Beneath the Bridge” is a war story seen from a ten-year old narrator’s viewpoint. From the abandonment of the schoolchildren to the parting of their ways, through a daylong journey back to the narrator's hometown, Okri gives us a grim picture of the war condition. The reader is taken through the experience of mother and son as they journey towards the safety of home. Harassed by gun-wielding, hemp-smoking soldiers all the way, they are witness to brutal rapes and killings of the innocent who happen to belong to the rebel tribe.

“In the Shadows of War” offers the reader another glimpse of the war condition. Again, Okri examines the moral issues that the necessities and exigencies of war inevitably raise. We meet the inhabitants of a forest encampment who are women and children forced to endure the living conditions of ancient man, with snakes slithering about. The children have “kwashiorkor stomachs” while the children go about in rags. It does not take long before we discover the fate of the men – husbands and fathers no doubt, to the wretched lot still alive:

The lights changed over the forest and for the first time Omove saw that the dead animals on the river were in fact the corpses of grown men. Their bodies were tangled with the river-weed and their eyes were bloated. (Stars 8)
Writing within the limitations of the short story, Okri’s stories lack the depth to make a categorical, profound war statement, what Hugh Hodges calls “a total reckoning” – a full and final accounting. Rather, Okri provides the reader a “limited, fragile human perspective (of the war) that makes it universal in a meaningful way” (Hodges 10). This enables us to see the war not on the fronts where the tanks roll, the guns blaze and grenades and bazookas explode, but on the fringes where the helpless – women, children, the old and infirm – engage in a battle of to survive the dire conditions that are usually a by-product of war.

CONCLUSION
African literature marks the endeavor of a people whose continent is undergoing the painful process of transformation from colonial through neo-colonial to wholly self-determining nations. This painful process has seen the continent slide into bloody civil conflicts, crass nepotism, monumental corruption and religious intolerance, creating social, economic, cultural and political disorder that is becoming increasingly impossible to surmount.

African literature has therefore become part of a rebellion against the impunity of the colonial creation whose unpalatable realities provide raw material for the authors. Writing about present-day Nigerian literature, Charles Nnolim posits:

(It) depicts a society adrift and a people lost in the imbecilities of futile optimism, hoping that materialism and the pursuit of dirty lucre will compensate for the loss of the nation’s soul; for the Nigeria we encounter in its contemporary fiction is a nation without a soul, without direction, without a national ethos – it is a rudderless ship a-sail amidst the jetsam and flotsam of a directionless voyage to nowhere. (Nnolim n.pag)

This is true of much of African literature. African authors, plagued by the density and morbidity of societal ills, have to rise to the challenge of reflecting the socio-historical realities of the chaos and disorder they observe in their society.

In light of the above, we cannot help but agree that for a reasoned discussion of African literature, “we continue to use the term ‘postcolonial’ as a pis aller, and to argue about it until something better comes along” (Brians n.pag.). In that meantime, critical enquiry will continue into the ways through which African experience and realities are distorted by the colonising culture’s literature and inferiority inscribed on the formerly colonised people, as well as the ways in which colonialism has morphed into new forms through which it continues to foster the economic, political and social crises created by colonialism and strengthened unjustly by imperialism.

REFERENCES
Barhoun, Brahim. “Magical Realism as Postcolonial Discourse: Magic, the Carnivalesque and Hybridity in Ben Okri’s Abiku Trilogy”. Diss. Universidad Complutense De Madrid. 2013. PDF.


CROSS-LANGUAGE PERCEPTION OF NON-NATIVE STOPS AND FRICATIVES AMONG MALAY AND HAUSA NATIVE SPEAKERS

Jamilu Abdullahi1,2, Yap Ngee Thai1*, Sabariah Md Rashid1, and Vahid Nimechisalem1

1 Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia
2 Department of Nigerian Languages and Linguistics, Bauchi State University, Nigeria
E-mail: jamilu2011@gmail.com2; ntyap@upm.edu.my1; smrashid@upm.edu.my1; vahid@upm.edu.my1

ABSTRACT
This study examines the effect of native language on listeners’ perception of native and non-native consonants. The study focuses on cross-language perception of selected stops and fricatives among Hausa speakers who have little exposure to Malay, and Malay speakers who have no exposure to Hausa. The primary goal of this study is to examine how Hausa and Malay speakers perceived non-native stops and fricatives that are absent in their native language. Hausa language has a combination of plosives and implosives which involves the use of different airstream mechanisms in their production. Malay speakers who do not have any experience of implosives may find it difficult to discriminate between implosives and plosives, and to produce implosives accurately. In contrast, Hausa speakers may have difficulty discriminating between labial stops and fricatives in Malay as this distinction is not present in Hausa. Forty-five Hausa native speakers and forty-five Malay native speakers were recruited for the study. Audio-recording of minimal pairs of Malay and Hausa words were used as stimuli in an AX discrimination task. Subjects had to indicate whether they heard two different words, or the same words presented twice by two different speakers. The results of the study show that the Malay and Hausa native speakers faced considerable difficulties and problems in perceiving most non-native sound contrasts. Native language influence was found to be a major factor influencing the perception of non-native sound contrasts. This study concluded that the Perception Assimilation Model was successful in the prediction and interpretation of most of the perceptual difficulties encountered by the Malay and Hausa native speakers in the perception of stops and fricatives.

Keywords: speech perception, non-native, fricatives, plosives, implosives

INTRODUCTION
A number of studies of cross-language or second language (L2) speech perception have focused on the identification and/or discrimination of non-native contrasts that are absent in listeners’ first language (L1) such as English /l/ and /r/ for native Japanese listeners (e.g., MacKain, Best & Strange, 1981; Oh, Guion-Anderson, Aoyama, Flege, Guion, Akahane-Yamada & Yamada, 2011), and these studies have identified several factors influencing L2 learners’ success in identifying or discriminating English approximants. These factors include the location of the segment in a word, type of speech stimuli (natural vs. synthetic), lexical familiarity, previous linguistic experience and degree of perceived dissimilarity, among others. For instance, in a study on perception of approximants, Best and Strange
(1992) showed that cross-language discrimination accuracy depended on the cross-linguistic phonemic assimilation patterns and listeners’ experience with spoken English.

Thus far, there is ample evidence that native and L2 speakers of English differ in their perception of the voicing and/or place contrast in word-final consonants (e.g., Flege & Wang, 1989; Flege & Liu, 2001; Aoyama, 2003). In a recent study, Aoyama (2003) examined the perception of syllable-initial and syllable final English nasals by Korean and Japanese L2 learners. The Japanese listeners found it difficult to discriminate the /n/–/ŋ/ contrast in word-final position, but not the /m/–/n/ or /m/–/ŋ/ contrast although none of these nasal contrasts occur word-finally in their L1. It was observed that the English /m/ was assimilated to a single Japanese category, but the English /n/ and /ŋ/ were assimilated to multiple Japanese categories; hence resulting in perceptual difficulties for the learners. Similarly, Tsukada (2006) reported the perceptual ability of Australian English and Thai English bilingual listeners in the perception of word-final stops in English and Thai. The two groups discriminated the Thai contrast for /p/–/t/ best, particularly among the Australian English listeners. The listeners’ accuracy of discrimination was influenced by the type of stops they heard. The findings also show that first language transfer alone is not sufficient to account for learners’ patterns of response in cross-language speech perception since in the above study, the performance of the Australian English listeners was more accurate.

In another study, Tsukada (2007) examined the discrimination of word-final stop contrasts (/p/–/t/, /p/–/k/, /t/–/k/) in English and Thai by L2 listeners from diverse Asian language backgrounds (e.g., Cantonese, Korean, Indonesian, Vietnamese). The findings suggest that familiarity with specific phonetic realization of sounds (i.e., unreleased final stops) may play a facilitative role in perceptual flexibility. However, without exposure to native phonetic contrasts that include these detailed acoustic characteristics, it may be difficult to develop the capacity to discriminate subtle phonetic differences to the level of native listeners. In the same context, Holliday (2014) conducted a study on native Mandarin listeners’ perceptual assimilation of Korean obstruents. Different combinations of stops, affricates, and fricatives were used for the experiments with 20 native Mandarin speakers. The results revealed that affricates were perceived as post alveolar and alveo-palatal more frequently than as alveolar affricates. The finding also shows that vowel context influenced the perception of fricatives and affricates.

These results appear to be consistent with predictions generated by models of cross-language speech perception such as the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) (Best, 1993; 1995). According to the PAM, instances of contrastive L2 categories that are identified as instances of a single L1 category (Single Category Assimilation) as found in the perception of English /l/–/r/ for Japanese learners, will be relatively difficult to discriminate. However, instances of contrastive L2 sounds that are mapped onto two different L1 sounds (Two-Category Assimilation) as found in the mapping of /w/–/j/ in English and Japanese will be discriminated more accurately.

The findings and recommendations of the previous studies concerning the perception of fricative sounds and important acoustic cues that are associated with the perception of fricatives, however, indicated some limitations. Specifically, it is observed that most of the studies carried out were on the perception of English fricatives by English as second language (ESL) learners. None was found on cross-language perception of fricatives among native speakers of two different languages. A recent study by Lago, Scharinger, Kronrod and Idsardi (2015) examined the relative acoustic contribution and information of phonology in
terms of perceiving fricative sounds. Two fricatives, /ʃ/ and /s/, presented at word initial position were used as stimuli. The results show that the fricatives were discriminated more accurately when they crossed a categorical boundary. Focusing on sounds with different manner of articulation, Alwan, Jiang and Chen (2011) studied the relevant perceptual acoustic cues for the place of articulation of plosives /b d p t/ and fricatives /f s v z/ at word initial positions in a noise condition. Relative spectral amplitude and frequency formants were examined for these segments. The study showed that vowel context, manner of articulation and voicing determined the perception of labial/alveolar distinctions in noise. Alwan, Jiang, and Chen (2011) also examined the relevant acoustic cues in the perception of syllable initial plosives /b p d t/ and fricatives /f v s z/. The findings revealed that the perception of alveolar/labial differences in noise was determined by the manner of articulation, voicing interaction as well as vowel context. The acoustic measurement and signal-to-noise-ratio (SNRs) indicated that the formant frequency measurements increased for the perception of alveolar/labial distinctions as the signal to noise ratio degrades. In another study, Stevens et al. (1992) examined the factors that differentiate voiced and unvoiced fricatives. The result shows that listeners based their intervocalic fricative voicing judgments on the interval duration for which there was no vibration on the glottis. The findings revealed that fricatives could be judged as voiceless if the time interval was above 60 milliseconds (ms).

An important discovery in this review is that even when native and non-native languages share a phonetic contrast at the abstract phonological level, listeners may fail to show accurate perception in the non-native stimuli. In other words, positive transfer from L1 may not be reflected in listeners’ performance. An example of this was demonstrated by Hallé, Best and Levitt (1999) for native French listeners’ perception of American English approximants /w j r l/. These phonemes occur in French with varying degrees of similarity to the target sounds. If L1-to-L2 mappings at the traditional phonological level predict cross-linguistic perception patterns, it is predicted that French listeners would not have difficulties with these English sounds. However, it was found that the French listeners had some perceptual difficulties with the English /r/. This finding was attributed to marked articulatory-phonetic differences between the English and French /r/ (i.e. phonetically realized as a central approximant in English and a uvular fricative in French). Of the three contrasts tested (/w/~ /ʃ/, /r/~ /l/, /w/~ /r/), the French listeners had most difficulty with /w/~ /r/ and tended to hear the English /r/ as /w/-like.

Since only limited counter examples of expected L1 positive transfer have been reported in the literature, it may be necessary to examine different non-native language comparisons before any generalization can be made. The present study sought to verify if positive transfer at the phonological level might be observed in word-initial position. The word initial context was chosen since phonetically, it is a more salient position. The word final context is also influenced by other phonological constraints such as English word final voice neutralization and phonotactic constraints against voicing contrast in Malay (Yap, 2013) and may be more difficult for perception because of these other confounding reasons. Hence, this study focused on the perception of native and non-native stops and fricatives in the word-initial position which are functional (i.e. phonemic) in both Malay and Hausa.
**Phonemic inventories of Hausa and Malay**

The Hausa language has a combination of plosives and implosives. However, in human languages, implosives are rare; linguists have encountered many problems in their descriptions, as most of the world’s languages sounds are produced with the egressive pulmonic airstream mechanism (Ladefoged & Maddieson, 1996:77). In addition, to our knowledge, there is also hardly any study done on the discrimination between plosives and implosives. The lack of published work on implosives motivated this study as anyone who wishes to learn and speak Hausa has to be able to learn the contrast between plosives and implosives as these stops are phonemic in Hausa.

The Hausa language, which belongs to the Afro-Asiatic language family (Greenberg 1966), also stands as the most powerful language in terms of speakers and prestige among the Westerly sub-group of the Chadic language. It has considerable literature in the forms of poetry, prose and Islamic writings, written in a modified Arabic script (Ajami). In West African sub region, the Hausa language has the highest number of speakers. In Nigeria alone, the Hausa language has about thirty-three (33) million native speakers. It is a second language of about 15 million people and taken together, an approximate total of forty eight (48) million people in Nigeria (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2019). The Hausas have dominated more than half of the demographic map of Nigeria. In the Republic of Benin, it has about 900,000 speakers; in Burkina Faso about 500,000 speakers; in Cameroon about 2,300,000; in Togo about 900,029 speakers; in Sudan about nine 918,000 speakers; and in Niger about 12,000,000 speakers are said to have been in existence (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2019). The Hausa language is spoken across the West African sub-region, and it is also spoken in Central Africa, Chad, Congo, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and North Western Sudan.

In standard Hausa, there are thirty-four (34) consonant sounds (Sani, 2005). Table 1 presents the Hausa consonantal chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Post-alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Palatalized velar</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Labialized Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plosive &amp; Affricate</strong></td>
<td>b t d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>k' g'</td>
<td>k g</td>
<td>k^ w</td>
<td>^w</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implosive &amp; Ejective Stop &amp; Affricate</strong></td>
<td>ɓ t's' ɗ (t∫')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>j'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nasal</strong></td>
<td>m n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fricative</strong></td>
<td>Φ s z</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tap/Trill</strong></td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approximant</strong></td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lateral Approximant</strong></td>
<td>ñ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to Hausa, the Malay language is one of the members of the Malayic subgroup in the Austronesian family of languages. The Malayic subgroup has languages such as Gayo in Sumatra, Iban in Borneo, and Minangkabau in Sumatra (Eades & Hajek, 2006). Adelaar (2005) reported that many local Malay dialects are found in Sumatra, Borneo, Malaysian Peninsular, and parts of Eastern Indonesia. Different varieties of Malay are spoken...
in Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and Indonesia; however, these varieties have mutual intelligibility as reported in Steinhauer (2013). With the influence of Javanese and Dutch, it was reported that Indonesia is the most divergent, but the other varieties spoken in the Malayan Peninsular differed mainly phonetically and phonologically.

In the Malay language, there are twenty-four (24) native speech segments (18 consonants and 6 vowels) and nine (8) loan consonants which occur in loan words in Malay according to Nik Safiah Karim et al. (2008). Table 2 presents the consonants of the Malay language with some of the loan consonants presented in parentheses. However, the loan consonants that are less frequent and those that are usually assimilated into other existing phonemic categories have been excluded from the Table (see Nik Safiah Karim et al., 2009: 299).

Table 2: Malay consonantal chart (Source: Nik Safiah Karim et al., 1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plosives/Affricates</th>
<th>Labial</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Post-alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
<th>Labial-velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fricatives</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>(v)</td>
<td>(z)</td>
<td>(j)</td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trill</td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific stops and fricatives were chosen from Malay and Hausa to be included in the design of the study and to enable comparisons to be made in the interpretation of the analysis. In this regard, implosives are found in Hausa but not in Malay, and likewise the voiceless bilabial plosive and the voiceless labio-dental fricative are found in Malay but not in Hausa. However, both languages have the same set of alveolar plosives and fricatives. The properties of the phonemic inventory of the two languages allow the researcher to examine the perception of the novel and familiar phonetic categories by naïve language learners.

Models of Speech Perception
As the present study investigated how Hausa and Malay native speakers perceived non-native stops and fricatives, the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) (Best, 1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1995) and Speech Learning Model (SLM) (Flege, 1995) were adopted as the framework for the study. Similarities and differences between native language and non-native phonological systems may pose some difficulties in the perception and production of non-native contrasts (Flege, 1995). Research have shown that adult listeners of non-native language have significant difficulties in the perception of most, but not all, phonetic dissimilarity that are not functional in their native languages (Best & Tyler, 2007; Best et al, 1988; Flege, 1995; Kochetov, 2004). In this light, the present study aims to provide an account for the perception of non-native naïve listeners based on the current non-native models.

Specifically, the study examined how Malay native speakers discriminate between word-initial plosive and implosives in Hausa, and how Hausa native speakers discriminate word-initial plosive and fricatives in Malay. Implosives are found in Hausa but not in Malay, and likewise the voiceless bilabial stop /p/ and labio-dental fricatives, /f/ and /v/ are found in Malay but not in Hausa. However since the alveolar stops, /t/ and /d/ and the alveolar...
fricatives, /s/ and /z/ are found in both languages, these segments were included in the study as they provided a comparison for interpretation of the analysis.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Participants**

Ninety adults volunteered to participate in this study. The participants comprised Malay native speakers (29 females and 16 males) who were born and brought up in Malaysia, and Hausa native speakers (7 females and 38 males) who were born and brought up in Nigeria. They were recruited based on their native language backgrounds. The Malay listeners’ (n = 45) age range was between 23 and 42 years (M = 27.40), while the Hausa native speakers’ (n = 45) age range was between 27 and 52 (M = 34.50). All the Malay native speakers were born and brought up in Malaysia, while the Hausa native speakers were born and raised in Nigeria, but since they were also postgraduate students in Malaysia, they were not completely naïve to Malay. However, most of them did not indicate that Malay and the other local languages such as Chinese and Tamil as a foreign language (see Table 3) that they were fluent or proficient in although they could possible use some rudimentary words and phrases in these local languages when communicating with the locals in Malaysia. The Malay participants as well as the Hausa participants also have knowledge of another language, namely, English. Both groups of participants (Malay and Hausa) use English language to communicate with non-native speakers of their languages.

**Table 3: Demographic Information of Malay and Hausa Subjects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native Groups</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Knowledge of Foreign Language</th>
<th>Language Often Used</th>
<th>Language Used with Non-native Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>English (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16     (36%)</td>
<td>29     (84%)</td>
<td>23-42</td>
<td>27.40</td>
<td>Arabic (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>English (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38     (64%)</td>
<td>7      (16%)</td>
<td>27-52</td>
<td>36.50</td>
<td>Arabic (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A purposive sampling based on the results of a demographic questionnaire was first employed to recruit the participants. The demographic questionnaire, which was adapted from the questionnaire of Montrul (2012) was used to filter the population so that the samples would comprise native speakers of Malay and Hausa. Apart from gender and name, pertinent information on the participants’ language of instruction, native language background, knowledge of foreign languages, linguistic history, and linguistic background, and so forth were also elicited. All questions in the questionnaire were designed to elicit essential information to ensure homogeneity of the respondents within each language group and to prevent cases where the participants are not Malay or Hausa native speakers. Table 3 summarizes the results of the demographic questionnaire.
Instruments
The study used a questionnaire to elicit background information of the respondents as described in the earlier section. To ascertain the performance of the respondents for cross-language perception of specific segments in Hausa and Malay, PRAAT (Boersma and Weenink, 2018), a computer programme which can analyse and run speech perception experiments, was used to collect the data for the study.

Audio-recordings of Hausa and Malay minimal pairs with the target speech segments were used as stimuli. The target sounds (stops and fricatives) were presented at word initial position. The stimuli were recorded by two male native Hausa speakers and two male native Malay speakers in order to ensure a standard and accurate pronunciation of the target segments. The two Hausa speakers were graduate students at a public university in Malaysia, one at the master level, the other at the doctoral level and both were conducting research on English and Hausa phonetics. The two Malay speakers were also graduate students of at a public university in Malaysia at the master level conducting research on the Malay language. The Malay speakers age ranges between 22 and 24, while the Hausa speakers age ranges from 27 to 33. The use of multiple speakers (2 Malay and 2 Hausa) was essential for the discrimination task as it ensured that the decisions were not made based on acoustic peculiarities from one speaker, such as pitch, intonation, or any other voice specification. All the stimuli were recorded with a Logitech Wireless Headset h600 microphone and PRAAT, the software program for speech analysis (Boersma & Weenink, 2001). The sampling rate used in the recording was 44100 Hz. The recordings were done in a quiet room, and each sentence was recorded once from the four speakers. The words for the discrimination task were extracted from the sentences using PRAAT and the discrimination experiment was also designed using PRAAT.

Each stimulus from the two languages (Malay and Hausa) was recorded in the carrier phrases shown below.

(1) Malay carrier phrase: 'read … again’
(2) Hausa carrier phrase: ‘3sg pronoun … again’

The use of the carrier phrase was important to determine the onset of the stops (Kang, 2014; Ogut, et al., 2006). The carrier phrase also helped to maintain the important acoustic cues which can be deleted if the recordings were done in isolation. In particular, it would be difficult to determine the closure duration which could be an important acoustic cue for the distinction of plosives and implosives. The carrier phrases were chosen to ensure that the target phonemes were all presented following a vowel to enable the closure phase and the release phases of the stops to be captured more accurately.

The Hausa and Malay minimal pairs that were recorded and used for the perceptual discrimination task are shown in Table 4. The researchers have chosen disyllabic words to ensure that both words are minimal pairs as Malay and Hausa words are usually disyllabic (Abubakar, 2001; Newman, 2000; Sani, 2000).

Table 4: Stimulus items for the discrimination task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hausa words</th>
<th>IPA Transcriptions</th>
<th>Malay words</th>
<th>IPA Transcriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>daba - taba</td>
<td>/dá:bà:/ vs /tà:bà:/</td>
<td>fasa - pasar</td>
<td>/fasa/ vs /pasar/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘horse riding – cigarette’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘phase – market’</td>
<td>[fasa:] [pasa:]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The phoneme /f/ was paired with /p/ while /v/ was paired with /b/ as the phonemes /f/ and /v/ are absent in Hausa phoneme inventory (Sani, 2015). Also, /f/ and /p/ were paired with one another as they both share the labial and voiceless feature and it has been recorded in the literature that Hausa speakers often confuse these two segments by producing [f] when [p] is expected (Maiunguwa, 2015). As for the Malay words, loan words such as visa and fasa are usually pronounced with the final [a:] and not with the schwa as noted in Asmah (2008:164) for loan words ending with the letter <a> in Malay. However the word bisa can be pronounced with a schwa or with the final [a:]. Care was taken during recording to ensure that the words bisa and pasar were pronounced as intended to ensure that the words presented in the task were minimal pairs. The final /r/ is pasar is not realized resulting in lengthening of the preceding vowel (Yunus Maris, 1980; Asmah, 2008). The word bisa is therefore ambiguous in meaning as it could refer to ‘poison’ pronounced with the standard pronunciation or it could refer to ‘possible’ in Indonesian Malay.

The perception task employed in this study is a discrimination task, whereby discrimination is “the act of differentiating two or more stimuli presented in some predefined format” (Logan & Pruitt, 1995). As Pisoni and Liverly (1995) explain, a discrimination exercise promotes “acquired distinctiveness”. In the AX categorical (same-different) discrimination task, the subjects’ task was to specify whether or not two stimuli in randomized word pairs were exemplars of the same phonetic category. In this study, the discrimination task was chosen as it taps phonological knowledge directly without mediation of lexical knowledge. Also, the stimuli used were non-native to listeners, it is appropriate to use a discrimination task, and not the identification task which taps into lexical knowledge (Tsukada, 2006; Tsukada, 2008). Therefore, listeners had to form some kind of mental representation of the phonetic categories under comparison instead of directly comparing stimuli on the basis of physical identity or mediate it via their lexical knowledge. Stimuli in the same pairs were physically different tokens drawn from the same phonetic category, while stimuli in different pairs were drawn from distinct categories. This type of discrimination task was used widely in cross-language studies (e.g. Strange & Dittmann, 1984; Ratos, 2014; Tsukada, 2006; Tsukada, 2008).

**Experimental Procedures**

The participants were seated comfortably, almost 40 cm away from a laptop computer in front of them, wearing a microphone headset. In the discrimination task, the participants listened to two words presented through the headphone sets and had to decide whether they represented the same or different words. The subjects were presented with a total of 120 trials each. There were six sets of minimal pairs as shown in table 4. For each set of minimal pairs, two same pairs and two different pairs were constructed. For example for /v/-/b/, the same pairs were visa-visa and bisa-bisa, while the different pairs were visa-bisa and bisa-visa. These four stimuli pairs were presented five times resulting in twenty tokens for each set of contrasts. The task took every participant about 10 to 15 minutes to complete, depending on
the participant’s response pace. Results for each participant were registered by the computer and transferred to an Excel Spreadsheet for processing and scoring. One (1) mark was assigned to each correct attempt and zero (0) mark for each incorrect response. The scores of each participant were then transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 22) for statistical analysis.

RESULTS

Descriptive Results
The descriptive results show that the Malay native speakers discriminated the Hausa implosives-plosives contrasts poorly with lower correct percentages obtained [/ɓ-b/: M = 36 /ɗ-d/: M = 48] compared to the performance of native Hausa speakers who had high correct percentages [/ɓ-b/: M = 80; /ɗ-d/: M = 93]. In contrast, the correct percentages obtained for the discrimination of Malay fricative-stop contrasts for /f-p/ and /v-b/ by Malay native speakers was higher [/f-p/: M = 87; /v-b/: M = 76] compared to the Hausa group [/f-p/: M = 54; /v-b/: M = 51]. Both groups performed relatively well with the alveolar segments as shown by the high correct percentages for both pairs of control segments [Malay: /s-z/, M = 84, /t-d/: M = 83; Hausa: /z-s/, M = 85, /t-d/: M = 86]. See Figure 1.

The results obtained from the discrimination of Malay fricative-stop contrast show that the Hausa native speakers were unable to discriminate the following pairs of contrasts: /f-p/ and /v-b/ with the correct percentage of only 54% and 51%, respectively. Since there were only two options available for their response, the results seem to be hovering around the guessing rate of 50%. This shows that the Hausa native speakers were less accurate than Malay native speakers when they heard the Malay fricative-stop contrasts. However, their discrimination accuracy depended on the type of contrasts they heard. Some contrast such as /f-f/ and /v-v/ were easier to discriminate with 66% and 64%, respectively. Contrasts such as /f-p/ and /v-b/ were more difficult to discriminate with only correct scores of 42% and 37%, respectively. Moreover, the results supported the claim made by the current research on non-native speech perception, as not all non-native segmental contrasts are equally difficult. Some are discriminated moderately well, and others at near native-like levels (Best, McRoberts & Sithole 1988; Best, McRoberts & Goodel, 2001; Best & Strange, 1992; Kochetov, 2004).

![Figure 1: Correct discrimination percentages for Malay and Hausa native speakers](image-url)
The independent sample t-test was conducted to identify any significant differences between the results of the two groups of participants. The results of all the 12 different pairs are summarized and presented in Table 5. As shown in the table, a significant difference is found for all consonant pairs except for the contrasts between /s-z/ and /t-d/ for both Hausa and Malay. The results show that the difference between the Malay and Hausa subjects are statistically significant for the plosive-implosive pairs as well as for the fricative-plosive pairs. The Malay subjects were unable to discriminate between plosives and implosives while the Hausa subjects were unable to discriminate between the fricatives and the plosives for /f-p/ and /v-b/. However, the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant for /s-z/ and /t-d/ as these contrasts were found in both Malay and Hausa; hence the speakers are sensitive to these contrasts.

**DISCUSSION**

This section discusses the results and major findings of the task for both Malay and Hausa native speakers, which include the level of difficulty encountered by the two groups of speakers in the discrimination of the various sounds contrasts discussed earlier. The results of the study were examined find out whether the perception of the contrasts was accounted for by existing models of speech perception.

**Sound Contrasts Found in both Malay and Hausa Languages**

The results obtained for the perception of fricatives and plosives /z-s/, /d-t/ supported the predictions postulated in the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM), where a two-Category
(TC) assimilation involving the mapping of the L2 contrasts to two categories in the L1 may result in ease of discrimination for the target L2 contrasts. The contrasts for /z-s/ and /d-t/ are found in both Malay and Hausa (Sani, 2005; Nik Safiah Karim et al., 2008). The phonetic experience of this contrast in the speakers’ L1 appears to be sufficient and results in positive transfer from the L1 to the L2 which facilitated performance in the discrimination task.

**Sound Contrasts Present in Malay Language and Absent in the Hausa Language**

The phonemes of these contrasts are sounds phonologically found in Malay phonemic inventory and phonologically absent in Hausa phoneme inventory. The sounds are the voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/ and the voiced labio-dental fricative /v/, and they are in contrast with /p/ and /b/, respectively. These pairs of contrast were predicted by PAM to be difficult for Hausa speakers as a Single Category Assimilation may result in the collapse of the L2 contrast into a single L1 category. Hausa has the voiceless bilabial fricative /ɸ/ but not the voiceless labio-dental fricative, /f/ nor the bilabial plosive /p/. When presented with two words from the latter categories, Hausa speakers may assimilate both of these segments to the only voiceless labial segment it has, the voiceless bilabial fricative /ɸ/. When presented with two words that represent the voiced labial segments /b/ and /v/, Hausa speakers may assimilate the voiced labio-dental fricative to the only voiced labial segment it has, the voiced bilabial stop /b/.

The results obtained from the discrimination of Malay fricative-stop contrast show that the Hausa native speakers were indeed unable to discriminate the following pairs of contrasts: /f-p/ and /v-b/. The performance of Hausa subjects hovered around the guessing threshold of 50% although the /f-p/ was slightly higher (M= 54%) compared to the mean correct percentage for /v-b/ which was only 51%. The results support the claim made by the current literature on non-native speech perception, as not all non-native segmental contrasts are equally difficult. Some are discriminated moderately well, and others at near native-like levels (Best, McRoberts & Sithole 1988; Best, McRoberts & Goodel, 2001; Best & Strange, 1992; Kochetov, 2004). In the context of this study, the performance of the discrimination task was native like for the alveolar stops and fricatives as discussed in the earlier section, but the performance for labial stops and fricatives are poor as predicted by the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) proposed by Best (1994).

**Sound Contrasts Present in Hausa Language and Absent in Malay Language**

The phonemes of these contrasts are sounds phonologically found in Hausa phonemic inventory and phonologically absent in Malay phoneme inventory. These sounds are voiced bilabial implosive /ɓ/ and voiced alveolar implosive /ɗ/. The results obtained show that the Malay native speakers, having no linguistic experience of Hausa implosives, failed to discriminate between the plosives and the implosives. This suggests that the acoustic differences may not be audible to the Malay native speakers. The results supported the predictions made by PAM Single-Category (SC), as the Hausa sounds contrasts are judged by the Malay native speakers as equally good or poor tokens of the only bilabial or alveolar stop category found in Malay. The two Hausa implosive sounds are assimilated to the Malay voiced plosives, which resulted in poor discriminations. The same instances were reported by Schmidt (1996), as Korean native speakers found it very difficult to discriminate /θ-ð/, /ʃ-tʃ/, /p-b/, and /f-v/ contrasts in English as a result of single-category assimilation to Korean phonemes.
CONCLUSION

The analysis of the discrimination of the stops revealed that the Malay native speakers were able to discriminate most of the sounds contrasts but faced substantial problems in the perception of plosives-implosives. The Hausa native speakers, on the other hand, successfully discriminated all the implosives-plosives contrasts but they could not distinguish the labial fricatives and stops in Malay. The alternating pattern in the result of the two respondent groups indicated that the /ɓ-b/ contrast was difficult for the naïve Malay group while the bilabial stop and labio-dental fricative was difficult for the Hausa group despite not being completely naïve to these pairs of contrasts as the Hausa group has some exposure to Malay and are also second language learners of English where these segments are quite frequently encountered. Although the study did not examine the effect of proficiency in English on the performance of the subjects in the discrimination task, the contribution from proficiency in English seems to be minimal as the performance of the Hausa group was hovering slightly above the chance level.

This study also showed that the non-native perception model was successful in the prediction and interpretation of most of the perceptual difficulties encountered by the Malay and Hausa native speakers in the perception of stops and fricatives. The Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) predicts the success of adults’ monolinguals ability to discriminate unfamiliar foreign contrasts with little or no experience to the target language. The results of the analysis of the perception task pointed out that both the native speakers have problems in perceiving non-native contrasts as the non-native segment is often assimilated to the nearest native category that exist. In the case of implosives, Malay subjects considered them as members of the plosive stops found in Malay. As for the Hausa subjects, the voiced labio-dental fricative, /v/ was probably assimilated to the voiced bilabial stop, /b/ in Hausa.

However, it is not clear what happens with /p/ and /f/ as both phonemes are absent in Hausa. Although it was not tested directly in this study, it is possible that both segments were considered as members of the bilabial fricative /φ/ which exists in Hausa. Future studies can test this directly to examine the extent to which instances of /p/ and /f/ are considered good examplars of /φ/ in Hausa. Future studies should also explore whether performance in the task can be improved with directed attention to the plosive-implosive contrast in Hausa as well as the dental-bilabial contrast in Malay and English. These future directions of studies will provide important suggestions on how to ensure successful learning of these contrasts by second language learners.

REFERENCES


EXPLORING THE ADOPTION AND PRACTICE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA

Oberiri Destiny Apukel* and Livinus Jesse Ayih²

Department of Communication, Taraba State University, Nigeria
E-mail: apukedestiny@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
Despite the numerous advantages reported as regards citizen journalism in developing countries, little has been documented on its adoption and practice in rural developing communities. This study, is anchored on democratic participant media theory. A qualitative research design was adopted and interviews were conducted among 40 participants within three large rural developing communities in the north-eastern region of Nigeria. The findings confirmed that a large proportion of the rural dwellers were not aware of the term citizen journalism, and only a few of them participated fully in the practice of citizen journalism. The results establish that citizen journalism practice is still very minimal in the rural areas of Nigeria, due to poverty, power failure, their attitude, religious upbringing, customs, high level of illiteracy, high internet subscription and slow speed. Nonetheless, it was found that citizen journalism provides an avenue for community dwellers to gather and disseminate messages with immediacy, assists in exposing the excesses of government officials, and promotes a healthy lifestyle in community settings. It is relevant to encourage citizen journalism practice in rural areas, and further studies could continue to explore the issues affecting the adoption and practice of citizen journalism in developing countries.

Keywords: Citizen journalism, community, Nigeria, democratic participant media theory, rural dwellers.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
The development of the Internet and other new technology devices has resulted in a new course where people cover events and distribute content easily and directly. Therefore, the advent of the new media has introduced the concept of citizen journalism, which is the act of allowing ordinary individuals to play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information to the public. By implication, a common citizen is involved in citizen journalism when he takes the task of gathering news and spreading it using the new media (Salawu, 2011). Atton (2009) provides a nuanced definition of citizen journalism, describing it as a journalism that is produced not by professionals but by those outside mainstream media organizations; that is, amateur media producers who typically have little or no training or professional qualifications as journalists; they write and report from their position as citizens, as members of communities, as activists, or as fans. Therefore, the development of blogs, mobile devices, social networks, micro-blogging and other digital tools has permitted people to publish their own stories and cover their own communities, in turn reducing the monopoly of information gathering and dispersal from the conventional media to a more interactive media environment (Tsegyu, 2016).

Globally, research has confirmed the effectiveness of citizen journalism since through the availability of technology, citizens often can report breaking news more quickly than traditional media reporters. Notable examples of citizen journalism reporting of major world
events are, the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the 2013 protests in Turkey, the Euromaidan events in Ukraine, and Syrian Civil War and the 2014 Ferguson unrest (Gilardi, 2016). Specifically, in Nigeria, citizen journalism played a substantial role in the nationwide protest against fuel subsidy removal in 2012 (Odii, 2013). This indicates the relevance of citizen journalism in our contemporary times (Noor, 2017). Despite the numerous advantages reported as regards citizen journalism in developing countries, little has been documented on its adoption and practice in rural developing communities. It has been observed that the media in developing countries do not give adequate coverage to the rural areas, and the manner the media perceive rural news shows that the rural areas are alarmingly neglected (Ate and Ikerodah, 2012). For example, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) stated that in Nigeria the mass media has over the years, solely neglected the rural areas and writes from the standpoint of an urban dweller's world. This suggests that the ills of the rural areas, the difficulties of life there, and their burning sense of grievance are seldom seriously conveyed. How then do the rural dwellers find ways to disseminate and get information since the Nigerian press seems to neglect them?

No doubt, the role of citizen journalism cannot be ruled out in the case of the rural dwellers since citizen journalism is based upon public citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing, and disseminating news and information. There is therefore a need for a study that demonstrates how these neglected rural citizens adopt citizen journalism to foster information dissemination which is the objective of the current study. The outcomes of this study are beneficial to the eclectic growing body of studies on alternative, participatory, community and citizen journalism, and have a wider significance not only in Nigeria but across the continent of Africa.

**Aim and objectives**
The main thrust of this study is to ascertain the prospects and constraints of citizen journalism practice in rural communities in Nigeria. To accomplish this purpose, this paper is guided by the following objectives:

- To confirm whether rural dwellers entirely accept and participate in the exercise of citizen journalism.
- To determine the prospects of citizen journalism in rural communities.
- To find out the constraints of adopting citizen journalism in rural communities.
- To outline the forms of citizen journalism that manifest in rural communities.
- To highlight ways in which citizen journalism practice could be better encouraged in rural communities.

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**
The adoption and practice of citizen journalism have been felt both in the western part of the world and in Africa. In the western context, Rodriguez (2000) argues that independent media enable “ordinary” citizens to become politically empowered. This means that when people create their own media, they are better able to represent themselves and their communities. She sees these “citizens’ media” as projects of self-education. The author described “citizens” as those members of society who “actively participate in actions that reshape their own identities, the identities of others, and their social environment, [through which] they produce power” (Rodriguez, 2000, p. 19). For example, Rodriguez (2000) reports that the
Exploring The Adoption and Practice of Citizen Journalism in Rural Communities in Nigeria

production of a video by striking women workers in a Colombian maternity clinic demonstrates how citizen journalism helps in the shifting power roles that facilitate a creative collective dynamic that challenges institutionalized leadership roles (Rodriguez, 2001). According to Atton (2009), an alternative or citizen journalism may serve specific communities and enable participation by those communities in media production. The same author highlighted the different manifestations of citizen journalism in different contexts from natural disasters, political violence or organised armature and community practices which is the case in the current study. Similar research conducted in the western region of the world demonstrates that since its advent the citizen journalism brand has been tested in several places and situation; for example, the 2004 Indonesian Boxing Day Tsunami, bombing that took place in London, Virginia Tech disasters where citizens massively engaged in journalistic work of snapping photographs, text and voice messages which were used to report such events to them. Further examples are the Arab Spring, the 2013 military takeover of power in Egypt and its protest, and the Occupy Wall Street movement (Carr, Barnidge, Lee, and Tsang, 2014). In this entire scenario, the ordinary citizens collected information, which included on-the-spot action pictures and uploaded to the internet for the world’s consumption.

In the African context, most especially Nigeria, studies on citizen journalism have been predominantly carried out on urban dwellers. For instance, Salawu (2011:194) observed that citizen journalism has profound implications for the blossoming of democracy. This supports Bowman and Willis (2003) that listed the benefits of citizen journalism to include an increased trust in media, shared responsibility in informing democracy, and a better journalism, etc. Also, Aperverga (2010) in Idoko (2012) carried out a study on the impact of citizen journalism in Nigeria. The study revealed that citizen journalism has impacted a lot on the lives of Nigerians, and that everyone is now a reporter and has the right to air out his view without running to a media house. However, the findings of the same study establish that people most times do not get the true picture of a story before posting it on the internet just because they want to be the first to post about a particular happening. Furthermore, Okoro et al. (2013) discovered that citizen journalism is emerging as a powerful phenomenon across Nigeria. This view is concretized by Dare (2011) who found that Sahara Reporters, a citizen journalists’ website was rated by 86 of the 120 respondents as a serious source of breaking news. This proposes that due to its interactivity and ability to present news in split seconds, citizen journalism has presented a severe challenge to the mainstream media in Nigeria; it has broadened people’s access to a variety of news, during emergencies.

Consequently, some scholars maintained that citizen journalism is a serious sort of journalism that eradicates the top-down monopolistic communication. Annotating on the benefits of citizen journalism, Alemoh (2013) observed that most of the issues the mainstream media leave out, the citizen journalist easily captures. Events that occur in distant places are now published directly by citizen journalists, making the public mindful of certain matters that happen around them. For example, the plane crash of the former and the late Governor of Taraba state of Nigeria Governor Danbaba Danfulani Suntai that occurred on 25 October 2012 was reported instantly by citizen journalists/eyewitnesses; however, it took about 24 hours for the mainstream media houses in Nigeria to report the same story. Furthermore, most of the events of the Boko Haram bomb blast are reported instantly by citizen journalists accompanied by photographs of the incident even before the mainstream media stations arrive at the bomb attack scenes. This suggests that citizen journalism
provides an avenue for both pros and novices in the origination and airing of news content to the receiving public/audience. It has made journalism more democratic and participatory as opposed to the mainstream monopolistic media production. Some other interesting aspect of citizen journalism is its speed in delivery of the message. It delivers messages in a flash like the focal ratio of light and this is possible due to its lack of gatekeeping. It, therefore, has immediate feedback from the audience as in the case of Facebook comments and liking. That is the reason why many people call citizen journalism “we media” because of the content made by the people, and for the people.

However, some other authors claim that due to its lack of credibility and authenticity of its content it is endangering the societal information cycle. In respect of this, Maher (2005) observed that the effectiveness of citizen journalism has been debunked by the mainstream media due to its lack of objectivity. Consequently, some journalists and media houses view citizen journalism with doubt and uncertainty, believing that journalism practice is intended for trained journalists who understand the objectivity and balance as well as the whole canons of journalism. Supporting this view, Mgbejume (2008) asserts that a journalist has to undergo training before he is equipped to publish effectively; he likened an untrained journalist to a madman left with a gun who can shoot at will without control which leads to disaster. As far as this writer is concerned, before one publishes news online, he ought to receive journalistic training in order to become familiarized with the moral philosophy of the profession. In addition, Educause Learning Initiative (2007) postulates that by permitting anyone to collect and broadcast the message to the public, citizen journalism practice will be more of personal interest, myopic view and as well cultivate new media community of similar interests. However, via Blogs, Facebook, and Twitter citizen journalists have disseminated breakthrough information on political oppression, corruption and economic theft in the society and the world at large.

Substantiating the criticism on citizen journalism, Dare (2011) reported that only 33 respondents of the 120 surveyed trusted Sahara reporters. This suggests that some Nigerians do not believe stories from citizen journalists because they spread falsehood. In the same manner, Apuke (2016) commented that the issue affecting citizen journalism in Nigeria is its lack of gatekeepers or editors to filter the information before it gets to the public. This suggests that citizen journalism in Nigeria might be full of duplication, malpractices, and wrong misleading information. Most of the news and information passed using citizen journalism might not be genuine; they could be propaganda that is aimed at either annoying or causing anger, promoting injustice or even creating enmity among the targeted audience. This view is consistent with Okoro et al. (2013) who argue that citizen journalism fuels civil unrest, political instability, and ethnoreligious crisis. In this regard, Aligwe and Nwafor (2017) in an empirical study that focused on Citizen Journalism and the coverage of the 2015 General Elections in South-East Nigeria identified a lack of professionalism, credibility question, over-sensationalism, the anonymity of sources and difficulty in regulation as some of the major weaknesses of the practice.

The problem affecting the effectiveness of citizen journalism in Nigeria has also been outlined by some authors. For example, Idoko (2012) discovered the challenges of citizen journalism in Nigeria to include; computer illiteracy, difficulty in accessing the internet and high price of ‘surfing’ the net. This means that the high cost of internet subscription impedes the effectiveness of citizen journalism in Nigeria. Due to the lack of free internet service, anyone who desires to post any event online must buy “data” which is expensive to some due
to the economic situation. Even so, the author found out the benefits of citizen journalism cannot be cast out. These include wider coverage of events, urgency in media reports and encouragement of information and communication technology (ICT) in the country. Another impediment to citizen journalism in Nigeria is the high level of illiteracy in the country. According to the World Development Indicators (2010) reports, the adult literacy level in Nigeria is 60%. This means that 40% of the population (about 60 million people in Nigeria) is excluded from citizen journalism and all other opportunities for audience participation that may require basic literacy (UNDP, 2010). This is clearly dangerous to the health of the nation’s democracy and a strong bane to citizen journalism in Nigeria. Aligwe and Nwafor (2017) found uneven penetration, illiteracy, constant power failure, endemic poverty and systemic corruption as the major threats affecting the effectiveness of citizen journalism in Nigeria. They recommended more efforts to enhance even penetration of ICTs in the country and address the issue of systemic corruption and endemic poverty, as these have continually constituted a major setback to every aspect of her development.

**Theoretical framework**

This paper, which is anchored on the democratic participant media theory examines the role citizens play in gathering and disseminating information in a society.

**Democratic participant media theory**

The democratic participant media theory was developed by Dennis McQuail during the 80’s. According to Folarin (1998), the theory discards the top-down communication system that involves professionals and commercially driven operators who hijack the media for their selfish interest, but agitate for pluralizing and democratize form of access and production of media contents. The theory advocates that media content generation, production, and dissemination should be done by one person to another instead of concentrating on particular top groups. It calls for the media to be a medium of the people, for the people and by the people rather than a medium in the hands of a few monopolistic groups. Ojobor (2002) states that this theory advocates for more horizontal rather than vertical (top-down) communication due to the continued commercialization and monopolization of the media stations as well as centralism of public broadcast stations. Corroborating this view, McQuail (1987) noted that one of the basic principles of the theory is that “individual citizens and minority groups have rights to access the media (rights to communicate) and rights to be served by the media according to their own determination of need. Therefore, this theory advocates for the liberalization of the media for the common good of the people it is meant to serve. It suggests that the people should have free access to the means of communication as against the monopolistic and rigid structure of traditional mass media. This theory is applicable to this current research because it focuses on the citizens’ participation in information gathering and dissemination. Thus, the theory supports participatory, citizen and alternative journalism, which this present work attempts to investigate in the Nigerian context.

From the literature reviewed, it could be deduced that the issue of citizen journalism in Nigeria has been little studied. Even though the knowledge of its practice seems to be prevalent among some citizens, the literature is growing. It was also observed that most of the reviewed papers are still far from adequate due to their surface technique of examining the subject matter. Most of the studies depended on a survey questionnaire method with a strong focus on understanding the phenomenon of citizen journalism from mostly the
professional media personnel, and urban dwellers with little emphasis on the rural public/dwellers (Odii, 2013). It is, therefore, worthwhile to study the phenomenon of citizen journalism through the rural dwellers’ lens since it is mostly referred to a journalism for the common man/citizen or community. This current study will, therefore, contribute to the body of knowledge by researching (using an interview method) citizen journalism practice among the rural dwellers and community. It will attempt to understand the prospects and constraints of citizen journalism practice in rural communities of a developing country such as Nigeria. To the best of the researchers’ knowledge, this paper is one of the first to make such an attempt. Therefore, the qualitative rich data derived from the interview will increase and contribute to the growing literature on the citizen or participatory journalism.

METHODS

Study design
This study made use of the qualitative research design following the phenomenological approach described by Braun and Clarke (2013). Interviews were conducted among 40 conveniently selected participants. The interview technique was used because few studies exist that explicate the phenomenon of citizen journalism in Nigeria. Thus, a method allowing for sufficient freedom and depth of probing was needed. This method has been shown to permit participants to describe their feelings in their own words and new themes could be followed up as they emerged (Dogari, Apuke, & Shadrach, 2018). It was also felt necessary to develop a context-based understanding as regards citizen journalism practice in the rural areas of Nigeria. In keeping with the general practice of qualitative research, the participants were promised and given anonymity in order to encourage them to discuss pertinent issues in depth and detail (Kontagora, Watts, & Allsop, 2018). For example, the participants were coded as participant 1, 2 3…40.

Participants and sampling
The study took place in three communities in the north-eastern region of Nigeria (i.e. Ardo Kola in Taraba state, Maiha in Adamawa state and Kaltungo in Gombe state). For clarification, a community in this study refers to either a small or large group of people that has something in common, such as norms, religion, values, and identity, and as well share a sense of place that is situated in a given geographical area such as a town. Therefore, the communities used in this study were selected based on convenience and proximity to the researchers. Additionally, it has been observed that technological development within this region is growing but very little research in the implementation of (ICT) has been undertaken (Apuke and Apollos, 2017; Poushter, 2016). Since the main aim of this study was to explore citizen journalism practice in rural communities, the authors made sure selected participants understood what citizen or participatory journalism is, because it was observed that most of the rural dwellers do not understand the term citizen or participatory journalism, so the authors had to explain what it meant in their local dialect through an interpreter. After the explanation, the authors asked if they practice what has been explained, those who then acknowledge that they practice citizen journalism were selected for this study and this amounted to about 40 participants across the three communities. So basically, those who use various forms of new media and acknowledge its usage for participatory journalism were selected. Of the 40 participants, (n=22) were male and (n=18) were female. In terms of age range, (n=23) were between the ages of 18-29 and (n=16) were 30 and above. With respect to
Educational background, (n=18) had a formal education while (n=22) had no formal education but could still communicate in English.

**Data collection procedure**
Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and all interviews were recorded. The interviews were conducted in the early months of 2017 and lasted for approximately 8 weeks. The questions in the interview script were adapted from established research (i.e., Alemoh, 2013; Aligwe and Nwafor, 2017; Okoro et al., 2013; Salawu, 2011) with appropriate revisions and modifications to suit into the context of this study. Each interview lasted for about 20-60 minutes to complete and was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

**Data analysis**
To examine the qualitative data received from the interview sessions. The six thematic data analysis steps identified by Braun and Clarke (2013) were employed. These entail the researchers transcribing the recorded interviews; rereading the transcriptions to identify emerging themes from the recorded data; reviewing the themes; defining the themes; naming the themes, and lastly writing the outcomes. The purpose of using thematic analysis is to identify patterns of meaning across a dataset that provide an answer to the research question being addressed.

**Results and discussion**
The results section has been organised into five themes. The first demonstrates the acceptance and participation in the practice of citizen journalism among rural dwellers. The second highlights the prospects of citizen journalism in rural communities of Nigeria. The third demonstrates the constraints of adopting citizen journalism in rural communities of Nigeria. The fourth establishes the forms of citizen journalism that manifest among the rural
community dwellers, and finally, the fifth highlights the ways in which citizen journalism practice could be better encouraged among rural community dwellers in Nigeria.

The reception and participation in citizen journalism among rural dwellers
In response to the first question about the participants’ acceptance and participation in the exercise of citizen journalism, it was found a large proportion of the rural dwellers were not aware of the term citizen journalism even though they adopted and practiced it. In this regard, the entire participants support citizen journalism practice, but only a few of them participated fully in the practice of citizen journalism. This indicates a minimum full participation of citizen journalism practice in the sampled areas. In this respect, one of the interviewees remarked:

Although we have a slower technological advancement, the advancement of citizen journalism has been felt in our area. But, many of us do not practice citizen journalism and prefer to use our devices to communicate with friends than post breaking news and events [Participant_1].

Another participant stated that:

At some time, I do engage in citizen journalism practice. I recall a time when a woman gave birth in the street due to lack of adequate medical facility in my community. I immediately captured the event and posted it online so as to draw humanitarian responses. Nevertheless, I do not frequently partake in citizen journalism [Participant_6].

Supporting this view, a participant claimed that:

I am fully cognizant of how citizen journalism works and I completely accept its practice, but this is not fully encouraged and acknowledged in my community. We have this culture of people minding their business which in turn discourages me sometimes from posting certain issues that happen in my community [Participant_18].

Only a few participants mentioned that they fully partake in the practice of citizen journalism. In this respect, a participant acknowledging to be a citizen journalist affirmed that:

Citizen journalism or participatory journalism is indeed a blessing to us because it has permitted me to share my viewpoint with heterogeneous people in my community and beyond. I will boldly say that I frequently engage in citizen journalism and this has been helpful to my audience. For example, there was a period where rape cases in my community were the order of the day. I took it upon myself to research into the issues, got live photos and footages of those caught in the act and posted them so as to create more awareness [Participant_15].

In line with this notion, one of the interviewees commented that:
I have been practicing citizen journalism for about 5 years now and I don’t regret this practice or its notion. The practice has enabled me to inform a couple of people on the dangers of certain issues in our community and beyond [Participant_22].

Additionally, it was found that the few participants who fully practice citizen journalism do so predominantly through their mobile devices using social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. Overall, the findings suggest that a large proportion of the rural dwellers were not aware of the term citizen journalism, yet they adopt and practice it, but the practice is low. These results contrast studies which revealed that citizen journalism has impacted a lot on the lives of Nigerian people and that everyone is now a reporter and has the right to air out his view without running to a media house (Apeverga, 2010; Idoko, 2012). The implication of this current study is that although citizen journalism has permitted an easy dissemination of stories in split seconds, its full practice has not yet been acknowledged in the grassroots areas of Nigeria and only a few people are willing to partake in the practice of citizen journalism. This outcome reflects the findings of a research which reported that in Nigeria, citizen journalism is gradually developing (Dare, 2011). The factors discouraging these participants as regards the full practice of citizen journalism will be outlined in the subsequent themes.

**The prospects of citizen journalism in rural communities of Nigeria**

The entire interviewed participants acknowledged that the prospects of citizen journalism in their community are inevitable. They believed that citizen journalism has provided an avenue for anyone willing to gather and disseminate messages to the rural dwellers and beyond. It has democratised the distribution of information as anyone could instantly report events in their community. The participants generally held the view that the fastness in the dissemination of messages also makes citizen journalism an interesting one. It delivers messages in a flash like the speed of light which in turn attracts an instant reply from the community dwellers. This notion supports the theoretical framework (Democratic participant media theory) of this study which advocates that people should have free access to the means of communication as against the monopolistic and rigid structure of traditional mass media (McQuail, 1987; Ojbor, 2002). In this regard, one of the rural community dwellers commented that:

> The use of citizen journalism has helped some of us expose the ills of government in our community. The issues of lack of basic amenities have been constantly reported by some in our community and neighbouring villages. There are a lot of issues being neglected by the mainstream media that volunteered community citizen journalist report and this has made some government officials come to our aid [Participant_20].

In line with these, a considerable amount (n=31) of the interviewed rural dwellers held the notion that citizen journalism and the advent of the new media has assisted them to expose the excesses of government officials in their rural communities. They stated instances whereby government approved projects in the communities and the rural district head embezzled such money. When such cases are reported to the mainstream media, they are rarely aired. However, with the help of information communication gadgets community
dwellers have been able to post such issues on Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, which in turn have attracted the attention of the government to act and remedy the situation. This has brought about developments in their community. One of the interviewed community dwellers reports:

I recall a time when the government approved the renovation of our community high school. The top officials in our community neglected the project and embezzled the money. This situation attracted the community’s attention and some of us posted the pictures of the debilitated school, which in turn made the government arrest the officials that embezzled our community allocation. Within two months the government was able to look for capable hands that renovated our high school [Participant_40].

The participants also held the notion that their community which is situated in the north-eastern part of Nigeria has witnessed some attacks from Boko Haram, which is not immediately reported by the mainstream media. However, some of them have been able to report instantly the occurrence of a bomb blast and attacks before any media organizations arrive at the scene. This has enabled them to report first-hand information that could attract a humanitarian response. They believed that the mainstream media could alter the reports to favour the government in power. In line with this notion, one of the participants alleges that:

There was a time when our community was attacked and I was an eyewitness. The mainstream media reported that the attack was not a serious one and there should not be much panicking, however, the incident was a serious one that took the lives of many of our community dwellers. Some of us were able to capture the accurate event and post via various social media platforms which in turn attracted the attention of the United States government. As I speak, we now have a barracks in our community and this has reduced the constant attack on us [Participant_38].

Most of the interviewed rural dwellers perceived that the advent of citizen journalism has enhanced their choice of political candidates. Through the posting of a candidate’s achievement and lapses by some of the community dwellers, they have been sensitized to the appropriate candidates that could move their community to greater heights. This suggests that citizen journalism promotes grassroot mobilization. In this respect, a community interviewed participant commented that:

Some of our politicians who are representing us in the National Assembly have been exposed through the help of some willing citizen journalist in our community. For example, in many occasions I have posted the underachievement of some of our so-called political leaders. As far as I am concerned, citizen journalism has assisted us to expose some of these politicians and sensitised us on an appropriate candidate to select [Participant_20].

Another benefit of citizen journalism highlighted by the interviewed rural community dwellers is in the aspect of health and hygiene promotion. Most of them pointed out that citizen journalism has helped them to keep hygiene and avoid certain practices. For example,
during the outbreak of the Ebola and Bird flu virus, the efforts of some of the community dwellers assisted most of them to stay on guard so as to prevent the spread of the virus. In addition, they also claimed that through various posts online they have been able to grasp the dangers of HIV and AIDS and have attempted to visit the community health care centre which in turn has reduced the rate of its spread among some of the rural dwellers. Although some of them are not learned, the pictures and videos posted by some learned ones have assisted them to understand the dangers of HIV, Bird Flu, and Ebola. This suggests that citizen journalism’s impact could also be felt by both educated and non-educated. Therefore, it should highly be recommended among rural dwellers as they are more prone and vulnerable to diseases. In addition, it was found that in contrast to research finding which claims that lack of credibility and authenticity of citizen journalism content is endangering the societal information cycle (Maher 2005), the participants believe that the content of citizen journalists is credible as it reports first-hand information, unlike the filtered mainstream media information.

The authors also asked the few rural dwellers that fully engage in citizen journalism to state the ways in which they involve other members of the community, particularly those who do not engage with the new media. In response to this, the participants claim they regularly attempt to engage other rural dwellers who do not have the means of sharing information online by getting vital information from them and requesting them to be a source of information. They expressed that although these ones do not have the means to share information, the word of mouth (WOM) has been essential in assisting and informing them on messages they should disseminate through their technological devices. Some of the participants stated that they normally go to market places where many rural dwellers who do not engage with technological gadgets are found and from there, they get vital information on situations happening in their community.

Generally, the implication of the above comments suggests that citizen journalism has provided an avenue for community dwellers to gather and disseminate messages to their fellow rural dwellers and beyond. This implies that instead of them waiting for the mainstream media, some of them have been able to inform the public of their aspirations and yearning which in turn has brought some development in the community as well as attracted humanitarian response. The outcome of the above comments also suggests that citizen journalism has assisted rural community dwellers to expose the excesses of government officials in their communities, which in turn has enhanced their choice of political candidates. With respect to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle in the community settings, it could be deduced that citizen journalism has helped some of the community members to keep hygiene and avoid certain practices. For instance, during outbreaks such as Ebola and Bird flu virus, community dwellers have been sensitised appropriately. Additionally, their knowledge of HIV and AIDS has also been improved due to their exposure to the videos and photos that demonstrate the dangers of HIV and AIDs, suggesting that videos and photo features of citizen journalism is very helpful to rural dwellers as most of them seem not to be learned. The outcome of this study is consistent with Alemoh’s (2013) observation which advocates that most of the issues the mainstream media leave out, the citizen journalist easily captures. Events that occur in distant places are now published directly by citizen journalists, making the public mindful of certain matters that happen around them. In addition, Educause Learning Initiative (2007) postulates that through Blogs, Facebook, and Twitter citizen
journalists have disseminated breakthrough information on political oppression, corruption and economic theft in the society and the world at large.

The constraints of adopting and practicing citizen journalism in rural communities

The interviewees were asked to outline some of the issues confronting the actualization of citizen journalism practice in their community. A large proportion of the participants reported poverty and power failure as one of the major constraints to the effectiveness of citizen journalism. This notion was also shared by Aligwe and Nwafor (2017) who found that uneven penetration, illiteracy, constant power failure, endemic poverty and systemic corruption as the major threats affecting the effectiveness of citizen journalism in Nigeria. In addition, the participants in this current study also pointed out to the attitude, religious upbringing and customs of some of the community dwellers. For example, most of the married women in the community are confined to their homes due to the religious rules and this affects them from covering events that could assist the public. Furthermore, the custom of not allowing certain events (such as accident scene, rape cases, murder cases, etc.) to the snapped affects the effectiveness of citizen journalism in rural areas. In respect to this view, one of the interviewed participants stated that:

Poverty and power failure affect most of us from getting good information communication gadgets and even if we do, there is no constant electricity to keep them charged. For the past six weeks a rainstorm dropped some electric pole wires in our community, resulting in the shutting down of our cell phones and other technological gadgets [Participant_25].

Other challenges that discourage the adoption and practice of citizen journalism was the high level of illiteracy among the rural dwellers. Although some of them engage in citizen journalism, most of them are discouraged due to lack of adequate knowledge to operate modern technological devices. In line with this, one of the participants commented that:

The level of illiteracy in our community is so much that most people don’t even wish to own a technological device; they’d rather talk about practicing citizen journalism. Although some of the community dwellers might be willing to partake in citizen journalism, they are highly discouraged because they cannot read nor write, neither are they acquainted with modern technological devices [Participant_6].

Supporting this point of view, another rural dweller stated that:

I own a smartphone and sometimes chat with it, but I lack adequate knowledge that will enable me to construct better sentences that I could use along the pictures I wish to upload to the public and this sometimes discourages me from frequent reporting of events that could assist my community [Participant_12].

The participants also pointed out to the issue of high internet subscription and slow speed in the rural areas as a factor discouraging them to fully harness the effectiveness of citizen journalism. Most of the participants claimed that they run out of data subscription and have only access to 2G networks. These findings seem to be a problem that also extends to
the urban areas of Nigeria; however, it is most glaring in the rural areas because the rural dwellers report to have slower internet services compared to urban cities. In a related study carried out in an urban centre in Nigeria, Idoko (2012) discovered the challenges of citizen journalism include; computer illiteracy, difficulty in accessing the internet and high price of ‘surfing’ the net. This suggests that the high cost of internet subscription impedes the effectiveness of citizen journalism in both rural and urban areas of Nigeria. Therefore, due to the lack of free internet service, anyone who desires to post any event online must buy “data” which is expensive to some due to the economic situation.

Generally, it could be inferred from the above comments that poverty and power failure, the attitude, religious upbringing and customs, high level of illiteracy, high internet subscription and slow speed in the rural areas are factors discouraging the adoption and practice of citizen journalism in rural areas of Nigeria. In line with this, the participants were asked for comments on the ways in which citizen journalism could be promoted and encouraged in their community and beyond.

**The forms of citizen journalism that manifest among the rural community dwellers**

The participants were asked how they manage to practice citizen journalism, even though they are faced with challenges due to material deprivation which has been defined as the inability to afford basic resources and services. A large proportion of the respondents remarked that when they are out of internet subscription, they make efforts to reach other community members who have technological gadgets and inform them of certain information so they could post on their behalf. As regards slow internet access, the participants mentioned that they sometimes wait to post information at night when the network is better. They acknowledge this could affect the immediacy of citizen journalism; nevertheless, this technique has been helpful to them. In addition, the participants who do not have adequate knowledge on the usage of technological devices admitted that they meet other people to assist them operate their phones so they could post vital information. They reported that besides using social networking sites, they also use SMS to disseminate vital information among their community members because it is cheaper. The participants mentioned two types of citizen journalism they engaged in; the opportunistic and planned types. The opportunistic type happens when a bystander or citizen happens to be in the right place at the right time; for example, at the site of a tragedy that has just happened and they witness the incident unfolding before them and capture it through film, photos or write about the event. Whilst the other type of citizen journalist is somebody who has purposely placed themselves at the scene in order to capture an event as it unfolds to communicate this to the rest of the world. In this regard, the participants remarked that the opportunistic type is the more common form of citizen journalism among them.

**Ways in which citizen journalism practice could be better encouraged among rural community dwellers**

The majority of the interviewed rural dwellers suggest that government agencies make development a priority. They believe doing so will improve the living condition of those in the rural areas, which in turn, encourages the use of technological devices that foster citizen journalism. The participants also called on the government to improve power supply in their community. It was observed that most transformers are no longer functioning and some areas have not seen electricity for a long while, thereby deterring the effectiveness of community
and citizen journalism. Most of the participants also reported that more orientation as regards the essence of citizen journalism is needed in the rural areas as some of the rural dwellers might not be even conversant with its practices. One of the participants remarked that:

I believe if the government provides gadgets and improves our skills; it will encourage us to buy gadgets that will enable us to effectively carry out citizen journalism. Citizen journalism is only effective when you have the technological tool to broadcast breaking news and events [Participant_28].

Another participant commented that:

In my ward, there are only few people that are aware of citizen journalism or even have a gadget that could facilitate its practice. Thus, I strongly recommend orientation [Participant_21].

The participants also recommended that good schools be set up in rural areas just like urban areas, as most of the learned people in their community were opportune to school outside. Due to the lack of good education, many people are not encouraged to study, thereby resulting in a high rate of illiteracy which in turn discourages the adoption and practice of citizen journalism. So, they believe when the level of illiteracy among the rural dwellers is reduced to the barest minimum, it will encourage citizen journalism as many will have the knowledge to operate modern technological devices. The participants also recommended that the issue of high internet subscription and slow speed be tackled with urgency so as to encourage rural dwellers to partake in effective community and citizen journalism. Internet service providers should reduce the cost of their subscription and extend a 4G network to rural areas so as to improve the internet speed, which in turn might encourage citizen journalism.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This study, which is anchored on democratic participant theory, aimed at increasing our understanding of citizen journalism practice, with a focus on rural dwellers, which has been little studied. The findings of this study suggest that a large proportion of the rural community dwellers in Nigeria are not aware of the term citizen journalism, but few participated fully in the practice of citizen journalism, and many of them support citizen journalism practice. The few participants who fully practice citizen journalism do so predominantly through their mobile devices using social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. The possible issues that discourage the full adoption and practice of citizen journalism in rural areas are poverty, power failure, their attitude, religious upbringing and customs, high level of illiteracy, high internet subscription and slow speed. These issues could be reduced if the government makes efforts to improve power supply in their community. Orientation as regards the essence of citizen journalism is also required to improve the understanding of rural dwellers. Service providers should reduce the cost of their subscription and improve their network speed to 4G as obtainable in developed areas so as to encourage citizen journalism among rural dwellers.

Although these rural dwellers face some challenges, they still strive to practice citizen journalism. For example, when they are out of internet subscription, they make efforts to
reach other community members who have technological gadgets and share certain information with them, so they could post on their behalf. In respect to slow internet access, some of them wait to post information at night when the network is better. This could affect the immediacy of citizen journalism, nevertheless, this technique has been helpful to them. As regards inadequate knowledge among rural community dwellers who practice citizen journalism, it has been shown that those who do not have adequate knowledge on the usage of technological devices could meet other people to assist them operate their phone so they could post vital information. This suggests that a person must not be learned before he or she could partake in citizen journalism. Besides using social networking sites, rural citizen journalism could also be achieved through the use of SMS because it is cheaper to disseminate vital information among community members. The two predominant types of citizen journalism as demonstrated in this study are the opportunistic and planned types. Of the two, opportunistic or impromptu citizen journalism is more common in the North eastern part of Nigeria. These points to fresh ways of conceptualising citizen journalism.

Conclusively, it could be seen that although the acceptance of citizen journalism is still minimal in rural areas of Nigeria, its prospect is inevitable. This implies that citizen journalism provides an avenue for community dwellers to gather and disseminate messages to their fellow rural dwellers with immediacy, and this notion supports the democratic participant media theory which advocates that people should have free access to the means of communication as against the monopolies and rigid structure of traditional mass media (McQuail, 1987; Ojobor, 2002). Citizen journalism encourages grassroots mobilization. It also assists in exposing the excesses of government officials in rural communities, which in turn enhances their choice of political candidates. It promotes a healthy lifestyle in the community settings, most especially during outbreaks of viruses. Therefore, it is pertinent to encourage citizen journalism practice in rural areas, and further studies could explore more issues confronting rural dwellers as regards the adoption and practice of citizen journalism in developing countries.

REFERENCES


Maher, V. (2005). Citizen journalism is dead. New media lab, School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, South Africa.


ABSTRACT
Neil Gaiman’s *Coraline* was published in 2002 and, since then, many studies have been conducted on this literary work of children’s literature. In all these studies, research using Sigmund Freud’s concept of defense mechanism and John Bowlby’s theory of attachment are yet to be conducted. I intend to analyse *Coraline* using these concepts in this study in order to fill in the research gap. In the novel, the eponymous character, Coraline, has been going through a journey to find her missing parents after discovering the existence of another world that resembles her real world. When Coraline encounters the Other Mother in this alternate world and finds that she resembles Coraline’s own missing mother, she feels confused. From here, my study will focus on the scope of Coraline’s relationship with her real mother and Other Mother through Freud’s defense mechanism and Bowlby’s theory of attachment. My study uses a textual analysis approach and aims to analyse Coraline’s family relationship, her feelings of denial as well as her aggressive behavior towards the Other Mother. Findings show that Coraline’s family relationship with her Other Mother is mirroring John Bowlby’s theory of attachment but in contradiction, Coraline still chooses to return back to her real mother as opposing this theory. Besides, Coraline’s denial and aggression depict her disapproval and rejection towards the existence of her Other Mother.

Keywords: attachment, mother, denial, aggression, *Coraline*, Neil Gaiman

INTRODUCTION
Neil Gaiman is a contemporary American author who writes fiction across many mediums, but he is particularly popular in the genre of children’s fantasy literature. This may be due to the fact that Gaiman explores “darker-psycho emotional themes in children literature” (Grace, 33). One of Gaiman’s award-winning children’s novel is entitled *Coraline*; a novel about the journey of an 11-year old girl to the Other World to search for her missing parents. There, she discovers that everything is similar to her own house and she meets her Other Mother, who resembles her real mother. Along her journey, she finds that the love and attention she desired for, and given by her Other Parents (OP), are not the same as the ones given by her real parents. As time passes by, the true nature of her Other Mother is revealed and, at the end of the novel, Coraline makes a plan to escape from the Other World. The objective of this study is firstly to examine Coraline’s relationship with her real parents and Other Parents through John Bowlby’s theory of attachment, to investigate Coraline’s denial and, lastly, to reveal Caroline’s unconscious thought in terms of aggression towards the character of the Other Mother by using Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytical approach.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been conducted on *Coraline* where most scholars analysed *Coraline* using Freud’s psychoanalytic theory (Grace A, 18; Stibbs, 13; Buckley, 5; Rudd, 20), though others examined *Coraline* from Lacanian and Jungian perspectives (Rudd, 8; Duff, 21). One scholar discussed his disapproval of adding a new male character in the movie adaptation of *Coraline* using a feminist lens (Curtis, 20).

In regards to a psychoanalytic analysis, the application of Freud’s theory of the uncanny on the protagonist, Coraline, has been a common topic among scholars (Buckley, 7; Theresa, 15). Freud defines the uncanny as “that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (220). In the novel, Coraline experiences the Other House as being familiar to her own house in terms of carpets, wallpaper and pictures (Gaiman 27). Hence, this situation recalls a feeling of uncanniness.

Another issue that has been examined by scholars on *Coraline* is the depiction of the fantasy world in the form of a child’s imagination and an interpretation of dreams (Grace A, 8; Stibbs, 20; Klapesik, 25; Duff, 85). In a study entitled “Other Mother: Neil Gaiman’s Postfeminist Fairytales”, Parsons et al. (2008) suggest that Coraline fits into “the genre of fantasy” where the depiction of fantasies has been depicted throughout the existence of “the uncanny”, particularly through the character of the Other Mother. It acts as a vehicle for the protagonist to resolve questions of identity as well as the dilemmas and adventures faced by Coraline.

In terms of the interpretation of dreams, Freud states that “dreams are not nonsensical but meaningful. They are composites made out of the residues […] chosen by the unconscious to represent the fulfillment of a wish” (91). For instance, Coraline’s journey to the Other World to seek her real parents can be interpreted as a dream of an unfulfilled wish: eternal love and attention from her busy parents. In the story, there is an incident where Coraline’s real mother wakes her up from sleep. Coraline is startled because everything is normal, as if nothing had happened and her parents are not missing. This incident shows the possibility that Coraline’s mysterious journey, her meeting with the Other Mother and the hardships that she faces are actually dreams (Coraline 60).

In a study by Prasanna Grace A (2018) entitled “Study of Neil Gaiman’s Coraline as a Novel that Caters to a Dual Audience”, the existence of an imaginary world is discussed and she argues that Gaiman creates the novel to distinguish between reality and the imagination as framed from a Lacanian perspective. Grace argues that Gaiman’s *Coraline* depicts the imagination and inner-thoughts of a girl when she is immersed in an alternate world. In early childhood, children have difficulties or are in a state of confusion in distinguishing between fantasy and reality as supported in a study by Khursheed Ahmad Qazi:

“[…] during the childhood period, the child moves from a period of need (in which the child is unconscious of its body as a coherent unified whole and can hardly differentiate between self and other, between itself and mother), to the period of want (where it has to separate itself from its mother in order to form its own identity), which is necessary to become a part of society” (9).

During this phase, in the forming of the self-identity of a child, he or she will enter a phase which involves difficulties in distinguishing between fantasy or reality and his or her
self with others. This scholar is in agreement with Prasanna Grace A’s earlier view, perhaps because both scholars use a Lacanian perspective to examine the concept of imagination and the imaginary world. The other world in Coraline can thus be described as a mirror of the real world. Hence, Coraline notices that the other world (imaginary world) that she is trapped in is not a permanent world.

Another issue that has been explored in Coraline is through the lens of magical realism. Todorov defines magical realism as “the supernatural element intervenes that describes elements of fantasy can be recognized similarly in magical realism (90) which also consists of supernatural events that happen in reality. Equally important, magical realism is one of the most prominent genres in adults’ literature after the publication of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude (Moghadam & Hosseinpor, 2). Referring back to Gaiman’s Coraline, the story is considered as a magical realist fiction because of features of magical realism that can been seen and analysed by critics: the past and present run in parallel in Coraline’s real world and the Other World.

Besides that, previous research has been conducted on the stages of development in Coraline through the analysis of the eponymous character herself. Carnes (2016) discusses Coraline psychological development using Erik Erikson’s psycho-social theories, making a comparison between Coraline and the character of Deeba in China Mieville’s Un Lun Dun, where the issue of identity has been discussed through the “Eight Ages of Man” which correspond to a set of stages humans undergo during a range of ages (Erikson 247). Carnes examines the stages of development of Coralinewho, according to Erikson’s psycho-social theories, is at the Industry vs Inferiority Stage, a stage which involves the “entrance of life” (Erikson 258). Coraline travels across the door in search of her parents and her adapting to the change of environment is based on her stage of development.

Other studies have applied Erik Erikson’s theory of development in the context of food power, which is then investigated through the mother-daughter relationship in Coraline (Polard and Keeling, 143; Herndon, 20; Bray, 12). In a study by Bray (2012), the role of Mother is described as the nurturer; she is the person who is responsible for the feeding of the children, and they gain power from food (Bray, 12). Hence, the relationship between Coraline, her real mother, and her Other Mother has been investigated focussing on the issue of food. Herndon states that “the mother-children relationship, not only in literature, but in “real life” as well, is one that brings with it many associations of nurturing and provision, especially in the form of food” (4). Food can bring closeness or creates a gap depending on how food has been served to the children. In Coraline, her OM tries to attract Coraline’s attention by preparing the best lunch ever. This incident shows how the Other Mother tries to preserve a good mother-daughter relationship with Coraline by the preparation of food.

Identity and self-discovery are two essential issues in “Coraline” that have also been studied by previous researchers. Staci Poston Corner explains that “mirrors and mirroring in this text play a key role in the development of Coraline’s identity” (70). For instance, Coraline’s action of interacting with a mirror gives us a deeper understanding of her identity as it changes throughout the text, both in terms of how she sees herself and how others see her. In Coraline, the protagonist goes through many challenges, such as battling the Other Mother, in order to find her real parents.

Next, identity formation can be seen through the influence of the house because it symbolises the dynamics of human minds (Drangsholt, 11), where the usage of dark corridors, doors and hallways in Coraline act as depictions of methods to enter the other
world. Thus, the second world or “alternate universes” can be a symbol of identity development (Carnes, 28). In his study, Carnes explains that the existence of alternate worlds, or the usage of portals, represents the physical development, identity and crises faced by the protagonists. Thus, Coraline enters the phase of physical development from childhood into adulthood when she enters the Other World. The portals become the foundation or bridge towards Coraline’s identity development (Carnes 3).

Lastly, in a study entitled, *The Other Mother: Neil Gaiman’s Postfeminist Fairytales* (2009), the character of the Other Mother in *Coraline* is seen as representing current trends in postmodernist fairytale adaptations (McInally et. al, 20), where postmodernism is defined by Angela McRobbie as “while simultaneously appearing to be engaging in a well-informed and even well intended response to feminism,” it is “an active process in which feminist gains from the 70s and 80s come to be undermined” (255). For example, the role of the mother as powerful and over-dominating in Gaiman’s texts to attain resolution for the female protagonist must be overthrown.

Upon completing my review, I have identified a gap in the literature regarding *Coraline*, which leads me to pursue an investigation of this novel through an understanding of the issue of attachment, denial, and aggression. These concepts will be explained below.

**THEORY OF ATTACHMENT BY JOHN BOWLBY**
The theory of attachment revolves around the mother-child relationship; it begins from infancy to childhood, and can affect children’s personality development when they enter adulthood. Bowlby (1969) describes it as:

“how a very young child behaves towards his mother, both in her presence and especially in her absence, can contribute greatly to our understanding of personality development” (3).

This statement has been supported and elaborated by another scholar, by Jillian F. Logan (2017), who suggests that a mother-child relationship is significant to determine a child’s personality development:

“Childhood experiences give rise to “mental representations of attachment figure, the self, and the environment that form important internal working models which in turn become the basis for the child’s decision making in future relationship (7)”.

According to Bowlby (1969), the mother is considered the primary attachment figure and the closest figure to the child compared to the father. It has been argued that mother and infant develop this innate relationship through the womb during pregnancy (Bowlby, 21).

**SIGMUND FREUD’S DEFENSE MECHANISM OF DENIAL**
This study will also focus on a subcategory of Freud’s defense mechanism, which is the concept of denial, which is one’s refusal to accept certain facts or knowledge. Thus, it can be described as a psychological method that acts as a temporary pain reliever to protect individuals from emotional disturbance. According to Rycroft (1985), denial is defined as a “defense mechanism by which some painful experience is denied or some impulse or aspect of the self is denied” (29). The concept of denial has been applied in psychoanalysis to
explain the way a person protects his or her emotional balance by refusing to acknowledge hurtful truths and unacceptable facts. However, it should be noted that this type of defense mechanism should be impermanent as individuals need to have the courage to face reality in order to solve his or her problem (Goldberger 12).

SIGMUND FREUD’S INSTINCT THEORY OF AGGRESSION

The second Freudian concept that will be employed in this paper is aggression, a human instinct that is derived from the death drive “Thanatos”. In this study, aggressive behavior will be highlighted and defined through a Freudian perspective. The protagonist in Gaiman’s Coraline will be examined in terms of her aggressive behavior that results from aggression in her psyche.

According to Freud in his book, Instincts and Their Vicissitudes'(1915),

“Aggressiveness, too, was a component of the ego instincts – aggression, in other words, was at last given a formal place in the theoretical scheme, though not yet as a full-fledged, separate instinctual drive in its own right”(130).

Freud considers aggressiveness as a component of the ego instinct involving the self-destructive drive: the death drive “Thanatos”. All human aggressive behavior results from a frustration that might occur in one’s unconscious mind and frustrations that result from the death drive can lead to aggressive behavior.

From a different point of view, Robert A. Baron (1994) describes aggression as:

“any behavior that is intended to harm another person who does not want to be harmed.” (833)

Based on the above statement, aggression can be defined as any violence or dangerous behavior that can harm other people such as killing, shooting, slapping and cursing.

Correspondingly, the notion of aggression can be divided into two: positive and negative aggression (Bluestein 794). According to Ellis (1976) in Healthy and Unhealthy Aggression, positive aggression can be exhibited as:

“[…] healthy, productive behavior if it promoted the basic values of survival, protection, happiness, social acceptance, preservation, and intimate relations (54).

The above notion of positive aggression is supported by Jack (1999) in Behind the mask: Destruction and creativity in Women Aggression. Here, positive aggression also can be explained as:

“self-protection, standing up in the face of negation, pushing for new possibilities, and defending against harm.” (200)

Both scholars explain that positive aggression is acceptable when it comes to one’s self-protection against external factors that might harm a certain individual, where one must
be strong and aggressive when being in a threatening situation to protect the survival of the species. On the other hand, aggression can be interpreted differently when it comes to “negative aggression”. Destroying someone’s territory and hurting someone physically, mentally and financially can be considered as negative aggression (Moyer 70).

**CORALINE’S FAMILY RELATIONSHIP (REAL PARENTS VS OTHER PARENTS)**

In the context of this study, Bowlby’s theory of attachment will be used to examine Coraline’s family relationship with her real parents and her Other Parents. This paper will examine Coraline’s family relationship with her real mother and her Other Mother based on parenting style and how Coraline reacts to the mothers.

Referring back to the novel, Coraline’s life at home is dull. Even though her parents worked from home, they were always busy. Interactions between the parents and the child are limited as exemplified below:

“What should I do?” asked Coraline.

“I really don’t mind what you do,” said Coraline’s mother, “as long as you don’t make a mess.”

(Gaiman 2)

The above excerpt shows a lack of a mother-child relationship, where Coraline’s real mother is unresponsive and pays little attention to Coraline. For Coraline, her mother appears to prefer work over fun activities with her daughter. Thus, there is a lack of closeness between mother and child. According to Bowlby (1969), a mother should be responsive towards her children’s needs and desires Yet Coraline’s relationship with her mother can be read as a form of negative attachment (Ainsworth, 56). Relating back to the notion of attachment theory by Bowlby (1952), he suggests that, “the determinant of attachment is not food but care and responsiveness” (232). A mother’s role is not only to provide food and clothes to the child, but to care and be responsive to the child’s wants and needs. Coraline’s parents’ lack of responsiveness can thus be seen as the causing factor of Coraline’s loneliness and boredom, which thus leads her to visit her neighbours Miss Spink and Miss Forcible, which later leads to the conflict of the novel. Further, Coraline’s parents’ parenting style can be related to one of Bowlby’s concept of anxious-avoidance insecure attachment. This kind of attachment style relates to Coraline as she feels distressed and isolated when her mother does not give her much attention. Anxious-avoidance insecure attachment also describes a child’s personality as being aggressive and anti-social; these traits are also later portrayed by Coraline.

When Coraline is immersed in the Other World, she finds a different type of parenting. Coraline is treated lovingly by her Other Parents, receiving abundant attention and care. The following excerpt shows how Coraline is treated by her Other Parents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coraline</th>
<th>Other Mother (OM)</th>
<th>Other Father (OF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where are my parents?</td>
<td>We’re here ready to love you and feed you and make your life interesting</td>
<td>Come on into the kitchen. I’ll make us a midnight snack. Hot chocolate perhaps?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gaiman 20)
Here, Coraline’s Other Parents act as attachment figures as they play the role of caregiver and guardians of Coraline. Hence, Coraline feels appreciated and finds the love that she has been looking for in the Other World. Coraline feels secure when she is under the supervision of her Other Parents; this is unsurprising considering the Other Parents’ attachment style fits into Bowlby’s notion as ideal:

“The infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment” (Bowlby, 1951, p. 13)

Coraline feels delighted to be a part of her Other Parents’ family: she is finally loved and taken care of by her Other Parents more than her real parents. Unfortunately, this happiness is short-lived. Coraline senses something strange when she sees her Other Mother eating insects alive and realises that they are not her real parents:

Coraline : You’re sick, sick and evil!
Other Mother : Is that any way to talk to your mother?
Coraline : You aren’t my mother.

(Gaiman 88)

From this point onwards, Coraline decides to destroy the attachment between herself and her Other Mother. Instead, Coraline chooses to return to her real parents, who had not given her as much as attention as her Other Parents. Consequently, this event shows Coraline resisting Bowlby’s attachment theory. This could perhaps be related to a critique of the attachment theory. Harris argues that Bowlby’s theory of attachment is limiting as it only focuses on the mother-child relationship and does not acknowledge other factors that could affect a child’s psychological development; she cites a child’s peers as an example of other influencing factors (67). In this novel, OM is considered as another mother for Coraline as she has been immersed in the Other World. Her care and treatment towards Coraline somehow make Coraline realise that those are her desires before this. But, in the end, Coraline still cannot accept her Other Mother as her real mother as she has seen her true nature and evilness. Based on this finding, it can be suggested that her OM is considered as Coraline’s negative peer who she wants to escape from instead of a motherly figure. Hence, in the end, Coraline still wants to return back to her real mother who does not even appreciate her at all.

It can be argued that Coraline’s growth does not stem from her relationship with her real mother. Instead, Coraline’s personality is indirectly shaped by her Other Mother as she becomes more resisting and mature in her decision-making. Upon realising the threat posed by the Other Mother, Coraline chooses to return to her parents; this decision-making prioritises dull safety rather than danger. In the end, Coraline feels safe and secure from her Other Parents and finds appreciation from her real parents. Thus, Coraline’s encounter with her Other Mother Harris’ fits into an earlier view by Harris.

DENIAL IN CORALINE

Earlier, I have shown that denial is a primitive defense which rejects reality and indirectly helps endangered persons to escape an unwanted and undesirable situation (Freud, 12). It is a
method to protect one’s internal emotions from a hurtful and unacceptable reality. For example, when there is a death of a loved one, a person might become depressed and is unable to accept the reality of his or her loved one’s passing. Through denial of reality, he or she could feel relief from a state of intense shock and excess grief.

In this section, I will focus on the analysis of the second objective; to explore how denial in Gaiman’s *Coraline* through the lens of psychoanalysis. To begin, the notion of denial can be examined through Coraline’s actions. From the beginning of the story, there is one scene that depicts Coraline’s agitation which is the scene when she enters an empty old flat by using a key that she has taken from the kitchen and meets with her Other Parents. One feels Coraline’s sense of strangeness through her words, “I didn’t know I had another mother” (Gaiman 32). Her other mother keeps calm and replies, “Of course you do. Everyone does” (Gaiman 32). The earlier example from the text foreshadows future unpleasant events. Coraline is curious regarding who her Other Parents are. According to Freud, anxiety and curiosity are the results of conflicts with the Id, Ego and Superego in an individual’s unconscious mind (70). Coraline’s unconscious mind can thus be seen as attempting to process this mysterious event. She is curious regarding what is happening and where her parents have gone to when she finds them missing. When she is in the Other World, she finds something meaningful; her parents’ attention and love that she always has desired. She begins to feel anxious after she discovers her parents’ disappearance. Thus, Coraline’s feelings of anxiety and curiosity towards her Other Parents show arising conflicts within her Id, Ego and Superego. In Coraline’s unconscious mind, the ego plays an important role in solving the conflicts between the Id and Superego, hence the ego defense mechanism of denial can be applied to Coraline’s situation.

Besides, another example of denial in this novel can be seen when the Other Mother shows Coraline’s real parents’ conversation to her and convinces Coraline that they do not want her anymore. Her Other Mother shows these visual images through the mirror and Coraline hears her real parents’ conversation where they do not want Coraline to disturb them anymore and that they want her to be taken care of by her Other Mother. Coraline does not accept the fact that her real parents are tired of her and rejects her Other Mother’s words. She denies the fact that her parents are leaving her and cannot accept her Other Mother’s justification as seen from the example below:

““They weren’t bored of me. You’re lying! You stole them! I don’t see. And I don’t believe it either”

(Gaiman 70-71)

Coraline’s refusal to believe that her real parents do not love her shows Coraline’s state of denial. She is afraid that her Other Mother’s words might be true as her real parents have gone missing. It is safe to assume that Coraline worries that she has been abandoned by her real parents. To overcome this possible hurtful truth, Coraline’s ego defense mechanism is raised through the form of denial. This method of defense mechanism acts as a temporary reliever to protect Coraline’s internal emotions. Hence, she talks back to the Other Mother in order to convince herself that her parents love her and will not leave her. Talking back and opposing her Other Mother’s words is Coraline’s method of temporarily protecting her internal emotions through denial.
Coraline’s subconscious mind also shows her denial:

“It’s funny. The other mother doesn’t look anything at all like my own mother. How could I ever have thought was a resemblance?”  

(Gaiman 142)

The excerpt above shows how Coraline finally notices that there is a difference between her Other Mother and her real mother. It can be argued that Coraline has initially been in a state of denial, confusing her Other Mother with her real mother because of a desire for love and attention. Later, however, she refuses to accept that her Other Mother is her real mother because the Other Mother is wicked and evil. Because Coraline has rejected the Other Mother, she now believes that her real mother is safe and, most importantly, that her real mother still loves her. Coraline is thus still in a state of denial; her unconscious mind is attempting to protect her from a possible reality that she has no parental figure that loves her.

**CORALINE’S AGGRESSION TOWARDS HER OTHER MOTHER**

Freud states that aggression is a part of the ego instinct:

“Aggressiveness, too, was a component of the ego instincts – aggression, in other words, was at last given a formal place in the theoretical scheme, though not yet as a full-fledged, separate instinctual drive in its own right” (130).

When the ego is unable to fulfill the demands of Id, it can lead to aggression. From a psychoanalytical perspective, human behavior is derived from the instinctual drive of either “Eros” or “Thanatos”. Similar to denial, aggression can be understood as an ego instinct for self-preservation. Conflicts between “Eros” and “Thanatos” can lead to aggression and can be projected in many forms, such as physical, verbal and relational aggression, as a result of frustration from one’s unconscious mind (McNeil, 5). This statement also goes back to Freud’s suggestion that “the frustration of behavior aimed at gaining pleasure or avoiding pain led to aggression” (cited in Dennen,10). In relation to the novel, there are several events that foreground Coraline’s aggression due to her frustration towards her Other Mother. One of the events is depicted below:

“I don’t want to play with you. I want to go home and be with my real parents. I want you to let them go. To let us all go. I have no plans to love you. You can’t make me!”  

(Gaiman 87)

Coraline becomes angry when her Other Mother continues to force her to take part in family activities. Coraline’s act of yelling and screaming above exemplifies verbal aggression. Coraline has rejected her Other Mother and, when her Other Mother insists in acting as her real mother, Coraline become frustrated and becomes verbally aggressive, hoping to injure her Other Mother’s feelings. This example can thus be read as Coraline’s demands being restricted and her ego being attacked by her Other Mother, which led to aggressiveness caused by frustration.
Another example that shows Coraline’s aggressive behavior is when she plans to escape the Other World with the talking cat:

“Coraline threw the cat towards the other mother. The cat slashed the other mother’s cheek. She was flailing at it. Blood ran from the cuts on her white face – not red blood but a deep, tarry black stuff. Coraline ran for the door.”

(Gaiman 146)

Coraline tries to hurt her Other Mother by throwing the cat onto her Other Mother which results in her Other Mother being injured. This form of aggression is called physical aggression as it intends to cause physical harm and injury to other people by hitting, kicking, stabbing, or shooting them (Bushman and Huesmann 834). Coupled with the concept of “Thanatos”, or the “death drive”, this physical aggression can be further read as a form of self-preservation (Dennen, 42). In this context, Coraline’s ego instinct has been attacked by her Other Mother in terms of her wickedness and her insincere displays of love to Coraline. To escape from this unwanted situation, Coraline has a moment of realisation and decides to run away from the Other Mother for her own self-preservation. Coraline’s frustration leads to her being physical by throwing the black cat onto her Other Mother’s face. Coraline’s action is considered as positive aggression because it aims for survival and self-protection as stated by Ellis (1976):

“Positive aggression takes many forms, including self-protection, standing up in the face of negation, pushing for new possibilities, and defending against harm.” (200)

The two events highlighted in the novel depict Coraline’s aggressive behaviors in terms of verbal and physical aggression caused by frustration in her unconscious mind. Coraline’s resistance and rejection towards her Other Mother depict her disapproval of the Other Mother as her real mother and, for Coraline, no one else could replace her real mother.

CONCLUSION
To sum up, Coraline’s denial towards the Other Mother has been analysed through the Freudian notion of defense mechanism. Coraline’s being in the state of denial depicts her rejection towards reality. Other than that, Coraline’s disapproval of her Other Mother’s existence also leads to her aggression that results in her aggressive behavior. In addition, the application of Bowlby’s theory of attachment illustrates Coraline’s relationship with her real parents and her Other Parents. According to Bowlby, the mother plays the most important role and should act as the primary attachment figure to the child. Children attain security and attachment when they are in close relationship with their mothers. However, in this study, Coraline rejects the secure attachment with her Other Mother and, instead, chooses her real mother who does not play a significant role as a mother figure and as her primary attachment figure. This opposes Bowlby’s attachment theory and raises further questions as to its relevance in understanding contemporary personality developments of children. Subsequently, Coraline’s denial towards her Other Mother shows her anxiety over her position as the child of a detached family, and Coraline’s aggression towards her Other Mother) emphasises Coraline’s growth through confident decision-making in rejecting her Other Mother to find her way back to her real world. In the end, Coraline chooses “reality”
over a “fantasy” of an ideal secure attachment bonding with her parents, symbolising her growth into young adulthood.

REFERENCES


PERCEPTUAL LEARNING OF SYSTEMATIC VARIATION IN MALAYSIAN ENGLISH AMONG LIBYAN EFL LEARNERS

Dalal Alfadhil Attaher Salheen1,2, Yap Ngee Thai1*; Afida Mohamad Ali1 and Vahid Nimehchisalem1
1Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia
2Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Bani Waleed University, Libya
E-mail: dalal_salhin@yahoo.com12; ntyap@upm.edu.my1*; afida@upm.edu.my1; vahid@upm.edu.my1

ABSTRACT
With the ever-increasing population of non-native speakers (NNS) of English around the world, encountering foreign-accented speech (FAS) has become frequent and inevitable, even in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning context as more and more non-native English teachers are trained and recruited around the world. This study set out to examine the nature and extent of Libyan EFL learners’ perception of Malaysian-accented English as Malaysia is one of the frequent postgraduate study destinations for Libyans. The study also attempts to examine the effect of exposure to Malaysian accented English in a speech intelligibility task. Libyan EFL learners received training with English sentences produced by fifteen Malaysian English speakers for five consecutive days. Sixteen undergraduate students recruited from a public university in Libya completed two intelligibility tasks; one as the pretest and the other as the post-test. The task involved listening to a list of sentences presented to them only once on the computer. While listening to the sentences, participants had to complete a cloze task with a total of 50 missing keywords. On average, the participants performed better in the post-test, as compared with the pretest. The results indicated a statistically significant difference between the pretest and the post-test, and this indicates that Libyan EFL learners could attain better speaker-independent adaptation to the Malaysian English variety when exposed to multiple speakers of the given accent during training. It is, therefore, concluded that perceptual training had a significant effect on the participants’ achievement in speech perceptual learning.

Keywords: Accented Speech, Libyan EFL Learners, Malaysian English, Perceptual Learning, Speech Intelligibility

INTRODUCTION
In the modern globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively with individuals from different language backgrounds and different cultures is considered an asset (Kitapci, 2016). With more than half of the world’s population becoming at least bilingual, and in some cases multilingual, there is a higher possibility of interaction between non-native speakers of English with other non-native speakers of English. In such NNS-NNS interactions, English is used by many people from a diverse range of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds (Grosjean, 2010). Hence, as argued by Mahboob (2014), it may be important to examine the different varieties of foreign-accented English which have evolved as with each new variation of accent, new potential obstructions to perception may occur and may require further investigation (Jaber & Hussein, 2011). It may also become necessary for English language
learners (ELLs) to be familiar with a wider range of accent variation (Cristia et al., 2012). With the rapid growth in the population of ELLs around the world, being able to comprehend and communicate with speakers exhibiting FAS has also become a milestone for efficient and successful international communication. Therefore, the need to identify best teaching methods to facilitate accent intelligibility will become clear when situated in the global reality of cross national pedagogy and the ever growing interest in business, commerce and entertainment, largely involving the use of world Engishes.

However, past studies have shown that FAS is not perceived in the same way as the speech of English native speakers (e.g., Baese-Berk, Bradlow, & Wright, 2013; Bradlow & Bent, 2003; Clopper & Pisoni, 2004). Numerous factors may influence the speech perception process including insufficient capability in terms of receptive vocabulary (Ingvalson, Lansford, Federova, & Fernandez, 2017; Janse & Adnak, 2012; McAuliffe, Gibson, Kerr, Anderson & LaShell, 2013), working memory capacity (Gordon-Salant & Cole, 2016; Ingvalson et al., 2017) and the degree of intelligibility (Van Wijngaarden, 2001). A challenging aspect of FAS perception is that each speaker descends from a different language background, and this directly affects the production of the English speech sounds and it also affects listeners’ sensitivity to the segmental properties of speech that differ from one accent to another (Sidaras, Alexander & Nygaard, 2009).

Intelligibility is also associated with accentedness, and these two aspects of speech have been widely acknowledged to be key issues in accent perception (Beinhoff, 2014). Speech intelligibility is found to be graded poorly if the speaker is a non-native speaker for a given language, and speech intelligibility greatly contributes to speech communication (Van Wijngaarden, 2001). Scholars have also affirmed the significance of intelligibility as a vital component in international communication (Rooy, 2009); the aspect of speech that is found to be improved with practice (Davis, Johnsrude, Hervais-Adelman, Taylor & McGettigan, 2005). Considering these facts, non-native English listeners may encounter problems perceiving speech of other non-native English speakers (Williams & Escudero, 2014). As a result, scholars have been studying accent perception and the effects of training to improve accent perception.

Studies have shown that native speakers could improve their perception of FAS after a short-term exposure to accented speech. Training with accented speech has shown positive result on accent perception, whereby native speakers have become more accurate in perceiving FAS while participating in foreign-accented training (Bradlow & Bent, 2003; Clarke, 2000; Weil, 2001). In a study by Clarke and Garrett (2004), native English speakers were exposed to English sentences produced by either a native or a Spanish speaker of English in a probe word matching task. The results revealed that the English native listeners were primarily better in responding to the speech of their fellow’s ‘native speech’ rather than to the Spanish-accented speech, but later on they showed competence with the Spanish accented speech after a brief exposure.

There are different kinds of tasks that have been used to measure speech intelligibility. Transcription accuracy is among those tasks that have been set to examine the effect of perceptual learning before and after training (Greenspan, Nusbaum & Pisoni, 1988). Greenspan et al. (1988) revealed that subjects who received training improved significantly by comparing the mean scores of the pre-training and post-training tasks. Similar results were also confirmed by more recent studies, pointing out that there is a good effect of exposure, irrespective of the speaker’s baseline intelligibility level. However, the amount of exposure
that is required to accomplish significant improvement is based on various features such as the strength of the accent, in addition to the listener’s experience with a given accent (Bradlow & Bent, 2008; Witteman, Weber & McQueen, 2013).

Previous studies demonstrated generalization of FAS adaptation to novel speakers within an accent after exposure to numerous speakers of that accent (e.g., Bradlow & Bent, 2008; Sidaras et al., 2009). Also, scholars have revealed generalization of foreign-accent adaptation amongst speakers from multiple language backgrounds (Baese-Berk et al., 2013). Studies have found evidence of improvement in recognizing FAS for a novel speaker within an accent (Bradlow & Bent, 2008; Sidaras et al., 2009), and a novel speaker from a novel accent (Baese-Berk et al., 2013). The training that was conducted in such studies (Bradlow & Bent, 2003, 2008; Baese-Berk et al., 2013) is assumed to help learners improve intelligibility of FAS so as to achieve some level of efficiency in communication in terms of intelligibility and communicability (Al-Ahdal, Al-Hattami, Al-Awaid & Al-Mashaqba, 2015). However, these generalisations may not be accurate for all English users unless independent attempts are made to test different users. Perceiving speech from non-native English speakers can be challenging and uncertain; there are many individual differences that can interfere and mar any communication attempts. Some individuals are able to accomplish native-like performance in both production and perception tasks, while others struggle in both of them (Hanulíková, Dediu, Fang, Bašnaková, & Huettig, 2012; Kempe, Thoresen, Kirk, Schaeffler, & Brooks, 2012; Perrachione, Lee, Ha, & Wong, 2011).

Arabic speakers can be considered a special case in perceiving other accents as they belong to the expanding circle (Kachru, 1985; an EFL area where competency accomplishment in English is always a challenge. Generalization about accent perception is only valid if non-native English users within the outer and expanding circles of English are also investigated; however, there are very few studies that have looked in this direction (e.g., Bello, 2019). As in the case of Libyan EFL learners who are within the expanding circle, to the best of our knowledge, there are no published studies on this issue. Therefore, this research intends to examine how Libyan EFL learners perceive a non-native variety of English, the Malaysian English variety of English.

Most previous studies account for accent perception within the framework of the Exemplar Theory, which was originally proposed by Hintzman (1986) and Nosofsky (1986). The principal idea of the stated theory works on how repeated exposure facilitates perception. Repeated exposure is related to notions of frequency, recency, and similarity (Jäkel, Schölkopf & Wichmann, 2008). Therefore, the essential notion under the Exemplar Theory is the memory traces of specific tokens that may lead to further refinements to the mental representations of the specific speech sounds (Gahl & Yu, 2006). ELLs would build exemplars out of any specific linguistic experiences and later on compare these exemplars with the new linguistic ones (Bod & Cochran, 2007). Consequently, over an extended period of exposure, they would perceive more accurately. Guided by the Exemplar theory, this study postulates that Libyan EFL learners would perform better in their post-test, when they are trained with the Malaysian English variety. To be specific, two research questions form the core of this study:

1. To what extent is the variety of English spoken in Malaysia perceptually intelligible to Libyan learners?
2. Is there any significant difference in intelligibility scores of the participants before and after training?

**METHOD**

**Design**
The study conducted was a within-subject experimental study which examined gains in terms of speech intelligibility following a five-day treatment session involving exposure to speakers of Malaysian English. Performance of the Libyan ELF learners in a speech intelligibility task was examined using a pretest and a post-test. The dependent variable was the scores in the speech intelligibility task. These scores were computed in percentages that were later interpreted according to the speech intelligibility scale by Bassiouny et al. (2013). The scale was adopted as it allowed the researchers to convert the percentage scores into a categorical variable which is more expressive for non-specialists. The speech intelligibility scale has five categories: score of 0-28% indicates ‘unintelligible’ perception, scores of 29-49%, ‘poor’, 50-65%, ‘fair’, 66-83%, ‘good’, and scores of 84-100%, ‘excellent’ perception.

**Participants**
Different participants were recruited as either speakers or listeners. Malaysian speakers of English were involved to serve as ‘speakers’, and Libyan EFL learners were recruited to serve as ‘listeners’. The following two sections give more clarification about these different sets of participants and how they were involved in the experiment.

**Speakers**
Twenty-one Malaysian speakers were recorded: fifteen for the training materials (three speakers for each training set) and six for the test materials (three for the pretest and three for the post-test). There were certain criteria that were considered before the involvement of the speakers:

1. English was the speakers’ second language;
2. They had never studied abroad before;
3. The speakers were undergraduate students;
4. They were between 21 and 24 years old; and
5. Speakers reported not having any speaking impairments.

However, a couple of speakers were excluded for having a special speech habit because of some problems with their teeth that affected the production of some speech sounds. In addition, a female speaker was also excluded as she spoke a regional Malay variety which made her accent very different from the other Malaysian speakers.

**Listeners**
For this experiment, listeners were recruited from 16 Libyan EFL learners. All of them were college students and were enrolled in the English department of a public university in Libya. The age of the listeners ranged from 17 to 24 years. The Oxford Placement Text (2001) was administered to identify students who were from the intermediate level. Students from lower levels of proficiency were excluded as their performance could be influenced by their word knowledge needed in the task. Out of those who were eligible to be involved in the sample,
only 16 were randomly chosen based on their performance in the Oxford placement test (Oxford Placement Test, 2001). None of the selected listeners reported having any hearing impairment. Their participation was voluntary and they were given a small token of appreciation.

**Material**

As the target population of this study was EFL learners, only real words were used in the speech intelligibility task as they are more representative and reflective of the learners’ knowledge and their problems (Almbark, 2012; Strange & Shafer 2008). The stimuli used in this study were taken from the Bench-Kowal-Bamford (BKB) sentences lists (Bench, Kowal & Bamford, 1979). These sentences were originally developed for testing British children, but they were also used with American children (Bamford & Wilson, 1979). Later on, the Northwestern University Foreign Accented English Speech research group started to use the lists with adults and created their own database that is known as NUFAESD (Baese-Berk et al., 2013). The reasons behind choosing these sentences were the high familiarity of the words to non-natives and that they are syntactically simple (Bent & Bradlow, 2003). Scholars have been using these lists to conduct similar studies on speech intelligibility; none so far has reported any problems with the use of the instrument (e.g., Bent & Bradlow, 2003; Bradlow & Bent, 2008; Baese-Berk et al., 2013). To ensure content validity, the words tested in the instrument were verified by two instructors in Libya as words that were familiar to Libyan EFL students.

There were 21 lists; each list was comprised of 16 simple declarative sentences. Each sentence had three or four keywords. The total number of keywords for the whole list was 50. Out of the 21 lists included in the BKB, 7 lists within the range of 1 to 7 were used for the purpose of this study. Five of them were used as the training materials (for the 5-day treatment sessions), and two were used as the testing materials (Pretest and Post-test). Following are four sample sentences taken from one list (Sentence list 4):

**Sample of the stimulus (BKB sentence list 4)**

1. The **wife helped** her **husband**.
2. The **music** was **very loud**.
3. The **old man worries**.
4. A **boy ran down** the **path**.

Twenty-one Malaysian speakers of English, 12 males and 9 females, recorded the sentences for the lists used in the tests as well as the training materials. At any one time, the listeners would listen to three new speakers for the test as well as the training sessions. The speech intelligibility task involved listeners in listening to the tape recorded sentences to transcribe the missing words on the answer sheet that was provided. Therefore, the speakers can all be considered as novel speakers.

**Research Procedures**

Listeners recruited for the study had to take a pretest, which was intended to determine the baseline for their performance in the speech intelligibility task. As the sentences were recorded by Malaysian speakers of English, the test scores would indicate their level of performance in term of perception of Malaysian accented English.
Then, the listeners were involved in a five-day training where each session took only 20 minutes and the total training session was only 100 minutes. The training sessions involved giving the students practice using the same speech intelligibility task, but they listened to a different list and a different set of speakers for each list. They listened to the sentences that were recorded by three different speakers in one list for each session. The answers were discussed and they could ask questions to clarify their answers and try to figure out how the sounds were produced. The same procedure was repeated for five days. On the sixth day, the listeners completed the post-test. For the pretest and the post-test, no feedback was provided.

RESULTS
Prior to the application of inferential analysis namely the paired sample $t$-test, the data were tested for normality. According to the skewness and kurtosis values which ranged between ±1, the data were normally distributed (George & Mallery, 2003).

Perceptual intelligibility level of Malaysian English among Libyan EFL learners
The pretest was given to the Libyan EFL learners to determine how intelligible Malaysian English was for them before training. Their intelligibility levels were divided into five categories of ‘unintelligible’, ‘poor’, ‘fair’, ‘good’, and ‘excellent’. Table 1 illustrates the frequency of occurrence of intelligibility scores within the intelligibility scale. Based on the results, none of the learners fell into the ‘excellent’ or the ‘good’ levels of intelligibility. There were only 3 learners who found the Malaysian English variety as ‘fairly’ intelligible. Similarly, 3 other learners performed poorly in the task, rendering Malaysian English speech as ‘unintelligible’. However, the majority of them ($n=10$) fell in the ‘poor’ level of intelligibility. That is to say, on average the majority of Libyan EFL learners find it difficult to perceive the Malaysian English variety due to its low degree of intelligibility.

Table 1: Intelligibility levels of Malaysian English variety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unintelligible</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 (18.75%)</td>
<td>10 (62.5%)</td>
<td>3 (18.75%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Key: (0-28%) = Unintelligible, (29-49%) = Poor, (50-65%) = Fair, (66-82%) = Good, (83-100%) = Excellent

Effect of training on intelligibility
The Libyan EFL learners’ speech perception was measured before and after the training sessions. Figure 1 shows the changes to their perceived intelligibility levels.
As the participants' scores were in the range of *unintelligible* to *fair* in terms of speech intelligibility before the treatment, their performance moved up to the range of *fair* to *excellent* levels after the treatment. While the majority (n=10) were at a *poor* level on the pretest, most of them (n=11) reached the *good* level of intelligibility on the posttest. After the training, none of the participants was reported to be at the *unintelligible* or the *poor* level. This means that after the 5-day training, the participants were no longer marred in comprehending the sentences presented. Further, paired sample *t*-test was run in order to determine whether the difference in intelligibility mean scores is statistically significant before and after the training. Table 2 presents the results of the test.

As Table 2 shows, the participants performed better in the post-test (\(M = 34.5, SD = 5.6\)), as compared with the pretest (\(M = 19.5, SD = 5.9\)). Comparing the results of the pretest and the post-test, the paired samples *t*-test results showed that the difference was statistically significant, \(t (15) = -13.64, p = .000, 95\% \ CI [-17.3, -12.6]\). The results show that Libyan EFL learners could attain speaker-independent adaptation to Malaysian-accented English when exposed to multiple speakers of the given accent during training.
DISCUSSION
The first objective was to determine the baseline level of Libyan EFL learners’ perception of Malaysian English, while the second was to examine the effect of training on perceiving the given variety of English. The performance in the speech intelligibility task was taken as an indicator of how well that particular English variety is intelligible to the listeners recruited for this study.

The findings showed that perceptual accuracy of Libyan EFL learners improved to higher levels after undergoing the training sessions. There was notable improvement in the ability of the learners to perceive the novel speakers of the given English variety. It was rather remarkable that the learners could achieve this level of performance after having undergone a fairly brief training session. Each training session took only 20 minutes and the total training session over the five days was only 100 minutes. Their improvement was due to exposure to the investigated accent, the Malaysian English. These findings are in conformity with postulations of the Exemplar Theory, which states that repeated exposure facilitates perception. That is, the more frequently, recently, and similarly the speech is with a specific accent, the more accurate it is perceived (Jäkel et al., 2008). Therefore, learners could trace the specific tokens of the different speakers, and use them to improve their perception of the speech when presented with novel speakers of the Malaysian English variety.

A large and growing body of literature has investigated perceptual learning in speech; it has empirically been found that perceptual learning can be improved through training. However, the majority of the works addressing perceptual learning have been done utilizing the framework of native speech. That is, native speakers were subjected either as the speakers or as the listeners for such experimental studies. Much awareness has been increasingly raised by applied linguists regarding the diversity of English and its ever-changing usage among speakers who come from different first language backgrounds (Sung, 2016). Libyan EFL learners were involved in this study as there is no research up to date targeting this population in such theoretical studies.

The effect of training in facilitating perceptual learning was initially found in learning speech produced by native speakers of English (e.g., Davis et al., 2005; Dupoux & Green, 1997; Greenspan et al., 1988; Nygaard & Pisoni, 1998). In these studies, exposure to unfamiliar speech has been found to improve speech perception although the speech was difficult to be recognized at the beginning of the experiment. In a study that was conducted by Davis et al. (2005), the participants showed improvement in recalling speech after exposure to 5 or 10 compressed sentences. Similar findings indicated the same notion about training/exposure, where Greenspan et al. (1988) reported that learners improved their transcription accuracy after being involved in perceptual training. Furthermore, the findings of Dupoux and Green (1997) also support previous findings, indicating clear improvement in transcription accuracy and speech intelligibility as a result of perceptual training. These research findings are further confirmed by the results of the current study; exposure facilitates speech perception as proposed in the Exemplar Theory.

In the case of accented speech, there is evidence supporting the possibility of learners learning different properties of accented speech from exposure to perceptual training of a specific accent. For example, the findings of Bradlow and Bent (2008) revealed that learners adapted to the given accent (Chinese-accent) which differed from their native accent due to the exposure to multiple speakers of that given accent. Also, different studies have demonstrated similar results (Baese-Berk et al., 2013; Sidaras et al., 2009). In both studies, a
short-term exposure to the target accent during the training sessions proved to facilitate speech perception; learners adapted to accented speech, absorbing the general properties of the speech tokens used in the training and they were then able to generalize their learning to novel tokens produced by novel speakers.

CONCLUSION

Today, the majority of English users are non-native speakers; therefore, studies like the present one are very important. English is now considered as the lingua franca of an international community giving rise to its status as English as lingua franca (ELF), which means English now, does not belong to any specific nation. However, with this ELF context, English is spoken by all English speakers around the world representing a great deal of linguistic variation. This diversity does not imply or lead to the conclusion that English would be an incomprehensible language among ELF speakers. Instead, such diversity can be overcome by promoting perceptual training in order to promote intelligibility among ELF speakers.

From the findings of the present study, it is therefore, concluded that Libyan EFL learners who are naïve to the English variety spoken in Malaysia do encounter difficulty in perceiving and comprehending the speech of Malaysian speakers of English. However, systematic exposure to perceptual training played a significant role in alleviating their difficulty in perceiving the Malaysian accented English, and the intelligibility thereof. Many questions about perceptual learning, however, remain to be explored. In fact, this study has a potential limitation; no a control group was involved. Even though, the effect that was found clearly counts for the training conducted, incorporating a control group is recommended in order to see how much the training was critical. Hence, future directions of study could include testing the intelligibility of other non-native English varieties with Libyan EFL learners and incorporating a control group, and also testing the intelligibility of Malaysian English with Libyan EFL learners, but incorporating a control group.

Finally, successful communication is the outcome of perceiving speech that must be at least fairly intelligible (Carney, 1986; Kent, Weismer, Kent, & Rosenbeck, 1989). Communication among different groups is important, and much more vital for foreigners who are becoming part of a specific society, the Malaysian society in this case. As this study presents, the effects of accented speech on target speech recognition can be modulated by language experience and by training experience. Therefore, it provides a significant contribution to the existing literature, which is sparse, especially in the scope of NNS-NNS interactions. The current study also has an immediate relevance to Libyan ESL learners as Malaysia is considered as one of the most popular study destinations for many Libyans, and as the results of the current study have shown, it may be advisable to have accent perception training incorporated into English preparatory classes before these students depart for Malaysia.

REFERENCES


POLITENESS IN LIBYAN POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS’ E-MAIL REQUESTS TOWARDS LECTURERS

Ergaya Alsout¹ and Mohsen Khedri²*

¹Department of English Language & Translation Studies, Sebha University, Libya
²Faculty of Language Studies, Sohar University, Sohar, Oman

E-mail: rogyalibya@gmail.com¹; mkhedri@su.edu.om²

ABSTRACT
This study aimed to explore the politeness phenomenon in Libyan postgraduate students’ e-mail requests to their lecturers based at four top-ranked Malaysian universities: University of Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, and Universiti Utara Malaysia. The data consisted of 109 e-mail requests to faculty written by 20 Libyan postgraduate students who were studying in Malaysia. The data was analyzed by adopting Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness theory which is considered as a plausible analytical framework to identify politeness strategies. The research method and design used in this study was essentially qualitative approach. The findings of the current study revealed that the Libyan postgraduate students applied mostly negative politeness strategies more than the other politeness strategies. This study argues that these e-mails which featuring a high level of directness, displayed a fundamental inadequacy in the use of politeness strategies, thus creating potentially a higher chance of pragmatic failure.

Keywords: E-mails, lecturers, Libyan postgraduate students, politeness strategies, requests

INTRODUCTION
In this study, the construct investigated is the e-mail of request. Requesting speech acts are one of the students’ main communicative purposes for using e-mail as they go about their academic business, to obtain feedback, to make appointments, to ask for extensions of time for assignment submission, etc. A request can be defined as a direct speech act in which the speaker asks the hearer to perform an action or provide information that is for the limited interest of the speaker (Trosborg, 1995). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), a request is one of the most face-threatening forms of speech act, especially in a student-lecturer context. This is because students who are in a low-power position are forced to make impositions on lecturers who have the power of control (Brown & Gilman, 1960). An ill-formed request can threaten and impose more heavily on a lecturer’s face. If the speech is produced with inappropriate linguistic structures and modifications, it might cause pragmatic failure between students and lecturers. As a result, there is usually a need for requesters to mitigate their message. To mitigate successfully, students have to use different politeness strategies types (positive, negative, bald on-record, and off-record) to reach their communicative goal.

Politeness plays an important role in interactions between interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds. However, misunderstanding and deviation from social conventions in its use can be expected. In student-lecturer communication, politeness is an important issue, particularly in the context in which the current research is framed, because the interlocutors come from different cultures in situations where the English language is used as the lingua franca. For this reason, students need to be aware of politeness norms so that they can
compose appropriate e-mails. Students should know how to compose an appropriate e-mail in order to accomplish their goals and also to be aware of the impact of their e-mails upon their lecturers. To gain a better understanding of potential issues and the possibility of pragmatic failure in the student-lecturer exchanges, the current study set to identify Libyan students’ politeness strategies used in their e-mail requests to faculty. In addition, the participants of this study are students who can be expected to perform a high frequency of requests than other speech acts such as thanking, complaining, or apologizing. This frequency of use warrants a study of such discourse as it impinges on communication efficacy.

Lecturers have been known to complain about students, both native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) of English, sending inconsiderate requests, using impolite style, inappropriate salutations, unsuitable level of formality, misspelt words, inaccurate grammar and insufficient explanations on the use of abbreviations (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007). As such, students have to know the appropriate way to compose e-mail requests to their lecturers and be mindful of how they affect the lecturers’ impression of them (Bolkan & Holmgren, 2012; Danielewicz, 2013; Jessmer & Anderson, 2001). Foreign students need to adjust to their new social and cultural surroundings, and effective communication entails pragmatic awareness of appropriate speech practices, especially when interacting with lecturers, who are important gatekeepers of the students’ request for academic success. Thus, it is imperative for students to show deference and respect towards lecturers through appropriate linguistic behavior, because of their dependent status in an academic setting.

An extensive search of the literature reveals that some gaps still persist regarding the speech act of requesting. Firstly, studies on how NNS students express their requests using e-mails as a medium of communication from a pragmatic perspective are scarce. Secondly, despite a rich literature on politeness, research on student-lecturer communication is still in its infancy (Al-Shalawi, 2001; Najeeb et al., 2012; Chejnova, 2014; Eshghinejad & Moini, 2016). Finally, while there are some studies studied on e-mail and the politeness of NNS students in academic settings, it needs to be reiterated that there have been no studies on the politeness of English e-mail requests from Libyan postgraduate students. This suggests a research gap which obviously needs to be bridged and obtained results will have implications for other cultural groups.

Thus, the current study sought to fill in a gap in literature regarding the study of speech acts of politeness. The study adopted a predominantly pragmatic perspective drawing upon Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory as the underlying framework to identify politeness strategies used in e-mail requests of Libyan postgraduate students studying in Malaysian universities. To be specific, this study endeavored to answer the following main research question:

1. How do Libyan postgraduate students deploy politeness strategies in their e-mail requests to faculty?

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Investigators understand that politeness strategies are used differently by people from different cultures (Al-Shalawi, 2001; Chejnova, 2014; Najeeb, et al., 2012). Linguistic realizations differ from culture to culture and are used differently in different societies (Sifianou, 1992). For example, cultures such as that of Arabs, whose politeness structured by two concepts: religious faith and social conventions (Samarah, 2015), operate using negative
and positive politeness strategies as a continuum rather than a dichotomous concept (Al-Shalawi, 2001; Najeeb et al., 2012). Similarly, Greek students preferred a range of negative and positive politeness strategies (Chejnova, 2014).

Al-Shalawi (2001) conducted a study attempted to explore the politeness strategies utilized to reduce the Saudi ESL students’ English disagreements within e-mails. The study also aimed to assess the usefulness of the framework by Brown and Levinson (1987). The data were natural e-mails collected for a period of three months. The findings revealed that strategies of positive and negative politeness were both used. The research proposed that these two strategies should be treated not as dichotomous concepts, but as a continuum between positive and negative strategies.

A study conducted by Bulut and Rababah (2007) investigated authentic e-mails written in English by Saudi females to their male professors. A total of 99 e-mails with different speech act performances were sent by 9 female Arab Saudi students to their NS speaker teachers. The results revealed that positive politeness was the preferred strategy, which was not suitable in the status-unequal context and could lead to pragmatic failure.

Another study by Najeeb et al. (2012) analyzed Arab postgraduate students’ politeness strategies in their e-mails while they were pursuing higher education in Malaysia. The study revealed that direct strategies were preferred. Eighteen e-mails were sent by six Arab student participants from three different universities. The results showed that Arab students used various politeness strategies, including both negative and positive strategies. In particular, they tended to be more direct in making requests.

In Chejnova’s (2014) study of e-mails written by Czech students, the researcher explored verbal politeness makers in the forms of address and the frequency of internal or external modifications. Choice of politeness behaviors, following Brown and Levinson (1987), was the primary concern. The data (e-mail messages sent to the author) were collected from students who were majoring in the Czech language or teaching at primary level schools. A total of 260 e-mails was analyzed. Regarding the dimension of directness level, the CCSARP framework was adapted from the works of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), and Biesenbach-Lucas (2007). Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) categorization of internal and external mitigations was used to analyze the data. In addition, the researcher drew upon the work of Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) and Schauer (2009). Similar to findings from previous studies, Chejnova found that lexical modifiers were used less frequently. Moreover, syntactic modification was employed as a negative strategy to minimize the imposition of the request.

A recent study on politeness SMS messages is Eshghinejad and Moini’s (2016) study. They studied the politeness strategies employed by female and male message senders to determine if any difference exists between these two groups of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners when transmitting SMS messages to their superiors, considering that the social distance and the asymmetric power relationship existed among interlocutors. A dataset of 300 L2 (i.e. English) and L1 (i.e. Persian) letters was gathered. From data analysis, the study showed that there was no significant difference between male and female groups in the use of positive and negative politeness.

These studies have revealed similarities in using negative and positive politeness strategies with the implication that culture-specific differences might present challenges for students faced with interacting in cross-cultural communications. Among the different politeness strategies, only on-record politeness (positive and negative strategies) was studied.
Thus, the present study extended the analysis to incorporate four strategies of politeness (negative, positive, bald on-record, and off-record) based on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework. Additionally, most of the studies were conducted in the context of NS and NNS speakers of English. However, this study investigated politeness strategies where both students and lecturers were NNS speakers of English.

**METHODS**

**Subjects and E-mail Data**
The participants in this study were 20 Libyan postgraduate students (9 males and 11 females), who were studying in the four internationally recognized universities in Malaysia, which are Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kembangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), and Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM); 5 students per university. The participants pursued various fields of studies other than linguistics and the reason for selecting these students was due to the fact that linguistic students ought to have pragmatic awareness regarding politeness. The participants were self-selected samples; that is, they volunteered to take part in this research.

The e-mail corpus consisted of 109 English e-mails addressed to lecturers during the years 2015 to 2016. Typo errors, grammatical mistakes, contracted forms, misspelling, and alike found in the e-mails were not changed and the focus of analysis was on original message contents.

**Data Collection**
The procedure used for collecting the data for analysis is similar to that used by Chen (2001). Libyan postgraduate students attending courses in the four selected Malaysian universities were requested to forward up to 10 of their e-mail requests that they had previously written and sent to their lecturers. In the early stages of the study, the researchers relied on a Facebook group called ‘Academic Affairs of the Libyan Students’ to communicate with the students. Then, students who were willing to participate contacted the researchers and signed a consent form assuring them that all identifying features and particulars would be kept strictly confidential. Prior to forwarding their e-mails, the students were instructed to send the researchers only English e-mails in which they requested their lectures either for an action, or information, or the like. Upon receiving e-mails, they were thoroughly checked to determine whether the content has at least one request head act and contains no confidential information. Head act is “the minimal unit which can realize a request” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 275). Overall, a total of 160 e-mails contributed by 20 Libyan postgraduate students (4 to 12 emails per student) were shortlisted and out of which 109, who met the needs of the study, were finally considered for analysis. As for data coding, all selected e-mails were anonymized, and a generic code such as, S1 UKM e-mail 1, S2 UUM e-mail 6, was assigned to identify the writer and the university where it originated.

**Analytical Framework**
This study adopted Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory to analyze pragmatic choices and how deference and solidarity are expressed. The theory emphasizes the concepts of face, face-threatening act, and modifications. According to the theory, politeness strategies are performed on-record with redressive action (i.e. positive and negative politeness) and
without redressive action (i.e. bald on-record politeness). What follows presents a detailed description of each politeness strategy.

To go on-record without redressive action is a bald-on-record strategy that is used to perform a very direct speech act performance; it does not give much attention to social niceties and it is often realized through the use of imperatives. It is used often in emergencies or when there is a small threat to the hearer’s face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It can also be used when the speaker has control over the hearer, for example in a message from lecturer to student not from student to lecturer.

Redressive action using either a positive or a negative strategy are the second and third types of politeness strategy that can be used, respectively. Positive politeness strategies are utilized between interlocutors to minimize distance, and this can be done by being friendly or by maintaining a good relationship. There are fifteen sub-strategies listed under this strategy, which are: “notice, attend to hearer (H) (his interests, wants, needs, goods), exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H), intensify interest in H, use in-group identity markers, seek agreement, avoid disagreement, presuppose/raise/ assert common ground, joke, assert or presuppose S’s knowledge of and concern for H’s wants, offer, promise, be optimistic, include both S and H in the activity, give (or ask for) reasons, assume or assert reciprocity (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation) and give gifts to H” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 102).

Negative politeness strategies are used to preserve the face of the hearers. This is the most elaborated and conventionalized form of strategy use (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Indirectness is mainly associated with negative politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson list ten sub-strategies of negative strategy: “be conventionally indirect, question, hedge, be pessimistic, minimize the imposition, give deference, apologize, impersonalize S and H, state the FTA as a general rule, nominalize, and go on-record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H” (1987, p. 131).

The off-record strategy involves the indirect use of language to remove the speaker from the possibility that the hearer will feel imposed upon. Brown and Levinson (1987) express fifteen off-record politeness strategies: “give hints, give association clues, presuppose, understate, overstate, use tautologies, use contradictions, be ironic, use metaphor, use rhetorical questions, be ambiguous, be vague, overgeneralize, displace and be incomplete by use ellipsis.” (p. 214).

**E-mail Analysis Procedure**

This study took mixed methods approach to explore the politeness phenomenon in the context of e-mail requests. To analyze the data qualitatively, content analysis (Carley, 1993) was run on the data to identify politeness strategies appeared in the e-mail requests of the selected Libyan postgraduate students. For example, in light of the positive politeness strategy, any feature that signalled the reason for sending the e-mail (i.e. because, since, as) was considered as ‘giving reason’ sub-strategy. ‘Being optimistic’ is another positive politeness sub-strategy that was identified when, for instance, the verb ‘hope’ was used in the students’ e-mail messages with the aim of getting help from their lecturer. Another illustration, which relates to negative politeness strategy, is ‘if-clauses’, which acted as hedges to minimize the imposition of the act. As for the quantitative phase of the study, frequencies of occurrence of the identified strategies were counted and tabulated in an Excel sheet.
To identify the politeness strategies, the head act of requests performed by the students was considered. As mentioned earlier, head act is the nucleus of the speech act, usually the most explicit utterance in the email, based on which the addressee understands the meaning of a message. Each head act was analyzed on a directness level to find out the request strategies based on the CCSARP framework (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011). The head act can be performed alone or with supportive elements called modifications to mitigate it. Modifications are various linguistic elements (i.e., syntactic, lexical and phrasal devices), which play a role to soften the head act or the context where the head act is embedded (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). These head acts and modifications were then identified for the different politeness strategies. It should be noted that request strategies and modifications were beyond the scope of the present study and left for further studies.

In this study, to reduce the risk of randomness and demarcate the precision of the analytical approaches taken at an adequately high level of consensus, a consistent method was very central to data analysis. Therefore, analysis was improved through a channel of inter-coder agreement albeit the data was mainly analyzed by the researchers themselves. The emails were first coded sentence by sentence based on directness level and the politeness strategies and a sheet of analysis was appended to each one for systematic analysis. Two experts in the field were then recruited to act as coders: one was an applied linguist at Kafkas University, Turkey, and the other was a Ph.D. graduate, who had done her dissertation on politeness in academic lectures. They received a small sub-set of the data (20 emails; 10 per each) with a coding manual containing descriptions and instances. Once the corpus was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, the coders were contacted and together with the researchers went through the texts to identify any conflicting results. Despite minor inconsistencies, which were only in relation to the identification of politeness strategies and were even ironed out in discussion, the inter-coder agreement measured by Cohen’s kappa obtained value signalled a high reliability index of .87.

**FINDINGS**

**Politeness Strategies Used in the E-mail Requests**

The analysis and findings presented here was guided primarily by politeness strategy model of Brown and Levinson (1987) to give insights into the occurrence of the different types of strategy used in the e-mail requests. It is noteworthy that analysis of the 109 e-mails identified a total of 137 politeness strategies (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence per e-mail</th>
<th>Number of e-mails</th>
<th>Politeness strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the analysis of on-record politeness strategies (bald on-record without redressive action, and positive and negative on-record with redressive action) and off-record strategies, the data showed that 113 number of on-record politeness strategies performed the request in a direct and unambiguous way either with or without redressive action. This gives (82.48%) of occurrence in the data. However, only 24 requests were made least indirectly (off-record strategy). This represents (17.52%) of the occurrence in the data. The next sub-
sections report on the use analysis of sub-strategies for each of the four politeness strategies (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politeness strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-record</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>82.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-record</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Negative Politeness Sub-strategies**

The total number of negative politeness appeared in the dataset was 70 cases. This strategy, representing the most prevalent politeness strategies, used to express requests made by the Libyan postgraduate students. Negative politeness was to be expected in e-mails from students to lecturers because these negative politeness sub-strategies were concerned with minimizing the particular force of the FTA. Table 3 below illustrates the negative politeness sub-strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question and hedge</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be conventionally indirect</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go on-record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting the Hearer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimize imposition</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of negative politeness strategy</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis showed that 4 negative politeness sub-strategies were used repeatedly in the e-mails of the Libyan postgraduate students: that is, they were conventionally indirect, used questions and hedges, go on-record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting the Hearer, and minimizing the imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987). What follows presents a detailed description of the negative politeness sub-strategies that appeared in e-mail requests in the present data.

**Question and hedge**

This sub-strategy was used to convey uncertainty as to whether the hearer was able to perform the action requested (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 136). In this sub-strategy, the students used mitigating expressions within the students-lecturers interactional constraints to lessen the impact of the request. The questions and hedges accounted for the highest use of on-record politeness strategies (46 occurrences), which represented questions (30 cases) and hedges (16 cases) of all requests identified in the data. Questions which asserted an assumption that the lecturer was unlikely to perform the act or to show uncertainty on the part of the student about the lecturer’s ability to perform the act, made up this category of negative politeness sub-strategies. Such questions appeared to be mitigated internally with modals like (have, can). The example below illustrates this sub-strategy:

Good evening Prof. (name)
It's (student’s name)
This is a new topic (project title)
Is it good enough to be a topic for proposal. If not, can I meet you tomorrow in your office? What time?
Thank you

(S17, UUM, e-mail 90)

The student, in the example provided above, used the model can to carry additional connotation regarding his request for appointment because it is the lecturer that can decide on his request and set the appointment time.

Hedges were used in the form of modals, if clauses, and performatives in phrases like if you don’t mind. Below is a text example:

Dear: Dr
My name is (student’s name), and I am a student in faculty of science, UM, in department of chemistry. I am interested to do my project in Environment area. I hope you don't mind my getting in touch and would very much appreciate it if I could meet you in person, or if convenient talk on the phone. I understand you are a very busy person so I'd appreciate any time you could give me.
With many thanks

(S15, UM, e-mail 78)

In the above sample, the student hedged the illocutionary force using expressions like I hope you don't mind and if I could meet you. By doing so, the student presupposed that she had the permission of the lecturer to do the act (i.e., to register her project with this lecturer). These two sub-strategies were the standard way to perform an on-record polite request (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that hedges and questions can enable “cooperation, informativeness, truthfulness, relevance and clarity which on many occasions need to be softened for reason of face” (p. 146).

Be conventionally indirect
The speaker is faced with an opposing tension between “the desire to give H an ‘out’ by being indirect, and the desire to go on-record” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 132). This means that the student performed the request by using certain conventional linguistic expressions that are unambiguous even if they are not be based on the literal meaning of the expression (Ruzickova, 2007).

Being conventionally indirect is an expected sub-strategy in student-lecturer communication since it acknowledges the imposition of the request (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This sub-strategy registered 20 times of occurrence of on-record politeness strategies total number employed by the Libyan postgraduate students. Being conventionally indirect inquired on the lecturer’s possibility or ability to comply with the request by using the phrase could you, or I would. The following is an illustration of this sub-strategy.

Salam.
Dear Dr. (name)
We apologize from you, because we did not come at an appointment time. My friend (Student’s name) came late, because the bus came late.
Could you please fix another appointment for us?
thank you
Yours faithfully,
(student’s name)  
(S2, UUM, e-mail 9)

In the above examples, the student used indirect speech with a degree of politeness to express the conventional indirect strategy could you and politeness marker please to make a request for an appointment and for feedback. The use of this sub-strategy would presumably minimize the imposition and encourage cooperation between student and lecturer.

Go on-record as incurring a debt or as not indebting H

By employing this sub-strategy, the S can take care of any FTAs in a way that claims his indebtedness explicitly to the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The speaker could also disclaim any indebtedness as a way of going on-record. This sub-strategy appeared three times of the total number of on-record politeness strategies found. The example below illustrates this sub-strategy.

Dear
I am planning to submit the attached paper to Q1/Q2 journals.
I’d be very grateful for your comments and advice before I send it.
Thanks  
(S10, UKM, e-mail 53)

The example provided above indicated that the students expressed their gratitude in anticipation of the request. The analysis showed that the expressions like I’d appreciate or I’d be grateful used by the Libyan postgraduate students to show their appreciation in the event that the lecturer did comply with the request.

Minimize the imposition

This is a way to defuse the strength of the FTA by indicating that the imposition of the request is not great in itself, so this might pay deference to the H, indirectly (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This negative politeness sub-strategy accounted for only one case of the total number of on-record politeness strategies used in the dataset. See the text example provided below.

Assalamualikum Dr
Thank you Dr for your reply. Actually i have not discussed chapter five with the other supervisors. Any time you are free i will come to discuss about it together, just let me know the suitable time for you.
Thank you  
(S8, UM, e-mail 40)

Minimizing imposition can be realized using certain words like just to minimize the imposition, as illustrated in the example (S8, UM, e-mail 40), where the student did to
arrange an appointment. Positive sub-strategies minimize the negative impact on the hearer’s positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The next section presents data on the occurrence of the positive politeness sub-strategies.

**Positive Politeness Sub-strategies**

The analysis revealed that the second most prevalent strategy used was positive politeness. It constituted 26 times of the total number of on-record politeness strategies. It was also found that only 4 of 15 positive sub-strategies were positive politeness strategies. Table 4 summarizes the results of these sub-strategies occurred in the analyzed e-mail requests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give (or ask for) reasons</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be optimistic</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include both Speaker and Hearer in the activity</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Positive Politeness strategy</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Give (or ask for) reasons**

By employing this sub-strategy, Speaker and Hearer are cooperatively involved in the activity by giving reasons as to why the request is made (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Thus, giving a lecturer (in the present context) a reason to form a request was seen as a positive move. The findings showed that the giving (or asking for) reasons sub-strategy was the most often positive sub-strategy used by the Libyan postgraduate students. It was used 14 times of the total number of on-record politeness. The request was based on the notion that the lecturer would cooperate once he or she understood why the request was made. This sub-strategy is illustrated in the example below.

Hi Dr. (name),
How are you? I hope you are very fine.
Sorry if I bother you but I have a question and I want to know from you if you don’t mind. I decided to travel to my country on June and I want to book a ticket from now so I wish to know the date of the final exam for (course code) because I want to travel after the date of the exam immediately.
Thanks to you and I am so happy to be one of your students.

(S5, UPM, e-mail 26)

In the data, the students used *want* and *wish* to show the reason for issuing their requests. Further, words like *because* and the preposition *for* showed what help is needed from the lecturers. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that speakers can assume cooperation by giving reasons because this implies “you can help me” (p. 128). The lecturer would be implicated as he processed the reason.

**Be optimistic**

Being optimistic is a way to make “S to assume that H wants S’s wants for S (or for S and H) and will help to obtain them.” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 126). By applying this strategy, a student assumed that the lecturer was likely to have the desire to satisfy the student’s wants. In other words, the lecturer’s wants and the student’s wants were assumed to be shared as
they had mutual interest. The prime function of this cooperative strategy was to maintain a friendly stance. This politeness sub-strategy was used 8 times of the total number of on-record politeness strategies. Examples are provided below:

Dear sir, 
good day, I am (student’s name), I hope take with you my project next semester, if you can. I prefer meet you, but someone tell me, you are not here. so, could you tell me, When I can meet with you?
thank you 
yours sincerely, 
(student’s name)  
(S18, UM, e-mail 95)

In the example (S18UM 95), the participant of this e-mail expressed their requests using the optimistic expression I hope. This expression worked by reducing the force of their request, which implied cooperation between students and lecturers and that the request can be taken for granted. Thus, the principal function of ‘be optimistic’ sub-strategy was to capitalize on the perceived advantage that would be experienced by the lecturer and in the event would fulfill the student’s request.

**Promise**

A promise can also be used to redress the potential threat of request as the speaker shows his good intention in satisfying the hearer’s positive face wants (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 125). This sub-strategy was utilized two times of the total number of on-record politeness sub-strategies. An example of this sub-strategy is presented below.

Alsalamualicom  
I apologize. This form has given me Dr. (name).  
**I will come to you on Tuesday morning to the application form Cartridge**  
Thank you very much  
(Students’ name)  
(S13, UM, e-mail 69)

In the example (S13, UM, e-mail 69), the student tried to show good intention in satisfying the lecturer’s positive face want by intensifying what kind of form (the application form Cartridge) his lecturer needed to look at.

**Include both speaker and hearer in the activity**

This sub-strategy is utilized while a speaker means either you or me when using the we form. It calls upon the activation of cooperative assumptions so that an FTA will be redressed (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The occurrence of this sub-strategy use was used in only twice of the total number of positive politeness sub-strategies. The following example represents the use of this sub-strategy in the e-mail data.
Salam,

Dear Dr. (name),

Firstly, I told you about my case " maybe I'll give birth during the final exam ", and you said that is better if I'll do the exam earlier, so I asked Dr. (FN) to know what will happen, she said if Dr. (FN) agree no problem but I have to get letter from you.

Secondly, We need outline or template to complete project report, please upload it.

Thank you very much

Respectfully yours,

(S3, UUM, e-mail 15)

The above example illustrated clearly how the student had included the lecturer in the action with the inclusive we, which actually meant I in reference. This sub-strategy was evident when the request incorporated the student and the lecturer together.

Bald-on-record strategies, however, serve to meet any FTAs head on so that the student’s intentions are very clear. The following section discusses the occurrences of bald on-record politeness sub-strategies in the e-mail requests made by the Libyan postgraduate students.

**Bald On-record Politeness Sub-strategies**

The last on-record politeness strategy used by the Libyan postgraduate students was bald on-record politeness sub-strategies. This politeness strategy relied on the use of imperatives (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The strategy was used to alleviate the lecturer’s anxiety by preemptively inviting him or her to impinge on the student’s request. The imperative strategy was used 17 times out of the total on-record politeness strategies found in the e-mail requests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This strategy seemed to threaten the lecturer’s dignity and, as such, it was not expected at all to appear in student-lecturer communication (Chejnova, 2014). It was considered to be inappropriate for use in an interaction in an academic context. Nonetheless, this strategy could be softened with the use of hedges or the politeness marker ‘please’. The presence of this strategy in the e-mails might indicate that the Libyan postgraduate students were not aware of the force of their impositions on the lecturers. The way how they used bald on-record slightly different in their e-mails is illustrated in the two examples below.

How are you?
*Give me your comments about power point.*
I think this is better
Thanks.

(S13, UM, e-mail 68)

Salam Dr.
Dr (name) ask me to send the abstract to you. Please help me to submit to Symposium Organizing Committee.
Attached file.
Thank you.

(S19, UKM, e-mail 103)

As can be seen in the above first example (S19, UKM, e-mail 103), imperative form was used baldly to explicitly express the request. This request was made without any redress. In the other example (S19, UKM, e-mail 103), the student used an imperative clause, help me, when asking for feedback. However, the student used the politeness marker please to reduce negative impact. Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that request with imperative can be mitigated by a ‘please’ marker. Although these imperative constructions appeared with the conventional politeness marker ‘please’, they can still be regarded as inappropriate constructions in student-lecturers’ interaction (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996).

The following section describes the occurrence of off-record politeness strategies in the Libyan postgraduate students’ e-mail requests to their lecturers.

**Off-record Politeness Sub-strategies**

Off-record politeness sub-strategies appeared to be the third most frequently used strategy. This strategy occurred only a total of 24 times of the total number of politeness strategies. Of the sub-strategies used, hints were used 10 times of the total number of off-record politeness sub-strategies, while giving clues of association was appeared 14 times of the total number of off politeness sub-strategies. The frequency of each sub-strategy of off-record politeness is reported in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hint</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give clues of association</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The non-conventional politeness strategy, which violated the norms of conversation because the maxim of manner was violated, was nevertheless able to imply a particular recommended course of action (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In this case, the student left himself out by allowing for plausible deniability, so that he was not held responsible for the negative interpretation of the act. In the present data, off-record politeness strategy was accomplished by two sub-strategies: giving hints and clues of association. Below are examples to illustrate these two sub-strategies.

Hi doctor
good evening
first thing first, for course notes I do not find it in the spectrum.
secondly, i cannot understand what we have to write about documentation in presentation project because every one of my group understand it by different way. for me i understand that documentation is talking about how we will save the document of our company
I am waiting your answer
thank you

greetings

(S16, UM, e-mail 86)

In the example (S16, UM, e-mail 86), the hint sub-strategy illustrated, which consisted of an attempt to highlight the act in association with reasons for wanting to pursue the act. In this example, the student stated her request indirectly by commenting that she did not understand what was required to complete the project set by the lecturer. This implied that the lecturer should explain the requirement for the presentation project. As can be seen from example (S11, UM, e-mail 60) below, the purpose was to ask the lecturer indirectly for feedback about the student’s work. However, the student had merely mentioned that he/she had attached the copy (of the assignment). The student also used the phrase for your kind consideration as a hint to motivate a positive action from the lecturer.

Dear Dr. (name)
It's me (student’s name).(matric number)
Here I attached the copy for your kind consideration.
Best regards,

(S11, UM, e-mail 60)

In brief, giving hints and clues of association were the two sub-strategies that occurred in the data under study.

DISCUSSION

The detailed analysis of authentic data produced interesting findings. The most frequently used on-record politeness strategy were negative politeness strategies. In order to safeguard the students’ own positive face and their lecturers’ negative face, the participants resorted to a variety of negative sub-strategies, which included “question and hedges, be conventionally indirect, go on-record as incurring a debt or as not indebting H, and minimize the imposition” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 131). Social distance between interlocutors appeared to be emphasized by means of the negative politeness strategy and sub-strategies. However, the integration of hedges, conventionally indirect strategies and questions could increase the politeness of such requests (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The most prevalent negative politeness sub-strategies were the use of hedges and questions. A possible explanation for the presence of such a high frequency of hedges could be that hedges used for this purpose are very much a part of the writers’ schema for mitigating and reducing loss of face. This claim can be justified by Jensen’s (2009) argument that hedges are rhetorical devices of modification. The use of hedges also expressed politeness and respect towards lecturers because they weaken the illocutionary force of an utterance (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

By performing requests with negative politeness sub-strategies, the students hoped that their requests would be fulfilled without the lecturer feeling that they were obliged to do so. In the context of interaction between students and lecturers, students were expected to perform requests politely and possibly this led them to soften the tone of their e-mails.

The positive sub-strategies recorded were ‘be optimistic’, ‘include both S and H in the activity’, ‘give (or ask for) reasons’ and ‘promise’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Among the positive politeness sub-strategies; ‘give reasons’ strategy was the most used positive sub-
strategy. This high level of preference indicates that the Libyan postgraduate students believed that giving reasons had a logical appeal that would motivate the lecturer’s cooperation. As Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) acknowledges, giving reasons was indeed a polite way to underlie a request. However, unless the reasons or explanations for the necessity of granting the requestee’s request was clear, the lecturer may not wish to comply. Giving clear reasons encourages cooperation between interlocutors and increases the likelihood of the lecturer acting in a positive fashion. It is worth noting that giving reasons entailed an explicit explanation especially when the conjunction ‘because’ was used. E-mails that were based on positive politeness strategies thus enhance solidarity between interlocutors.

Off-record sub-strategies can be used as a request for action, such as giving feedback and fixing an appointment. This is in line with Krish and Salman’s (2016) study which reported that Arab students use the indirect strategy specifically for feedback. The Libyan postgraduate students probably opted for the indirect strategy considering the level of imposition that would be actualized by a direct request, which could threaten the lecturer’s negative face. Krish and Salman (2016) revealed that female students used hints which might refer to their attention to avoid direct confrontation with the recipients (i.e., teachers in their study). A student may even select to or not to make the request speech act in order to prevent face loss. However, this opaque strategy might require more effort in interpretation on the lecturer’s part to understand the illocutionary force of the request act. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that it is common among high social distance relationships; however, it is not a preferred strategy in some cultures like Malaysia, who do not use hints in their communication. This is supported by Khalib and Tayeh’s (2014) study when Malaysian students avoided using hints either with their lecturers or their peers.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate politeness strategies used in e-mail requests written by Libyan postgraduate students to lecturers in four selected Malaysian universities. In order to identify which politeness strategies were used in the students’ e-mail requests, Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework was adopted to answer the research question. The findings revealed that negative politeness strategies were the most frequently used (identified 70 times) in the request head act of the present study. The second most commonly used strategy identified from the analysis was positive politeness, followed by the off-record, while the least occurrence in the data was the bald on-record politeness strategy.

The present work contributed to the growing body of politeness research in e-mail requests in academic settings, especially in the area of Arab pragmatic linguistics. It dealt with Libyan postgraduate students in Malaysia, who encountered a different culture, language and communication challenges, especially in terms of e-mail writing, during their studies at Malaysian universities.

This study has implications for the students, lecturers, decision makers, and educational syllabus designers to avoid pragmatic failure from occurring, and to facilitate effective communication across cultures. As Libyan students step into a new context to pursue their higher education, they might benefit from learning how to interact with people from different cultures and with higher power and status.

Research on pedagogical intervention has concentrated on the significance of instruction to students, essentially English NNS students, across different domains. In
conjunction with different studies (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Felix-Brasdefer’s 2011, 2015, Lazarescu, 2013), the current study places emphasis on the need for increasing awareness among language learners about the appropriate use of politeness strategies when they compose e-mail requests to their lecturers.

This study recommended a cross-cultural comparison between local Malaysian postgraduate students and the international postgraduate students could be carried out to determine how politeness strategies vary between the two groups. This contrastive work allows for more precise findings on cross-cultural and inter-language pragmatic features of these e-mails.

Ultimately, this study concentrated on the politeness strategies used within request events and excluded the opening and closing moves of the e-mails. However, further studies are needed to also consider politeness in the opening and closing, as well as forms of address used by Libyan students, for the purpose of achieving a complete picture of the politeness phenomenon.

REFERENCES


RHETORICAL MOVE ANALYSIS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ARTICLE ABSTRACTS IN ENGLISH IN IRANIAN JOURNALS

Sara Seyed Paydari¹ and Shamala Paramasivam²*
Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia
E-mail: Sara.paidary@yahoo.com¹; shamala@upm.edu.my²

ABSTRACT
Writing an abstract in English is a challenging task. This corpus-based study aims to identify the move structures of empirical Political Science research article abstracts written in English in Iranian journals and to examine if the writing complies with Hyland’s (2000) model as an accepted model for abstract writing. A corpus of 120 abstracts was randomly collected and analysed employing Hyland’s (2000) five-move model for abstract writing. Findings revealed that the moves of Political Science research article abstracts in Iranian journals differ from Hyland’s model. Political Science writers of Iranian journals used 3-move and 2-move patterns in their abstracts. These patterns show that the abstracts lack Move 1 (Introduction), Move 4 (Product) and Move 5 (Conclusion). These moves were low in frequency of use and were treated as optional. Only Move 2 (Purpose) and Move 3 (Method) were used with high frequency. The move analysis showed that Iranian journals lack a display of genre competence in abstract writing with regard to the rhetorical structure of an abstract mainly in the use of moves that explain the introduction, outcomes and conclusions of research (i.e. Moves 1, 4 and 5 respectively). Recommendations are made to investigate reasons for the difference in move patterns through comparative and contrastive research between native writers (both in English and Persian languages) and non-native writers (Iranians writing in English), so as to address languages and discipline specific conventions in abstract writing in political science.

Keywords: genre, move analysis, research article abstracts, political science, Iranian journals

INTRODUCTION
It is significant to be able to write scientific research articles in English because most journals are written in English as a medium for academic language all over the world. An important requirement in the process of publication of a research article is to submit an abstract. Among all academic genres, abstract is considered one of the key genre that conveys new knowledge and findings in academic discourse communities. It condenses the core idea of a research article and is essential for the article’s publication and citation. Swales (1990) points that abstracts are independent, as not everyone who reads the abstract will necessarily read the article itself. Bhatia (1993) also states that an abstract as a description or factual summary of the much longer report is meant to give the reader an exact and concise knowledge of the full article. It is, therefore, deemed as “an important area of investigation” (Chan & Seyed, 2012, p. 1147).

Postgraduate students are required to follow latest research in English as well as to have their own research published in English. Nunan (1999, p.271) believes that producing a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing is probably the most difficult thing there is to do in language and he notes it is something even most native writers never master. Hyland
(2000) believes that learning to write academic genres involves students being familiar with the issues of form and structure and with public contexts for writing. In the academic world, the strategic use of rhetorical and linguistic features that fit to the standards of the specific discipline can increase chances for successful publication. This means that if students become familiar with the form and structure of a target genre they can produce texts with the form and structure required to take part in the genre.

Studies in the field of academic writing, particularly the research article abstract, has attracted the attention of Iranian researchers, both at the micro level of linguistic features and at the macro level of move analysis. For example Jalilifar (2007) investigated hedges in English academic research article abstracts. His study revealed that the primary types of hedges used in the abstracts were conventional hedges that are hedges by passive voice and hedges by putting the writer at a distance from the data. Khedri (2013), who studied metadiscourse markers in research article abstracts between two disciplines, Applied Linguistics and Economics, found that each disciplinary community within the broad domain of soft sciences have social agreement and contextual restriction in metadiscourse use.

Nasseri and Nematollahi (2014) compared the generic structure of abstracts of master thesis in Applied Linguistics written by native English and Iranian students using move-step analysis to find possible variations between the writing of these two groups. They focused on analysing lexi-co-grammatical patterns, use of personal pronouns, verb tenses, voice and hedges in abstracts. They found that the generic structure of the abstracts in the field of Applied Linguistics for both groups were very similar.

Ghasempour and Farnia (2017) performed a contrastive move analysis of Persian and English research article abstracts in the field of law to examine move structures and verb tenses used. The results showed that all moves were considered obligatory in English law abstracts while only move 1 (Introduction) and move 2 (Purpose) were obligatory in Persian abstracts. Contrasting findings were made in Chalak and Norouzi (2013) who compared the rhetorical moves in abstracts of Language Studies written by American and Iranian academic writers. They found that move 1 (Introduction) along with move 5 (Conclusion) were optional in Iranian abstracts while the moves for Purpose, Method, and Result were obligatory. However, Farzannia and Farnia (2017), who compared moves in research article abstracts in mining engineering journals between English and Persian native writers, found that all the five conventional moves were obligatory in Persian abstracts and were statistically different from the English group with regard to the Purpose move. In Noorizadeh-Honami and Chalak (2018), who did a comparative analysis of architecture research article abstracts written by native and non-native writers of English and Persian authors, found that both groups used the IMRD (Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion moves) and IMR (Introduction, Method, Results) patterns with high frequency.

Although much research has been conducted on the abstract genre among Iranian writers, there is still abundant room to investigate this genre in the Iranian context. In most of the previous studies regarding research article abstract in Iran (for instance Jalilifar, 2007; Khedri, 2013; Chalak and Norouzi, 2013; Nasseri & Nematollahi, 2014; Ghasempour and Farnia, 2017, Farzannia and Farnia, 2017; Noorizadeh-Honami and Chalak, 2018) there are contrasting findings across different disciplines such as language studies, applied linguistics, law, engineering, and architecture. Furthermore, most of these previous studies have investigated native writing (English and Iranian writers writing in their native languages) and have not examined Iranians as non-native writers writing in English as a foreign language.
The literature review also shows that analysis of research article abstracts in political science has not been studied although the field is not new in Iranian academia. The present study is conducted to address these gaps. The study conducts a move analysis of abstracts written in English to highlight Iranian academics conventional rhetorical styles of writing in the political science discipline. This study contributes to the knowledge of appropriate use of conventional pattern and forms in academic writing amongst Iranians.

This paper aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the rhetorical moves found in Political Science research article abstracts (PSRAA) written in English in Iranian journals?
2. How are these moves patterned in the abstracts?

**RELATED LITERATURE**

The present study employs genre analysis as the approach to discourse analysis as this approach allows for identifying moves and reporting the patterning of moves in text. Genre analysis has its roots in Swales’s (1981, 1990) work on the discourse structure and linguistic features of academic research articles. The description of move in genre analysis was first proposed by Swales (2004, p. 228-9). He defined move as a “discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse”. Moves can be recognized in many ways, each of which is called a “strategy” (Henry, 2007, p. 3) or a “tactic” (Henry, 2007, p.7). Bhatia (1993) defines strategies as the tactical choices made by the writer to achieve his or her purpose.

Swales’ influential works and his CARS model is widely employed among scholars who studied rhetorical moves in research article introductions (Fakhri, 2004; Samraj, 2005; Ozturk, 2007 and Hirano, 2009). Swales’ CARS model was used to analyse abstracts of research articles and the model was found not suitable since the aim of an Introduction in research articles is different from the abstract. The abstract is a summary of the main points of the whole research article. Thus, to analyse the abstract, different frameworks were established.

Bhatia (1993) proposed a four–move structure; (1) introducing purpose (2) describing methodology, (3) summarizing results, (4) presenting conclusion. This I-M-R-C structure of the research article has been used by some researchers such as Salager-Meyer (1990, 1992) and Ventola (1997). Santos’ (1996) five-move model is another framework for abstract analysis; move 1 entails situating the research, move 2 involves presenting the research, move 3 describing the methodology, move 4 summarising the results, and move 5 discussing the results. In an important study of disciplinary differences in abstracts, Hyland (2000) studied 800 abstracts from 8 disciplines. From his study, it became clear that the rhetorical structure of abstracts varies considerably according to discipline. Hyland’s framework in abstract move analysis is presented in Table 1. It has 5 moves with move 1 on introduction about the research, move 2 on research purpose, move 3 on methodology, move 4 on results of the research, and move 5 on conclusion.
Table 1: Hyland’s (2000) Model of Abstract Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Indicates purpose, outlines the aim of the research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Provides information on design, procedures, assumptions, approach, data, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>States main findings or results, the argument, or what was accomplished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Interprets or extends results beyond the scope of the paper, draws inferences, points to applications, or wider applications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since Hyland’s (2000) model was successfully applied across 8 disciplines, the model can be said to have wide applicability and validity across disciplines. It was thus deemed suitable to be used to analyse the abstracts in the present study.

**METHODOLOGY**

The corpus-based design was used to analyze the pattern of the moves in PSRAA. The corpus-based approach allows “analyzing the actual patterns of use in natural texts, and relies on quantitative as well as qualitative analytical techniques” (Biber et al., 1998, p. 4).

A sample of 120 empirical Political Science research article abstracts from three Iranian journals were randomly collected using simple random sampling. Forty research article abstracts were randomly selected to represent each journal. The choice of the journals was based on 3 criteria. Firstly, the language of use had to be English. Secondly, the study focused on Political Science journals published in Iran and thirdly, the journals had to be free access for ease of accessibility. The chosen journals are in Table 2. Articles published in the span of 5 years at the time of the research (2016) were selected. This involved articles published from 2010-2015.

Table 2: Iranian Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Number of Abstracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Sciences Research Review</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Justification of the sample size was based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970). According to them, a population which is equal to or greater than 180, the required sample size is 118. Thus 120 PSRAA in the corpus of this study was considered large enough to enable the purpose of the study to be achieved with a reasonable degree of reliability. All 120 research article abstracts were downloaded in original PDF format. This format, however, does not allow additional annotation. For this reason, the research article abstract format was changed from PDF to XML. Additional parts of the abstracts such as article title, writer’s name and keywords were removed. The length of each abstract was between 150-250 words.
The unit of analysis was moves; they were identified based on Hyland’s (2000) analytical model. Top-down and bottom-up approaches were used to identify a move. Biber et al. (2007) state that in the top-down approach, the researcher recognizes a move based on its rhetorical function. Therefore the communicative purpose of each move was established based on the analytical framework used.

To support the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach was employed. This approach requires the researcher to identify a move based on specific linguistic features (Biber et al, 2007). For this purpose, Hancioglu’s (2009) academic abstract corpus bank was used to identify a move. This corpus offers alternative lexico-grammatical patterns for fulfilling the required rhetorical moves in abstract. For example, for Move 2 (Purpose), reporting verbs that reflect the communicative purpose of this move like look into, proposes, investigates, analyses etc were identified, in order to confirm the move established from the top-down analysis. In other words, the top-down and bottom-up approaches were used collaboratively to conduct the move analysis. After identification of the moves, each move was coded. For example, S1M1 signals Sentence 1 Move 1. Table 3 shows a sample of an abstract with 5 moves illustrating the coding for each move and the reporting verbs that help identify the moves in a bottom-up analysis.

In this study, obligatory and optional moves were determined using Pho’s (2009) proposition that an obligatory or prototypical move occurs when the frequency of the move is more than 80%. An optional move is when a move is found in less than 80% of the data. For frequency calculation, whenever a move repeated more than one time it is counted as one time only since it does not show additional function. Microsoft Excel frequency calculation was used to quantify distribution of each move in the corpus.

### Table 3: Sample of Abstract with five moves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S1 M1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The election of Mahmood Ahmadinejad in Iran in June 2005 came to have an enormous impact on Iran’s foreign relations including Iran’s relations with the Arab states of the Persian Gulf.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S2 S3 M2</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The present article looks into the state and dynamism of bilateral relations between Iran and the GCC during the 2005-09 period.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Placed in the context of the background of relations between the two sides since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and specifically the 8 years of confidence-building and détente under Khatami, the article discusses the factors that affected these bilateral relations during the period under review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S4 M3</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The research method involved certain assumptions. It was assumed that such factors as Ahmadinejad’s peculiar foreign policy outlook and discourse relations with the U.S., diverging postures towards Israel’s threat perceptions, Iran’s rising regional stature and influence in the post-2001 period and also dispute on the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf and the name of the waterway have each affected the state of relations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S5 M4</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The review shows the resilience of economic and trade ties between the two sides beyond the mere political realm and the outstanding issues and disagreements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considering the inevitable negative impact of the continuing tension and conflict between Iran and the U.S. on the state of relations between Iran and the GCC, the paper emphasizes the imperative of confidence-building measures and policies by all the parties concerned – within the region and beyond.

It concludes that any meaningful improvement – and ultimate rapprochement – in the U.S.- Iran relations even though far-fetched or illusive at the time would help these relations and the mutually-beneficial establishment of regional security arrangements in the Persian Gulf.

RESULTS
Figure 1 represents the percentage of each rhetorical move in Political Science research article abstracts. As it is seen, Move 2 (Purpose) shows the highest percentage of moves which is 100%. Following that, Move 3 (Method) shows 85% and Move 1 (Introduction) 73%. In contrast to Moves 2, 3 and 1, Move 5 (Conclusion) contains the lowest percentage, which is 7%. Move 4 (Product) demonstrates 52 %.

Based on Hyland’s (2000) analytical model of move analysis the first move in abstract writing is Introduction where the author generates background of the study and motivates the research. This move also shows the scope of the research and tells the reader what the area of focus is and the perceptions that are going to be considered. This move was identified in 73% of abstracts in the data. Examples 1-3 display Move 1.

Example 1  
Arms control and the designing of global and regional security regimes is important issues in the field of strategic studies. (A.1)
Example 2 Wall Street Movement represents the people's protest about the function of capitalist system, and can be considered as one of the most important events and changes of American society in 2011. It is important because unlike other movements, it is not limited to a certain area and could gradually travel to other parts of the world. (B. 35)

Example 3 Iran's revolution was a prelude to the rise of a modern system in the world's contemporary political history. This newly-emerged system was born without a prefabricated copy and model. (B. 31)

The second move is the most vital move where the writer indicates the main purpose of the study and summarises the objective behind the paper. This move is undoubtedly the most significant one in an abstract since all other moves in the abstract are dependent on the main aim of the study. In this study, the writers may indicate their main purpose(s), or describe what they regard as the main aspects of their research (Swales, 1990, p. 159). This move is realized by using specific academic research words for example, the aim of this paper and the purpose of this article. The findings showed 100% distribution of this move in the data. Examples 4-6 illustrate Move 2.

Example 4 The present paper aims to study the Iranshari ('Iranian') politics in Sassani era. (C.1)

Example 5 The goal of this paper is to study the impact of underdevelopment and inefficiency of political parties in assisting to the formation of political underdevelopment in Pahlavi era. (C.7)

Example 6 The paper aims to critically consider the proposition maintaining that the contemporary state of affairs between Iran and the Arab world results from an endemic, deep-rooted enmity between these two peoples with roots in the annals of history. (A. 26)

Methodology is the third move in the abstract which covers information about the approach, methods used, the rationale, the research context, the participants or subjects of the study, and the data collection and analysis tools. The main purpose of this move is to inform the reader about how the research was done, and why it was done that way. The findings displayed 85% realization of Move 3. See Examples 7-9.

Example 7 A historical review of the evolution of transitional trends in Iran and India's foreign policy approach especially during the Post-Cold War era with an emphasis on the role of different internal regional and international elements in shaping these approaches would bring new light on the study of relations between these two countries. (A.28)

Example 8 The authors of the present paper with applying the comparison method analysis of the geopolitical themes of Iran and Russia, has tried to find the contrasting model and the format of the confronting codes and genomes of Iran and Russia. (B.5)
Example 9 The theoretical framework of this research is based on constructivist theory it holds that becoming a regional superpower is dependent on a developmentalist foreign policy. (A.36)

In the Product move, which is the fourth move in an abstract, the writer reports about the data examined, highlights and summarizes the noteworthy findings. The result shows 52% distribution of this important move through the data. Examples 10-11 illustrate Move 4.

Example 10 The Results of this paper shows that Vietnam obtained the ground for economic reformations which named Doi Moi by political changes. (B.10)

Example 11 Research results indicate that the axis as the only serious opposition to America’s presence in the region to adopt policies and measures such as anti-Israel, oppose to Arabic conservative and the rotten governance, oppose America’s presence in the region, reliance on oil means to pressure the West, supporting the Palestinian cause, forgotten roles of self-determination for peoples, Shia minorities in democracies alternative power and a revival of faith-based thinking and the growth of Islamist movements in the spread of Islamic Awakening in the area of public opinion have effected in increasing costs for America and reduced its interests in the region. (B. 6)

The last move in abstract writing is Conclusion which explains findings beyond the scope of the paper, shows implications, and points to applications. The data analysis in this study shows that this rhetorical move is often absent in the political science research article abstracts with only 7% of the abstracts displaying the move. The examples below show the Conclusion move. See Examples 12-13.

Example 12 Thus, in light of these arguments the research concludes that the main obstacles to the formation and sustainability of arms control regimes consist of: structural disequilibrium, imbalance of power interventions of intrusive powers, global cycles of power and its linkage to this region, as well as strategic instability caused by these variables. (B.4)

Example 13 The paper concludes that the uneasiness in Iran-Arab relations during the past five to six decades has been situational and a modern phenomenon chiefly stemming from specific political circumstances with certain roots in nation-building activities in the concerned countries. Hence, historical and ethno-religious or civilizational roots of this strained relationship are either non-existent or insignificant. (A.26)

Obligatory and Optional Moves
Based on the Hyland’s (2000) analytical framework a well formed abstract must present all five moves. However Pho (2009) believe that some moves are obligatory while others are optional. They note that 80% occurrence of a move determines the move as an obligatory move. Moves which occur below 80% are optional.

Figure 2 shows obligatory and optional moves in the data of the study. Move 2 (Purpose) with 100% and Move 3 (Method) with 85% occurrence seem to be viewed as an obligatory move in Iranian journals since they are frequently used by the writers. Move 1
(Introduction) with 73%, Move 4 (Product) with 52% and Move 5 (Conclusion) with 7% seem to be considered as optional moves in Political Science research article abstracts.

**Move Patterns in PSRAA**

Figure 3 displays the move patterns in the data of the study. As it can be seen 60% of abstracts contain 3 moves, 18% of abstracts show 4 moves and 15% have 2 moves. Only 7% of the abstracts contain 5 moves. In sum, more than 50% of abstracts have only three moves and a large majority, i.e. 93%, do not have the 5 moves needed for an abstract.
We can see that the Iranian journals in Political Science mostly have three moves in abstract writing. This can be better understood by a closer look into the data as shown in Figure 4.

![Preferred Move Patterns of PSRAA](image)

It can be observed from Figure 4 that 33% of abstracts include the 3-move pattern, Move 1+Move 2+Move 3 (Introduction+Purpose+Method), and 27% of the abstracts represent the 3-move pattern, Move 2+Move 3+Move 4 (Purpose+Method+Product). Examples 14-18 illustrate the two types of 3-move pattern.

**Example 14 Abstract with 3-move Pattern (M1+M2+M3)**

| S1M1 Introduction | Relations between Iran and India two ancient civilizations go far back in history. However, the contemporary politico-economic relations between these two major Asian powers, especially after the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, are affected by various different domestic, regional and international elements. |
| S2M2 Purpose | The main objective of this research is to analyse the dominant foreign policy trends in Iran-India relations during the last three decades. |
| S3M3 Methodology | A historical review of the evolution of transitional trends in Iran and India's foreign policy approaches, especially during the Post-Cold War era, with an emphasis on the role of different internal regional and international elements in shaping these approaches would bring new light on the study of relations between these two countries. |

S=Sentence/M=Move
**Example 15 Abstract with 3-move Pattern (M1+M2+M3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S1M1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>The present discourse is a preparation and introduction to explain Ikhwān al-Safā’s ethical and political teachings and beliefs with the view to providing accurate understanding of relation between ethics and politics in their thoughts which is inspired by Islamic and mystical education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S2M3</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>In this research the analysis of such teachings is methodologically normative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S3S4M2</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>In this concise paper, attempt has been made to briefly introduce this personable and enigmatic group. Besides, it was tried to address the question of “what explainable relation there is between Ikhwān’s ethical and religious teachings with politics and governing in human community”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S=Sentence/M=Move

**Example 16 Abstract with 3-move Pattern (M1+M2+M3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S1S2 S3 M1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>After the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the long-term vital interests of America faced with a serious challenge in the Middle East. At the same time, the Iranophobia project was on the agenda of western countries and America in military, political, economic and especially advertising and media aspects that which ultimately led to the phobia of the Islamic Republic of Iran among the neighbouring countries of the Persian Gulf border. One of the most important and influential effects of this phobia was establishing the Persian Gulf cooperation council that consisted of the six countries of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arabic Emirates, and Oman.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S4 M2</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>The main research question is: what is the relationship between the development of arms purchases of the Persian Gulf cooperation council members and the Iranophobia project?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S5 S6 M3</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>The hypothesis of this paper is that the induction of Iranophobia is due to obtaining greater economic benefits for Western countries and America through arms purchases to the Persian Gulf countries. The present article attempts to use the descriptive - analytical method and the neorealist approach as the conceptual framework to evaluate the effect of Iranophobia on the ascending trend of arms purchases among the Persian Gulf cooperation council members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S=Sentence/M=Move

**Example 17 Abstract with 3-move Pattern (M2+M3+M4)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S1M 2</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>This survey examines the content and purpose of the political science discipline in respect to seven prominent universities in Iran and its significance for the Iranian society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is based on quantitative and qualitative data including personal interviews and survey results, as well as theses conducted by political science students, academic articles written by scholars in the field, and university curricula.

The survey suggests that Iranian political science after the 1979 revolution addresses contemporary political problems and challenges related to Iran only to a limited extent, and is predominantly theoretical and “borrowed” in nature, despite the goal during the Cultural Revolution to indigenize and Islamicize the social sciences.

Example 18 Abstract with 3-move Pattern (M2+M3+M4)

The paper aims to critically consider the proposition maintaining that the contemporary state of affairs between Iran and the Arab world results from an endemic -deep-rooted enmity between these two peoples with roots in the annals of history.

To elucidate its argument -the paper offers a brief review of the major ups and downs in the historical relationship between Iranians and Arabs to see whether animosity or good-neighborliness has mainly prevailed. Then -seeking to pinpoint the causes of uneasiness in the Iranian-Arab relationship since the 1950s -the focus of the paper turns to the formation of pan-Arab ideology and its strong anti-Iranian elements.

The review showed that major differences in outlooks -coupled with territorial and diplomatic disagreements -had Nasserite Egypt and especially Ba’athist Iraq embrace these elements and begin implementing them to their full and extreme extent at a time when a monarchical West-leaning regime was in power in Iran.

Uneasiness in Iran-Arab relations during the past five to six decades has been situational and a modern phenomenon -chiefly stemming from specific political circumstances with certain roots in nation-building activities in the concerned countries.

Hence -historical and ethno-religious or civilizational roots of this strained relationship are either non-existent or insignificant.

Example 19 and 20 display the 2-move structure of M1+M2 (Introduction + Purpose). 15% of abstracts had this structure.

Example 19 Abstract with 2-move Pattern (M1+M2)

Since the Islamic Revolution in Iran -the state of interaction between Tehran and Washington has seen considerable ups and downs. Conflict between the Islamic of Iran's national interests and those of the United States gave rise to the dominance of strategic confrontation between the two states -though some cooperative actions have been witnessed between the two sides.
DISCUSSION

Results of the present study reveal that there are obvious differences in the structure of Political Science research article abstracts in Iranian journals. The most frequently used moves based on the findings are Move 2 (Purpose) and Move 3 (Method) and this indicates that the main issues addressed in abstracts by Iranian Political Science writers are stating the aim of the study (Purpose move) and the methods for investigating the study (Method move).

Taking into consideration that the main purpose of abstracts is to summarize the knowledge of the whole research article, the use of the 3-move structure shows that Political Science writers of Iranian journals do not summarize their research according to academic conventions. The first combination of moves (M1+M2+M3) indicates that the writers do not summarize the results of their research (M4) and do not close their study with a conclusion (M5). The second combination of moves (M2+M3+M4) shows that they do not make a research space (M1) and do not draw a conclusion (M5). In addition to the 3-move structure, writers of the Iranian journals were also found to use the 2-move structure of M1+M2. This also shows that they do not note the Method (M3), the results of the research (M4) and the conclusion (M5) in abstract writing. The complete conventional norm of 5-move structure in abstract writing was used minimally (7% of the time).

The findings of the present study show similarities as well as differences with findings in the literature about academic writing styles of Iranian writers. For instance, the findings of the present study are similar to Chalak and Norouzi (2013) who found that Iranian writers of English Studies use move 2 (Purpose) and move 3 (Method) as obligatory moves when writing abstracts. However, unlike the present study, while Chalak and Norouzi (2013) found that Iranian writers use move 4 (Results) as an obligatory move, the present study showed that move 4 was optional. Chalak and Norouzi (2013) also found that move 1 and move 5 were used by Iranian writers as optional moves supporting the findings of the present study. The findings of the present study also support Ghasempour and Farnia (2017) who found that move 4 and move 5 were optional moves of native Iranian writers in Law. However, Ghasempour and Farnia (2017) reported move 3 as an optional move while the present study found it to be used as an obligatory move. They reported move 1 and move 2 as obligatory moves while the present study found move 1 as optional and move 2 as obligatory. The findings of the present study differ from Farzannia and Farnia (2017) and Noorizadeh-Honami and Chalak (2018) who found that native Iranian writers of Mining Engineering and Agriculture respectively used all 5 moves as obligatory moves in their abstracts.

The move patterns of Iranian writers of English in Political Science research abstracts cannot be conclusively determined from the present study. The difference in the move patterns of this particular group of writers from Hyland’s (2000) model as an accepted model for abstract writing could stem as a result of languages or discipline specific conventions. Different languages and different disciplines are known to have different linguistic and writing conventions (Sanz & Bondi, 2014). Comparative and contrastive research is needed.
to examine how Political Science research article abstracts are written in native speaker journals, both in English and in Persian languages, in order to find out if native speaker groups and non-native speaker groups share common features so as to ascertain if languages and discipline specific conventions could be potential reasons to explain the move patterns found in the data of the present study.

**CONCLUSION**

According to international conventions in academia, an abstract should include a five-move pattern. However, the moves of Political Science research article abstracts written in English in Iranian journals did not display this convention. As a result, the abstracts can be said to be less rhetorically structured in terms of international norms. Majority of the abstracts had 3-move and 2-move patterns. These patterns show high use of Move 2 (Purpose) and Move 3 (Method); these moves were considered as obligatory by Iranian political science writers. Move 1 (Introduction), Move 4 (Product) and Move 5 (Conclusion) had low frequency of use in the abstracts and were employed as optional moves by the writers. The Political Science journals published in English in Iran show a difference in move patterns from Hyland’s (2000) model for rhetorical structure of an abstract. The Iranian journals lack a display of genre competence in abstract writing with regard to the rhetorical structure of an abstract mainly in the use of moves that explain the introduction, outcomes and conclusions of research (i.e. Moves 1, 4 and 5 respectively). Further research is needed to investigate reasons for the difference from international conventions through comparative research that examines languages and discipline specific conventions in political science abstract writing between native writers of English and Persian, and non-native writers, i.e. Iranians writing in English, so that features between the three groups (native writers of English, native writers of Persian, and Iranian writers of English) may be captured to better understand the academic writing practices and rhetorical organisation structures used by Iranian political science writers when they write their research article abstracts in English.

**REFERENCES**


THE EFFECTS OF CHINESE ON ENGLISH ARTICLE USE BY CANTONESE ESL LEARNERS

Alice Yin Wa Chan
Department of English
City University of Hong Kong
E-mail: enalice@cityu.edu.hk

ABSTRACT
This paper discusses the effects of Chinese on the use of English articles by Hong Kong Cantonese ESL learners. A total of 63 Cantonese ESL learners participated in two language tasks about the use of English articles, including a cloze passage task and a noun countability task. In the cloze passage task, participants completed two cloze passages by providing a suitable article for each of 50 blanks and explained, immediately after the completion of each passage, the reason for each article choice. In the noun countability task, participants used a bilingualized dictionary to determine the countability and associated article use of seven nouns in different contexts and explained, in an introspective questionnaire, how their judgements were made. Results of the tasks showed that despite the absence of structural equivalents of English articles in Chinese, Cantonese ESL learners occasionally resorted to their mother tongue in their article selection processes. A translation and comparison strategy was often employed to validate an article choice by comparing a given English sentence with its seemingly equivalent Chinese version. In teaching the use of English articles, ESL teachers are suggested to alert learners to the differences and similarities between English and their mother tongue and to help learners tackle possible adverse L1 influence.

Keywords: English article system, Cantonese ESL learners, language acquisition, L1 influence, article selection

INTRODUCTION
Negative L1 transfer has well been documented in the literature as one source of learner errors. Many errors have been argued to be the result of negative L1 transfer, such as the topic-comment structure (Kwan, Chan & Li, 2003) and “the independent clause as subject” structure (Chan, Kwan & Li, 2003) commonly used by Chinese ESL learners. There are, however, target language items where no structural parallels exist in the native language. For these areas of L2 learning difficulties, arguments about the effects of L1 are diverse. While it has been argued that the difficulties can be seen as the results of an absence of a comparable system in the native language (Chan, 2010), L1 effects for such language items cannot be easily attested.

The English article system is an area which has been seen as controversial. There are languages which have structural equivalents of English articles, such as French, but there are also article-less languages, such as Chinese, Korean and Thai. Although empirical evidence for L1 transfer has been observed for article-less languages, and the poor acquisition of English articles by Chinese ESL learners has been argued to be related to the first language, especially at the early stages of language learning (Master, 1997), the effects of L1 on article acquisition by speakers of article-less languages are often countered (e.g. Serratrice, Sorace,
Filiaci & Baldo, 2009). Acquisition by speakers of article-less languages are often countered (e.g. Serratrice, Sorace, Filiaci & Baldo, 2009).

For example, Mede and Gurel (2010), who studied the acquisition of English articles by a bilingual child and two monolingual English speaking children, noticed cross-linguistic transfer for the bilingual child whose native language, Serbo-Croatian, did not have articles. These ascertained the effects of article-less L1 on the acquisition of English articles. On the other hand, Zdorenko and Paradis (2008, 2012) found counter-evidence for L1 influence, that the overuse of the for a in indefinite specific contexts was observed in children whose native languages had articles as well as in those whose native languages did not have articles. This disconfirmed the influence of the L1. Ionin et al., (2004) also found that ESL learners whose native language lacked articles (e.g. Korean, Russian) showed fluctuations between the definiteness and specificity settings in the article choice parameter, yet access to the specificity feature cannot be explained by L1 transfer or L2 input. Although different theoretical perspectives have been adopted in these previous studies, (e.g., Ionin et al., 2004) adopted an article semantics perspective and used a strategy based explanation to account for the findings, whereas Master (1997) focused more on actual usage), it can be seen that the effects of L1 on L2 learners’ use of English articles have been under debate in the literature irrespective of the theoretical orientations.

Not only have there been conflicting findings about the influence of article-less L1 on L2 article acquisition, but there also exists a gap in the nature of the investigations: previous research into the effects of L1 transfer on the acquisition of English articles focused mostly on learner performance with particular reference to learner errors or difficulties (e.g. Ionin & Montrul, 2010; Liu, Dai & Li, 2013; Serratrice, Sorace, Filiaci & Baldo, 2009; Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008, 2012). Learners’ knowledge of the English article system, as well as their thinking processes, has not been the focus of extensive investigation. Although it is true that learners’ performance may be indicative of the extent of L1 influence, our understanding of L1 effects can be enhanced if we probe into learners’ knowledge of the English article system and the reasons underlying their selection of a certain article. The focus of the present paper is on learners’ thinking processes during article selection.

GOAL AND METHODOLOGY
The present paper aims to uncover how L1 influence works in Hong Kong Cantonese ESL learners’ acquisition of English articles by putting together relevant results and insights obtained from two sub-studies (tasks) of a larger study, including a cloze passage task (Chan, 2017a) and a noun countability judgment task (Chan, 2017b). These two tasks were not specifically designed to investigate the effects of Chinese on the acquisition of English articles, yet the effects of L1 were revealed during the course of the investigations.

Participants
A total of 33 Hong Kong Cantonese ESL learners participated in the cloze passage task whereas another group of 30 learners participated in the noun countability task. They were all English majors at a local university, including a total of 12 males and 51 females. They had all studied English for 14 years or more. Among them 49 learners had received a C or above in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Use of English (UE) Examination1 or General Certificate of Education (GCE) A-level Examination, 7.5 or above in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, or 5 or above in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary
Education (HKDSE). The rest had received a D in HKALE, 6.5-7 in IELTS, 4 in HKDSE, or C in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). They could all be regarded as advanced learners of English.

**Objectives and Procedures of Tasks**

**CLOZE PASSAGE TASK:** The objective of the cloze passage task was to investigate the reasons behind learners’ article selection and the hypotheses they made in their selection processes. Whether a certain correct article choice could be the result of an inappropriate learner hypothesis was also investigated. Participants completed a cloze passage task by providing the most suitable articles (a/an, the, /) for a total of 50 blanks in two short passages of about 200 words each. Immediately after the completion of each passage, participants were asked to explain verbally why they had chosen a certain article for each blank. In the explanation of article choices, participants were allowed to use whatever language(s) they were comfortable with. As a result, 94% of them used a mixed-code of Cantonese and English, and the rest used English throughout the whole process (For other details, see Chan, 2017a).

**NOUN COUNTABILITY TASK:** The objective of the noun countability judgement task was to investigate the effectiveness of a bilingualized dictionary in helping learners determine the countability of English nouns and associated article use. Participants were required to consult the Oxford Advanced Learner’s English-Chinese Dictionary (8th Edition) (Hornby, 2013) to help them make decisions about the countability (i.e., deciding whether the noun was countable or uncountable) and related article use for three sentence contexts for a total of seven nouns (e.g., feeling, reason, understanding, etc.), all of which had different countability when used in different contexts. They had to show their decisions on article use by choosing the most appropriate option from three choices (singular form without an article (e.g., basic understanding), plural form without an article (e.g., basic understandings), and singular form with a/an (e.g., a basic understanding)). All the sentence contexts for all the target nouns were chosen from popular dictionaries available on the market, including Cambridge dictionaries Online (http://dictionary.cambridge.org/), Collins COBUILD Advanced Learners’ English Dictionaries 4th edition (Sinclair, 2003), etc. After completing all three sentence contexts for a noun, participants had to complete an introspective questionnaire to report on the feelings about their decisions on ending a search (whether they were sure that their decisions were correct, and why), to write out the definitions, examples etc. which led them to their decisions, to describe how such definitions, examples, etc. showed them that their decisions should be correct, to explain why they were doubtful about a certain decision and to spell out the difficulties they encountered. All the participants used English in their completion of the introspective questionnaire, as the questions were all given in English (For other details, see Chan, 2017b).

**RESULTS**

As noted earlier, the two tasks did not specifically aim to investigate the effects of L1 transfer on learners’ article use, yet a few phenomena related to L1 influence could be observed from the results of the tasks. Because both tasks involved some form of self-reports (verbal explanations of article choices for the Cloze Passage task and answering of questions in the introspective questionnaire for the Noun Countability task), relevant self-reports will be included in this paper to illustrate participants’ thinking processes during article selection.
and/or countability determination. Numerical results on participants’ performance in the two tasks and other data not relevant to the goal of this paper will not be presented.

**Influence of Similar but Distinct Structural Items in the Native Language**

Despite the non-existence of structural equivalents in Chinese, learners were prone to formulate their thoughts in Chinese and model their article selection on the “corresponding” Chinese structures. This was manifested in a “translation and comparison” strategy, in that an article choice was validated by comparing a given English sentence or phrase with its seemingly equivalent Chinese version, notably those with Cantonese determiners showing definite reference, such as demonstratives.

In the Cloze Passage task, where participants were asked to insert the most appropriate article in two passage contexts, some participants made their article selection based on translations from Chinese, especially when the article selected was **ZERO**. For example, for the clause **handle your lenses with / damp hands**, a participant said that she chose **ZERO** for **damp hands** because of direct translation of the clause from Chinese.

> 不好用溼嘅手,
> not good use damp POSSESSIVE hand,
> 不係唔好用呢啲濕嘅手，所以。
> not not good use ‘those’ damp POSSESSIVE hand, so,
> 就譯咗。
> then translate PERFECTIVE
> 我用廣東話，覺得唔會用呢啲。
> I use Cantonese, think not will use ‘those’,
> 就揀咗無嘅喇
> then choose PERFECTIVE nothing PARTICLE (participant 11)
> (Do not use “hands that are damp”. Not “do not use those hands which are damp”, so I just translated. I used Cantonese. I think we should not use ‘those’, so I chose nothing (no articles)).

When the chosen article was other articles, such as **the**, similar contention about Chinese translations was given in participants’ descriptions of their article choices. An example was the selection of **the** in the clause **If the following simple rules are followed**, as illustrated in the self-report from another participant:

> 唔啲啲樣嘅步驟,
> Those like POSSESSIVE procedures
> 我好鍾意中文用譯啲樣嘅。
> I very much like Chinese use translate like ‘those’
> 就揀咗the喇
> then choose PERFECTIVE ‘the’ PARTICLE (participant 22)
> (Those procedures like this. I like to use Chinese to translate like this: ‘those’, so I chose ‘the’.)
It can be seen that the acceptable presence of a determiner (a demonstrative in the above examples) in Cantonese was taken as confirmation for learners’ choice of the, whereas the absence of such was taken as confirmation for the choice of ZERO. Although the articles selected were correct, the participants’ selection was based on inappropriate comparisons of target language structures with native language structures.

Influence of Native Language Translations of Head Nouns in the Same Noun Phrase

The translation and comparison strategy discussed in the previous section was manifested in another form in the Noun Countability Task, where participants were asked to use a bilingualized dictionary to help them determine the countability of an English noun and associated article use. Because the task involved the use of a bilingualized dictionary which included Chinese definitions and examples, the influence of the native language became more apparent, in that participants determined the countability of an English lexical item (e.g., feeling) based on the countability of the “thought-to-be” best Chinese translation (e.g., 情感) as used in the given sentence contexts. The associated article use for the target English noun was modelled on the structures of the English examples and/or English definitions for that chosen “best Chinese translation”. The majority of the nouns under investigation showed instances of such inappropriate modelling, which sometimes resulted in correct article choices but sometimes incorrect choices.

In determining whether to choose feeling, feelings or a feeling for the sentence

It’s incredible that Peter can behave with such stupid lack of feeling (Sinclair, 2003, p. 526).

Participant 40 found the Chinese meaning 情感 for the target noun feeling and was puzzled whether the word feeling meant 情感 in the given target sentence. Irrespective of her puzzle, the Chinese meaning 情感 and the corresponding structure feelings in the example sentence He hates talking about his feelings and I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings (Hornby, 2013, p. 761) led her to use feelings instead of the target answer feeling. Her introspective report shows her thinking process:

I am struggling what is the feeling means here. I don’t know whether it means 情感. 情感 and ‘feelings’ led to my decision. (Participant 40)

Reliance on Chinese translations sometimes resulted in correct article choices. In determining whether to choose was understanding, were understandings, or was an understanding for the sentence

We had not set a date for marriage but there was an understanding between us (Sinclair, 2003, p. 1579).

Participant 38 chose the correct answer based on the English example shown for the “thought to be” best Chinese translation of the target English word understanding (協議):

協議 + the example ‘We finally came to an understanding led me to my decision."
The definition 協議 fits perfectly and ‘came to an understanding’ shows me an article should precede ‘understanding’. (Participant 38)

When explaining whether they were sure about their decision for choosing a certain option for a certain sentence and/or whether their determination of the countability of a target noun as used in a certain sentence context was correct or not, some participants explicitly mentioned their reliance on Chinese translations during the decision process:

I was not sure whether my decision was correct because the Chinese translations are similar (Participant 61; target word reason)

The Chinese translations of definitions helped me a lot in making my decisions. (Participant 56; target word reason)

The Chinese definition really stands out and eye catching and it fits with the situation the question is positioned in. (Participant 39; target word understanding)

The translation and comparison strategy as discussed in the previous section was, thus, manifested in learners’ search for a Chinese translation which was thought to be the best fit for the meaning of a target English noun in a certain context and their modelling their article selection on the syntactic structure of an English definition/example for that selected Chinese translation.

DISCUSSIONS

It can be seen from the above results that, in their selection of English articles, Cantonese ESL learners tend to formulate their thoughts in their native language, translate their thoughts to the target language and compare the structures of the two languages in their minds. This kind of translation and comparison strategy clearly reveals the effects of L1. That a translation and comparison strategy was employed in article selection in the Cloze Passage task can be understood by learners’ confusion between English articles (e.g. a/an, the, ZERO) and demonstratives (e.g. these), as the latter are sometimes regarded as examples of articles by Cantonese ESL learners. In Chan (2016), which reports on the result of another sub-study of the same study about the inventory of English articles, it has been shown that demonstratives such as this, that, these, those, and their were listed by some Cantonese ESL learners as members of the English article system. It has also been argued in the literature that Cantonese demonstratives, such as 嚮個 (that) or 嚮啲 (those), being the most commonly used determiners in Cantonese and often used for deictic functions pointing or referring back to noun phrases mentioned in the same context, are quite like English the in terms of functions (Chan, 2004). Learners’ modelling their article selection on the use of Chinese demonstratives in their decision of whether to use English the or not may have been a result of this similarity. Such reliance may not result in wrong article choices, but it reveals learners’ misconceptions about the English article system and their unawareness of the subtle differences between articles and demonstratives.

Learners’ modelling their sentence construction for a target English lexical item on the syntactic structure of an English definition/example based on the Chinese translations of that English definition/example, on the other hand, shows their insensitivity to the differences
in the syntactic requirements of the different senses of a lexical item. As documented in Chan (2012), some lexical items have different senses which are dependent on the grammatical contexts the items are in (e.g. the verb boast has different meanings when used transitively (boast something) and intransitively (boast about something)), so the usage of these words is governed by the syntactic requirements of a particular sense in a particular context. What is more, lexical items in two languages seldom have precisely the same meaning. Different languages may also have different syntactic requirements (e.g. verb transitivity) for corresponding vocabulary items (e.g. While listen is intransitive in English, its corresponding Chinese 聽 is transitive) (Chan, 2017b). The syntactic context of a Chinese word is, thus, not necessarily an appropriate model for the corresponding English word. Choosing a certain sense of an English lexical item based on its translations in another language (e.g. Chinese) and then modelling corresponding sentence construction on the English syntactic requirements of that chosen sense is not a desirable strategy and may result in errors not noticeable to learners. However, such a strategy shows learners’ tendency to resort to their native language when encountering difficulties in making a judgment, revealing that the extent of L1 influence is not restricted to a target structure (e.g. articles) but also to the surrounding syntactic environments (e.g. head noun of a noun phrase) which trigger the use of the target structure.

**IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of the study have both theoretical and pedagogical significance. They confirm that L1 influence operates not just when the target language items have functional equivalents in the native language but also when the target language structures do not have functional equivalents in the native language. In learners’ production of these target language structures, they may rely on native translations of distinct language items (e.g. demonstratives instead of articles) or even native translations of other (key) lexical items in the syntactic environments (e.g. head noun of a noun phrase) and be (mis)led by the structural requirements and/or usages of those items. While inappropriate reliance on the L1 may not necessarily lead to learner errors, the potential problems brought by the shadowy effects of correct language use as a result of L1 influence are clearly revealed and merit attention. Learner performance can be deceptive, as learners’ correct language use may be grounded on inaccurate hypotheses (Chan, 2017b). Our findings support this contention, disclose the inadequacy of empirical evidence which is restricted to performance data, and expose the need for more in-depth qualitative research probing into learners’ thinking processes. To bridge the gap of previous research which focused mostly on learner performance (see Introduction), future research into the acquisition of English articles should not just analyze learner errors and/or compare and contrast the L1 and the L2. A qualitative component, such as introspective think-aloud protocols or post-task interviews requiring learners to articulate the reasons for their article choices, should be incorporated alongside language tasks.

Pedagogically, our findings suggest that a contrastive analysis approach can be employed, irrespective of whether the native language is article-less or has articles, to discuss the functional and semantic similarities and differences between similar items in the two languages, such as English the and Chinese determiners (啲個 (that) or 唔啲 (those)), possessives or numerals. Though the differences between, say, demonstratives and articles might look indispensable in certain cases, such as when the target noun phrase has definite
reference and the language items are substitutable without affecting grammaticality, ESL learners, especially advanced learners, should be made aware of the very subtle functional and meaning differences between these seemingly equivalent items. For example, English the does not have a demonstrative function whereas Chinese demonstratives are not articles in the language, and, unlike English the, they cannot be used in non-definite contexts. These are subtle differences which ESL teachers should highlight in their classrooms. Teachers could design awareness-raising exercises which compare these similar but distinct items in the native and target languages and guide students to discover their similarities and differences. Language tasks which encourage learners to verbalize their knowledge of the use of such language items in the target and native languages could also be introduced, so learners’ misconceptions could be eradicated.

LIMITATIONS
Some limitations inherent to the present study may be of concern. No attempt was made to systematically investigate L1 transfer. The instruments used in the two language tasks were not specifically designed to probe into the influence of L1 on L2 article acquisition, so no comprehensive data from a sizable group of participants about the extent of L1 influence could be collected. The use of a bilingualized dictionary consisting of translations in the L1 in the Noun Countability task may also be argued to have aggravated or even triggered unintended L1 reliance. However, despite the diverse objectives and nature of the two tasks, unconstrained data about learners’ thinking processes were obtained from the self-reporting protocols (verbal explanations immediately after completion of the Cloze Passage task and introspective questionnaires for the Noun Countability task). The patterns of L1 influence observed from such elicitation protocols reflected learners’ conscious and subconscious reliance on the L1 and demonstrated the genuine presence of possible L1 effects. The insights obtained are, thus, worth attending to. Future research may include language tasks as well as self-reporting protocols which specifically probe into the effects of L1 transfer for comprehensive understanding and triangulation.

It may also be argued that language use is largely an unconscious process and therefore the self-reporting protocols used in the two tasks may not be authentic or natural enough in providing data for real language use. This may be true, but the diverse nature of the self-reporting protocols used in the two tasks, as well as the implementation times of the protocols, makes them reliable tools for understanding learners’ underlying cognitive processes during their language use: The two self-reporting protocols were both self-reports with no intervention from the researcher, and they were implemented either immediately after the completion of the language task (for the cloze passage task) or during the language task (for the noun countability task), so the protocols could relate clearly to learners’ learning behavior. The reasons reporting protocol for the cloze passage task has been used in other similar studies, such as Butler (2002), and the introspective questionnaire for the noun countability task has also been adopted in several similar studies, such as Chan (2012). Both of these protocols are useful in providing the data required.

CONCLUSION
The results of a study uncovering the effects of L1 on Cantonese ESL learners’ acquisition of English articles have been reported in this paper. While previous research has mainly focused on performance, the present study probes into learners’ thinking processes during article
selection. It reveals the effects of L1 which are shadowed by correct language use and provides insights into the importance of tackling L1 effects on the use of target language items which do not have native language equivalents. Teachers are advised not just to tackle errors which are clearly the result of L1 transfer but also to diagnose learners’ knowledge and hypotheses and eradicate their misconceptions so as to ensure that their language use reflects not just their performance but also their competence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work described in this article was supported by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council (Project Number: CityU 11400614). The support of the council is acknowledged. I would also like to thank all the participants for their participation and my research assistants for their administrative help.

REFERENCES


Chan, A.Y.W., Kwan, B.S.C., and Li, D.C.S. (2003). ‘According to X, X said …’ A consciousness raising approach to helping Cantonese speakers overcome problems in


http://dictionary.cambridge.org/ (retrieved on 17/6/2018)

---

1 The Hong Kong Advanced Level Use of English (UE) examination aimed to test students’ ability to understand and use English at a level that was required for tertiary education and/or for future employment. (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/HKALE/Subject_and_Syllabuses/2013/2013as-ue.pdf). It was normally taken by F.7 students in Hong Kong who had completed their two-year matriculation studies. UE Grade E was regarded as equivalent to Grade E in the GCE A level examinations (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/recognition/ce_al_recognition/).

2 The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education examination aims to measure the attainment of students upon their completion of six years of secondary education and has been the only public examination in the new 3-3-4 education system in Hong Kong since 2012. 5** is the highest grade that students can attain for a certain subject, followed by 5* and 5.

3 The use of a mixed-code of Cantonese and English in participants’ explanation of their article choices should not have any impact on the reliability of the data about the effects of Chinese, as only explanations which made explicit reference to the influence of Chinese were focused on in this paper.

4 A bilingualized dictionary (e.g. *Oxford Advanced Learners’ English-Chinese Dictionary*) is a dictionary with definitions and examples which have been translated in full or in part into the target language (e.g. Chinese), but there are also definitions and examples in the source language (e.g. English) (see Hartmann 1994; James 1994; Marello 1998).
The reasons for choosing a bilingualized dictionary instead of a monolingual dictionary are detailed in Chan (2017b): Because Chinese does not have structural equivalents of English articles and the countability of corresponding English and Chinese nouns is often different, the use of a bilingualized dictionary instead of a monolingual dictionary may yield more interesting results about learners’ judgements of English noun countability.
THE IMPACT OF LISTENING AND SPEAKING ANXieties ON THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: WHAT CAN EDUCATORS DO?

Siti Faridah Kamaruddin1*, Imelia Laura Daneil2, Jacqueline Susan Rijeng3, Mohamad Musa Bohari4, Tang Howe Eng5

1,2,3,4 Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Sarawak Mukah Campus, 96400 Mukah
5 Faculty Computer and Mathematical Science, UiTM Sarawak Mukah Campus, 96400 Mukah.

E-mail: faridah8543@uitm.edu.my1; imelialaura@uitm.edu.my2; jacquelinesusan@uitm.edu.my3; moham241@uitm.edu.my4; lily@uitm.edu.my5

ABSTRACT
The future of language education is experiencing pedagogical shift due to the new expectation centering on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The communication skill is one of the significant 4IR technical skills apart from 21st century skills and digital skills which are highly sought after by Human Resource Departments in future employment (Jeshcke, 2015). However, in order to produce future workforce who are not restricted by communicative barriers, learners may be affected by the threat of listening and speaking anxieties. Hence, in an attempt to understand how severe the impacts of listening and speaking anxieties are on university learners, which is the main source of human capital required for the protraction of 4IR, the research objectives of this study are to investigate the impact of language anxiety on listening and speaking skills and discover the causal factors that could contribute to language anxiety in relation to listening and speaking skills. By employing a survey design with a mixed method approach, the Factors of Language Anxiety Questionnaire (FLAQ) was distributed to 125 university learners from non-English programmes. Based on the analysis, it was discovered that learners experienced a severe impact of language anxiety in listening skills in comparison to speaking skills. However, using paired sample t-test, it is discovered that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of listening and speaking anxieties. The impact of language anxiety in both listening and speaking skills was profoundly affected by causal factors such as self-esteem and social anxiety. Therefore, by understanding the impact of listening and speaking anxieties from the learners’ perspective, several strategies are recommended which highly emphasise how educators can eliminate the existence of listening and speaking anxieties in language classroom environment.

Keywords: Fourth Industrial Revolution, Communication Skills, Listening Anxiety, Speaking Anxiety, Causal Factors, Language Anxiety Alleviation

INTRODUCTION
The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is a new era that forms and expands the power of digitisation in fresh and unforeseen ways due to the emergence of technologies which are affecting society vastly. The 4IR is driven by technologies such as automation, additive manufacturing and Industrial Internet (Schwab, 2016). Hence, it is vital to investigate the shifts that the future of education will experience in ensuring that the 4IR can create many benefits for the mass public, especially to those who are directly linked to the education field, such as educators, learners and stakeholders.
The concept of the 4IR is exemplified in an array of technologies which function in an integrated manner, connecting virtual space with the physical world that involves a process of profound transformation of how an individual will think, learn, conceive, produce, distribute and use products and services, powered by the development and availability of a new generation of digital technologies with increasingly competitive prices (South Med Social Dialogue, n.d.). The linking of virtual space such as the internet and other data, with the physical world has profound implications for the society and the economy.

From the historical perspective of the Industrial Revolution (IR), the first IR was based upon water and steam power to mechanise production. Next, the second IR was based upon electric power to create mass production where electronics and information technology (IT) became the core business for third IR to automate production. Lastly, the 4IR continues as per its predecessor, where this digital revolution has been occurring since the middle of the last century. It is characterised by a fusion of technologies that has created grey areas between the physical, digital and biological elements (Schwab, 2016). This leads to the urgency of universities to improvise their roles in shaping the educational framework for innovating and educating future generations. The upcoming trends of education and learning are more technology intensive and learner-oriented, thus educators will have to meet new expectations. The permanent and proactive adjustment between the needs of the economy and the society, together with the new skills and competencies need to be integrated into the generated ecosystems particularly in the employment and business systems.

The 4IR requires certain skills that are not exactly the same as the skills that were required in the 3IR where information technology is the key driver. For the 4IR, future employees or current learners are required to arm themselves with skills such as critical thinking, people management, emotional intelligence, judgement, negotiation, cognitive flexibility as well as knowledge production and management (Xing and Marwala, 2017). In addition, educational institutions are also expected to impart the complex and problem solving skills such as creative skills and social skills, which includes management, leadership, collaboration, critical thinking, curiosity and risk taking, communication, marketing and sales, which are highly required for entrepreneurship (Naude, 2017).

Lifelong comprehensive and reasonable quality education, whether it is formal and informal or physical and digital, will be important in preparing future workforce to prosper in this ambiguous future. The 20th century model of education that instils standardised facts and procedures deliberated to yield a human resource for jobs that no longer exists will be inadequate to meet future challenges. How the future will define the term “work” is where machines will be unable to perform as the “work” will rely on creative expressions, social interactions, physical dexterities, empathy, ingenuity and collaboration. This is where future graduates will fit in (Brown-Martin, 2017).

One of the challenges for the Higher Education (HE) is to provide broader skill sets as cross-functional exchange is often hindered by different languages (Walsh and Donaldson, 2017). Future graduates have to possess a few capabilities such as 21st century skills and digital skills. However, this study will specifically highlight another capability which is the technical skills of the 4IR focussing on the communication centred ability, either between human to human or human to machine. The employee of the 4IR is expected to have no language and time barriers because everybody and everything are networked globally (Jeshcke, 2015). Communication is the analytical and interpersonal skills which need to be combined with critical thinking to operate effectively (Abersek, 2017).
In relating listening anxiety and speaking anxiety with regards to the 4IR, the deprivation of these two skills have brought some fears, for example, unemployment, poor communication skills and incompetent knowledge dispersion to future workforce as studied in past research. Studies have shown that higher education graduates lack second language communication skills and this has led to high unemployment rates among Malaysian graduates (Hanapi and Nordin, 2014). A study conducted by Kassim and Ali (2010) indicates the importance of acquiring communication skills in the English language in the engineering field as a platform for them to be more global friendly in order to be at a par with the demands of the 4IR. In addition, the process of communicating knowledge has been challenged with the emergence of the 4IR, which intensifies language anxiety among university learners specifically from the spectrum of listening and speaking skills as learners are expected to deliver information effectively and precisely (Smithers and Gray, 2017). These issues reveal the call for immediate action for educators from every level to improve the situation. Hence in this study, the researchers investigate the phenomenon of the English language listening anxiety and speaking anxiety which university learners experience as well as the causal factors that could contribute to them. To accomplish these objectives, two research questions have been formulated as guidelines for this study which are as follows:

**Research Question 1:** Is there a significant difference between the mean score of listening anxiety and speaking anxiety?

**Research Question 2:** What are the causal factors that contribute to the formation of listening anxiety and speaking anxiety among university learners?

**LISTENING ANXIETY**

According to Krashen (1985; as cited in Zhang, 2013), listening anxiety is closely related to situations where learners are required to listen in the language where they are targeted to learn. Anxiety in listening occurs when educators have difficulties to teach listening skills as this skill itself is deemed as challenging (Christenberry, 2003). Based on a study conducted by Riasati (2011), listening is considered as anxiety provoking due to three reasons, namely the speed of speaking, different intonation patterns, and unfamiliar words and expressions. Furthermore, listening anxiety causes negative impacts on listening comprehension (Kim, 2000) and learners’ achievement (Elkhafaifi, 2005). It effectuates the language learners to feel worried and tensed as well as make them have doubts whether they are listening correctly. As a result, having constant self-doubts over what they have hear in the target language tasks will implicate badly on their achievements based on their listening assessments and final examination grades.

As stated by Bloomfield et. al (2010), there are several factors that can cause listening anxiety, namely listeners characteristics, such as their working memory capacity, metacognitive strategies, proficiency and experience with L2 and their anxiousness; listening passage characteristics which involves length (overall length and density along with redundancy of information), complexity (syntactic features, directness, concreteness and pragmatic information), organisation (orality, coherence, discourse markers, position of relevant information) and auditory features (accent, hesitation, pauses, noise, distortion, speech rate); and testing conditions which are time allocation, multiple hearings and the process of jotting down notes.
SPEAKING ANXIETY
When a learner is feeling a state of fear or anxiety as he or she is communicating orally, the individual is known to have speaking anxiety (Daly, 1991; as cited in Elkhafaifi, 2005). Fear of communication is relevant with the concept of foreign language anxiety due to the prominence of interpersonal interactions (McCroskey, 1977; as cited in Oxford, 1999). The symptoms for fear of communication can be identified as feeling shy when communicating with people, struggling with oral communication either in pairs or groups, having stage fright and reacting negatively (namely listening to or learning) to a spoken message. According to MacIntyre (1994), how an individual reacts during language learning or communication can be influenced by the significant role of language anxiety as he or she has minimal control over their communicative situation.

There are several factors that can influence the decisions made by learners to speak English in the classroom which include, linguistic difficulties such as limited vocabulary, poor command of grammar rules, pronunciation impediments (Ozturk and Gurbuz, 2014); low self-esteem, minimal L1 information, educators’ intervention and competitiveness (Kayaoglu and Saglamel, 2013); the realisation of undertaking a speech communication course (Yahya, 2013); uncomfortable classroom environment (Zgutowicz, 2009); humiliation by peers, talking in front of native speakers and concerned with social image (Tsiplakides and Keramida, 2009).

In relation to achievement and performance, speaking anxiety is known to produce negative influence such as lower quality of oral performance (Azarfam and Baki, 2012) especially when the learners’ oral ability is tested (Stephenson Wilkinson, 2006). Hence, speaking anxiety can be a significant predictor to oral achievement where anxious language learners can be categorised as those who have retrieval interference while others can also have deficit in their speaking skills (Woodrow, 2006). Conversely, the intensity of anxiety is weak for language learners at freshman or juniors level (Cheng, 2009) and sophomores level (Cheng, 2005) where learners at these levels are not highly concerned with anxiety influence in their language studies.

CAUSAL FACTORS OF LISTENING ANXIETY AND SPEAKING ANXIETY
There are ten factors that can trigger language anxiety which are (1) self-esteem, (2) ambiguity tolerance, (3) resilience to risk, (4) competitiveness, (5) anxiety in social setting, (6) fear of test, (7) inability to adapt to identity and culture, (8) self-philosophy in language learning, (9) activities and teaching strategies conducted in classroom and (10) interactions between educator and their learners (Oxford, 1999). To address the research objectives for this study, only four contributing factors are selected and will be examined comprehensively.

Self-Esteem
Oxford (1999) defines self-esteem as the perceived efficacy in judging their self-worth or value. This definition can be illustrated clearly such as communicating effectively in an environment that requires sufficient speaking skills. How an individual controls himself or herself would determine the desired efficacy. According to Price (1991; as cited in Oxford, 1999), successful language learners possess higher self-esteem compared to unsuccessful ones. Self-esteem is related to the success in language learning when the individuals have the perception of how important language learning is to them. Price (1991; as cited in Oxford, 1999) states that when learners find themselves incompetent in the target language but
resourceful in the native language, this is the condition where self-esteem is endangered. The deteriorating performance in language learning can be related to self-esteem when those with lower self-esteem will be unable to handle their anxiousness. Self-esteem can be an inherent personality or a reaction resulting from a particular situation. The tension on one’s self-esteem is normally heightened when an individual is being put in a situation where they are required to speak with native speakers regardless whether they possess higher educational level or not (Qaddomi, 2013). Additionally, Scarcella and Oxford (1992; as cited in Legac, 2007) state that low self-esteem in a particular situation or environment coexists despite the positive feelings that a person can have on himself or herself. However, self-esteem cannot be entirely blamed in regards to the success of language learning because the nature of language learning itself is threatening which leads learners to deprived normal communication means, restricted space for error-making and inability to function normally (Horwitz et.al, 1986).

**Competitiveness**

Language anxiety can also be triggered by competitiveness when language learners compare themselves to others or unrealistic self-image that they could not achieve. This view is produced by Bailey (1983; as cited in Oxford, 1999) through studying diaries of several language learners. However, this account is not applicable to all language learners as competitiveness is inevitable when they live in a culture that thrives on competition (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992; as cited in Oxford, 1999). An individual can be affected differently by competitiveness based on the preference of learning style, the particular nature of competition, and the rewards or demands of the learning environment.

**Social Anxiety**

According to Leary (1983; as cited in Oxford, 1999), social anxiety can be related to speech anxiety, introversion, stage fright, awkwardness, social-evaluative anxiety and fear of communication. As stated earlier by McCroskey (1977; as cited in Oxford, 1999), with the presence of interpersonal evaluation in interaction, this is where social anxiety will transpire. As a result, those who are too conscious about other’s evaluations of them will tend to behave in a manner that attempts to avoid negative assessments towards them when they display their performance in regards to language, especially speaking skills (Oxford, 1999). Therefore, when the learners receive negative assessment, they will completely opt for withdrawal in social situations. Aida (1994; as cited in Oxford, 1999) highlights examples of the withdrawal indicators such as learners will lack initiative or minimally take part in conversations with their peers.

**Educator – Learners’ Interactions**

Many studies have been conducted on relating educator-learners’ interaction with language anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Koch & Terrell, 1991; Price, 1991; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Young, 1990, Oxford, 1999), where the issues related to educator – learners’ interaction have been identified as strict error correction, agonising mistakes managing especially in front of a class, and conflict management in classroom. As stated by Oxford et. al (1991), these issues will later affect the learner by lowering their grades and contributing to stress in the classroom. Educator – learners’ interaction is said to be a factor that can activate language anxiety due to educator’s personalities (Al-Saraj, 2011), methods applied
by educators when correcting errors (Toth, 2009), fear to communicate with educators especially during question and answer sessions (Mesri, 2012) and unsuitable teaching method and unwillingness to cultivate bonding with their learners (Worde, 1998; as cited in Marwan, 2007).

**METHODOLOGY**

*Research Design*

This study employed a mixed method design using questionnaires and interview protocol to collect quantitative and qualitative data in order to answer the research questions. This two-phase design entails the collection of quantitative data in its first phase, followed by the collection of qualitative data in the second phase. The second phase was conducted with the purpose of explaining or elaborating the results from the quantitative data (Creswell, 2014).

*Participants*

The quantitative data for the study were obtained from 125 learners from higher education institution majoring in non-English programmes namely Science and Physical Health, Music, and Architecture, Planning and Surveying in a public university through the use of the Factors of Language Anxiety Questionnaire or also known as FLAQ (Kamaruddin, et. al, 2017). Meanwhile, the qualitative data was acquired through in-depth email interviews. These eight participants interviewed were selected based on their high score on the FLAQ. The highest score on the FLAQ indicated that they are highly anxious while accomplishing listening or speaking tasks.

*Instruments*

Items for this self-developed questionnaire were adopted and adapted from reputable questionnaires related to language anxiety. Specific items related to listening anxiety and speaking anxiety were based on the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) by Elkhafaifi (2005) and the Foreign Language Classroom Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLCSAS) by Apple (2013), respectively. On the other hand, the questions for the interview protocol were derived based on the relevance to the research questions. The six open-ended interview questions used in this study are as follows:

1. Do you feel nervous studying in the English language classroom?
2. Which types of language activities will make you nervous in the language classroom? Is it listening activity or speaking activity?
3. In your opinion, what are the reasons that make you feel anxious or nervous while doing listening or speaking task?
4. What are the signs or indicators that inform you are anxious or nervous when you are doing listening or speaking task?
5. How do you normally react to the anxiety induced situation?

*Data Collection Procedure*

This study was conducted in one of the higher learning institutions in Shah Alam, Selangor. The FLAQ questionnaires were distributed to learners who are studying at the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying. After the questionnaires were collected, their scores on the FLAQ were counted and those who scored within the
range of 147 to 200 were considered as learners with high level of listening anxiety and speaking anxiety. This range was obtained by dividing the highest score on the FLAQ, namely 200, with three levels of anxiety namely high, moderate and low. Eight learners who acquired high scores on the FLAQ were identified as highly anxious learners and they were contacted using emails procured from their demographic profiles. The eight participants gave their consents to be interviewed and six open-ended interview questions were emailed to them. The participants were allowed to be bilingual while responding to the interview questions. Responses from the email interviews were received within two weeks. The responses were then extracted from the email interviews and categorised based on themes to answer the research questions pertaining to listening anxiety and speaking anxiety.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

The analysis to identify which of the two language skills are severely affected by anxiety was conducted by computing the following numbered items of the FLAQ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Skills</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, 33 and 37.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26, 30, 34 and 38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The quantitative data was analysed by using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and sum. Inferential statistics involving Paired Samples t-test was also analysed to discover if there was any significance differences between learners’ listening and speaking skills.

Meanwhile, the qualitative data was acquired through in-depth email interviews. The eight interview participants were learners with high anxiety scores based on the FLAQ who agreed to be interviewed. The interview data served to triangulate and further validate the quantitative findings.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

a. **Listening Anxiety**

Table 2 below shows the mean and standard deviation of language anxiety experienced by university learners with regards to their listening skills. This table shows also that the highest item of the abovementioned dimension is “I get upset when I am not sure whether I understand what I am hearing in English.” which has a mean of 3.4160 (SD = 1.02536). The lowest item of the aforementioned dimension is “I usually find it difficult to understand English related materials that I listen to.” which has a mean of 2.7920 (SD = .83566).

<p>| Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Language Anxiety in Learning Listening Skills |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qu1</td>
<td>3.4160</td>
<td>1.02536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu13</td>
<td>3.2240</td>
<td>.99890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu17</td>
<td>3.1440</td>
<td>.92199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu29</td>
<td>3.1200</td>
<td>.98045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu33</td>
<td>3.1040</td>
<td>.95735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu37</td>
<td>3.0480</td>
<td>.82164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu5</td>
<td>2.9920</td>
<td>.99593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu21</td>
<td>2.9760</td>
<td>1.08853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu25</td>
<td>2.8960</td>
<td>.89644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu9</td>
<td>2.7920</td>
<td>.83566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.0712</td>
<td>.51491</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the email interview, Miss K stated that she is not comfortable during the listening activities because she cannot grasp the words that she hears and sometimes due to the interlocutor who speaks in a fast pace.
The top three relevant aspects that relate to their anxiety when it comes to listening are based on their self-esteem (item 1), competitiveness (item 13) and social anxiety (item 17). When the learners were unsuccessful in understanding the information in their listening activity task, it lowers their self-esteem thus building the feeling of anxiousness due to their ineffectiveness in listening. Their self-esteem is also closely related to competitiveness as the learners not only wanted to be a successful listener in English, but they also wanted to be better than their other friends. This implies that learners in this current study are competitive in listening. Furthermore, in the social context namely English language classroom, the learners felt anxious to participate in listening activities as, when the learners felt that they could not perform well in listening activities, it would affect the production of the language as well since listening is equally important as speaking in communication. In agreement with Aida (1994; as cited in Oxford, 1999), learners will not be motivated to initiate or participate in conversations when they do not comprehend completely what they hear from the interlocutor.

b. Speaking Anxiety

Table 3 below shows the mean and standard deviation of language anxiety experienced by university learners with regards to speaking skills. This table also shows that the highest item of the above mentioned dimension is “I am worried about making mistakes when I use English to converse.” which has a mean of 3.2720 (SD = .92785). The lowest item of the aforementioned dimension is “I am afraid by the number of rules I have to learn to speak in English.” which has a mean of 2.6880 (SD = .98714).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qu34 I am worried about making mistakes when I use English to converse.</td>
<td>3.2720</td>
<td>.92785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu18 I feel nervous speaking in front of the entire class.</td>
<td>3.2480</td>
<td>.87672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu2 I get nervous when I have to speak up in my English language class.</td>
<td>3.2320</td>
<td>1.01708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu14 I am worried that other learners in class speak better English than I do.</td>
<td>3.2240</td>
<td>1.07661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu10 I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English language class.</td>
<td>3.2000</td>
<td>1.03954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You have to know so much about English history and culture in order to speak in English.

I often feel panic when I have to prepare and speak English under time constraint.

I feel confident when I speak in English.

Answering a teacher’s question in English is embarrassing.

I am afraid by the number of rules I have to learn to speak in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qu22</td>
<td>3.1120</td>
<td>.86338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu38</td>
<td>2.9200</td>
<td>.85760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu6</td>
<td>2.8960</td>
<td>.84074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu26</td>
<td>2.8960</td>
<td>1.05476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu30</td>
<td>2.6880</td>
<td>.98714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result from the email interviews supported the questionnaire. Seven out of eight participants unanimously stated that the type of classroom activities which makes them feel anxious is speaking. For Miss N, she felt nervous when she has to speak English in the class. Mr. K stated that he is comfortable with other language activities, but not with speaking skills. Miss K felt inferior with her speaking skill as she is not confident to produce an output as expected by her educator. Miss F and Miss R similarly responded that they felt nervous with speaking skills especially during public speaking and when it has to be done individually. On the other hand, Miss H specifically mentioned that she felt anxious with speaking activities when she is not given an ample time to make preparations. As for Miss L, who studied Academic Skill subject in that particular semester, she has been encouraged by her educator to converse in English but she did not do so even with her friends due to her shyness.

Referring to the quantitative data, it was actually surprising that speaking is not the main language skill that caused learners’ anxiousness as demonstrated by numerous studies in the past. Most of the extensive studies conducted on speaking anxiety signify that language anxiety is greatly impacted by speaking skill, but it does not seem to be the case for the participants in this study. However, the qualitative findings seem to contradict the quantitative findings by supporting the findings from past studies.

In the analysis of mean score for the speaking items, the learners illustrated that speaking influenced their anxiety from the aspects of educator-learner interaction (item 34), social anxiety (item 18) and self-esteem (item 2). The learners stated through the quantitative findings that they were worried of making mistakes when they use English to converse with their educator. This finding then fits into previous views by Hoang (2011) and Mak (2011) who explain that educators’ inadequate feedback, encouragements and mistake correcting manners have caused speaking difficulties for learners. From the perspective of social anxiety, learners also stated that they are nervous when asked to speak in front of the entire class. This finding corresponds to an earlier view by Hadziosmanovic (2012) who also suggests that there are significant relationship between speaking English, speaking anxiety
and classroom environment. When learners perceive themselves as incompetent in speaking and become too concerned with how their peers would think of them, they will breed the fear of speaking in them (Tsiplakides and Keramida, 2009). This will later develop the idealistic beliefs that they should produce sentence with none grammatical errors, active participations in classroom, confidence in experimenting the language with their language educator and become competitive with their peers. As a result, these idealistic language beliefs will affect their self-esteem and nervousness with the idea of speaking up in front of the English language class.

c. The Significant Difference between Listening Anxiety and Speaking Anxiety

Table 5: Paired Sample T-test Table for the Mean Scores of Listening and Speaking Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interval of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 Listening</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.34731</td>
<td>.03106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A paired sample t-test revealed that there is no significant difference in language anxiety for listening and speaking skills, t (125) = .155, p>.05. Although the mean score for listening anxiety is higher than the mean score for speaking anxiety, the significant difference indicates that language anxiety has its debilitating influence for both of the language skills. Hence, this finding is in line with what has been stated by Horwitz et. al (1986) on the general conceptualisation of language anxiety whereby the unique nature of language learning process has triggered distinguishable complexity of how learners will react in language learning based on their self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours in language classrooms.

CONCLUSION

The finding from this study has revealed that learners are more triggered with anxiety when they are placed in language learning situations that involve listening compared to speaking based on the mean and standard deviation for both questionnaire prompts on listening anxiety and speaking anxiety. The quantitative findings have contradicted findings from past studies as most researchers found that learners possess higher anxiety in speaking situations rather
than other language skills such as listening. In addition, the contributing factors to listening anxiety and speaking anxiety stem from learners’ self-esteem and social anxiety or in other words, anxiety coming from self-judgment and others’ evaluations. Hence, in catering to the need of providing skilful workers with excellent communication skills as part of the 4IR skills requirements, language learning fears such as listening anxiety and speaking anxiety, should not be a major issue that hinders this aspiration.

In the retrospective of overcoming language learners’ anxiousness in listening, there are some listening strategies that can be employed by learners who experience anxiety attack. However, there is a negative association between foreign language listening anxiety and listening strategy used as learners are aware of listening strategies but they did not employ effective listening strategies and, in the worst case, some of these anxious learners do not know what the listening strategies are that they can use especially when learners feel anxious while sitting for listening test (Gonen, 2009; Chang, 2008). Hence, educators can teach and guide their learners regarding some listening strategies based on their level of anxiety. According to Yang (2012), language learners with low anxiety utilised listening strategies while learners with higher level of anxiety employed compensation and memory strategies. Chang (2008) further suggests educators to apply these four forms of listening support, namely previewing questions, repeated input, background information preparation, and vocabulary instruction, for assisting their learners during listening tests or assessments. Additionally, there are three classroom pedagogies that may minimise listening anxiety, namely the use of authentic listening tasks (Melanlioglu, 2013), bilingual communicative classroom (Legac, 2007) and the integration of computer based listening tasks (Ko, 2010).

As for speaking anxiety, there is a need for educators to understand their learners’ restrained reactions to speaking activities based on several contributing factors which originate from the language classroom that they conduct. It is important for educators to allocate mutually agreed preparation time (between educator and learners) for presentation rehearsal or mock presentation to build their readiness before they are able to speak in front of the classroom (Mak, 2011). Learners’ oral presentation is profoundly affected by their low language proficiency and will affect their confidence as well (Hoang, 2011; Subasi, 2010). To reduce anxiousness among language learners, educators should also provide sufficient feedback and encouragement and, at the same time practise positive and acceptable mistake correcting manners. In the situation of group oral presentations, their presentation dynamics should not be affected by rigid applications of target language and this can be done by allowing them to use their first language when they are communicating with other group members (Mak, 2011). Conclusively, there are two aspects where educators must reflect in order to cultivate an anxiety-alleviating classroom for language learners, which are their own characteristics and classroom planned activities. According to Cheng (2005), distributing uninformed assessments, impulsive teaching, being too firm and lacking in communication skills are the common anxiety provoking habits commonly found in educators. Cheng adds that the main in-class activities regarded as anxiety provoking are the ones that involve making speeches in front of a large group. Educators must also realise that their learners’ voice is crucial in order for them to receive feedback on their professionalism, and teaching and learning activities in classroom so that they can reflect whether educators themselves or their teaching practices have been contributing to language anxiety especially when dealing with speaking skills.
Taking everything into account, this study attempts to remind educators that, in the race to prepare learners with various skills such as 21st century skills, digital skills and technical skills, psychological factors that can cause some anomaly in learners’ language learning, such as listening anxiety and speaking anxiety, should not be entirely forgotten. Educators can help learners with any learning problems that come from the outside such as physical learning environment and psychosocial learning environment (Gardiner, 1989; Zandvliet, 1999; as cited in Amirul, Che Ahmad et. al, 2013), but what goes on the inside or the affective side of learners’ learning? Through this study, educators can get some insight on how to reduce listening anxiety and speaking anxiety based on the recommendations suggested in this paper which has tapped into educators’ personality and activities in classrooms.

REFERENCES


THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES IN VOCABULARY TEACHING:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THREE STRATEGIES

Arjumand Ara* and Sadia Afrin Shorna2
Department of English, University of Asia Pacific
E-mail: arjumand@uap-bd.edu1; sadia@uap-bd.edu2

ABSTRACT
Vocabulary knowledge is very complex and learning vocabulary often requires the application of various vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). These strategies recommended by educationists and researchers are based on some theoretical principles and are considered as effective in varying degrees in different contexts. It is important to find out the comparative effectiveness of these strategies in case of the tertiary level students of Bangladesh who are not found to be very good at using VLSs. This study, thus, investigates the comparative effectiveness of three different strategies by randomly assigning 90 tertiary level students into three groups. These three groups received different treatments and were given tests to find out both the short term and long term retention rates of 16 vocabulary items. The findings show that both the short and long term retention rates were the highest when learners were taught vocabulary using the visual aids.

Keywords: VLS, visual strategies, rote learning, guessing meaning from context, long-term retention, short-term retention

INTRODUCTION
Vocabulary is considered as one of the most important components of language and normally through words the main message in any communication is conveyed. However, teaching vocabulary throughout the history of English language teaching has received comparatively less attention in the curriculum design or classroom practice, so much so that Carter and McCarthy (1988) described vocabulary as “the neglected Cinderella” of this field. Recently, the field of vocabulary teaching has received considerable significance and many (e.g. Nation, 2001, 2005; Marion, 2008; Susanto, 2016) deem vocabulary learning necessary for the acquisition of the second language. In classroom context, vocabulary teaching includes giving instructions about the form of the lexical item, its pronunciation and the meaning it conveys. This particular task can be carried out by using various strategies, which are commonly called the vocabulary learning strategies (VLS).

These strategies recommended by educationists and researchers are based on some theoretical principles and are considered as effective in varying degrees in different contexts. It is imperative for a language instructor to understand which strategies work best for a particular group of learners in a unique situation. It is also imperative for language instructors to become familiar with the various vocabulary learning strategies learners can use to cope with new words, to motivate them to use the strategies they find effective and through their teaching introduce some of these (Hedge, 2000). Vocabulary learning, particularly in case of Bangladesh, usually involves rote learning; that is, merely memorizing lists of words without associating them with any context. While this traditional way of acquiring word meaning is sometimes workable, it normally results in poor retention rate. It is important to find out the comparative effectiveness of these strategies in case of the tertiary level students of
Bangladesh who are not found to be very good at using VLSs. These students, who are not usually proficient in English because of their Bengali medium background, are required to carry on their higher studies in English. Particularly, reading a text becomes quite challenging for them as they have to encounter unknown lexical items quite often. It is important to investigate what vocabulary learning strategies work for these tertiary level learners and to equip them with effective strategies for both classroom and outside the class vocabulary learning. This paper, therefore, investigates the comparative effectiveness of three of the most widely known strategies: rote learning, use of visual images, and guessing meaning from context and thereby considers the classroom implications of using them.

**Vocabulary learning strategies**

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) are usually considered an integral part of language learning strategies which Chamot and Kuppers (1989) define as the techniques that learners employ to understand and retain skills and information. Rubin (1987:23-27), in the same vein, defines learning strategies as “the process of obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using new information”. Language learning strategies are sub-categories of general learning strategies and language learning strategies (Abadi, Baradaran, 2013). They are defined by Gu (1994, as cited in Harvey and Goudvis, 2000) as particular strategies used by second language learners when they want to acquire new words. Ellis (1994) suggested that VLSs set off a number of actions including trying to find new words deliberately, organizing lexical items carefully, guessing meaning from context and retaining word knowledge in the long term memory. Nation (2013) mentioned the following characteristics of the VLSs:

- There are a number of strategies available from which learners can select;
- These strategies are learnt in several stages;
- Training and adequate knowledge about these strategies are required in order to use them successfully;
- These strategies need to improve learners’ ability to learn new vocabulary.

In other words, VLSs are supposed to help learners acquire information on the grammatical meanings of new words, their pronunciation, spelling and also usage in varied contexts.

**Types of VLSs**

VLSs are classified based on different criteria. Schmitt (2000), for example, makes a distinction based on learners’ receptive and productive knowledge. Schmitt (1997) earlier made the following division according to the strategy inventory of language learning (SILL) proposed by Oxford (1990):

- Discovery strategies: these strategies are related to the ones language learners apply to find out the meaning of unknown vocabulary.
- Consolidation strategies: this refers to the process in which meanings of new words are consolidated once they are encountered.

Oxford’s (1990) main categories of memory strategies that Schmitt (1997) used include-

- Rote learning (RL)
The Role of Instructional Strategies in Vocabulary Teaching: A Comparative Study of Three Strategies

- Creating mental linkage (CML)
- Applications of visuals and sounds
- Structured reviewing.

The following table which is based on Sinhaneti and Kyaw’s (2012) diagram shows the strategies and their features.

Table 1: Classification of memory strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory strategies</th>
<th>Rote memorization</th>
<th>Creating mental connections</th>
<th>Using visuals and sounds</th>
<th>Reviewing appropriately</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reading aloud</td>
<td>• Grouping words according to their grammatical categories</td>
<td>• Using images</td>
<td>Doing structured reviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing down vocabulary items</td>
<td>• Creating a link between lexical items and the context in which they are presented</td>
<td>• Using semantic mapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning new words from a list</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Using sounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Finding out translated equivalents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Finding definitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three of these strategies are discussed in detail in the following segments.

**Rote memorization**

Li (2005) defined rote learning (RL) as repetition, memorization and practicing. In this strategy generally words are repeatedly uttered aloud, sometimes with little or no comprehension of the meaning or the context. Although memorization of vocabulary lists is quite popular with some students, this traditional practice is both recommended and criticized by different practitioners. There are several studies (e.g., Barcroft, 2009; Hummel, 2010; as cited in Sinhaneti and Kyaw, 2012; Li 2008) that indicate learners not only hold positive views on rote learning strategy but also still use them. Sinhaneti and Kyaw (2012) in their study on 100 Burmese EFL students concluded that this strategy was used more than other memory strategies. These learners also gave opinions that rote learning works effectively both in the preliminary and further stages of vocabulary acquisition.

However, RL is vehemently criticized by many linguists including Schouten-van Parreren (1989) whose arguments have four strands. Firstly, learners are likely to forget even after giving considerable efforts in memorizing words in a list -as they are presented as isolated elements without any ‘cognitive hold’ in their memory. Secondly, if the word lists are arranged alphabetically or thematically, learners usually suffer from interference. This can have potentially harmful effects on learners as not only these hamper their learning of new words but also make them learn wrong meanings which later can be difficult to get rid of. Thirdly, Parreren (1989) cites Beheydt (1987) who argued that isolated words are devoid of linguistic reality since meaning of a new word is sometimes partly defined by its context.
Finally, isolated words also do not present a psychological reality as they are not capable of carrying a message. They cannot evoke an emotional involvement in learner which is considered as an important factor for long term retention (Lontjew, 1979, as cited in Hedge, 2000).

There are several factors, as mentioned by Sinhaneti and Kyaw (2012) behind these differing views on rote learning such as educational background, cultural norms, language learning environment, examination system or just the lack of proper knowledge of different vocabulary learning strategies and how they are used effectively. Learners in many Asian countries including Bangladesh still utilize rote learning, especially in case of vocabulary learning as part of their traditional teaching system. Although in Bangladesh communication has been emphasized now in case of English language learning, students are found to hold on to the traditional practices.

**Visual strategies**

Among the multitude of vocabulary learning strategies, visual strategy is quite popular for their effectiveness and simplicity in implementation. One visual strategy is the addition of images or diagrams while another is using strategies such as mapping. In the former simply an image or diagram is used alongside a vocabulary item to be learnt. The use of such images and especially diagram, according to some linguists (e.g. Kim and Gilman, 2008) can be effective in explaining the meaning of a new lexical item. The latter may involve the visual representation of the relationship between known and unknown words, synonyms and antonyms. This strategy is also known as semantic mapping.

Visual strategy holds importance as a necessary step in the meaning retention process. Brown and Payne (1994, as cited in Hatch and Brown, 1995) talked about five necessary steps that are involved in learning new vocabulary and the second one emphasizes on the visual image:

1. the presence of sources for encountering new lexical forms;
2. obtaining a clear picture of the forms of the new vocabulary; this image may be auditory or visual or both;
3. learning the meaning of the unknown vocabulary;
4. being able to make a strong link between the form and the meaning of the new vocabulary; and
5. using the new vocabulary item.

Different researchers have pointed out different ways in which the visual strategies can be beneficial. One reason for using such strategies is the increase of motivation of the students as this strategy allows more interaction among the learners and the teacher (Danan, 1992). Another reason pointed out by some (e.g. Mayer, 1993) is that the use of visual aids helps students concentrate better.

Different studies also indicate that teaching vocabulary with visual images is quite effective. Carpenter and Olson (2012), for example, in their study found that students remembered the meaning of words better when they learnt them with pictures rather than using them as independent words. Mayer and Sims (1994) also found that students’ learning was better when teachers used visual and verbal aids simultaneously. According to Richards, Platt and Webber (1985), learners could retain the meaning of words taught by using visual
strategies both for a short and long time. Stokes (2002) in her study investigated the effectiveness of using images to teach lexical items. She came to the conclusion that images helped learners to learn better as they could associate the unknown words with the images. Rokni and Karimi (2013) in their study with two groups of students also came to the similar conclusion. They divided 46 female intermediate students into a control group and an experimental group. The control group was asked to memorize 56 lexical items traditionally while the same number of items was taught to the learners of the experimental group by using visual elements such as images, real things and flash cards. The findings showed that learning of lexical items in the experimental group increased significantly. In addition, the members of the group also perceived the visual strategy to be an effective way of learning vocabulary.

**Guessing meaning from context**

Guessing meaning from context is one of the cognitive strategies that involve “direct mental operations” to work out the meaning of the new lexical items and retaining them in the “mental lexicon” after categorizing them (Hedge, 2000). Harvey and Goudvis (2000) claim cognitive strategies include moves that include:

- connecting existing knowledge and new information found in the text;
- raising questions during reading;
- inferring the writer’s ideas which s/he may not state directly;
- summarizing information; and
- monitoring understanding particularly when ideas are not clear.

There are many ways in which cognitive strategies can be used such as making associations, learning words in clusters, exploring range of meanings, and using key words in which a keyword is selected from the learners’ L1 which is pronounced in the same way as the unknown word in the target language. Lexical inferring or guessing lexical meaning form context is another important strategy that learners use in their attempt to find the meaning when they encounter a word for the first time. This context, in case of vocabulary learning, is defined in a number of ways. Context can be the sentence in which the new word is found or the way in which the vocabulary is presented. Others (e.g. Reed, 2000) define context in terms of the linguistic and the nonlinguistic information that learners get that is linked to the meaning of it when the new word is presented in a particular setting. When the new lexical items are presented in the context, learners can use the linguistic or nonlinguistic cues to decode or predict meaning without having to use any dictionaries (Rogers, 1996).

Guessing meaning form context is generally considered a very useful strategy especially in case of incidental vocabulary learning. Prince (1996) pointed out three major advantages of the guessing lexical meaning from context strategy. First of all, when learners have to guess meaning from context, it makes it imperative for them to develop strategies such as making inferences or anticipations which in turn slowly help them to gain self-reliance that is deemed as necessary for the development of proficiency. Secondly, when students come across new lexical items in context, it is in fact an indication that these are the words really used in a discourse for carrying out communication. Finally, when lexical items are used in context, they give an indication of how the words are used.
Inferring the meaning of a lexical item from its context can aid the retention of meaning, especially when learners decide on the meaning after more careful analysis and the length of retention will depend on the amount of emotional and mental energy invested in the process of working out the meaning (Haastrup, 1989; as cited in Hedge 2000). A number of studies have indicated its value such as the one by Cody and Nation (1988). Fan (2003), in his study on the effectiveness of 58 vocabulary learning strategies, found guessing meaning from context as one of the most widely used and useful strategies.

However, there are also other studies that indicate quite the contrary outcomes. Back, McKeown and McCaslin (1983) pointed out that certain contexts might be deceptive, compelling learners to guess wrong meanings. Mokhtar and Rawian (2012) in their study found out that guessing strategy was preferred by students but it did not help to improve the learners’ English vocabulary knowledge. Folse (2004) in his empirical study came to the conclusion that guessing meaning from context hardly contributed to the learners’ vocabulary learning as it required learners to have the knowledge of a large vocabulary size to help them guess accurately, although this strategy did not interrupt the flow of reading.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
The objective of this study is to investigate whether the three strategies discussed above are effective for the ESL language learners of the university where the authors teach. In Bangladesh, learners are usually found to be relying heavily on rote memorization. In schools, the Bengali medium students study two subjects in English. In the first subject a book named “English for Today” is used. The book is designed based on the principles of communicative language teaching approach with the main focus in communication practice. While in the second subject, they study grammar books written by local authors. In both the secondary and higher secondary levels, little focus is given to vocabulary instruction. The books do not contain long texts with a range of vocabulary items, nor do they include various strategies for learning vocabulary.

In the tertiary level, these students have to study in the English medium as in most universities at present English is the medium of instruction. These students with poor vocabulary knowledge have to struggle with the numerous new words they encounter everyday while they pursue their higher studies. Their lack of skills in vocabulary learning makes it imperative for them to get acquainted with the vocabulary learning strategies to find out the meaning of the new vocabulary items that they often encounter while reading texts and also to retain their meanings for a long time.

Thus the research questions of this study are:

1. How effective are the visual, rote learning and guessing meaning from context strategies for the short and long term retention of the learnt vocabulary items?
2. Which among these strategies is more effective in case of the tertiary level students of Bangladesh?

METHODOLOGY

Subjects
The subjects of this study were 90 Bangladeshi first year first semester tertiary level students of the university where the authors currently teach. These students who are majoring in
different disciplines including civil engineering, pharmacy, computer science and business administration, were selected by Simple Random Sampling (SRS) method. All these students had passed their higher secondary school certificate examination from different boards of Bangladesh before they were enrolled in the university. The students were both males and females and their age ranged from 17 to 19 years. Although the students were majoring in different subjects, they attended the same placement test for an English Language Proficiency Course (ELPC) and attained the same range of marks. This four-week course is offered to the students as a remedial course and students who achieve less than 50% marks in the placement test need to take a remedial course before they begin their first semester.

These students were further divided into three groups of each consisting of 30 students. These three groups were given three different kinds of treatments explained in the next segment of this paper. One of the researchers carried out the study during the ELPC class hours.

The study instrument
A passage named “A Ship in a Strom” was selected for the study and initially 20 words were selected to prepare a list for the treatment. Before the treatment began, the reliability of the test was checked by giving all the three groups of students the list to find out whether they already knew the words or not. Out of the 20 words, 4 were deleted from the list after the students admitted that they knew the words and the final list contained 16 words.

First experiment for short-term retention
For finding out the comparative effectiveness of the three different vocabulary learning strategies, Group A was given a reading comprehension test entitled “A Ship in a Strom”. They were instructed to read the passage and guess the meaning of the highlighted lexical items. Their answers were discussed later in the classroom and the teacher discussed the meaning of the words they found difficult to guess. An hour later they were instructed to answer 16 multiple choice questions on those words and to tick the correct answers. Their answers were checked and the number of correct answers was calculated. Based on the calculation, the students could remember 46% of the words they guessed from the context.

In Group B, the subjects were presented through multimedia projector the words and their meanings pairing them with images that relate with the meanings of those words (Appendix A). One hour after the presentation their retention of the meanings was tested by giving the subjects 16 multiple choice questions on those words and asking them to tick the correct answers. Their answers were checked and the number of correct answers was calculated. The short term retention rate was found to be 64% in this strategy.

The students of Group C were given the words meaning as a list (Appendix B) and asked to memorize the words without any kind of discussion. Sixteen multiple choice questions on those words were also given to them one hour later and they were asked to tick the correct answers. Their answers were checked and the number of correct answers was calculated. In this experiment, students could remember 51% of the meanings of the words they memorized. Figure 1 shows the results of the short-term retention experiment.
Second experiment for long-term retention
In the second phase of the experiment that took place after one week, the three groups were asked separately to answer the 16 MCQs on the words they had previously learned by using those strategies. In this long term retention experiment, it was revealed that the first group remembered 25% of the vocabulary, second group remembered 53% and the third group remembered 41% of the vocabulary respectively. The data is presented in Figure 2.

It is clearly seen that students’ retention is higher in visual representation of words. In case of short-term retention experiment Group B’s retention rate was 18% higher than that of Group A and 13% higher than that of Group C. Similarly, in the long-term retention experiment, the retention rate of Group B was 28% higher than Group A and 12% higher than Group C.
DISCUSSION
This study provides further strength to the claim that different strategies differ in their effectiveness in different contexts. In line with the outcomes of the previous literature (Richards et al. 1985), the study puts further claims to the fact that learners are able to retain the meaning of new vocabulary items learnt with the help of visual aids both after short and long time intervals. When learners associated meaning with a visual image, the memory traces became more permanent. When learners engaged in rote memorization, on the other hand, they performed moderately well. Several reasons may have contributed to this result. First of all, these students are used to an education system (i.e. the Bangladeshi education system) that makes learners rely heavily on memorization. Students are quite adaptive to this “traditional” way of learning vocabulary. As mentioned by Barcroft (2009), Hummel (2010), and Li (2005) in their studies, learners might still hold very positive views on the rote learning strategy. Their positive attitude towards this strategy might have helped them to use it effectively.

In case of guessing meaning form contexts, however, it was found to be of little effect both in the case of short term and long term retention of meaning. There are several possible reasons why guessing meaning of unknown words form context had such a poor outcome. It is an undeniable fact that this is one of the most widely used strategies for the L1 learners for learning vocabulary incidentally. Native speakers not only possess quite impressive vocabulary knowledge but also get repeated encounters to those words as they are always exposed to the language input in natural settings. Second language learners, in contrast, are denied these repeated exposures to new lexical items over time and in a wide variety of contexts (Martin, 1984). Thus, this study, in line with Folse’s (2004) claim, reveals that merely depending on context clues may not turn to be an effective vocabulary learning strategy particularly in case of learners with low proficiency level.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM
Although the study was applied to a limited number of students all belonging to the same university, it nonetheless has strong implications for the language classrooms including the following:

- In cases when learners depend on memorizing words from a list, teachers need to introduce and use vocabulary learning strategies to motivate learners to work with word meanings and to retain the knowledge for a long time.
- Teachers can develop materials by using visual images with the help of the internet. Although it is difficult to find images of abstract concept, there are thousands of websites that contain a wide variety of usable images.
- Teachers also need to train the learners the skills required to guess meanings from context as this strategy is important to develop the fluency of reading.

CONCLUSION
Vocabulary is a key factor when learning a second or a foreign language and it is important for classroom instructors to understand which vocabulary strategies will work best for the particular group of learners they are teaching. Language instructors undoubtedly need various VLSs as arsenals to enhance the reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of the learners and also to equip them with the means to learn independently out of the classroom. This
A comparative study on the effectiveness of the three vocabulary learning strategies can be promising for second language instructors, especially in the context of Bangladesh to decide on which VLS to select when teaching a particular group of learners. Despite its limitations, the study can pave the way for new research in different contexts.

REFERENCES


Bird, P. Falvey, A. Tsui, D. Allison, & A. McNeill (Eds.), Language and learning (pp. 376-401). Hong Kong: The Education Department.


The Editorial Board of the Journal of Language and Communication wishes to thank the following:

Jackie Lee Fung King  
*University of Hong Kong*

Chan Mei Yuit  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Jariah Mohd Jan  
*University of Malaya*

Siti Nurbaya Mohd Nor  
*University of Malaya*

Kiranjit Kaur  
*Universiti Teknologi Mara*

Shadrach Idi  
*Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State Nigeria.*

Mohd Hilmi Hamzah  
*Universiti Utara Malaysia*

Ang Lay Hoon  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Chiew Poh Shin  
*University of Malaya*

Pramela Krish  
*Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*

Ting Su Hie  
*University Malaya Sarawak*

Jayakaran Mukundan  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Vahid Nimechisalem  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Mohammed Nasser  
*Wasit University, Iraq*

Helen Tan  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Manjet Kaur Mehar Singh  
*Universiti Sains Malaysia*

Hardev Kaur  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Mohd Muzhafar Idrus  
*Islamic Science University of Malaysia*

Manimangai A/P Mani  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Aimillia Mohd Ramli  
*International Islamic University Malaysia*

Wan Nur Madiha Ramlan  
*International Islamic University Malaysia*

Jessica Price  
*University of Nottingham Malaysia*

Christine Leong Xiang Ru  
*University of Nottingham Malaysia*

Ramiza Darmi  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Ain Nadzimah  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Sumati A/P Renganathan  
*Universiti Teknologi Petronas*

Omar M. Abdullah  
*University of Anbar*

Carol Elizabeth A G Leon  
*University of Malaya*

Arbaayah Ali Termizi  
*Universiti Putra Malaysia*

Faizahani Ab Rahman  
*Universiti Utara Malaysia*