TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

'The conquest of learning is achieved through the knowledge of languages.'

- Roger Bacon

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Introduction to Issue 8(1)

by Editor-in-Chief Elena N. Malyuga

Welcome to Issue 8(1) of Training, Language and Culture. This issue incorporates a collection of eight original research articles and one book review that together span a wide range of topics in the fields of language learning, pedagogical innovation, linguistic analysis, and the intersection of language with technology. Each contribution encourages the integration of the findings across disciplines, appealing to a broad audience including educators, linguists, curriculum designers, and policymakers. The articles in this issue collectively expose the importance of interdisciplinary research in addressing complex questions about language acquisition, teaching methodologies, cultural influences on communication, and the role of language studies.

In *The use of the iBrainstorm app in a collaborative argumentation-based learning context for developing listening comprehension skills by EFL learners,* Mahmood Yenkimaleki and Vincent J. van Heuven explore the pedagogical benefits of incorporating the *iBrainstorm* app into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Their study, conducted among BA-level students at Bu-Ali Sina University, Iran, provides empirical evidence that the app significantly enhances students' listening comprehension skills more effectively than traditional teaching methods. This research has important implications for educators and curriculum designers, suggesting that the integration of technology and argumentation-based learning can significantly impact EFL learners' listening proficiency.

In *A target English needs analysis on ESP course: Exploring medical students' perceptions of necessities at a Yemeni university*, Wafa Ahmed Farea and Manjet Kaur Mehar Singh present a valuable and comprehensive needs analysis of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses from the perspective of medical students in Yemen. By identifying the key discrepancies between student needs and course offerings, this study offers actionable observations on how ESP courses can be better tailored to meet the specific language skills required in the medical profession, thus improving the educational experience and professional preparedness of medical students.

In *Spanish as a resource in the acquisition of English as a second language*, Ana María Pérez-Cabello and Michelle Teresa Quinn challenge traditional views on the use of students' first language (L1) in learning a second language (L2). Through a mixed-methods approach, the authors argue that judicious use of Spanish can facilitate English language acquisition among learners in Spain. This finding contributes to the ongoing debate about L1 use in L2 education and suggests that a flexible approach to language instruction, which incorporates the strategic use of L1, can benefit learners.

In *Stance expressions in applied linguistics research articles: A corpus-based contrastive study*, Muchamad Sholakhuddin Al Fajri and Ikmi Nur Oktavianti examine the differences in stance marker use between L1 Indonesian and native English speakers in the field of applied linguistics. Their findings reveal culturally influenced patterns in academic writing, offering critical information for English language teaching, particularly for non-native speakers aiming to publish in international journals. This research points out the need for targeted instruction that sensitises learners to the discursive norms of academic writing in English.

In *Evaluating the BBC's L2 approach to teaching English consonants online: A digitally oriented pedagogic phonetic analysis*, Amir H. Y. Salama critiques the effectiveness of the BBC's online phonetics resources. The analysis identifies areas for improvement in digital pedagogy, specifically in teaching English consonants, suggesting that more comprehensive instructional strategies could enhance learning outcomes. This study emphasises the importance of evaluating and refining online educational content to meet learners' phonetic and phonological needs effectively.

In *Power and solidarity in pronominal forms of address: A case study of Chinese and Russian teacher-student interactions*, Qing Zhou and Tatiana V. Larina investigate the cultural specifics of teacher-student communication in Chinese and Russian academic settings. Through an analysis of *T/V* pronominal forms, the study explains how sociocultural factors influence linguistic choices, revealing differing emphases on power distance and solidarity. These findings have significant implications for intercultural communication and education, specifying how linguistic practices can reflect and reinforce cultural values.

In *Teacher practices and student preferences of oral corrective feedback in Indonesian EFL classrooms: A Vygotskian perspective*, Bambang Irfani and Aisling O'Boyle investigate the alignment between teachers' corrective feedback practices and students' preferences in Indonesia. This study exposes the gap between teacher practices and student expectations regarding feedback on language errors, suggesting that a closer alignment could enhance language learning. The authors call for open communication and negotiated understanding between teachers and students to improve the effectiveness of oral corrective feedback, framed within a sociocultural perspective on language learning.

In *The subject and non-subject agreements in the Yemsa relative clauses*, Mitike Asrat provides a rare glimpse into the syntactic structures of the Yemsa language, an Afroasiatic language spoken in Ethiopia. The author employs a descriptive methodology based on data collected through informant interviews and analyses the agreement patterns, focusing on the morphological markers and syntactic arrangements that characterise these structures. The study reveals the ways in which Yemsa manages agreement, using a range of morphological suffixes that signify person, number, and gender, adhering to Siewierska's Prominence Hierarchy. This work not fills a significant gap in our understanding of Yemsa's grammatical structures and contributes to the comparative study of Afroasiatic languages..

Finally, the book review of *Sounding out semantics: The limits of philosophy (book review)* by Fangning Ren and Wei Xu is a concise evaluation that bridges the complex theories of R. J. Mott Jr. to the reader's understanding. The analysis presented in the review commendably distills the book's challenging arguments across language, mind, mathematics, and epistemology, into an engaging overview, focusing extensively on both innovative aspects and potential areas for further exploration. The review places the work within broader scholarly debates, summarises its core arguments and critically engages with them, assessing its impact on future research and its relevance to ongoing discussions in various fields. The review is an essential guide for prospective readers, indicating the book's significance to different research interests and intellectual pursuits.

Training, Language and Culture welcomes contributions in the form of original research articles, book reviews and correspondence. Details are available at rudn.tlcjournal.org. For questions, please contact us at tlcjournal@rudn.ru.

Original Research

The use of the *iBrainstorm* app in a collaborative argumentation-based learning context for developing listening comprehension skills by EFL learners

by Mahmood Yenkimaleki and Vincent J. van Heuven

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The present study investigated the use of the iBrainstorm app in a collaborative argumentation-based learning context for developing listening comprehension skills by EFL learners. Two groups of students were formed. All of them studied English as a foreign language at the BA level at Bu-Ali Sina University, Iran. Participants were assigned to groups at random. Participants took a pre-test of listening comprehension skills before starting the programme. The control group listened to authentic audio tracks in English and discussed their contents, watched authentic English movies, discussed issues in the movies in pairs in the classroom. The experimental group spent part of the time on theoretical explanation of, and practical exercises with, argumentation-based learning by the iBrainstorm application. The total instruction time was the same for two groups, i.e., 32 hours. Students then took a post-test and, a month later, a delayed post-test in listening comprehension skills. The results show that the use of the iBrainstorm app significantly improved the students' listening comprehension skills, and significantly more so than those of the control group. These results have pedagogical implications for curriculum designers, material producers, and all who are involved in language study and pedagogy.

KEYWORDS: *listening comprehension skills, collaborative argumentation-based learning, English as a foreign language, curriculum design*

1. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension skills are active processes of meaning construction in message communication, in which the listener makes use of various sources of information to reconstruct the intended meaning of the oral message (Faerch & Kaspar, 1986; Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2016; Yenkimaleki et al., 2021). Vandergrift (2009) argues that, when listening, people draw on the following knowledge sources: linguistic knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, and prior experiential knowledge. Listeners consider the linguistic source to be the fundamental one. It is accessed through semantic, phonological, and syntactic knowledge of the target language, and permits the listener to assign meaning to the sound stream of the connected speech. Luu et al. (2021) concluded that prioritising prosody by using the techniques such as listening to low-pass filtered audio, repetition in synchrony with body movements, and shadowing, enhances listening comprehension skills.

Argumentation in this study is looked upon as a communicative activity of producing and exchanging reasons in the context of doubt or disagreement regarding topics students would listen to in the study to answer the questions or to discuss. Argumentation is a fundamental component of meaning making and decision taking in modern society. It can also be a vehicle for collaborative learning processes and knowledge co-construction in many learning tasks that entail complex matters and multiple perspectives, ranging from primary school to university and

beyond (van Amelsvoort et al., 2007). This is known as Collaborative Argumentation-Based Learning (CABLE) (Moradimokhles & Hwang, 2020). With CABLE, students acquire and co-construct knowledge through discourse when they elaborate on their individual knowledge, sharing their knowledge and possibly developing new insights together as a team (Roberts et al., 2017). When students become better arguers (learning to argue) in groups, they improve their chances to collaboratively (co)construct knowledge (argue to learn). Rapid advancement of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) environments and the swift growth of information, communication, and educational technology and tools offer ample opportunities to enhance students' argumentation competence (Noroozi et al., 2012).

Currently, the greatest challenge in teaching listening comprehension skills to EFL learners is to make training programmes convenient, practical, useful, and attractive to a broader cohort of students, to allow the learners to develop perception skills in the communication of the message (Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2016; Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2022). The *iBrainstorm* app in the collaborative argumentation-based learning context can meet this challenge. Therefore, the present study addresses the use of *iBrainstorm* app in the collaborative argumentation-based learning context in developing listening comprehension skills of Persian learners of English as a foreign language.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Collaborative argumentation-based learning

Collaborative learning can be defined as a situation in which people work with each other towards achieving the same learning aim (Roberts et al., 2017). Collaborative learning differs from cooperative learning in several aspects. Generally, collaboration deals with joint and symmetrical engagement of people toward shared learning and problem-solving goals, while cooperation considers the division of work that learners typically work separately, performing a part of the tasks which later should be combined into a single product (Lehtinen et al., 1999; Moradimokhles & Hwang, 2020). Traditionally, collaborative learning is looked upon as engaging in interaction in small-group settings. However, in knowledge-building communities, collaboration often goes further, and beyond fixed small groups, since learners collaborate with different groups or like to have opportunistic collaborations with people in the community (Zhang et al., 2009; Angeli et al., 2017).

Noroozi et al. (2012) state that collaborative argumentation is a situation where some participants engage in an argumentative negotiation with the same aim of achieving a shared recognition of issues through multidimensional perspectives and negotiations for and against each other's point of view. Therefore, the goal is not to win a discussion or to simply turn others' perspectives (Noroozi et al., 2012). Collaborative argumentation could resolve complicated and controversial problems and might offer participants room for learning through discussions (Marttunen & Laurinen, 2002; Roberts et al., 2017). Van Amelsvoort

et al. (2007) point out that a polished and extended discussion that includes different perspectives could deepen both recognition of the issue and collaborative learning.

Two perspectives are essential in collaborative argumentation. First, constructing multiple perspectives is required since approaching problems that do not have specific solutions demands discussion from different viewpoints (Van Amelsvoort et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2017). Second, based on Hinds and Weisband (2003), a major aim of collaborative argumentation is shared understanding, i.e., collectively finding a procedure to organise and transfer the relevant information. Hinds and Weisband (2003) state that to create a shared understanding people must have the opportunity to learn with each other and develop mutual expectations, for instance, regarding task-related goals, processes, and information.

Collaborative interaction and argumentation avoid confrontation of different perspectives and support a shared recognition of the problems available (Quinn-Lee, 2014). When searching for the best solution for a problem with other parties, collaborative argumentation can help parties involved state and justify their perspectives on the issue. Some researchers criticised social work teaching methods (Proctor, 2007; Tew et al., 2012; Shu & Gu, 2018) in support of the passive transference of information instead of giving priority to active construction through discussions.

Researchers have pointed out that collaborative learning positively impacts the learning process (Remedios et al., 2008; Teasley, 2017). Some studies explain that collaboration requires both the individual's contribution to the group learning as well as the individual's learning from the group (Soller et al., 1998; Remedios et al., 2008). Furthermore, Soller et al. (1998) found that classroom learning improves significantly when students participate in learning activities with small groups of peers. Small group work activities may encourage students to ask questions, explain and justify their opinions, articulate their reasoning, and collaborate and reflect upon their knowledge, which motivates and enhances learning (Gokhale, 1995; Shu & Gu, 2018). This means the success of one student helps other students to be successful. Students who do not understand the material may scaffold with each other and share their knowledge with each other. Therefore, all the students are responsible for each other's learning as well as their own. This philosophy, practically, should also work in developing listening comprehension skills in EFL settings.

2.2. Listening comprehension skills

Listening comprehension skills are the complex processes that transform an auditory stimulus into a mental reconstruction on the part of the listener and the speaker's intention (Poelmans, 2003; Ismail & Aziz 2020; Yenkimaleki et al., 2021). Listening comprehension is a conscious process by which listeners, through using different types of cues from the context and their previous knowledge, construct meaning from the incoming input (O'Malley et al., 1989; Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2016;

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Ismail & Aziz 2020). Listeners consciously process utterances in particular settings to perceive the message (Mendelsohn, 1994). Although listening comprehension is one of the important skills in second language (L2) acquisition, the teaching and learning of this skill have been seriously understudied (Keskin et al., 2019; McAndrews, 2020). Major psycholinguistic approaches to foreign language learning agree that a learner needs to be exposed to input. However, there is no agreement on the type of input needed and how such input is processed in order to be acquired (Karimvand, 2011; Nushi & Orouji, 2020). The main criteria which are taken into consideration when designing listening aids are contextual, personal, criterion of authenticity, sociolinguistic, the linguistic form of the speech signal, the instructional goal (Fedotova, 2015).

Listening in a foreign language is a complex task, which ranges from perception to comprehension and requires the interaction between top-down and bottom-up cognitive processes partly mediated by attention and memory mechanisms (Delvaux et al., 2015). Listening comprehension training programmes should include enough exercises aimed at training the students to listen at the level of the surface form of the linguistic unit, especially, at lower levels of language proficiency, i.e., there should be enough exercises helping to form bottom-up processing skills.

Studies investigating the role of topic familiarity in L2 listening comprehension have found a facilitative effect (Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994). Research in the 1980s concentrated on the impact of higher-level processes (top-down processes) on listening comprehension (Long, 1989, 1990). Attention was directed to the higher levels such as background knowledge, semantics, and syntax, and listeners were viewed as active participators in reconstructing the intended meaning of the message heard (Long, 1990; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994; Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2020).

Anderson (2009) argued that listening comprehension is a complex process comprising internal processes like sound perception, word recognition, parsing, giving structure to the words and, consequently, interpretation which is giving meaning to the identified words. Goh (2000) studied the listening problems of Chinese students in Hong Kong through interviews and listening diaries. The results indicated that they had problems with connected speech, especially with blending and reduction. Considering the significance of perception of words Yenkimaleki (2016) stated that the impact of phonological modifications in connected speech can be so great that it may render the recognition of any word by L2 listeners impossible. Yenkimaleki (2016) added that the significance of lower-level phonological features has been underestimated to the extent that contextual clues will contribute to understanding of the listening material (Yenkimaleki, 2016; Carlson, 2019).

Bottom-up and top-down strategies arose out of 1970s computer science (Nunan, 2010, 2015). The bottom-up strategy is text based, relying upon language aspects (i.e., sounds) and is a process of decoding the sounds, from the smallest units to complete texts (i.e., listening for specific details, recognising cognates, and recognising word order patterns). Alternatively, the learner-based top-down strategy focuses upon the listener's thinking process, constructing the original meaning of the speaker by using incoming sounds, and using context as clues to interpret the main idea, make predictions, and summarise intentions (Nunan, 2010, 2015). The effects of background knowledge, for example, were investigated by Long (1990). Long (1990) used two listening passages, one on a topic considered familiar to the learners, the Rock group 2, and another believed to be unfamiliar, a gold rush in Ecuador, and tested the comprehension of 188 intermediate level Spanish learners. The learners, then, took a comprehension test and summarised their understanding of the passage in English. The comprehension test was in the form of a checklist. The study found that learners who used schemata outperformed those who depended on using a bottom-up approach. In fact, the comprehension of the former group was more accurate than that of the latter. Long concluded that schemata helped learners predict, anticipate, and infer the message heard, while the linguistic knowledge did not prove to be of great help (Long, 1990; Carlson, 2019). The role of semantic and syntactic alteration in the case of L2 listeners has been investigated (Field, 2005; Darti & Asmawati, 2017). Anderson (2009) concluded that L2 listeners paid more attention to syntactic information but less attention to semantic information in the input speech than native speakers did. This conclusion should be looked at with reservation because the criteria for the distinction between syntax and semantics were somewhat blurred. In another study, Chaudron (1995) checked the effect of syntactic modification of topic sentences in lectures and non-native speakers' recognition and recollection of those sentences. He found that subjects at a low level of proficiency benefited from the simplification of the topic, using synonyms and rhetorical questions.

Advance organisers facilitate listening tasks. They are introduced in the pre-listening phase and provide the listeners with all the prerequisite information. They help activate the background knowledge and set the expectations of the listeners. These organisers may be in the form of declarative and interrogative summarising sentences. Herron et al. (1998) tested the effectiveness of advance organisers in listening comprehension tasks. They used three groups, two experimental groups, and one control group. One group was provided with declarative sentences and the other one with interrogative sentences. The results in the listening phase showed the experimental groups outperformed the control group. Native and proficient non-native listeners make use of advance organisers much better than the beginning L2 listeners (Buck, 2004; Thai & Nguyen, 2018). Native listeners and proficient L2 listeners can process the input materials automatically, whereas beginning L2 listeners have restrictions in automatically processing of the input material because of their limited knowledge of the language.

Studies indicate that listeners at a low level of proficiency rely on top-down processing to compensate for their deficiency in the perception of speech. To document such a claim, Tsui and

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Fullilove (1998) undertook a study by analysing the answers given by 2000 Chinese learners to listening comprehension questions. They separated the questions for which top-down processing might be helpful from the questions that could only be answered through bottom-up processing. The results indicated that even the answers to the mere bottom-up items were based on wrong top-down interpretation.

2.3. Message perception in listening comprehension

It has been proposed that we acquire language when we understand what we hear and what we read (Krashen, 2016). Krashen (2016) holds that the effectiveness of his so-called 'input hypothesis' is evidenced through method comparison studies. He adds that students in classes that supply comprehensible input outperform students who are exposed to less comprehensible input in communicative tests and do as well as, or better in grammar-based tests (Krashen, 2016). At the intermediate level, two kinds of studies supported this claim. Teaching language through the comprehensible presentation of the subject matter has proved more effective than the traditional teaching of subject matters at the intermediate level of instruction (Gut, 2007). In-school free reading programmes have also proven more effective than traditional approaches on a wide variety of tests for children (Ellis, 1997) and adults (Manson & Krashen, 1997; Basri et al., 2019).

Corder (1981) defines input as what goes into the mind for processing and not what is available for being taken in. Berne (2004) classifies input as the product when it is not yet processed and intake as the process when input is processed. He further redefines the intake as *'an abstract entity of learner language that has been fully or partially processed by the learners, and fully or partially assimilated into their developing system'* (Berne, 2004, p. 522). Input comprehensibility is affected, among other things, by individual factors, negotiation factors, environmental factors, and linguistic factors. Linguistic factors comprise linguistic complexity, token frequency of units (phonemes, words, etc.), and their perceptual saliency. Some researchers believe that perceptual saliency makes certain features of input more comprehensible. Perceptual saliency is one of the determining factors for the forms that are acquired (Yenkimaleki, 2018). The presence of reduced forms decreases perceptual saliency which, in turn, decreases the likelihood of input becoming intake (Friederici et al., 2000; Graham, 2017). Yenkimaleki and van

Heuven (2018) pointed out that for the input to change to intake learners need to pay attention to the input. They further stated that noticing is affected by task demand, expectation and skill level, frequency of occurrence, and perceptual saliency.

Therefore, developing listening comprehension skills for EFL learners is of the utmost importance in message perception and communication of the messages (Yenkimaleki, 2017b). Technology-based application tools (TBAT) have become widely used in the foreign language teaching curriculum (Neri et al., 2008; Yavuz & Celik, 2017). Since there is no systematic study of the effect of collaborative argumentation-based learning through usage of the *iBrainstorm* app on developing listening comprehension skills for the EFL learners, we set up this experiment to experimentally investigate the effect of collaborative argumentation-based learning in developing the listening comprehension skills of Persian learners of English as a foreign language. The results may lead to modification of the EFL curriculum (e.g., Iran) in developing listening comprehension skills.

2.4. Current study

We proposed that the collaborative argumentation-based learning is a crucial element for the EFL programmes in enhancing listening comprehension skills of EFL learners (Yenkimaleki, 2017b, 2018). In the present experiment, we broaden our horizon and investigate the effect of using the *iBrainstorm* app in a collaborative argumentation-based learning context for developing the listening comprehension skills of Persian learners of English as a foreign language. The following research question was formulated: *Does the use of the iBrainstorm app in collaborative argumentation-based learning enhance EFL learners' listening comprehension skills?* At this stage we do not suggest any specific hypothesis as to the benefits yielded by the treatment in general. This will depend on the political and cultural views in different countries on the usage of technology in educational settings, and on the level of deployment of educational technology in these countries.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS
3.1. Design of the study

To answer the research question we posed, we set up an experimental study in which we quantified the listening comprehension skills of our participants. Sixty participants who were chosen randomly out of 100 students recruited in the study in an extracurricular programme. Listening comprehension was tested within participants at three points in time, i.e., a pre-test immediately before the start of the treatment, a post-test immediately after the completion of the treatment, and a delayed post-test one month after the immediate post-test. Pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test were (different) versions of the listening comprehension skills test from the standard Longman's TOEFL English proficiency test (paper-based version). One control group and one experimental group were utilised in this study. The independent variable in this study was the method of instruction, i.e., training listening comprehension

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skills by *iBrainstorm* app and not employing it for the control group. The dependent variable was the listening comprehension score obtained by the students.

3.2. Participants

Study participants were industrial engineering students at the Bu-Ali Sina University, Iran. Sixty students were chosen randomly out of a larger group of 100. Participants were assigned at random to two groups, each including 30 students. The students' age range was between 18 and 20 years. The students' first language was Persian. None of the participants had ever lived in an English-speaking country by the time of the experiment. Participants took part in all training sessions in sixteen weeks, and two sessions per week (i.e., 32 hours in total).

3.3. Ethical issues

Ethical approval was obtained from the English department at Bu-Ali Sina University to enrol the participants in the experiment. All of the students agreed to take part in the programme (informed consent).

3.4. iBrainstorm app

iBrainstorm is a free iPad app that allows students and teachers to organise thoughts and ideas in creative ways. To help users skilfully organise their thoughts and ideas, *iBrainstorm* provides them with several types of diagrams to use. There are templates for various kinds of charts, webs, and diagrams. Also, *iBrainstorm* enables users to add in virtual post-it notes, just as students would use in class. Whatever students want to write on the post-it note, they type out. There is also a virtual pencil that lets students doodle or takes notes. Because *iBrainstorm* is highly customisable, it lets students be creative. The app permits students to connect to other iPads in the classroom so that students around the classroom can collaborate and directly build upon each other's ideas. *iBrainstorm* is easy to use as an organisational app for children and adults. The app looks like a corkboard with the ability to add coloured sticky notes and connect ideas using the coloured pencil option. Users can make daily schedules, homework or project boards, steps to a recipe, etc. Disabled students also can use *iBrainstorm* developmentally to track their daily routines. The teacher instructs the students to open the *iBrainstorm* app and find their tasks. Using this app helps reduce frustration and gives students a feeling of ownership and responsibility. The latest release of *iBrainstorm* enables students to capture and share their ideas, add sticky notes, drag and drop anywhere on the iPad screen, assign colours for prioritisation, draw on the background canvas and share with teachers or classmates with a simple gesture. What started out as an idea-sharing application quickly became the first-ever iPad-based, multi-device collaboration tool for the classroom.

iBrainstorm 5.0 has new features and an improved interface to serve students with high-quality digital education tools. New content and functions in the app will engage learners by gamifying aspects of the learning content. Animation, imagery, sound, illustration, and interactivity will all play a role in creating more engaging learning content for the students in developing listening comprehension skills in a collaborative argumentation-based learning context.

3.5. Materials

Authentic English materials (e.g., audios, videos), were used for the two groups and students discussed their contents in different sessions. Both pre-test, immediate, and delayed post-test were versions of the listening comprehension skills test taken from the standard Longman's TOEFL English proficiency test (paper-based version) (Phillips, 2003). We chose the TOEFL listening comprehension test because it is easy to administer, is standardised, has multiple versions calibrated to be equivalent. It comes in multiple-choice format (50 items with four alternatives each), for each equivalent version of the test. All versions of the test have been tuned to the same level of difficulty, as claimed by the documentation that goes with these tests. This makes the test ideal for a pre-test, immediate, and delayed post-test design. The pre-test and post-tests were different to rule out repetition effects.

3.6. Procedure

Before the beginning of the training programme, students took a pre-test of listening comprehension skills to ascertain whether the groups were homogeneous or not. Students listened to the 50 audio fragments and answered the multiple questions based on their contents.

After the students' listening comprehension skills were measured by the pre-test and we ensured that two groups were equal in their command of listening comprehension skills, the training programme started for the two groups. The control group received listening comprehension training by the instructor through the regular curriculum, which was through the Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT). CLT is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning. When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used, and this will allow them to learn to use the language. According to CLT (Yenkimaleki, 2107a), the following variables must be emphasised: (i) communication (activities that involve real communication promote learning); (ii) tasks (activities in which language is used to carry out meaningful tasks support the learning process); and (iii) meaning (a language that is meaningful and authentic to the learner boosts learning).

CLT is a generally employed approach for teaching listening comprehension skills in EFL academic settings. The instruction was done at Bu-Ali Sina University. Authentic American English materials (e.g., audios, videos), were used for instruction purposes for control and experimental groups alike, and students discussed their contents in different sessions. Natural speech was presented to both groups and the students did not have control over the pace of the audio and video files.

The experimental group received the same instructions in listening comprehension skills, but before doing listening comprehension tasks, students were divided into five groups and engaged in collaborative argumentation about the contents of the audio files with each other in five separate teams through the *iBrainstorm* application.

This software was novel for the students. The students in the experimental group were taught by the instructor how to use it. This was part of the treatment for the experimental group. The instructor brought up the subject of the files for the teams and students discussed it in English based on the content of the audio files before listening to the audio files employing the *iBrainstorm* application. Then they listened to the audio files and did the required tasks (e.g., answering some questions, talking about the content of the audio files). When the training programme ended, all the participants took an immediate post-test in listening comprehension skills, as well as a delayed post-test of listening comprehension skills four weeks after the immediate post-test was run.

Scoring was done objectively through the answer sheet since the tests were multiple choice questions with only one correct option per item. The range of the scores for the pre-test, immediate, and delayed post-test was between 0-50.

Table 1 illustrates the summary of the activities and the time spent (i.e., minutes) by two groups of participants in the study.

Table 1

Summary of activities and time spent (minutes) by two groups of participants in the experiment

ACTIVITY	GROUP	
	Control	Experimental
Listening to audio tracks/watching movies/discussing about their content	1280	640
Listening to the instructor explanations/guidance	640	640
iBrainstorm app		640
Total time spent	1920	1920

4. STUDY RESULTS

Figure 1 shows the means and 95% confidence intervals of the listening comprehension scores (between 0 and 50 items correct) obtained by the Experimental and Control groups in the pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test (one month later). A t-test for independent groups bears out that there was no significant difference between the experimental (35.8) and control (35.7) groups in the pre-test scores, $t(58)$ = .2 (p = .845). The experimental groups performed significantly better than the control group in the immediate post-test (40.0 vs 36.0, $t(58)$ = 4.9, $p < .001$), as well as in the delayed post-test (39.3 vs 35.4, $t(58)$ = 4.3, $p < .001$). The main effects of group and moment of testing, as well as the interaction between the factors, were tested by a Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (RM-ANOVA) with Moment of testing as a within-participants factor and Group as a between-participants factor. The assumption of sphericity was met (Mauchly's W = .959, approximate $\chi^2(2)$ = 2.45, p = .299) so that degrees of freedom did not have to be adjusted. The main effect of Group was significant, $F(1, 58)$ = 9.3 (p = .004), as was the main effect of Moment of testing $F(2, 116)$ = 122.1 ($p < .001$, pη^2 = .678). Post-hoc tests with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons indicate that the immediate and delayed post-test scores differ from the pre-test scores but not from each other (α = .05). Crucially, the Group × Moment interaction is also significant, $F(2, 116)$ = 129.7 ($p < .001$, pη^2 = .691). Separate one-way RM-ANOVAs

per group then reveal that Moment of testing has only a small effect in the control group (35.8, 36.0, 35.4 for the three moments of testing), $F(2, 58)$ = 4.9 (p = .011, pη^2 = .144). Only the difference between immediate and delayed post-test is significant in the post-hoc test, which suggests that the control students did not benefit by the treatment. For the experimental group, the effect of Moment is much larger (35.7, 40.0, 39.3), $F(2, 58)$ = 196.0 ($p < .001$, pη^2 = .871). The post-hoc tests show that all three moments of testing differ from each other.

5. DISCUSSION

In the present study, the use of the *iBrainstorm app* in a collaborative argumentation-based learning context was investigated in developing listening comprehension skills by EFL learners. There were no differences between the two groups before the treatment started, as was shown by statistical analysis. After the treatment, the students' listening comprehension skills in the experimental group developed significantly while the control group did not improve their listening comprehension scores.

Following Andriessen and Baker (2015) and Chinn and Clark (2013), we argue that the main reason why the *iBrainstorm* app should enhance learning is that students will be involved in different types of tasks related to developing better recognition and understanding of content. By expressing their perspectives, students make their own perception of complex
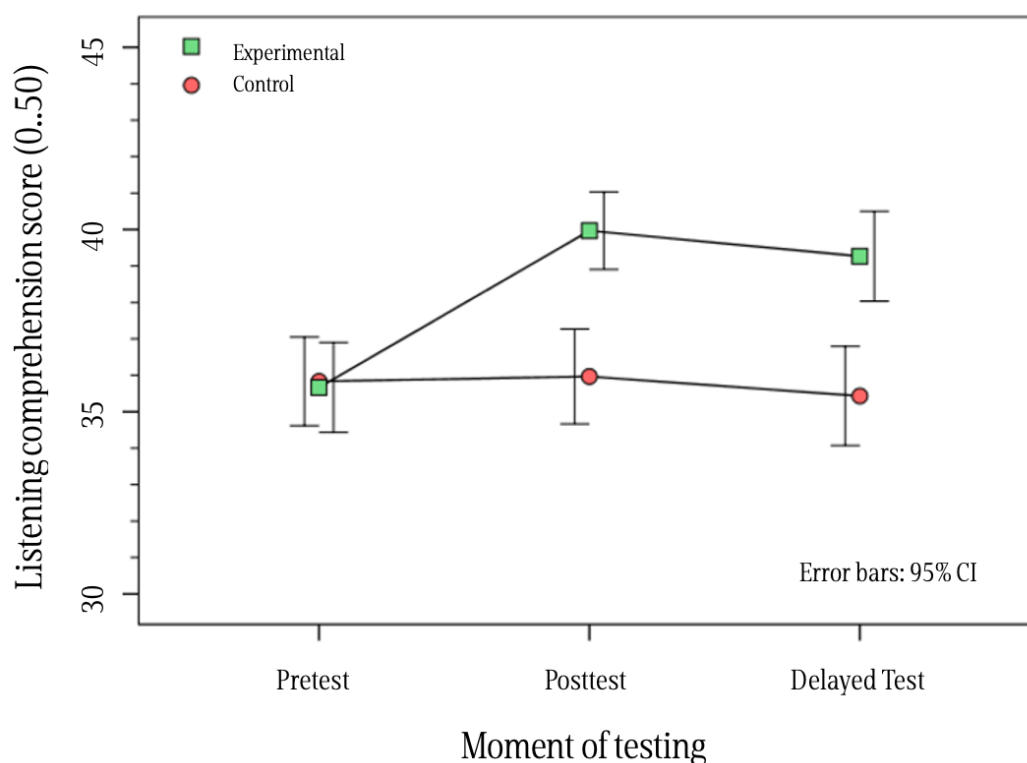
Figure 1. Listing comprehension score (0 .. 50) obtained at three moments of testing (pre-test, post-test, delayed post-test) by experimental and control groups (*N* = 30 per group). Error bars represent the 95% confidence interval of the mean

notions explicit and open to evaluation by their peers. In fact, research supports that the anticipation (Tetlock, 1992; Grant, 2019) and the real act of explaining one's own perspectives to other people (Webb et al., 1995; Grant, 2019) enhance students' learning. The oral utterance is addressed to other people, which may enhance reflection and consciousness of the incompleteness of one's own recognition (Keil, 2006; Lee & Cha, 2017), specifically when one is making an effort to convince people (Tetlock, 1992; Pulla, 2020). It is logical to suppose that when getting involved in argumentative explanations by using the *iBrainstorm* app, learners consciously find alternative perspectives and make an effort to resolve differences between divergent points of view through logical reasoning, thus resulting in learning outcomes. Miller et al. (2014) stated that predicting an argumentative explanation with a disagreeing student after studying a scientific article resulted in longer studying times and better learning outcomes, in comparison with not predicting any explanation or anticipating a positive discussion.

iBrainstorm is a collaborative tool that combines the functions of a whiteboard and a corkboard. Users can write or draw ideas and add sticky notes. It is great for interactive lessons and brainstorming sessions and allows creative and flexible teaching and learning methods. *iBrainstorm* (i) provides a user-friendly interface, (ii) supports real-time collaboration, (iii) can be used in various settings, from education to business, (iv) is portable, allowing for brainstorming on the go, and (v) is free to use.

The *SyncSpace* app provides an infinitely zoomable drawing space that can be shared in real-time across multiple devices. This tool is great for interactive classes, as it allows for real-time collaboration between teachers and students and between students themselves. However, compared with the *iBrainstorm* app, (i) the user interface feels less intuitive, (ii) the drawing tools are too basic for those who need more complex graphic tools, and (iii) drawings cannot be exported in vector format.

Coggle is an online tool for creating and sharing mind maps. It works simply by typing in text, automatically linking and arranging the map as you go. *Coggle* integrates with *Google Drive*, allowing for seamless storage and collaboration. This tool allows for creating colourful and engaging educational content and is useful for breaking down complex topics into simpler, more digestible chunks. Nevertheless, compared with the *iBrainstorm* app, (i) advanced features are available only in the paid version, (ii) the free version supports only three private diagrams, (iii) customisation options are limited compared to some other tools, and (iv) the automatic layout tends to create cluttered diagrams.

The findings of the study indicate that methodological issues in teaching listening comprehension skills matter. The results suggest that the use of the *iBrainstorm app* in a collaborative argumentation-based learning context can be employed for developing listening comprehension skills by EFL learners. These students appeared to concur with the idea that the use of the *iBrainstorm app* in a collaborative argumentation-based learning

context enabled them to resolve complicated and controversial problems and offered participants room for learning through discussion (Roberts et al., 2017). Compared with normal classroom procedure, there were fewer distractions and less dependence on the instructor and yet with greater efficiency and effectiveness. According to Field (2005), practising listening in a whole-class context is ineffective. The more engagement students have in the tasks, the more chance learning can happen. The use of the *iBrainstorm app* in the collaborative argumentation-based learning context tasks gave the students a chance to reconstruct in their own ways what they could hear from their peers. They had a chance to actively structure their understanding as well as evaluate their work by comparing their perspectives with the others.

Students like to enhance critical thinking and thereby their argumentation skills by getting involved in learning environments that foster collaboration and mutual interaction (Wesp & Montgomery, 1998; Zheng & Chen, 2018). The argumentative process entails acts such as (i) raising an issue, discussing, explaining and categorising perspectives and ideas; (ii) gauging one's own perspectives and finding new information; (iii) changing one's ideas and attitudes on a given issue of discussion; and (iv) learning to find solutions to problems. There is also the probability that such ideas, knowledge and perspectives can be exchanged in a misinformed way and may sometimes lead to division of ideas and even conflict. This can be dependent on the instructor's interaction qualities, the aims of discussion within its settings, and the accessibility of information to the learners. To participate in argumentative negotiation, learners could be invited not only to build and transfer their own information (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1989; Thai & Nguyen, 2018) but also to co-build and bring about new information structures with each other (Dillenbourg, 1999; Carlson, 2019).

The contribution of the present study to the growing body of literature on developing EFL listening comprehension skills is that we examined the use of the *iBrainstorm app* in collaborative argumentation-based learning to enhance these skills. We suggest that, when teaching listening comprehension skills, authentic tasks should be provided to the students, and that students should discuss the issues in small groups through *iBrainstorm* to make them reflect on the accuracy of their message perception.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the use of the *iBrainstorm app* in a collaborative argumentation-based learning context to develop listening comprehension skills by EFL learners. Overall, our results show that using the *iBrainstorm app* significantly improved the students' listening comprehension skills, and significantly more so than those of the control group. In the present study, the collaborative argumentation-based environment offered chances for the students to share and evaluate their knowledge and understanding, and to learn how to argue based on scientific information on different topics through *iBrainstorm*, prior to being engaged in specific listening comprehension tasks.

The study contributes to the recognition of the *iBrainstorm* app (and similar) in collaborative argumentation-based learning and its positive effect on the EFL students' listening comprehension skills. The limitation of this experiment was that we had access to sixty students as the participants of this study. Therefore, future studies may be conducted with larger number of participants, distributed over different countries, to verify the generalisability of the findings of this study.

It should be acknowledged that the present study has a number of limitations, which can only be overcome by replicating the experiment with added conditions. For instance, we did not have access to large number of participants in this study. Another study could be set with large number of participants with other language pairs to confirm the results of the study. Moreover, we argued that the involving the use of the *iBrainstorm* app is the single and crucial factor that explains the superior enhancement of listening comprehension in the experimental group.

We realise that the use of the *iBrainstorm* app prior to training listening comprehension, entails a variety of steps, each of which may help the students perform better in the subsequent listening tasks, and each of which should be tested separately in future studies. For instance, the app was used to discuss topics that would later be dealt with in the listening comprehension exercise. Discussing the topic beforehand activates relevant vocabulary (especially since the discussion is in the target language), students may alert one another of ways to express ideas on the topic (in the target language), and expose gaps in their knowledge of the topic, which may motivate them to listen more attentively in the subsequent listening exercise.. One way to decide whether it is the act of collaborative argumentation *per se*, or about argumentation on the same topic of the ensuing listening comprehension exercise would be to create an extra condition in which the topics do not match. However, if – as we expect – matching topics are a prerequisite, is it true that getting the students involved in collaborative argumentation in small groups through the app is more effective than collaboratively arguing under the guidance of a human moderator (i.e., the instructor) without breaking up into small groups.

And then again, one may ask whether collaborative argumentation is needed at all (contrary to what we argue), or would it be sufficient to simply inform the students beforehand about the topic of the listening comprehension exercise, either by just mentioning the topic, or by asking them to read an informative text (e.g., a Wikipedia entry, or a similar source of information) about it.

To sum up, using the *iBrainstorm* app to discuss a topic prior to getting our students involved in a listening comprehension task on the same topic, works well. Since the time spent on the prior activity is compensated by less time spent on the later exercise, it is time spent well. The pedagogical value of using the app therefore stands, but follow-up studies are required to determine what it is that makes its use so successful.

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by Mahmood Yenkimaleki and Vincent J. van Heuven

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Original Research

A target English needs analysis on ESP course: Exploring medical students' perceptions of necessities at a Yemeni university

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This research focuses on the needs analysis and perspectives in evaluating English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses designed for medical students. The study intends to identify the medical students' perceptions of the frequency and importance of using English language skills. Two different instruments, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, were used to collect data. Respondents included 186 medical students, 4 ESP lecturers, and 10 Department of Medicine (DM) Subject Matter lecturers at Ibb University in Yemen. In this study, quantitative data were collected from three different subject groups (n=200) by means of three versions of the questionnaire. Correspondingly, some follow-up interviews, which were organised with a group of these three informants (n=29), complemented the data collection procedure. The collected data was analysed via the SPSS software package, followed by a qualitative data thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. The findings showed some differences in which medical students believed the most frequent skills used are Listening and Reading, while their ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers believed that medical students use Writing and Listening. The results revealed that although most of the English language skills and sub-skills in target needs were considered important or very important by all the participants, there were discrepancies in the preferences and priorities. The findings of this study are expected to be used as reference material for further research and give valuable considerations which may provide useful information for the ESP course designers to meet the target English needs of medical students in Yemen.

KEYWORDS: ESP, needs analysis, medical students, English skills, inferential statistics

1. INTRODUCTION

English has been a common *lingua franca* in the global scientific community for many decades, enabling millions of professionals to deal with their routine activities (Mauranen et al., 2016; Millot, 2015; Tardy, 2004). English has become mandatory and used as the medium of instruction in most Faculties of Languages, Science, Engineering, Technology, Medical and Health Sciences. It is commonly used in commercial, education, and other technical domains. It has been broadly concurred that the English language is important for undergraduate students to empower them to work effectively in their academic and related subjects (Basturkmen, 2014; Grynyuk, 2016; Sidek et al., 2006). Consequently, learning English is required to meet two kinds of needs: current and future needs. The former is related to the English requirements for students to succeed academically. The latter is the needs of the students who require the language in their day-to-day situations and perform professional activities such as writing lab reports or business letters (Basturkmen, 2014).

The rapid growth in science, technology and economic activities has made ESP a better approach to English language teaching at the university level to meet the specific needs of the

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learners (Bracaj, 2014; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2020). ESP is an evolving division of English as a Foreign Language instruction in higher education worldwide. The ESP is recognised as a technique that provides significance to the learners' needs, giving them the language they require for their educational and professional needs (Agustina, 2014). In this regard, Niţu (2002) points out that *'ESP (English for Specific/Special Purposes) has witnessed rapid and steady development, becoming today one of the most important branches of English Language Teaching (ELT)'* (Niţu, 2002, p. 155). Therefore, ESP courses intend to develop four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) with training and teaching networks. English can lead to outstanding jobs in advanced education worldwide (Binti Ramsa, 2014; Chalikandy, 2013; Jordan, 1997). Al-Fadly (2004) stated that the ESP courses aim to *'develop and improve students' communication competence in the four language skills'* (Al-Fadly, 2004, p. 18). Hence, it was confirmed that if the ESP course is not designed to fulfil the goals of learners and the needs of society, it is valueless and used randomly without purpose (Alduais, 2012).

The ESP lecturers have faced many challenges, such as controlling and motivating the classrooms, difficulties in English communication with students, lack of vocabulary, and learning and teaching strategies for developing ESP courses for medical students and other divisions. These courses should follow not only the learners' needs and perspectives but also contributions to the classrooms (Deocampo, 2020; Pritchard & Nasr, 2004). The value of appropriate context and expertise is identified by Nunan (1987): *'If teachers are to be the ones responsible for developing the curriculum, they need the time, the skills, and the support to do so. Support may include curriculum models and guidelines and may include support from individuals acting in a curriculum advisory position. The provision of such support cannot be removed and must not be seen in isolation from the curriculum'* (Nunan, 1987, p. 75).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
2.1. Needs analysis development

Needs analysis (NA) is a vital asset in evaluating ESP courses and helps teachers to identify learners' needs (Sari et al., 2020). NA's origin can be drawn back to 1952 (Moore & Dutton, 1978). Due to the ongoing demands of public and private sector organisations to improve efficiency and productivity, the emphasis has been placed on defining the needs of target groups. Watkins et al. (1998) stated that *'meeting the many requirements of clients, fellow associates, and society has become a requirement for organisational success'* (Watkins et al., 1998, p. 40). NA has been rooted in continuous improvement and production since these needs were detected. A recent analysis reveals that NA has been involved in numerous organisations. NA is a helpful platform for generating data recommending options for tackling the target stakeholders' performance problems in the private and government sectors. Therefore, NA flourished in social, education, and health services activities between 1966 and 1981. Salas and Cannon-Bowers (2001) observed that NA's significant role in the organisational field change and development had guided the development of different approaches/models to NA (Berwick, 1989; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Long, 2005; Munby, 1978). The present study uses a NA model based on Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) recommended emphasising the learning process rather than relying solely on language needs. The *learning-centred approach* combines both target and learning needs. Figure 1 demonstrates Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) taxonomy of target language needs.

2.2. Needs analysis and ESP

The importance of NA has consensually been emphasised in the literature on ESP. Several scholars such as Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Nunan (1988), Brindley (1989), Robinson
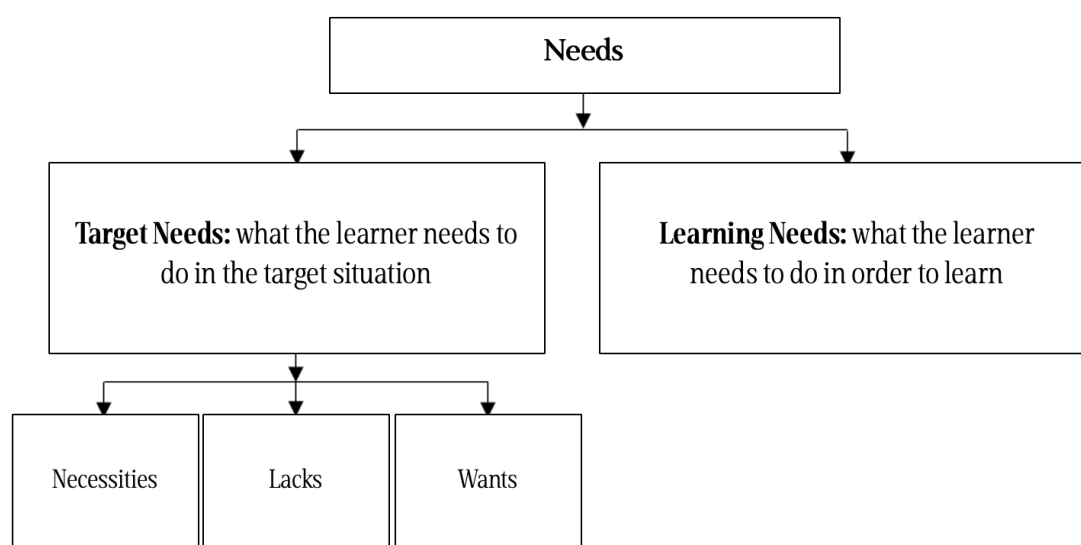
Figure 1. Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) taxonomy of target language needs

'ESP is an evolving division of English as a Foreign Language instruction in higher education worldwide. The ESP is recognised as a technique that provides significance to the learners' needs, giving them the language they require for their educational and professional needs'

(1991), Brown (1995, 2009), Seedhouse (1995), West (1997), Graves (2000), Richards (2001), and Long (2005), support that NA has a significant role in distinguishing between General English (GE) and ESP design. Developing an ESP course to evaluate the fundamental reasons for learning the language is essential. Therefore, as Belcher (2009) and Lesiak-Bielawska (2015) indicated, NA is the key aspect of ESP design. As cited in Chostelidou (2010), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) stated that NA is the cornerstone of ESP and a particular specific language item of grammar and vocabulary.

Songhori (2008) highlighted that the NA's purpose in any ESP course is mainly concerned with linguistics and analysis in the earlier periods. Furthermore, Basturkmen and Elder (2004) regarded NA and the description of language use in target situations as the two central aspects and critical features of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) courses. It is indicated that learner information, language analysis, knowledge of the learning process, or a combination of these items are the main step in the course design (Nunan, 1988, 1996). Astika (1999) mentions that NA is the starting point for materials development and regulates content selection, classroom activities, and assessment. Richards (2001) further outlines that ESP starts with student needs evaluation. Different students' demands enforce some limitations on ESP courses and ESP lecturers. NA restricts ESP courses to material encompassing various vocabularies, grammar, necessary language skills and concepts, subjects or topics, and communicative requirements.

2.3. Needs analysis of medical studies

Medical students and graduates in the Arab World in general and in the Yemeni setting specifically are found to have numerous issues in utilising the English language, such as communicating freely, writing and even dealing with standard and specific vocabulary, pronunciation during speaking, and lacking much practice in and outside the classroom (Abuklaish, 2014;

Al-Nasser, 2015; Al-Saidat, 2010; Anajar, 2017; Hamza, 2018; Bobr & Migdal, 2023). An overview of studies indicates that it is challenging to recognise broad similarities concerning language requirements in medicine since some students perceive they need to improve their speaking skills (Faraj, 2015; Iravani & Saber, 2013). Javid (2011) reported that students needed writing more than other skills. Other studies offered considerable insights into choosing appropriate courses to educate first-year medical students and required reading and speaking skills (Iravani & Saber, 2013; Javid & Umer, 2013). Other studies revealed that reading skills are the most prioritised, followed by writing, listening, and speaking skills (Abugohar et al., 2019; Vahdany & Gerivani, 2016).

3. METHODOLOGY
3.1. Research design

This approach identifies the target needs as *'what the learner needs to do in the target situation'* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 54) and classifies them into three categories: (i) necessities – *'what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation'* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 55); (ii) lacks – *'the gaps between what the learner knows and the necessities'* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 56); and (iii) wants – *'what the learners think they need'* (Nation, 2000, p. 5), which are the learners' perspectives of their needs. This study aims to investigate the English language target needs of the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth-year of medical students who studied in the academic year 2020-2021 in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) at Ibb University (IU) in Yemen from the perspectives of the students, ESP lecturers and DM Subject Matter lecturers. The main objective is to determine the English Language skills that medical students at IU have to acquire to function effectively in the target situation.

To gain a deeper insight into the issue, an explanatory sequential mixed methods design is employed in this study to collect data in two phases: quantitative and qualitative, analyse them separately, merge data, and use the outcomes to comprehend a study problem.

This mixed-method design starts with the quantitative phase since there are challenges in explaining the quantitative findings to help investigate the unequal sample sizes for each study phase, as shown in Figure 2 (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).
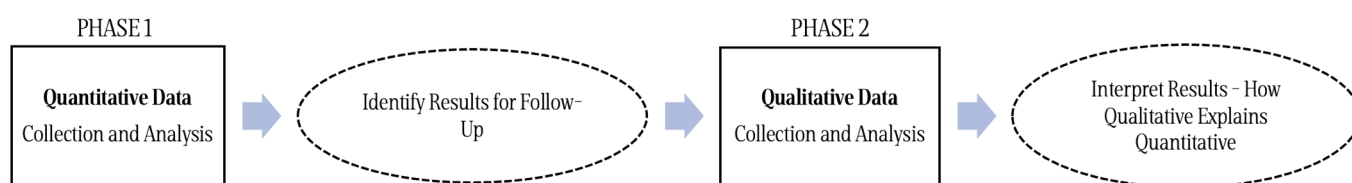
Figure 2. Research process in explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018)

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3.2. Participants and sampling

Sampling indicates selecting many individual cases from a larger population to generate the data (Leavy, 2017). It is used to *'gain insight into a larger population without studying each member of the population'*, according to Adler and Clark (2014, p. 96). The study consists of three categories of participants: the enrolled medical students, ESP lecturers, and the Subject Matter lecturers of the DM at IU. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table was exploited to determine the ideal sample size of the medical students. The purposive sampling strategy is employed in the current study to select a representative sampling of the subjects. This type of sampling allows the researcher to select the best respondents to contribute their experience and knowledge and achieve a deep understanding of the research phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2017). Therefore, a total of 186 students, including first (n=37), second (n=35), third (n=38), fourth (n=35), and fifth (n=41) -year medical students involved in the NA questionnaire, studied English courses for at least two semesters. A total of 15 students, including first (n=1), second (n=3), third (n=2), fourth (n=3), and fifth (n=6) -year medical students, participated in the interview in the main study. On the other hand, the 4 ESP lecturers and 10 DM Subject Matter lecturers, who participated in the NA questionnaire and interviewed, were selected from IU's corresponding English and medical departments via convenience sampling, followed by Nazari and Zaroori (2021).

3.3. Data collection instruments

Two different research instruments were used for collecting quantitative and qualitative data: a set of questionnaires for three participants (medical students, ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers) and semi-structured interviews. Many researchers (Cowling, 2007; Jasso-Aguilar, 2005; Park, 2021; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017) reported that using a different source/method approach could help triangulate the outcomes that expanded the data reliability and validity in the field of NA research. The researcher ensured that the data collection instruments used in this study addressed all the English language target needs of the medical students.

Cohen et al. (2007) define triangulation as an *'attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint'* (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141). The need for triangulation stems from the ethical need to enhance the validity and reliability of the research findings by combining at least two methods, theories, and information sources (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009; Noble & Heale, 2019). Thus, structuration and constructivism are the two leading educational approaches that underpin this process (Akyel & Ozek, 2010; Noble & Heale, 2019; Santos et al., 2020).

Although the final drafts of the questionnaires and interviews for the various groups of respondents were adapted from previous studies, according to Marek and Wu (2019), to test a research instrument, *'it is common to do a pilot test of a survey questionnaire, to determine any problems'* (Marek & Wu, 2019, p.

771). Connelly (2008) mentioned that experts advise that a pilot study sample size should be 10% of the sample estimated for the main study to achieve possible objectives. Hence, a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.90 indicates the high reliability of the questions (Alkutbi, 2018).

The questionnaire and semi-structured interviews used in the current study were derived from previous studies (Al-Tamimi, 2010; Alqurashi, 2016; Faraj, 2015). The questionnaires were printed, distributed and collected from the first- to fifth-year medical students, ESP lecturers and DM Subject Matter lecturers at IU at the end of second-semester exams during June of the academic year 2020/2021 in order to explore their views regarding their target language needs. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in the Appendix. The contributors responded to the following two research questions: 1. How frequently do medical students use English language skills/sub-skills? 2. How important are the English language skills/sub-skills to medical students?

The quantitative data is initially collected, analysed, and reported in an explanatory sequential design followed by qualitative data (Creswell & Hirose, 2019). Morgan and Hoffman (2021) recently mentioned that in this design (QUAN → qual), which consists of two distinct phases, *'the follow-up study uses qualitative methods to help to understand how and why the quantitative results came out the way they did'*. Thus, the quantitative data involved the administration of the questionnaires to the three enrolled respondents, medical students, ESP lecturers and DM Subject Matter Lecturers at IU. The qualitative data were then followed and assembled from the three groups through semi-structured interviews with a limited number of interviewees who voluntarily came across this study by convenience sampling.

A detailed description of the questionnaire for medical students is shown in Table 1. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section 1 sought to collect demographic information about the participants (items 1–5). Section 2 collected information about the frequency of using English language skills/sub-skills (items 6–27). Section 3 focused on the importance of English language skills/sub-skills where items (28–31) asked students to rate their main English language skills, and items 32–53 sought to identify the importance of English sub-skills in learning English.

The questionnaire versions for ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers were parallel to those in the version given to the medical students, except in terms of demographic information. The ESP lecturers' questionnaire asked about their age, gender, academic title, experience in teaching, and whether they attended any ESP teaching and learning workshops. Part 1 of the DM Subject Matter lecturers' questionnaire started with their demographic information (age, gender, academic title, experience in teaching, and language they use in teaching).

AbdelWahab (2013) mentioned that quantitative scales' value objectively assesses a particular ESP course using Likert-style rating scales. On the other hand, qualitative assessments use open-ended questions and interviews to collect personal in-

Table 1

Description of data collection inventory

PART	PART NAME	DESCRIPTION OF PARTS	SCALE
1	Demographic information	In this part, the researcher asked five questions about age, gender, year of study, score in the English language course 101 in the first term and score in the English language course 102 in the second term of the first year of the medical students.	No scale was used for this part
2	Frequency of English Language Skills/Sub-Skills	This part consisted of the frequency of using the English language. In this part, twenty-two points were designed to ask how frequently medical students use English to perform the English sub-skills in their educational setting.	Five points Likert scale of frequency
3	Importance of English Language Skills/Sub-Skills	This part consisted of the importance of the English language. In this part, two sub-items were designed, asked to rank the main English skills and asked about the importance of English sub-skills in their educational setting.	Five points Likert scale of importance

formation on the quality of ESP courses. Although qualitative assessments can review the curriculum in detail, quantitative evaluations are more accurate tools and are easier to deal with, especially where team assessments are involved. As per Brown (2016), individual interviews enable researchers to obtain accurate data regarding the perspectives and experiences of the research respondents. Thus, it is expected in this study that any variations among the participants' perspectives might help English language course development. A coding scheme was developed to code the three contributors in qualitative data. The medical students (n=15) who participated in the interviews were coded with a number provided to each respondent and a letter used to identify their year of study. For instance, a respondent who responded in the one-to-one interview session from the first year of study is coded as *MS1A*. The symbols *MS* represent the medical student respondent, *1* represents the respondent's number, and *A* represents the year of study. The 4 ESP lecturers who participated in the one-to-one interview were coded with a number provided to each lecturer. For instance, the ESP lecturer interviewed coded as *EL1*. *EL* represents the English lecturer, and *1* represents the lecturer's number. The 10 DM Subject Matter lecturers who took part in the one-to-one interview were coded with a number provided to each respondent. For instance, the first DM Subject Matter lecturer is coded as *SML1*. *SML* represents the Subject Matter lecturer, and *1* represents the lecturer's number.

3.4. Data collection analysis

The data analysis was conducted to interpret the findings from the explanatory sequential design of data collection. This study used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The quantitative method used a questionnaire consisting of demographic information and Likert scale questions with different multiple-choice answers. The semi-structured interviews were used to collect the qualitative data. The quantitative data were derived from the questionnaires, originally written in

English, and distributed to the medical students, the ESP lecturers and the DM Subject Matter lecturers. Quantitative data of the methods were analysed via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 24), which is usually used in applied linguistics and education research. Descriptive statistics analysis involving means, percentages and frequencies was used to summarise the findings. The means and standard deviations for the demographic information and Likert scale items were initially calculated and analysed. Then, the overall means for the multiple-response questions were calculated (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 213). The question for ranking the language skills' priority order was also analysed with descriptive statistics displaying means and standard deviations (Sönmez, 2019).

Inferential statistical procedures were used to determine any significant differences in the current study. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis (K-W) test for making multiple comparisons and a Mann-Whitney U test for making dual comparisons were employed to assess the statistical differences. These two tests were used among the three respondents not equivalent in number (186 medical students, 4 ESP lecturers and 10 DM Subject Matter lecturers) regarding their perspectives on English language needs and the content of the ESP course (Alfehaid, 2011; Riazi, 2016). *'Non-parametric data are those which make no assumptions about the population'* (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 727). Cohen et al. (2018, p. 797) also recommend using the K-W test to determine any significant difference *'for three or more related samples'*. The K-W test is recommended in many needs analysis studies to find any significant differences if the probability value (p-value) is less than 0.05 and identify discrepancies between the groups on a rating scale (Hekmati et al., 2020; İlgör, 2019).

In addition, the qualitative data were collected from the interviews to clarify better or build upon initial quantitative results to investigate the learners' target needs (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). It might be worth indicating that a thematic analysis framework that includes classifying, organising data according to key themes, concepts and emergent categories (Ritchie et

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al., 2013) was used to analyse the data collected from the recorded semi-structured interviews with selected participants. Regarding the interview results obtained from the 15 medical students, the 4 ESP lecturers and the 10 DM Subject Matter lecturers, the researcher presents them qualitatively based on what is found on the checklists, recordings, and notes obtained. The interviews were audio-recorded and then manually transcribed. Then, the interview transcripts were coded and thematically analysed to create the themes and discuss the findings in a systematic analysis as highlighted by Alsamadani (2017). The questions of the interviews were assembled under the same categories as the questionnaires to determine whether the findings were consistent.

4. STUDY RESULTS
4.1. Participants' personal information

From the questionnaire, as shown in Table 2, most students (36%) were in the 23-24 age group. Of all 186 medical students, 102 were females and 84 males, 37 were in the first year, 35 were in the second year, 38 were in the third year, 35 were in the fourth year, and 41 were fifth-year students in the academic year 2020-2021. It is revealed that 41.40% (77 students) and 42.47% (79 students) scored excellent and very good in the first semester of their first year of study. Similarly, 46.24% and 38.71% of the students achieve excellent and very good in the second semester. Conversely, only 4.30% and 4.84% of the students passed between 50% and 64% in both semesters.

Table 2
The demographic background of the medical students

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION		ITEMS	TOTAL (N= 186)	%
Age		19-20 years old	24	12.90
		21-22 years old	56	30.10
		23-24 years old	67	36.00
		25-26 years old	39	21.00
		27-28 years old	—	—
Gender		Male	102	54.8
		Female	84	45.2
Year		1st	37	19.90
		2nd	35	18.80
		3rd	38	20.40
		4th	35	18.80
		5th	41	22.00
English Score	1st semester	90% − 100% Excellent	77	41.40
		80% − 89% Very good	79	42.47
		65% − 79% Good	22	11.83
		50% − 64% Pass	8	4.30
	2nd semester	90% − 100% Excellent	86	46.24
		80% − 89% Very good	72	38.71
		65% − 79% Good	19	10.22
		50% − 64% Pass	9	4.84

As detailed in Table 3, all four male ESP lecturers are between 31 and 60 years old. Two (50%) are Professors, an Assistant Professor and one Lecturer. In terms of work experience, one lecturer has an experience of more than ten years, another one between 2 to 5 years and two less than two years. Two ESP lecturers only have attended training courses or professional development workshops on ESP teaching and learning.

Table 4 shows ten DM Subject Matter lecturers who participated in this study, with one female and nine male lecturers. They teach different subjects to medical students in the medical faculties at Ibb University. Their ages range from 31 to 50 years old. Three (30%) are Associate Professors, five (50%) are Assistant Professors, and two (20%) are Professors. The results revealed that two (20%) of them have been working for more than ten years, four (40%) between five to ten years, three (30%) between two to five years and only one (10%) for less than two years.

The results also showed that four lecturers use English in their teaching style, while the remaining lecturers use Arabic and English.

Table 3

The demographic background of the ESP lecturers

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	ITEMS	TOTAL (N= 4)	%
Age	20-30 years old	–	–
	31-40 years old	1	25.00
	41-50 years old	2	50.00
	51-60 years old	1	25.00
Gender	Male	4	100.00
	Female	–	–
Title	Professor	2	50.00
	Associate Professor	–	–
	Assistant Professor	1	25.00
	Lecturer	1	25.00
Teaching English language to medical students for	more than 10	1	25.00
	between 5 to 10	–	–
	between 2 to 5	1	25.00
	less than 2	2	50.00
Attended workshops on ESP teaching and learning	Yes	2	50.00
	No	2	50.00

Table 4

The demographic background of the DM Subject Matter lecturers

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	ITEMS	TOTAL (N= 10)	%
Age	20-30 years old	–	–
	31-40 years old	1	10.00
	41-50 years old	8	80.00
	51-60 years old	1	10.00
Gender	Male	9	90.00
	Female	1	10.00
Title	Professor	2	20.00
	Associate Professor	3	30.00
	Assistant Professor	5	50.00
	Lecturer	–	–
Teaching medical students for	more than 10	2	20.00
	between 5 to 10	4	40.00
	between 2 to 5	3	30.00
	less than 2	1	10.00
The language they use in their teaching	Arabic	–	–
	English	4	40.00
	Arabic & English	6	60.00

4.2. Frequency of English language skills/sub-skills use

In this section, the results cover how frequently medical students use the four main skills/sub-skills of the English language and their important needs. Likert on a five-point scale (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, and 5 = Always) were used to allow the respondents to express their responses. Table 5 shows the mean and overall mean scores for the English language sub-skills for the medical students in the analysis procedures. The overall mean of the medical students takes into account the frequency of using English language skills. The most

Table 5
Medical students' responses regarding the frequency of using English skills/sub-skills

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS	NO.	MEAN	SD	OVERALL MEAN	OVERALL SD
Reading	Reading textbooks	186	4.26	0.98	3.96	0.21
	Reading medical articles in journals	186	3.69	1.00		
	Reading medical manuals	186	3.97	1.02		
	Reading course handouts	186	4.10	1.01		
	Reading texts on the computer	186	3.76	1.20		
	Reading instructions for assignments/projects	186	3.82	1.09		
	Reading instructions for labs	186	3.88	1.10		
	Reading study notes	186	4.18	0.92		
Writing	Writing lab reports	186	3.96	1.00	3.94	0.23
	Writing assignments	186	4.02	1.11		
	Writing field-trip reports	186	3.55	1.20		
	Writing short projects	186	3.83	1.14		
	Taking notes in lectures	186	4.16	0.97		
	Writing test/exam answers	186	4.12	0.98		
Listening	Following lectures	186	4.09	1.01	4.00	0.10
	Following question/answer sessions in class	186	4.05	0.93		
	Listening to spoken presentations	186	4.06	0.93		
	Listening to instructions	186	3.96	0.96		
	Listening to instructions for assignments	186	3.84	1.08		
Speaking	Participating in discussions	186	3.90	0.98	3.77	0.13
	Asking questions in class	186	3.63	1.20		
	Giving spoken presentations	186	3.76	1.11		

frequent skill used is Listening (overall mean = 4.00), followed by Reading (overall mean = 3.96) and Writing (overall mean = 3.94). On the other hand, medical students considered Speaking the least frequent use of English language skills with a mean score (overall mean = 3.77).

More specifically, as shown in Tables 6 and 7, ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers rated similarly across the four main skills of the English language. The overall mean of the most frequent English skills used by medical students has initially listed Writing with an overall mean of 3.92 and then followed by Listening (overall mean = 3.85 and 3.88), Reading (overall mean = 3.66 and 3.74), and Speaking (overall mean = 2.67 and 3.30). In addition, the findings showed similarities between medical students' perspectives and their ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers regarding the frequency medical students use the English language sub-skills. A total of 10 sub-skills *reading textbooks*, *reading course handouts*, *reading study notes*, *writing lab reports*, *writing assignments*, *writing field-trip reports*, *writing short projects*, *taking notes in lectures*, *writing test/exam answers*, and *listening to instructions* were used mainly by medical students. The Kruskal-Wallis (K-W) test indicated no significant differences among the three groups of participants on the frequency of using the English language by medical students, except in speaking sub-skills such as *participating in discussions* (x^2

= 10.530; *df* = 2; p = 0.005) and *giving spoken presentations* (x^2 = 8.399; *df* = 2; p = 0.015). In addition, the Mann-Whitney U test also showed only a statistically significant between medical students and their ESP lecturers in speaking sub-skills such as *participating in discussions* (u = 92.000; z = -2.701; p = 0.007) and *giving spoken presentations* (u = 123.000; z = -2.382; p = 0.017).

The interview questions were employed in this study to seek evidence of English language target needs, including the frequency and importance of medical students. Accordingly, medical students' interview responses show that English sub-skills were used differently. Some students showed limitations between sometimes and rarely in using English sub-skills. However, medical students assumed that frequent English use could improve their necessities or weakness, such as performing better presentations and seminars. In addition, all ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers highlighted that medical students should always use English sub-skills to perform better. The candidate's comments are summarised in the quotations below:

I sometimes use English to present and perform better presentations. [MS3E]

It is very important for me to use English because I have to do better scientific seminars. [MS1D]

I rarely use English to perform the English subskills because I don't understand how important it is. [MS1C]

Table 6

ESP lecturers' responses regarding the frequency of using English skills/sub-skills

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS	NO.	MEAN	SD	OVERALL MEAN	OVERALL SD
Reading	Reading textbooks	4	4.00	0.82	3.66	0.30
	Reading medical articles in journals	4	3.75	0.96		
	Reading medical manuals	4	3.50	1.73		
	Reading course handouts	4	4.00	0.00		
	Reading texts on the computer	4	3.25	0.50		
	Reading instructions for assignments/projects	4	3.75	0.50		
	Reading instructions for labs	4	3.25	0.96		
	Reading study notes	4	3.75	0.50		
Writing	Writing lab reports	4	3.75	0.96	3.92	0.40
	Writing assignments	4	4.50	0.58		
	Writing field-trip reports	4	3.25	1.26		
	Writing short projects	4	3.75	1.26		
	Taking notes in lectures	4	4.00	1.15		
	Writing test/exam answers	4	4.25	0.96		
Listening	Following lectures	4	3.75	0.50	3.85	0.29
	Following question/answer sessions in class	4	4.00	0.00		
	Listening to spoken presentations	4	3.50	1.29		
	Listening to instructions	4	3.75	0.96		
	Listening to instructions for assignments	4	4.25	0.50		
Speaking	Participating in discussions	4	2.50	0.58	2.67	0.38
	Asking questions in class	4	3.00	0.82		
	Giving spoken presentations	4	2.50	0.58		

Table 7

DM Subject Matter lecturers' responses regarding the frequency of using skills/sub-skills

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS	NO.	MEAN	SD	OVERALL MEAN	OVERALL SD
Reading	Reading textbooks	10	4.10	0.54	3.74	0.32
	Reading medical articles in journals	10	3.10	0.94		
	Reading medical manuals	10	4.00	0.77		
	Reading course handouts	10	3.80	0.75		
	Reading texts on the computer	10	3.60	0.49		
	Reading instructions for assignments/projects	10	3.50	0.81		
	Reading instructions for labs	10	3.90	0.70		
	Reading study notes	10	3.90	0.70		
Writing	Writing lab reports	10	3.90	0.83	3.90	0.29
	Writing assignments	10	4.20	0.75		
	Writing field-trip reports	10	3.50	0.92		
	Writing short projects	10	3.60	0.92		
	Taking notes in lectures	10	4.10	0.83		
	Writing test/exam answers	10	4.10	0.94		
Listening	Following lectures	10	3.70	1.10	3.88	0.26
	Following question/answer sessions in class	10	3.60	0.80		
	Listening to spoken presentations	10	4.10	0.94		
	Listening to instructions	10	3.80	0.75		
	Listening to instructions for assignments	10	4.20	0.60		
Speaking	Participating in discussions	10	3.30	1.00	3.30	0.40
	Asking questions in class	10	3.70	0.90		
	Giving spoken presentations	10	2.90	1.51		

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I always use English to perform English skills to fulfil better results. [MS2B]

For me, I often use English to perform most subskills. [MS1A]

Medical students most often use English to perform the best English sub-skills. [EL1]

Some English sub-skills are more important than others, so medical students must use English to improve these subskills for the best performance. [EL2]

I think that medical students should always use English for performing all the sub-skills because that would help to improve their main skills. [SML1]

As a medical student, he has to often practice more and more English sub-skills to perform a better presentation. [SML2]

I think that all English subskills are related so medical students must sometimes use English to perform them. [SML3]

4.3. Importance of English language skills/sub-skills

As shown in Figure 3, the participants ranked the English language skills according to their importance to medical students. The findings showed some differences in ranking the most important English language skills. The medical students ranked Reading (overall mean = 3.25) and Listening (overall mean =

3.17) as the most important, whereas the ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers ranked Writing (overall mean = 3.25 and 3.10) and Speaking (overall mean = 3.00 and 3.70), respectively, as the most important skill to medical students from their point of view.

Accordingly, the K-W test showed a statistically significant difference among the perspectives of the three respondents about the medical students' four main English language skills ranking in Listening (x^2 = 25.544; *df* = 2; p = 0.000), Speaking (x^2 = 17.628; *df* = 2; p = 0.000), Reading (x^2 = 31.065; *df* = 2; p = 0.000) and Writing (x^2 = 63.018; *df* = 2; p = 0.000). In regard to rating the importance of Listening and Writing, there were only statistically significant differences between medical students and their ESP lecturers (u = 86.500; z = -2.907; p = 0.004) and (u = 45.500; z = -4.443; p = 0.000), respectively. Additionally, as analysed by the Mann-Whitney test, there were statistically significant differences between the medical students and their DM Subject Matter lecturers in rating the main English language skills such as Listening (u = 251.500; z = -4.273; p = 0.000), Speaking (u = 363.000; z = -3.933; p = 0.000), Reading (u = 98.000; z = -5.360; p = 0.000) and Writing (u = 47.500; z = -7.111; p = 0.000).
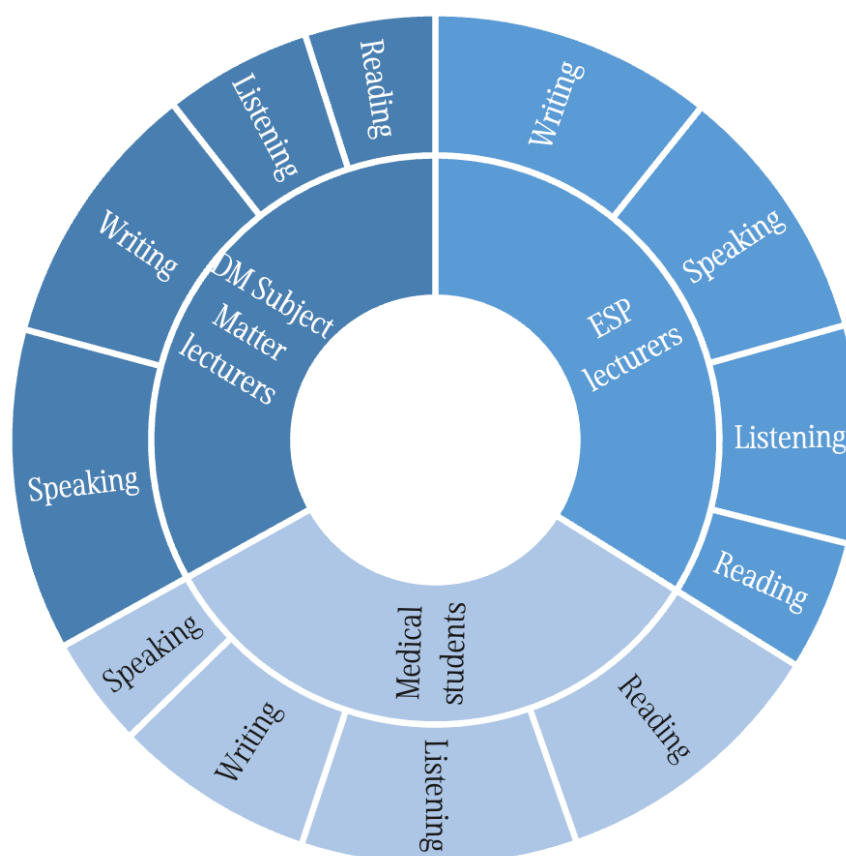
Figure 2. Medical students', ESP lecturers' and DM Subject Matter lecturers' responses regarding the ranking of English language main skills

Table 8

Medical students', ESP lecturers and DM Subject Matter lecturers' responses regarding the ranking of English language main skills

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS	NO.	MEAN	SD	OVERALL MEAN	OVERALL SD
Reading	Reading textbooks	186	4.51	0.72	4.14	0.22
	Reading medical articles in journals	186	4.04	0.87		
	Reading medical manuals	186	4.10	0.88		
	Reading course handouts	186	4.25	0.88		
	Reading texts on the computer	186	3.80	1.07		
	Reading instructions for assignments/projects	186	4.04	0.89		
	Reading instructions for labs	186	4.05	0.97		
	Reading study notes	186	4.32	0.84		
Writing	Writing lab reports	186	4.05	1.00	4.08	0.14
	Writing assignments	186	4.08	0.96		
	Writing field-trip reports	186	3.88	1.01		
	Writing short projects	186	3.99	0.94		
	Taking notes in lectures	186	4.19	0.95		
	Writing test/exam answers	186	4.26	0.84		
Listening	Following lectures	186	4.25	0.86	4.13	0.11
	Following question/answer sessions in class	186	4.22	0.92		
	Listening to spoken presentations	186	4.11	1.00		
	Listening to instructions	186	4.09	0.86		
	Listening to instructions for assignments	186	3.98	0.92		
Speaking	Participating in discussions	186	4.10	0.97	4.06	0.09
	Asking questions in class	186	3.96	0.97		
	Giving spoken presentations	186	4.13	0.94		

Table 9

ESP lecturers' responses regarding the importance of English language skills/sub-skills for medical students

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS	NO.	MEAN	SD	OVERALL MEAN	OVERALL SD
Reading	Reading textbooks	4	4.50	0.58	4.47	0.28
	Reading medical articles in journals	4	4.25	0.96		
	Reading medical manuals	4	4.00	0.00		
	Reading course handouts	4	4.25	0.96		
	Reading texts on the computer	4	4.50	0.58		
	Reading instructions for assignments/projects	4	4.75	0.50		
	Reading instructions for labs	4	4.75	0.50		
	Reading study notes	4	4.75	0.50		
Writing	Writing lab reports	4	4.50	1.00	4.38	0.21
	Writing assignments	4	4.00	1.15		
	Writing field-trip reports	4	4.50	0.58		
	Writing short projects	4	4.25	0.96		
	Taking notes in lectures	4	4.50	0.58		
	Writing test/exam answers	4	4.50	1.00		
Listening	Following lectures	4	4.25	0.50	4.20	0.33
	Following question/answer sessions in class	4	4.50	0.58		
	Listening to spoken presentations	4	4.50	0.58		
	Listening to instructions	4	4.00	1.41		
	Listening to instructions for assignments	4	3.75	1.26		
Speaking	Participating in discussions	4	4.00	1.15	4.08	0.14
	Asking questions in class	4	4.25	0.50		
	Giving spoken presentations	4	4.00	1.15		

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Besides, all participants were involved in rating the importance of 22 items of English language sub-skills to medical students. The Likert scale used in this section of the questionnaire rates from 5 *very important*, 4 *important*, 3 *somewhat important*, 2 *important*, to 1 *not important*. The medical students' mean and overall mean scores regarding the importance of English language sub-skills are shown in Table 8. For instance, the medical students' results concerning the importance of Reading sub-skills showed that the very important sub-skill was *reading textbooks* (mean = 4.51), whereas *reading texts on the computer* (mean = 3.80) was found to be somewhat important.

The findings presented in Table 9 showed that the ESP lecturers perceived that all skills are very important. In particular, the overall mean of the most frequently used skills was listed, respectively, Reading (overall mean = 4.47), Writing (overall mean = 4.38), Listening (overall mean= 4.20), and Speaking (overall mean = 4.08). The findings explicitly demonstrated that the ESP lecturers perceived Reading sub-skills (i.e., *reading instructions for assignments/projects, reading instructions for labs,* and *reading study notes*) to be very important sub-skills with the same mean score of 4.75.

Table 10 showed that the DM Subject Matter lecturers perceived the importance of English language sub-skills to medical students. The overall means differed from the findings obtained from medical students and ESP lecturers. Listening skills (overall mean = 4.46) received the highest score, while Reading skills (overall mean = 4.31) scored the least. Speaking and Writing skills scored in the middle, and the overall means were 4.37 and 4.32, respectively.

The findings on the importance of English Language sub-skills showed the same agreement between medical students' perspectives and their ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers, such as *reading textbooks, reading course handouts, reading study notes, taking notes in lectures, writing test/exam answers, following lectures, following question/answer sessions in class, listening to spoken presentations, participating in discussions* and *giving spoken presentations*. Almost all English four sub-skills have shown high importance for medical students, except *reading texts on the computer, writing field trip reports,* and *listening to instructions for assignments*, which students may rarely use. In addition, there were differences in the importance of the four main English language skills between medical students and their ESP and DM lecturers. Reading was the most important while Speaking was the least perceived by medical students and their ESP lecturers. In contrast, the DM Subject Matter lecturers perceived Listening as the most important skill for medical students, and the other skills come next in the order of Speaking, Writing, and Reading.

Table 10

DM Subject Matter lecturers' responses regarding the importance of English language skills/sub-skills for medical students

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS	NO.	MEAN	SD	OVERALL MEAN	OVERALL SD
Reading	Reading textbooks	10	4.80	0.40	4.31	0.27
	Reading medical articles in journals	10	4.30	0.78		
	Reading medical manuals	10	4.50	0.50		
	Reading course handouts	10	4.20	0.75		
	Reading texts on the computer	10	3.90	0.83		
	Reading instructions for assignments/projects	10	4.30	0.78		
	Reading instructions for labs	10	4.10	0.70		
	Reading study notes	10	4.40	0.66		
Writing	Writing lab reports	10	4.10	0.70	4.32	0.21
	Writing assignments	10	4.20	0.75		
	Writing field-trip reports	10	4.10	0.54		
	Writing short projects	10	4.50	0.50		
	Taking notes in lectures	10	4.40	0.49		
	Writing test/exam answers	10	4.60	0.49		
Listening	Following lectures	10	4.40	0.49	4.46	0.05
	Following question/answer sessions in class	10	4.40	0.49		
	Listening to spoken presentations	10	4.50	0.50		
	Listening to instructions	10	4.50	0.67		
	Listening to instructions for assignments	10	4.50	0.50		
Speaking	Participating in discussions	10	4.30	0.78	4.37	0.06
	Asking questions in class	10	4.40	0.66		
	Giving spoken presentations	10	4.40	0.49		

Moreover, most participants emphasised the importance of English in meeting the student's demands. Apart from the requirement of English for academics, numerous interview respondents stated that English is increasingly important in various sectors. Initially, the medical students' responses during the interviews show that most medical students presume that the English language course helps them to improve their necessities in English language skills up to some limit. However, throughout the interview sessions, the interviewees assessed the priorities among the language skills differently. In addition, most medical students, for example, ranked the importance of language skills in the following order of Reading and Listening followed by Speaking and Writing, whereas the ESP and Subject Matter lecturers considered Writing and Speaking are the most important skills. Some of their comments are shown in the quotations below:

I think all English language skills are very important to medical students, but ... can be ranked as reading, listening, speaking and writing. [MS5E]

I believe that Writing and Speaking are more important skills for medical students in order to pass their exams with good marks, listening and reading come next. [EL1]

Speaking is more important, and writing is important too. [SML4]

Consistent with the results of the questionnaires, the respondents again emphasised the important role of English language sub-skills differently. The following quotations highlight some of their responses:

Well, I think the sub-skills in English medical materials are the main important things that reflect the English language need in human medicine majors. For example, reading textbooks, articles, and updates in medical fields is important. This is regarding reading. Also, writing, study notes for assignment tests and exams, participating in medical discussions and seminars, and asking questions regarding speaking. Also, listening to spoking presentation and instructions. Listening to instructions for assignments, listening to medical professors, taking experience notes from them, and so on. [MS2E]

It is very important especially since medical students perform scientific seminars during the study, so they must be able to master the sub-skills to present a complete and wonderful presentation. [MS1D]

In my opinion, medical students must read textbooks and course handouts, lab instructions, and exam questions, usually written in English. They are also obliged to take notes in their lectures, write their assignments, and answer exams in English. Also, I think students must improve their listening and speaking skills to communicate easily with their lecturers. [EL1]

See, when it comes to language, you cannot be professional if you are not practising every day. So, medical students must listen to scientific videos, watch movies, listen to songs, and read more and more books. To write you have to read; to speak you have to listen. So, these sub-skills are very important for any language. [SML1]

The questionnaires and interviews indicated a match and mismatch of responses for the most important skills between medical students and their ESP, mainly in Reading and Speaking skills, as well as with the DM Subject Matter lecturers who emphasised and agreed with medical students that the least important of Writing skills.

5. DISCUSSION

This study examined the appropriacy of the current ESP course to the English target needs of the medical students at Ibb University in Yemen using a triangulated mixed method needs analysis approach. In other words, medical students at IU have to acquire the four English skills/sub-skills to function effectively in the target situation. The ESP courses are only designed based on accessible materials. The needs analysis is not practised, and the students' needs are neglected, as Al-Kadi (2018) mentioned. Al-Kadi (2018) also indicated that ESP is based on general purposes but not specific needs. Grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and note memorisation are the core of these programmes. Current studies in Indonesia and Hong Kong indicated that medical students desire for ESP courses to focus on the target needs of their academic and professional lives with emphasis on four language skills (Sikumbang & Dalimunte, 2021; Pun & Onder-Ozdemir, 2023). In addition, Trujeque-Moreno et. al (2021) stated that revising ESP programmes in Mexican context is crucial to improve student motivation to use English in their professional lives. Thus, developing an ESP course without considering the students' needs is probably doomed to failure. Consequently, learners struggle to meet the profession's expectations in the target situation. The inappropriate ESP curriculum primarily affects students' academic preparation, thereby affecting their workplace success. However, the current ESP courses at the Yemeni universities should improve to meet the students' English language needs and perspectives.

The findings on the frequency of English language use and the importance of English skills to the students are analysed to define the medical students' English language necessities. The findings showed some differences in which medical students believed the most frequent skills used are Listening and Reading, while their ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers believed that medical students use Writing and Listening. In this regard, a similar agreement finding was found in research studies of Kavaliauskienė and Užpalienė (2003) on a tertiary level and Liu et al. (2011) on EFL college students. Thus, it is important to mention the difference between how students use a language in a specific situation (internal needs) and how they study the language for a short time and pass exams (external needs) to recognise how various internal and external factors complicate the issue of interrelated necessities, lacks and wants.

Alsamadani (2017) uses the same framework, which could analyse students' needs from the first step to the target situation. The priority given to Listening appears to be mainly associated with the context that these medical students study, where English is the medium of instruction. Thus, the medical students'

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viewpoint needs for Listening skills is meaningful in that they need to listen to more other professionals at meetings, conferences, or training courses, in which active and effective listening has a significant role. Several research studies conducted in similar contexts also show that faculty members considered Listening as one of the most important skills having a role and importance in medical education (Hwang, 2011; Hwang & Lin, 2010; Kayaoğlu & Akbaş, 2016).

Medical students must be furnished with knowledge and information on their major and increase their competitive job search ability Çelik (2017). According to Wahi et al. (2013), *'prospective employers expect fresh graduates to be competent in their disciplines area in all modes of the English language as well as socially and professionally competent in speaking and listening'* (Wahi et al., 2013, p. 109). Students must improve their communicative speaking skills for everyday situations and many professions in future (Luana et al., 2021). This was also supported by a study on medical students in Sudan that emphasised on speaking and listening skills (Ibrahim, 2020). Sattarpour and Khalili (2019) were also of consensus that improvement should be based on cooperation between English language instructors and medical content instructors in the context of Iran.

A recent study by Al-Hassaani and Qaid (2021) added to the Yemeni EFL learners of the second-year level at Aden University to identify a classroom speaking problem. The findings concluded that students need enough practice time for speaking skills. The study could help ESP designers define educational tools to be implemented to match the learners' needs in the future. However, the findings also mismatch with other studies, e.g., Faraj (2015) and Mohammed and Nur (2018) that reported that speaking skills are the most significant for medical students and are used as criteria for evaluating language proficiency. Therefore, contextual factors such as the gap between two languages, the proficiency level of a student's native dialect, the knowledge of a second language, and the dialect of the native language spoken by the students, the relative status of the students' language in the community, and societal attitudes toward the students' native language, all these factors may affect students to speak English actively and frequently (Henter, 2014).

The findings of this study are in harmony with previous studies done by Moiinvaziri (2014), Akbari (2016), Vahdany and Gerivani (2016), Çelik and Topkaya (2018), and Karimnia and Khodashenas (2018) that giving reading the most important English language skills/sub-skills in terms of use, context and ability by medical students.

As conceived in Giddens's theory of structuration, social practices improve, expand and eventually die away over time concerning the learners' needs and the demands of their day-to-day existence (Basturkmen, 2014). The current study only considers structuration and constructivism theories which were in line with Basturkmen's (2010) view.

The theory of structuration could be useful to explain the skills that medical students need to function effectively in their target societies, academically and in future job fields. The ESP

world might be viewed as a social group. It is formed and maintained by various recognised and repeated practices in designing courses and learning content.

Social constructivism has been regarded as a dominant language learning theory; as stated by Hyland (2019, p. 345), social constructivism is *'the mainstream theoretical perspective in ESP and EAP research today'*. Thus, constructivism is the educational approach underpinning the methodology in exploring the English language needs analysis (Akyel & Ozek, 2010). The questionnaires and interviews in this study addressed the importance and effective use of learning strategies related to English language skills. The active involvement of medical students in giving their perspectives on the English language input they receive and the tasks offered to them is another implication of taking a constructivist perspective on the English language needs analysis research.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) mentioned that the purpose of an ESP course is to facilitate students to perform effectively in a target situation in which they will use the English language they are learning. If learning the English language is to improve communication, servicing, and writing papers, then sufficient training classes to meet such needs should serve the purpose. The power of needs analysis is collecting and exploiting data from different perspectives (Belcher, 2009; Frendo, 2005). The needs analysis of English language skills can include three main types of need assessment: target needs, current needs, and future needs (Czabanowska et al., 2007). However, the value of needs analysis is in designing and developing suitable ESP curriculums to meet the student's academic requirements (Mehrdad, 2012; Romanowski, 2017). Therefore, the needs analysis is a crucial step to collect and examine information about the current situation to understand the gap in the learners' existing knowledge and skills, contributing to the ESP course development.

6. CONCLUSION

The current English course offered to medical students at IU does not meet their English language target needs. However, the study revealed that medical students at IU are not qualified enough to use the English language in their major courses, presentations and practices. The current NA research was done to produce information that might be used to build an effective English language course (ESP course) that would suit the needs of medical students. Therefore, a match or mismatch between the perspectives of medical students and their ESP and DM Subject Matter lecturers on one side and between the medical students' needs and the skills promoted or developed by the current ESP course on the other side about the medical students' lack of using the English language should urgently need addressing to fill the gap in this research.

The current ESP course should be improved based on the student's English language target needs identified by this study. This will fulfil students' needs and wants as the current ESP course does not meet their needs and does not enable them to

use English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills effectively. Next, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) within the ESP teaching approach should be incorporated to design speaking and writing activities with a communicative purpose to support student learning. In addition, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method that is student-centred could be considered to improve listening and reading skills and successfully fulfil their academic and professional lives' needs. Finally, a major curriculum restructuring can involve introducing EGP courses for the first-year medical students and ESP/EMP courses for seniors.

This research focused only on needs analysis in evaluating ESP course designed for medical students with a small group of samples. Similar research should be carried out at more research sites involving a bigger pool of sample size. Further research, especially needs analysis, should be considered every two to three years to investigate graduate medical students' needs after

graduation. This will allow universities to review their ESP curriculum and align it to the needs of the workplace. In addition, research can consider experimental design to examine the revised ESP curriculum focusing on individual language skills. Furthermore, the learning needs of the graduates should be the core of the investigation in identifying student motivation, attitude, suitability of teaching methods, as well as teaching and learning styles and strategies.

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Original Research

Spanish as a resource in the acquisition of English as a second language

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The use of the mother tongue in foreign language lessons has always generated a wide debate on whether the use of L1 prevents students from learning a L2. This research shows what teachers of English as L2 in Spain think about this topic. First, we review the reasons to exclude the use of Spanish, as well as the reasons for its inclusion. This approach includes linguistic, social, and cultural factors intrinsic to the teaching/learning process. Information is collected using a mixed method approach. On the one hand, a questionnaire is designed to identify patterns and trends regarding the use of Spanish in the English classroom considering factual, behavioural, and attitudinal data. Each section is linked to research objectives. On the other, three specific qualitative methods are used: personal interviews, small focus group discussions and extension written narratives, where 12 questions are composed as a basis for the realisation of these three methods. The results of the study suggest that a prudent and judicious use of Spanish does not prevent or hinder the development of English learning in students. On the contrary, in many cases, it facilitates it since it provides the teacher with a powerful pedagogical resource. The study posits that the judicious employment of Spanish within the classroom setting yields positive outcomes and advocates for increased flexibility in its utilisation. However, it simultaneously points to the imperative that this flexibility should not detract from the primary objective of English language acquisition. This study has theoretical and practical implications in the design of formation syllabi for in-service and future teachers of L2 in L1 contexts..

KEYWORDS: *mother tongue, foreign language, language acquisition, English, pedagogical resource*

1. INTRODUCTION

This research deals with the use of the mother tongue (L1) in the foreign language (L2) classes, specifically Spanish within English language (L2) classrooms in Spain. The study explores the contentious spectrum from the belief that L1 hinders L2 acquisition to the view that L1 facilitates the validation of L2 learning. The practical realities of classroom instruction prompt a re-evaluation of L1's role in English language teaching, questioning whether bilingual educators should adopt a monolingual facade to deter students from reverting to L1. The aim of this research is to investigate how both learners and educators engage with L1 in the L2 learning environment, with a focus on Spanish usage in English education across Spain. It seeks to understand teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards this issue, alongside the determinants that shape these views. The research thus addresses several key questions:

1. When and in what contexts do teachers engage with students using L1 within L2 instruction?

2. What attitudes do teachers hold towards the incorporation of L1 in L2 education?

3. How do teachers perceive institutional policies in Spanish schools regarding L1 usage in L2 classrooms?

4. What factors influence teachers' beliefs and opinions on the use of L1 in L2 teaching?

The hypotheses posited in relation to these questions include: 1. Teachers predominantly resort to L1 for explanations, instructions, and classroom management. 2. Most teachers acknowledge the practicality and advantages of L1 use. 3. Spanish educational institutions, particularly private ones, adhere to a stringent policy against L1 use in L2 settings. 4. Factors such as prior training, institutional policies, students' L1 proficiency, and educators' teaching experiences significantly impact their attitudes towards L1 use in L2 classrooms.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Methodology used for collection and subsequent analysis of data is intended to know teachers' different positions regarding the use of L1 in L2 lessons. Besides, there are possible deviations between what they think is correct and what they really do in the classroom. Different experiences and reflections provided are compared. As mentioned above, there are quite a few studies done on this debate at a global level. However, it is not so common to see studies on teachers of English as L2 who teach in Spain. A mixed-method approach has been carried out. The following instruments have been employed: questionnaires, personal interviews (focus group discussions), and extension written narratives. This method triangulation offers researchers a less biased and comprehensible analysis since data are based on teachers' own perceptions about using L1.

On the one hand, a questionnaire is designed to identify teachers' patterns and trends regarding the use of Spanish in the English classroom considering factual, behavioural, and attitudinal data (Dörnyei, 2003). Each section is linked to research objectives. On the other, three specific qualitative methods are used: personal interviews, small focus group discussions and extension written narratives, where 12 questions are composed as a basis for the realisation of these three methods. To select these questions, researchers analysed questionnaire responses to repeat or create new questions. In narratives, both oral and written, participants are given the opportunity to expand further on events and feelings. In personal interviews, explanations or clarifications may be requested, which is not possible in questionnaires. There are also people who prefer using the written word to reflect. The group interview is the most flexible and dynamic method since it involves more people, usually between 4 and 10. Participants speak freely and openly enter conversations where they share opinions and personal experiences. The interviewer takes on an observer role and uses questions to facilitate the speech.

The study has been carried out among teachers of English as L2 who currently work and live in Spain. Participants are teachers who use English in their lessons as the main means of communication, whether it is English itself or other subjects. The survey has been disseminated through interest groups via social networks, teachers' organisations in Spain, as well as teachers from public, private, and grant-maintained schools that fit the profile for this study. The result obtained was, for a survey period of 2 weeks, 140 people.

All participants are teachers between 23 and 53 years old currently working in language academies and schools. Of the 11 participants, 10 are women and 1 is male, comprising three nationalities: United States, Great Britain, and Spain. Most have taught English in Spain for more than 10 years, with the extremes being 3 years and 18 years of teaching in total. That is, it has been possible to talk and try to understand a wide spectrum of the existing possibilities. The personal interviews were individualised according to the experiences of each participant. Participation in the first questionnaire was voluntary. Although there were many people who initially offered to participate more actively in this study, only 11 people ultimately responded to requests to participate in interviews and written narratives.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Stern (1992) notes that *'neither in second language learning research nor in foreign language pedagogy has this issue so far been resolved, and it demands further exploration'* (Stern, 1992, p. 403). Ellis (1992, 1994) also highlights the lack of information to reach a conclusion on this debate. For his part, Atkinson (1987) points out this uncertainty in the methodological literature may cause confusion for teachers about using L1.

On the one hand, Atkinson (1993) points out the difficulty of determining the correct balance of L1 use, however, admits that it can be a positive resource if used sensibly and in certain situations. Auerbach (1993) believes English teachers should use L1 to help students improve L2 language skills: *'Starting with the L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learner lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves. The learner is then willing to experiment and take risks with English'* (Auerbach, 1993, p. 19). L1 can reduce anxiety and create a more relaxed environment. Auerbach (1993) adds teaching exclusively in English is based on scientific findings and argues *'we need to recognise that respect for leaners' languages has powerful social implications'* (Auerbach, 1993, p. 30). In a study about the effects of Spanish (L1) in English lessons (L2), Schweers (1999) discovers *'students found it easier to cope with the L2 teacher if he/she can speak their mother tongue because this indicates how such a teacher appreciates the students' mother tongue'* (as cited in Almoayidi, 2018, p. 376).

Numerous empirical studies (Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002; Bouangeune, 2009; Kavaliauskiene, 2009; Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011; Carson & Kashihara, 2012; Timor, 2012; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014) reveal L1 can be an adequate resource in teaching L2. Forcing students to exclusively communicate in the L2 can be stressful, especially in the low and intermediate levels (Tang, 2002; Schweers, 1999). Yonesaka (2005) indicates the exclusive use of L2 was only intended to maximise the input of students, exposing them to a level they could not understand. In this way, Yonesaka (2005) and Burden (2000) indicate the exclusivity of L2 can generate a student-teacher relationship based on a position of power. In this case, if students need the support of L1 and the teacher is unable or refuses to respond to it, it can lead to unsatisfactory experiences for all (Burden, 2000).

'Students at lower proficiency levels view L1 as a beneficial aid in their English language learning process, enhancing their confidence in articulating thoughts (Mouhanna, 2009; Al Sharaeai, 2012). Conversely, students with higher proficiency levels perceive the incorporation of L1 as reducing their exposure to the second language (L2). However, they exhibit greater acceptance of L1 usage for grammatical explanations'

The use of L1 has several functions within the classroom, such as giving instructions in beginner levels (Tang, 2002; Atkinson, 1987), explaining the meaning of words (Tang, 2002; Jingxia, 2010) or clarifying complex grammatical concepts (Tang, 2002; Harbord, 1992). This suggests L1 can be used in class by the teacher to facilitate learning and by students to produce language and check comprehension (Atkinson, 1987; Nation, 2003; Weschler, 1997; Auerbach, 1993; Norman, 2008; Malyuga, 2009). A noteworthy investigation is the study conducted by Hawa et al. (2021) in the context of higher education, which explores students' perspectives on the use of their first language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Students at lower proficiency levels view L1 as a beneficial aid in their English language learning process, enhancing their confidence in articulating thoughts (Mouhanna, 2009; Al Sharaeai, 2012). Conversely, students with higher proficiency levels perceive the incorporation of L1 as reducing their exposure to the second language (L2). However, they exhibit greater acceptance of L1 usage for grammatical explanations (Al Sharaeai, 2012).

Cook (2001) argues L1 should be used systematically and with clear intent. Also, students can turn to L1 as a strategy for their collaborative and individual learning. So, the use of L1 can be considered as a pedagogical tool that facilitates the teaching and learning of L2 (Yusuf, 2009). Cook (2001) illustrates this idea claiming that *'given the appropriate environment, two languages are as normal as two lungs'* (Cook, 2001, p. 23). Finally, Deller and Rinvolucri (2002) state that *'many teachers have continued to use the mother tongue because it is both necessary and effective'* (Deller & Rinvolucri, 2002, p. 3). Alshehri (2017) considers that L1 can positively influence foreign language learning. Khati (2011) expresses that the *English only* policy can have a negative impact on students. This fact turns to be very important in relation to learning instructions and classroom interactions (Yusuf, 2009; Harmer, 2007). As Hawa et al. (2021) explain, *'learners feel difficult to understand the materials and tend to be passive to communicate in the target language during teaching and learning'* (Hawa et al., 2021, p. 1094). In terms of language methods, communicative approach disapproves L1 as opposed to the grammatical translation method (Esmaiel, 2015).

The arguments against the use of L1 refer to reducing the opportunities for input from L2 (Parker & Karaağaç, 2014) and creating a dependence on it (Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Levine,

2003; Nation, 2003; Scott & de la Fuente, 2008; Littlewood & Yu, 2009). Krashen (1982) claims that an excessive use of L1 not only deprives students of L2 input, but also does not motivate them to use it. According to Krashen (1987), there is no reason to rely on L1 in class. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) state L2 should be *'the medium as well as the object of instruction'* (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 8).

Larsen-Freeman (2000) prefers using L2 to manage and control the class and claims that *'the students learn from these classroom management exchanges, too, and realise that the target language is a vehicle for communication'* (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 132). Supporting the idea that teachers should create a communicative environment in L2 in the most natural way, Sharma (2006) is also against the use of L1 in the English classroom suggesting that *'the more students are exposed to English, the more quickly they will learn; as they hear and use English, they will internalise it to begin to think in English; the only way they will learn it is if they are forced to use it'* (Sharma, 2006, p. 80).

Prior training in second language (L2) teaching methodologies significantly influences the pedagogical approaches and rationales of prospective English language teachers. An analysis of Harmer's (1983, 1991, 2001, 2007) evolving perspective on the use of the first language (L1) in L2 acquisition across several decades reveals that, by 2007, the scholar acknowledged the critical role of L1 in learning L2. He recognised L1 as an integral part of students' identities, a sentiment echoed by subsequent research (Pillai et al., 2015; Aziz et al., 2020; Aziz et al., 2021). This suggests that the natural inclination to rely on L1 for understanding L2, whether through conscious or unconscious comparison and translation, is a legitimate and valuable part of the language learning process.

4. STUDY RESULTS
4.1. Statistical analysis

Out of the 140 respondents working in both formal and non-formal education who were surveyed, 75% are women. This aligns with statistics reporting that approximately 75% of language teachers in Spain are female (Zippia, 2024). The predominant age range of respondents is between 31 and 35 years, including adjacent age groups, accounting for 53% of the total. Furthermore, it is observed that there are three primary nationalities among the respondents: 37% are British, 27% are Spanish, and 20% are American, with an additional 11 nationalities represented to a lesser extent. The most common range of teaching experience among participants is 6 to 15 years, encompassing over 56% of respondents.

The subsequent sections will detail the most significant findings from the survey, beginning with the presentation of results for each question, followed by an analysis of these findings. A notable trend is that most respondents are employed by language schools (57%), in contrast to those working in public, private, or subsidised schools. Among these educators, 24% teach primary students, while 43% teach at the secondary level (Figure 1).
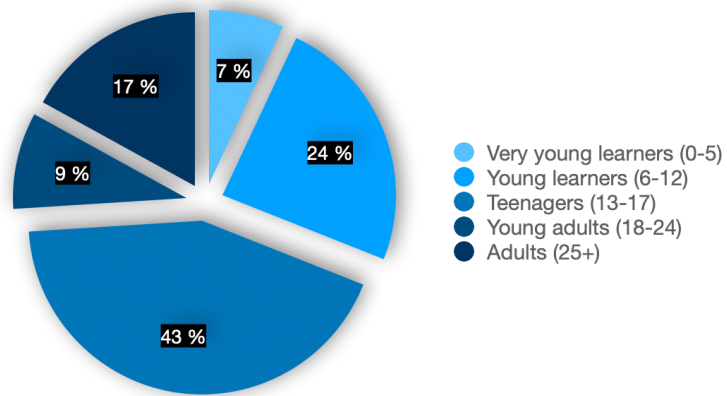
Figure 1. Student pool age group

Concerning the autonomy in determining the Spanish/English linguistic balance within their classrooms, 58% of educators report having the discretion to decide this mix. However, it is notable that over half are required to use only English during their instructional time. This contrast becomes more apparent when considering the views of their colleagues, as indicated by a decrease in this percentage (Figure 2). Additionally, 73% of the respondents are involved in teaching English as a second language (L2), whereas 16% are tasked with instructing other subjects in English. A smaller segment, 11%, engages in both teaching English as L2 and delivering content in other subjects through English (Figure 3).

1* Teachers can decide for themselves the balance of English/Spanish use in the classroom
2* Teachers are obliged to teach in English only
3* Students (or students' parents) expect classes to be taught in English only
4* My co-workers feel that classes should be taught in English only
5* My school should be more flexible about the use of Spanish
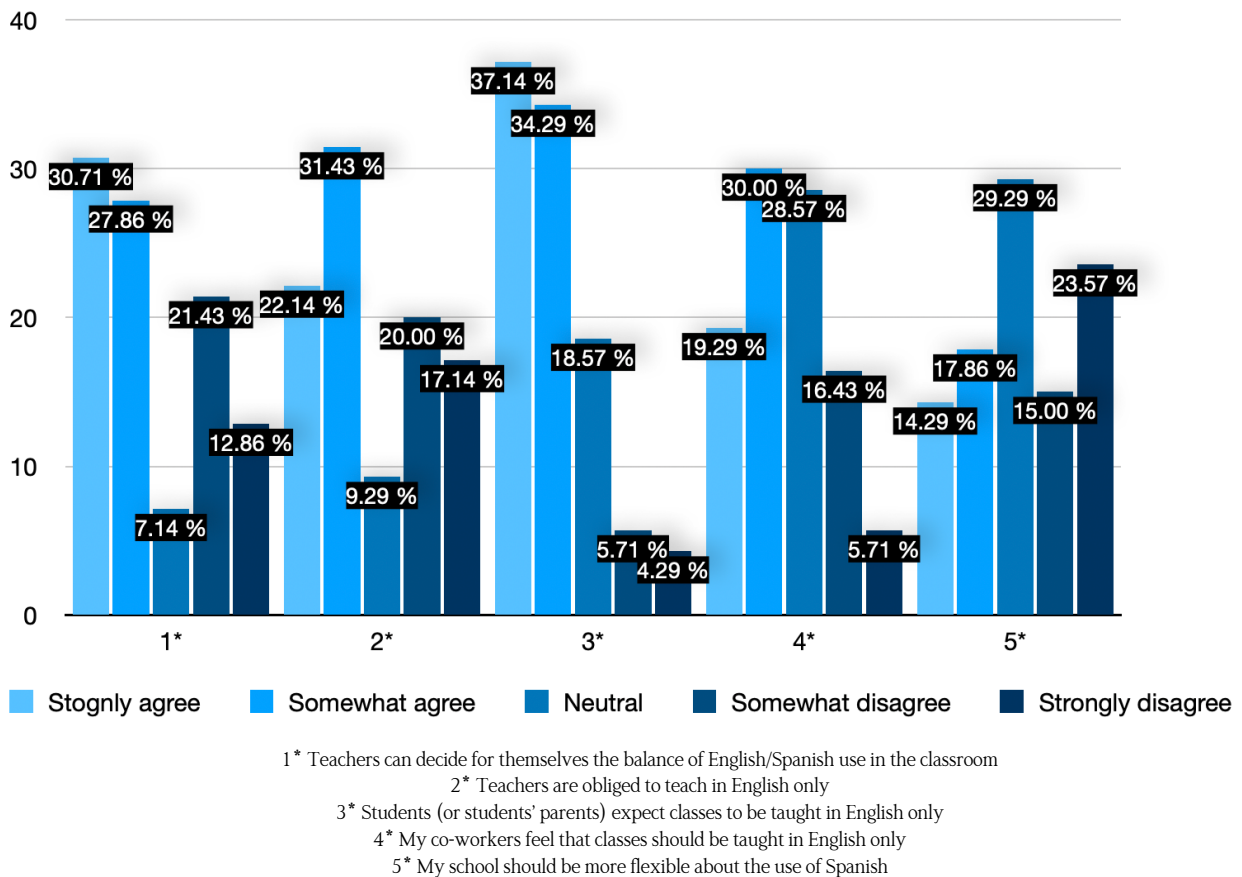
Figure 2. General attitude towards the use of Spanish in the workplace
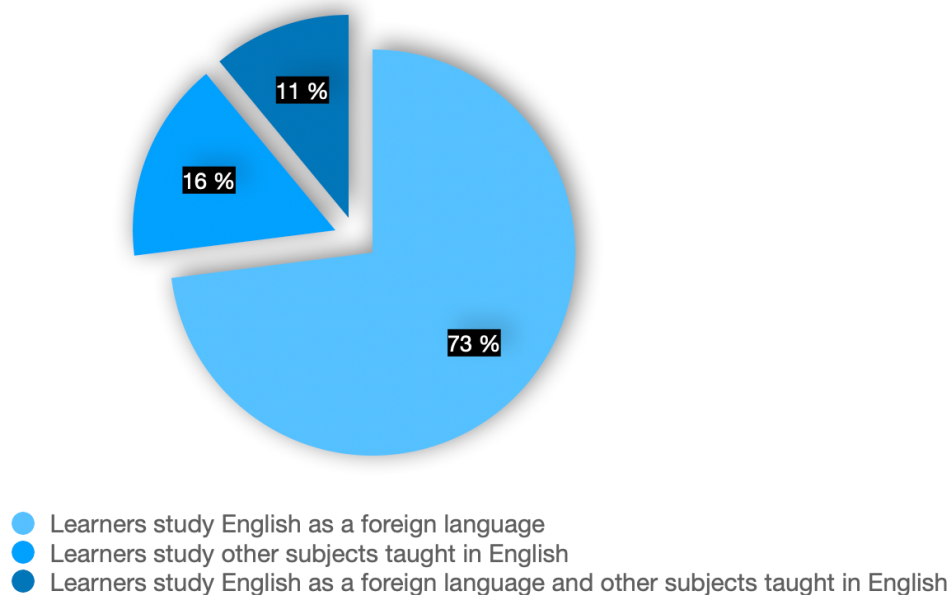
Figure 3. Responses on the place of English in the curriculum

The incorporation of Spanish into English lessons is administered via a range of approaches, as depicted in Figure 4. A notable 43% of educators employ Spanish selectively, considering its use beneficial without detracting from their students' motivation to communicate in English. This practice contrasts with the 26% of respondents who adhere strictly to using only English yet observe that their students persist in communicating in English, despite being aware of their instructors' proficiency in Spanish. This comparison brings to the fore the different strategies educators adopt in language instruction.
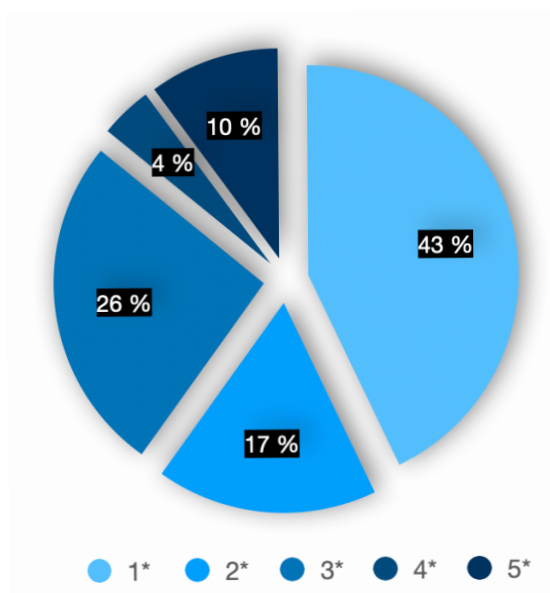
1* I primarily teach in English, resorting to Spanish only when deemed appropriate, while my students consistently strive to communicate in English
2* I mainly teach in English but use Spanish whenever necessary, which I believe reduces my students' efforts to communicate in English
3* I teach solely in English, and although my students know I understand Spanish, they consistently try to communicate in English
4* I teach only in English; my students know I understand Spanish, leading me to think they're less motivated to use English
5* I strictly teach in English, and my students, not knowing I understand Spanish, exclusively communicate in English

Figure 4. Educator strategies for Spanish use in English lessons and students' behaviour

The distribution of opinions on the flexibility of using Spanish in group work is nearly even, with a split of 47% to 53% (Figure 5). While this may initially appear negative, it is quite positive, as it indicates that nearly half of the respondents support allowing students to use Spanish judiciously and appropriately while engaging with English exercises.

47 %

53 %

● During groupwork, students must communicate in English only
● During groupwork, students may occasionally communicate in Spanish
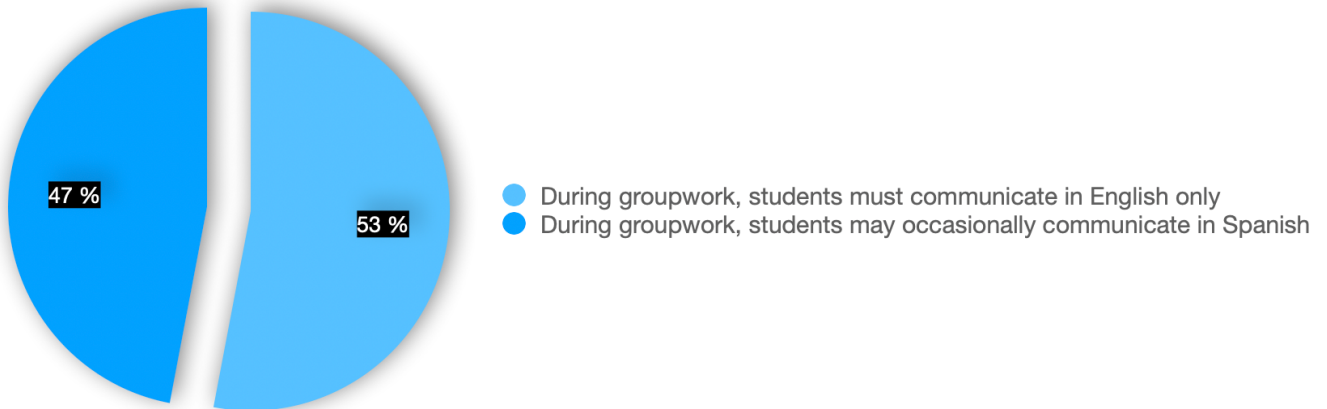
Figure 5. Educators' flexibility in the use of Spanish during groupwork

Concerning the use of Spanish, the number of teachers who would always use Spanish in the English language class is negligible. This was to be expected since it is a class taught in English and it would not make methodological sense to be continuously speaking Spanish. Also of note is the context in which the use of Spanish is largely accepted, which is teaching new vocabulary (57%) or new grammar (42%), explaining idioms (55%), managing the class (46%), comparing English and Spanish (61%), and addressing students' personal problems (68%) (Figure 6). This speaks to the fact that communication with students is essential, and we cannot, nor should we or do we want, to impose linguistic barriers that prevent this, especially considering that these are personal problems, outside of the strict academic field.

Always   Often   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

1* To check understanding and provide clarification
2* To raise linguistic awareness about differences and similarities between Spanish and English
3* To maintain discipline or resolve conflict
4* To encourage and comfort learners, offer individual support when students are struggling
5* To build rapport and create a comfortable classroom atmosphere
6* To address personal problems (when a student is emotional or sick)
7* To attract students' attention

Figure 6. Acceptable contexts for Spanish use

The subsequent examination concerns the potential use of Spanish as a resource under various circumstances (Figure 7). It is observed that 50% of respondents lean towards the belief that classes taught exclusively in English are most beneficial for students. This viewpoint is reinforced by nearly 70% who suggest that flexibility in language use may lead to students becoming complacent and opting to communicate in Spanish. Conversely, almost 60% of the participants argue that emphasis should be placed more on fluency rather than accuracy, even if it necessitates occasional use of Spanish. Furthermore, 65% concur that incorporating Spanish can alleviate student stress and foster a more relaxed learning atmosphere.

1* A flexible policy about Spanish use reduces learner anxiety and creates a more relaxed learning environment
2* An 'English only' class is the best way for students to make progress
3* Teachers should collaborate with students to establish guidelines for appropriate Spanish use in class, instead of completely prohibiting it
4* A flexible policy on Spanish use may lead students to default to Spanish without first trying to express themselves in English
5* If the goal is communication, it is better to focus on fluency (even with some use of Spanish) than on accuracy
6* The use of Spanish impedes learners from thinking in English

Figure 7. Educators' perceptions concerning English vs Spanish language policies in the classroom

Over 50% of teachers advocate for the use of Spanish when students struggle to express themselves or comprehend English explanations after multiple attempts (Figure 8). They emphasise the importance of facilitating students' understanding by contrasting concepts with their n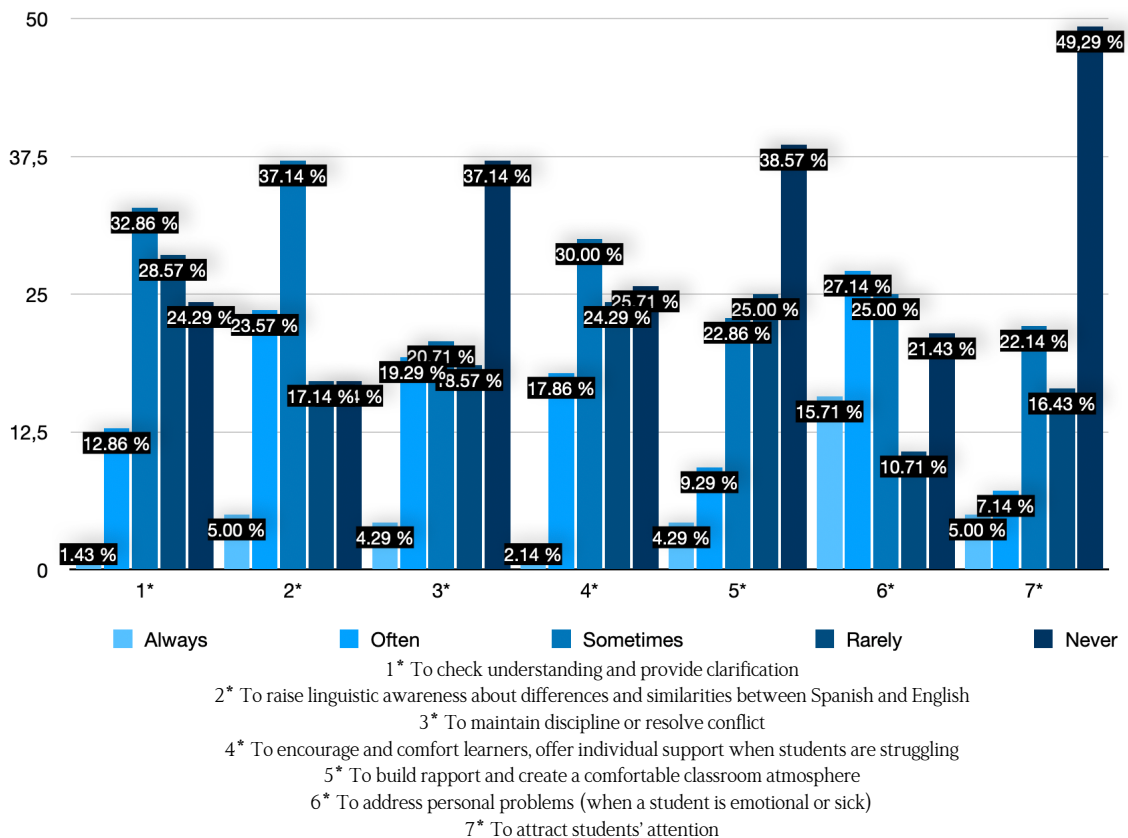ative language (L1). However, opinions vary regarding whether Spanish should be employed to assess comprehension or serve as a foundation for learning English, lacking a clear consensus among educators. At the same time, over 62% of respondents agree that it's appropriate for students to reconfirm information in Spanish and make language comparisons (Figure 9). Moreover, respondents believe that being bilingual can serve as a motivational model for students, encouraging them to excel in learning and participation.

Finally, respondents note that the use of Spanish limits exposure to English (55%), while exclusively using English fosters self-confidence (60%) (Figure 10). They agree (60%) that L2 acquisition differs from the process of acquiring a L1. Discrepancies arise among teachers regarding the use of Spanish. This acknowledgment aims to respect students as individuals and foster a positive environment, although there's an inclination towards a positive perspective. Similarly, when considering whether English should be the sole medium of instruction, opinions are evenly split, although there's a slight lean against those opposed to this idea. Respondents find the use of students' native language quite or very appropriate, especially at lower proficiency levels (Figure 11). Additionally, even at beginner levels, the use of Spanish becomes more acceptable as proficiency decreases.

1* It is appropriate for students to use Spanish to express their feelings and ideas when they fail to do so in English

2* A reasonable situation to use Spanish is to check students' comprehension

3* Spanish should be used as a means of scaffolding – teaching the basics from which further learning can take place

4* Using English with struggling students may heighten frustration, making Spanish a preferable option for providing straightforward explanations

5* Sometimes, students' clear understanding in their own language takes precedence over exclusive explanations in English

Figure 8. Educators' perceptions concerning English vs Spanish language policies in the classroom (continued)

1* Translation is a natural process with beginner levels, students will do it no matter what

2* Miming, visual aids, examples, demonstrations and repeating more slowly are more memorable and effective alternatives to translating

3* Spanish is a positive and valuable resource which can facilitate learning, if used minimally and with common sense

4* Students can confirm their understanding by paraphrasing the teacher's words in Spanish, if it boosts their confidence

5* Using Spanish to make comparisons between the two languages can facilitate English learning

6* Bilingual teachers serve as role models, motivating students to become bilingual as well

Figure 9. Educators' perceptions concerning English vs Spanish language policies in the classroom (continued)

1* Using Spanish limits exposure to comprehensible input, hindering listening and understanding of English, thus slowing progress
2* Exclusively using English fosters confidence by encouraging learners to communicate despite limited proficiency
3* Learners acquire their L2 the same way they acquire their L1
4* Teachers should use Spanish judiciously to acknowledge students' individuality, convey care, and create a positive learning environment
5* English needs to be the only medium as well as the object of instruction

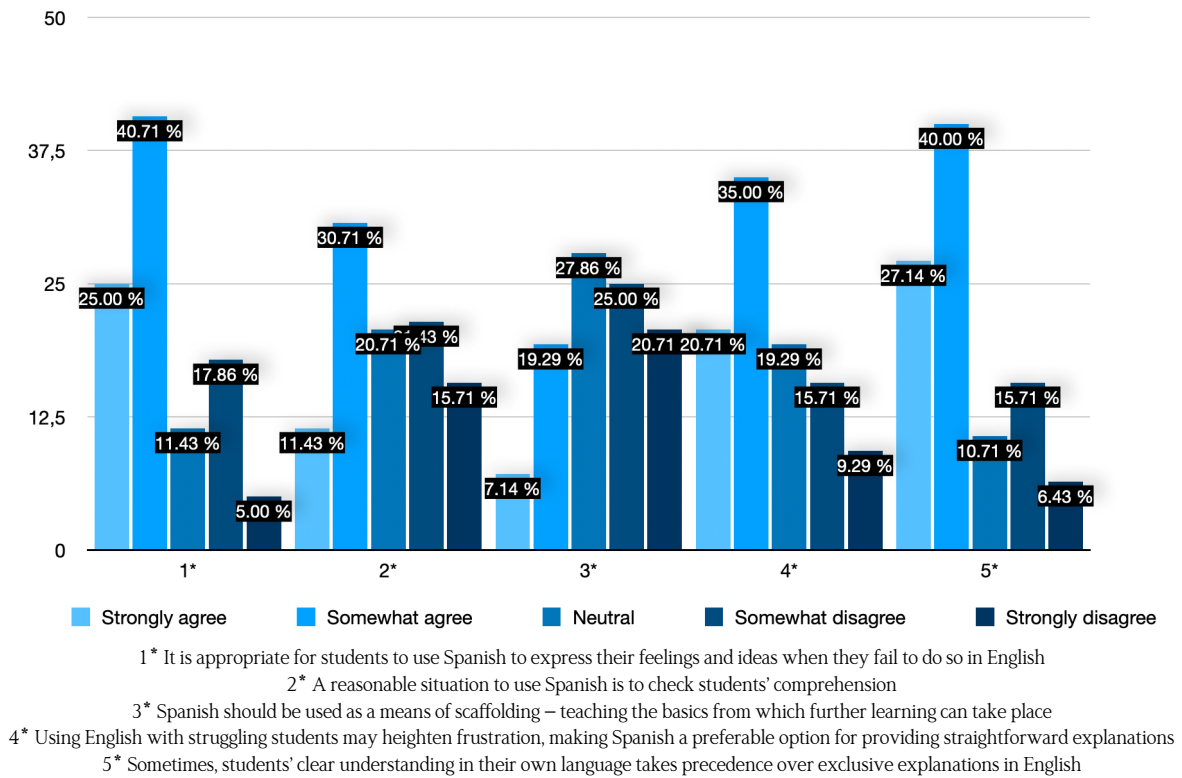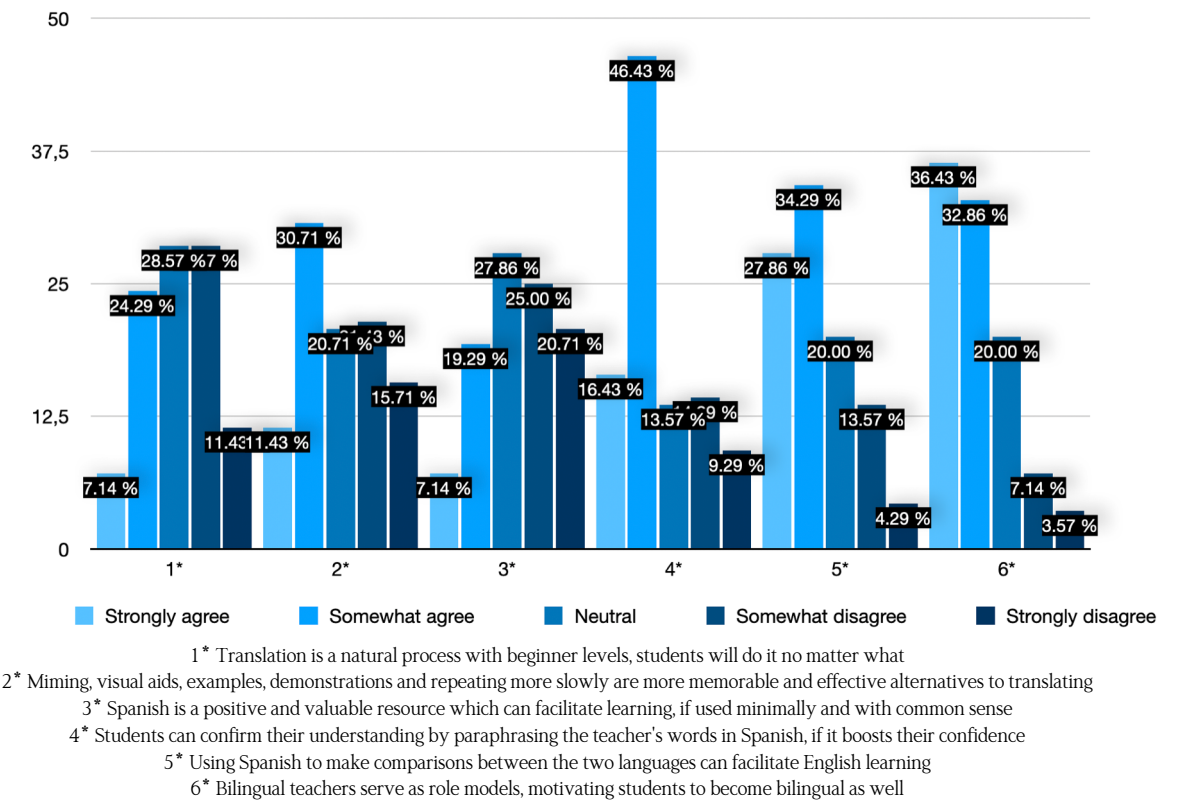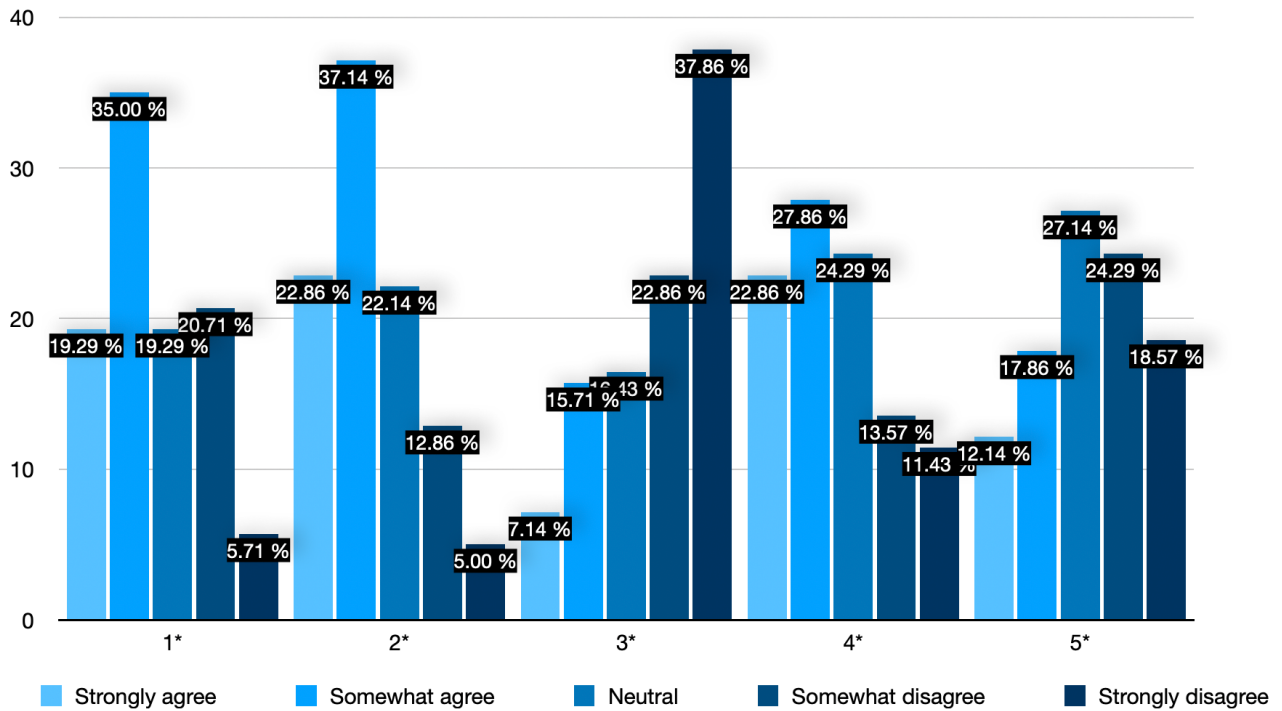*Figure 10*. Educators' perceptions concerning English vs Spanish language policies in the classroom (continued)
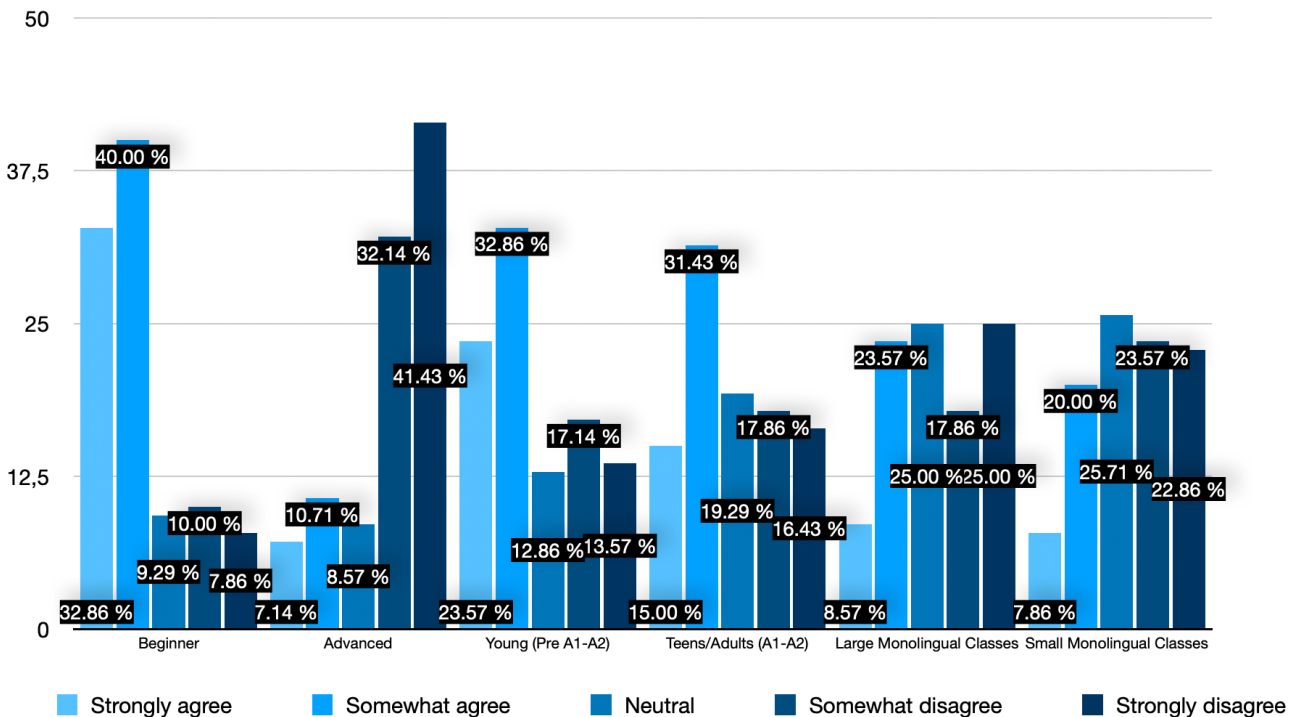

Figure 11. Acceptability of Spanish usage across student levels/ages

4.2. Questionnaire analysis

Following the statistical analysis and data presentation, this section will interpret the results and include comparisons based on factors like country of origin, workplace, educational level, and Spanish proficiency, highlighting key findings organised by sections.

The *School Policy on the Use of Spanish in the English Classroom* section aims to provide an overview of various factors, including workplace settings, student demographics, class sizes, and school policies regarding Spanish use in English classes. A notable finding is that 58% of teachers surveyed feel they have autonomy in deciding the Spanish-English balance in their instruction. Conversely, 37% reported no compulsion to teach exclusively in English, a perspective that challenges the prevalent belief in Spain that credibility is lost if teachers, especially non-native speakers, do not use English exclusively. Additionally, over 20% of respondents indicated that their peers believe lessons should not be conducted solely in English, marking a significant portion considering the study's focus on the utility of using the L1 in L2 classrooms.

Further analysis based on the type of institution (language schools vs schools) shows minimal overall differences. In language schools, 12% of teachers felt compelled to use only English, compared to 39% in schools who felt a forced exclusion of Spanish and 20% who felt somewhat obliged.

Additional comments underscored that the use of Spanish varies with the students' level of proficiency and time of the year, the impracticality of such support in multilingual classrooms, and the role of Spanish as a foundational support for progression.

The *Attitudes and Opinions about the Use of Spanish in the English Classroom* section explores teaching methods involving the L1 as support in primarily English classes. Surprisingly, nearly 60% of respondents report predominantly using English, indicating that a significant proportion of English teachers (or teachers of subjects in English) leverage L1 support. A closer look at language schools vs traditional schools reveals notable differences. Teachers in schools report a higher tendency to teach exclusively in English compared to language schools, where 65% of teachers incorporate some Spanish, versus 53% in traditional schools. This contradicts the common assumption that language schools would be more likely to conduct lessons solely in English, whereas traditional schools might be more lenient and utilise Spanish as a supportive resource. The 12% discrepancy could be attributed to institutional policies that implicitly or explicitly discourage Spanish use in the classroom. Additionally, 28% of teachers exclusively use English, and despite students being aware of their teachers' bilingual abilities, they continue to endeavour to communicate in English. There's a concern among 13% of teachers that if students knew they could speak both languages, it might lead to decreased effort and increased reliance on Spanish. However, the teacher's preference for using English does not translate to students' group work, where language schools exhibit stricter policies against Spanish use compared to traditional schools. Comparisons between native Spanish-speaking teachers and non-native speakers show minimal differences from the overall findings. Another area of focus is determining the optimal moments for Spanish reliance, with a distinct variation based on teachers' origins. The three areas showing the most significant differences are outlined below (Table 1).

Table 1
Frequency of Spanish use

	SPANIARDS	FOREIGNERS
Frequently use Spanish to teach new vocabulary	50%	60%
Frequently use Spanish to teach grammar	52%	42%
Always use of Spanish to address students' personal problems	40%	43%

The initial findings reveal that foreign teachers tend to use Spanish primarily for teaching vocabulary, while Spanish teachers are more inclined to use it for explaining grammar. This is attributed to the fact that 90% of foreign teachers, including those from Britain, America, Ireland, and Canada, have English as their first language and thus have a more intrinsic understanding of English grammar.

The section on *The Use of Spanish as a Resource in the English Classroom* exposes an acknowledgment among teachers that language proficiency alone does not encompass the entirety of teaching. Approximately 60% of teachers, regardless of their background, turn to Spanish to aid students in expressing themselves during personal situations where English may be insuffi-

cient. However, the choice to use Spanish is influenced not only by the teachers' origins but also by the institutional context. For instance, 9.43% of schoolteachers consistently use Spanish to engage students' attention, and 13.21% do so frequently, compared to 2.50% and 3.75%, respectively, among language schoolteachers. This suggests that Spanish is more commonly utilised in schools, possibly due to larger class sizes making student management more challenging. Language schools, typically with smaller class sizes ranging from 1 to 10 students, show a more sparing use of Spanish for this purpose.

In schools, where class sizes often range from 20 to 30 students, the use of Spanish as an engagement tool is notably more prevalent. This difference may stem from the distinct dynamics

between teachers and students in schools, where there is more shared time and potentially a closer relationship, in contrast to the more dynamic and engaging activities found in language schools. In schools, the presence of monotonous activities necessitates additional motivation, for which Spanish is employed.

Regarding the strategic use of Spanish in monolingual English classes, respondents advocate for a judicious, sensible application of Spanish to reduce student anxiety, enhance communication goals, and improve concept comprehension. They view the teacher's role as pivotal in modelling an approach to bilingualism, suggesting that drawing comparisons between the two languages can facilitate learning through associative memory.

The debate over the efficacy of English-only classes versus the strategic use of Spanish, including negotiations with students on when Spanish can be used and the role of translation, presents a complex range of opinions. Concerns arise particularly around the tendency for lower-level students to resort to automatic or unintentional translation, and whether alternative forms of assistance might be more effective than translation itself.

Approximately 70% of respondents believe that a flexible approach to Spanish usage could lead to students habitually relying on Spanish for questions and exercises, bypassing attempts to address them in English first. This perspective suggests that such flexibility might limit English exposure and, consequently, reduce opportunities for language input. Advocates for English exclusivity argue that it fosters greater confidence in students' communication skills in English. However, it's recognised that as educators working with humans, there are exceptional circumstances where using L1 is justified, especially when students need to express emotions or when identifying students' needs.

A comparative analysis between language schools and traditional schools, as well as between native English-speaking teachers and Spanish teachers of English, reveals notable differences. 58% of Spanish teachers favour exclusive English instruction as the optimal path for student advancement, compared to 48% of native English-speaking teachers. This suggests a more stringent approach among Spanish educators. Furthermore, 80% of native English teachers are open to using Spanish for translation at beginner levels, whereas only 65% of their Spanish counterparts agree. Additionally, the acceptance of Spanish use, even for crucial concepts, is lower among Spanish teachers (57%) compared to their foreign counterparts (70%). This stricter stance by non-native Spanish-speaking teachers of English may stem from their own language learning experiences or the belief that immersive learning without L1 is most effective, potentially influenced by opportunities to learn or improve English through living or studying abroad.

Evidence supporting the belief in learning English through immersion, akin to L1 acquisition, shows a divide between Spanish English-language teachers and native English teachers. 18% of Spanish teachers strongly advocate for the L1 acquisition approach, a figure that rises to 39% when including those who find it advisable. In contrast, only 3% of native English teachers

strongly support this view, with an additional 13% considering it convenient. Furthermore, 45% of Spanish teachers view English as both the subject and the medium of instruction, compared to 25% among native English teachers. Interestingly, 70% of Spanish teachers are open to using Spanish to enhance communicative fluency, a sentiment shared by 53% of their native English counterparts.

Institutional perspectives reveal that 65% of schoolteachers worry about students becoming overly reliant on Spanish, affecting their English proficiency. This concern is slightly less among language schoolteachers, at 55%, possibly due to the focused nature and reduced hours of extracurricular English activities.

Analysis also covers the pros and cons of using the L1 in classrooms and the impact of teacher training. It highlights that Spanish support is generally accepted for beginners, with negligible differences across age groups, suggesting its suitability for both children and adults. Interestingly, 46% of respondents reported their training explicitly discouraged L1 use, illuminating the ongoing debate this research engages with.

In concluding remarks, the discussion turns to the perception of Spanish use based on teachers' proficiency levels. Excluding native Spanish speakers, a higher proficiency in Spanish correlates with greater acceptance of L1 as a classroom resource. For example, 82% of teachers with a C1 Spanish level regard it as beneficial. The lower approval rate among native Spanish speakers, at 71%, may reflect workplace pressures, the need to validate their competence, or the influence of their training background (Figure 12).

5.2. Interview analysis

The study involved 11 teacher volunteers from three countries, aged 23 to 53, with 3 to 18 years of teaching experience in Spain. A comprehensive analysis was conducted on the data collected through personal and group interviews, as well as detailed written narratives. This analysis aims to offer observations on the practicality of using L1 in teaching L2 in classrooms.

There's a prevalent reticence toward using Spanish in English classrooms, a sentiment echoed by most study participants in their respective institutions, with one exception from a respondent who is also a language school director. At a language school employing two of the participants, Spanish is permitted in specific situations, and the institution tends to recruit teachers with a minimum of a C1 level in Spanish. The respondents noted the positive reception from parents who value easy communication with teachers and from students who benefit from immediate clarification of doubts, which helps maintain their motivation.

In a private bilingual school where four of the study participants teach, the policy is to foster complete English immersion. Here, English teachers are to feign ignorance of Spanish, and Spanish teachers are to act as if they are non-Spanish speakers. One Spanish teacher at this school highlighted a disregard for the potential advantages of using Spanish in the classroom.
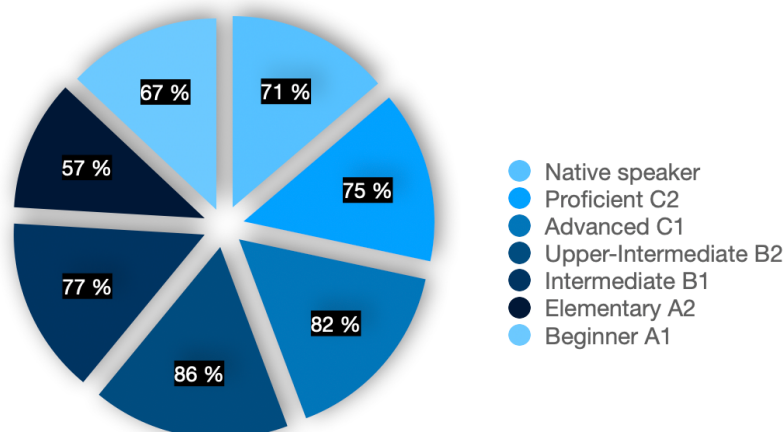
Figure 12. Perceptions of Spanish utility as a teaching resource by teacher language proficiency level

The prior training of teachers also influences their attitudes and teaching approaches. One teacher recounted experiencing lessons delivered solely in Arabic, which was meant to demonstrate the possibility of learning a language without resorting to one's mother tongue, though she questioned the effectiveness of this method. Another participant was trained to cultivate an English-only environment, pointing out the diversity in educational philosophies.

Despite not receiving formal training in English language teaching, two respondents drew upon their experiences as language learners and their time in English-speaking countries. One recalled a transition from passive to active English proficiency during their stay in New York, where real-life application solidified their language skills. Only one out of the eleven teachers recalled specific training regarding the use of L1 in L2 instruction.

Several participants acknowledged the value of occasionally using Spanish to clarify grammatical points, introduce new vocabulary, and explain task procedures. While they aim to conduct lessons and address questions in English, they view Spanish as a supplementary tool to ensure comprehension, describing it as a 'back-up' for understanding. One teacher mentioned using Spanish only as a final option, even adopting a foreign accent when speaking Spanish to maintain the persona of a native English speaker, sometimes enlisting students' help for Spanish explanations. Spanish is not only seen as beneficial for explaining grammar but also for drawing comparisons between L1 and L2, highlighting nuances and connotations in both languages. Moreover, most teachers recognise that L1 usage can strengthen student-teacher connections and support students emotionally, showing empathy, listening, and providing advice when needed. In certain teaching scenarios, teachers speak in L2 while permitting students to respond in L1.

Teachers primarily employ Spanish for disciplinary purposes when faced with serious issues, prioritising behaviour management over English instruction. Additionally, they utilise Spanish to maintain classroom control and to emphasise the value of maximising English class time.

The consensus among educators is that adult learners, especially beginners, are well-positioned to benefit from L1 usage in the classroom. Adults have a pressing desire for rapid, practical language acquisition that can be immediately applicable in real-world contexts, such as business meetings. Using L1 can streamline lessons and minimise the likelihood of students becoming disengaged.

The educators generally advocate a strategic and limited use of Spanish at the foundational levels of English language learning to keep students motivated. As proficiency in English grows, the reliance on Spanish diminishes. However, it remains an asset for clarifying complex vocabulary and grammar, fostering linguistic connections, and addressing personal student needs. There is a consensus that without the imperative to use English, less proficient students might lose motivation. Setting clear guidelines for Spanish use is deemed essential.

The teachers express a need for adept classroom management skills to use L1 effectively and judiciously. They point out the necessity of equipping students with ample opportunities to practice English, particularly once they gain confidence in the activities. One teacher analyses the use of L1 to a craftsman's tool: its effectiveness is determined by the skill level of the user – a novice may misuse it, but in the hands of an expert, it can produce exemplary work. Thus, Spanish in the English classroom is another instrument at the disposal of a well-trained educator.

One teacher's stance on using Spanish is shaped by various factors: her school's policy, the pre-adolescent age and advanced English level of her students, her personal insecurities about her Spanish accent, and her immersive experience in the Spanish culture that advanced her second language proficiency.

Among the surveyed educators, two exhibit apparent contradictions in their approach to L1 use. One acknowledges that using L1 can simplify concept comprehension and expedite the learning process by allowing occasional translation, yet he minimises its use to maintain competence and authority, especially with children or adolescents. He believes immersion in English

and the effort to speak it mirrors the authentic experience of being abroad, thus serving as the most effective learning method. The other expresses a general opposition to using Spanish but concedes its utility in challenging situations or with unfamiliar words, and even among students during peer interactions.

A common concern is the overreliance on Spanish in the classroom, which could diminish students' efforts to engage in English, particularly among adolescents or those at lower proficiency levels. To prevent this dependency, some teachers deliberately conceal their ability to speak or understand Spanish. Two respondents go as far as to feign limited Spanish proficiency or use a foreign accent when Spanish is necessary. In contrast, one teacher openly shares his non-native English speaker status and proficiency in the students' mother tongue, believing that his linguistic journey can serve as an inspirational example.

The fear that using Spanish might impede thinking in English and limit communication skills in the language is prevalent among the teachers. They encourage attempts in English first and resort to Spanish only when necessary to prevent student frustration. To manage Spanish use, they advocate for clear guidelines regarding when and how Spanish is used, combined with age-appropriate positive reinforcement or disciplinary measures. The consensus is that with well-defined rules and purposes for L1 use, it need not be a barrier to learning.

The application of Spanish in educational settings varies, influenced by institutional policies, student proficiency levels, and ages. Teachers in traditional schools often have precise practices tailored to the specific courses they teach, while those in language schools, instructing a range of levels, adjust their L1 use to suit the needs of their students – expecting different language use from B1 level students compared to those at C1.

One educator promotes constant English communication in class, noting that children are generally eager to learn and respond well to the school atmosphere. To discourage the misuse of Spanish, this teacher implements light sanctions, such as additional exercises or temporary exclusion from games, which supports peer accountability for English use. However, the predominant approach among teachers is positive reinforcement; for instance, students earn 'bucks' for exemplary behaviour or using English, which can be exchanged for small rewards.

Another teacher employs a tiered incentive system, recognising that younger students might naturally converse in Spanish among themselves and does not penalise them for it. With older students, the expectations are higher, and casual conversation in Spanish can lead to the loss of points. Yet, if Spanish is used for task-related questions or to facilitate learning, it is deemed acceptable without repercussions.

One respondent pointed out that the foremost rule in their classroom is to speak English, with deductions in points or parental notifications as penalties for defaulting to Spanish. Nonetheless, there is flexibility for Spanish use in pair exercises or group work, provided it doesn't disrupt the class. Another concurs with allowing Spanish among students during collaborative tasks.

Different tactics are employed to balance English immersion with practical L1 use. One teacher introduced Spanish flags for students to signal their desire to speak Spanish, setting clear boundaries for its use. The goal is to conduct most of the class in English, resorting to Spanish only when it's necessary and advantageous. Despite this flexibility, there's a consistent emphasis on encouraging students to practice speaking English with their peers to enhance their speaking skills.

One educator insists on English as the primary language of communication in class, resorting to Spanish only for clarifying assignments or confirming word meanings. The use of Spanish is adapted for different age groups: it's limited to welfare checks for 3-year-olds and expanded to concept explanations for 10 to 15-year-olds.

There is a consensus among teachers that understanding the students' native language and culture facilitates deeper connections, acknowledging the significance of these elements in students' identities and demonstrating respect for linguistic equality. A respondent noted that understanding students' native language aids in developing targeted teaching strategies that cater to their specific learning needs. They also mentioned that language is intertwined with culture and traditions, so integrating their cultural perspectives into English language learning enriches the process.

Proficiency in the students' mother tongue is advantageous for various reasons, including the prediction of grammatical and phonetic errors, comprehension of certain behaviours, and communication with parents.

The overarching conclusion is that using L1 as a resource in the L2 classroom is generally positive for both students and teachers when employed judiciously and at strategic moments. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that as student proficiency increases, the necessity for L1 support diminishes, sometimes by student preference. However, reliance on L1 should be carefully managed to prevent dependence and ensure adequate exposure to L2.

6. DISCUSSION

Concerning the inquiry and hypothesis 1 regarding when and in what activities teachers use the students' native language (L1) in the English (L2) classroom, it's generally anticipated that teachers will employ L1 to dispel uncertainties, convey instructions, and manage classroom dynamics. A significant use of Spanish is reported when addressing students' personal issues. In such instances, the priority shifts from language instruction to providing care and understanding for the student. According to the survey, Spanish is predominantly used for maintaining discipline, resolving conflicts, language comparisons, and introducing new vocabulary and grammar.

Both oral and written narratives from participants reveal consistent use of Spanish for classroom management, disciplining, and grammatical explanations, particularly with younger students or adults at beginner levels. In addition to these uses, the interviews underscore the employment of L1 to

build and sustain positive teacher-student relationships and alleviate student anxiety. Notably, although not a key feature in the quantitative data, 5 out of 11 interviewees pointed out the time-saving aspect of using L1, especially with lower-level adult learners. Thus, the first hypothesis is affirmatively supported.

Regarding question and hypothesis 2 about teachers' overall stance on using Spanish (L1) in the English (L2) classroom, the expectation is that despite some teachers' reluctance and the perception of L1 use as negative, the majority acknowledge its practicality and advantages. While teachers generally try to minimise Spanish use due to personal beliefs or institutional mandates, a significant number resort to it when deemed necessary or beneficial – for instance, when a student fails to grasp a linguistic concept or task instructions. The preference indicates that concept mastery is sometimes prioritised over English language instruction.

Interview responses predominantly view Spanish use favourably, citing benefits such as enhanced teacher-student rapport. However, there is unanimity that English should remain the principal mode of communication, confirming the second hypothesis. The findings suggest that Spanish can be an effective resource when its application is judicious and moderated.

Addressing the third question and hypothesis, which concerns the regulations of Spanish schools on the use of L1 in L2 classrooms, the hypothesis posits that Spanish schools, particularly private institutions, adopt a strict stance on L1 usage in L2 education. The study indicates that while teachers initially had the autonomy to determine the English-Spanish ratio in their classrooms, over half report that their institutions mandate an English-only teaching approach. Interviews reveal that some teachers are encouraged to anglicise their names or alter their accents to cultivate an English-dominant environment, a practice more prevalent in private schools. Moreover, some language schoolteachers reported job losses due to unauthorised Spanish use. These findings affirm the third hypothesis: despite recognising the benefits of judicious Spanish use in English language learning, institutional policies often strictly limit it.

Regarding the fourth question and hypothesis, which explores the factors influencing teachers' perspectives on L1 use in L2 classrooms, it was presumed that prior training, institutional policies, students' L1 communication abilities, and teaching experience significantly shape teachers' views. The responses partially validate this hypothesis. Teachers' views are primarily shaped by their experiences and ability to communicate with students, rather than institutional influence, which dictates their actions rather than beliefs. Contrary to expectations, previous training does not emerge as a strong influence, as many educators report that their training either discouraged L1 use or did not address it. Nonetheless, those with recent training recall discussions about using L1 effectively and sensibly as a support tool in predominantly English-based lessons.

The study's quantitative data underscores the impact of fluency and communication skills. Charts reveal the significance teachers place on fluency and their tendency to use Spanish for addressing students' personal issues or when students struggle to express thoughts and emotions in English. Teachers' capacities and experiences guide their strategic use of Spanish, suggesting that over time, educators adapt their methodologies to the unique needs of their students, sometimes moving beyond rigid policies to better serve their learners' requirements.

While discussing the outcomes and observations from this study, it's important to acknowledge its constraints. The scope of this research is not broad enough to warrant generalising the results, as the sampling was confined primarily to Spain, with a particular focus on Seville. The demographics of the questionnaire participants were predominantly female, employed in academies, and there was a lack of substantial representation from Spanish nationals. The narrative sample further reflected this imbalance, comprising 10 women and only 1 man, among which just 3 were Spanish natives, with the rest being English natives. The workplace distribution was also narrow, with 6 individuals from language schools and 5 from private schools. Incorporating more male perspectives and insights from public and subsidised school staff would have enriched the study.

Considering the possibility of a more targeted research approach, future studies might benefit from homing in on a single type of educational institution or focusing on a specific student age group, like primary or secondary school students.

A longitudinal study tracking the development of less experienced teachers over observations on the evolution of teaching practices. Similarly, observing native English teachers with limited Spanish proficiency and their changing use of L1 as a classroom resource could reveal significant trends.

Given the research's limited geographical and demographic range, the findings might not accurately reflect the experiences across various regions and teaching environments in Spain.

The interviewees had completed an online questionnaire prior to their interviews, which might have influenced their reported teaching practices and views. Hence, their interview responses might reflect their contemplated rather than their actual teaching methods. The interview format did, however, allow for the clarification and expansion of responses as needed. The research phase was completed in a tight timeframe of 2 weeks, with some narrative contributions arriving post deadline.

In conclusion, this study faces limitations such as the non-generalisability of results, time constraints, and the potential benefits of a longitudinal framework with a more diverse or balanced sample. Nonetheless, its aim was to illuminate the role of the mother tongue in the classroom. The findings, despite the limitations, can enhance our comprehension of teaching and learning dynamics and offer EFL teachers' valuable perceptions concerning the effective and sensible integration of L1 use.

7. CONCLUSION

This research has investigated the role of Spanish (L1) in enhancing English (L2) communication skills. The study calls for the strategic use of Spanish at beginner levels to mitigate student frustration and dropout by facilitating comprehension.

While less critical at advanced levels, Spanish can be selectively employed upon student request, underlining a preference for bilingual teachers. This aligns with the broader understanding that acknowledging students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds facilitates respect and inclusivity.

Key moments identified for L1 utilisation include grammar explanations, vocabulary introductions, and conveying essential messages, bringing to the fore its role in effective teaching and classroom management. Despite institutional policies often advocating for English-only environments, especially within private and language schools, the judicial use of Spanish is recognised for its educational value.

However, the study also exposes the delicate balance required in L1 usage to avoid fostering dependency, advocating for a thoughtful integration that prioritises extensive exposure to English. The findings suggest the need for educational institutions to adopt a more lenient stance towards L1 use, emphasising its potential as a pedagogical tool when used judiciously.

Training programmes and educational courses should emphasise the strategic use of L1, offering guidance on its balanced application and cautioning against overreliance. This research argues for a shift in pre-teacher training to include practical examples of L1 use and feedback mechanisms, focusing on prioritising comprehension over language immersion for complex topics; leveraging L1 for linguistic comparisons to enhance learning; employing L1 for clarification when necessary to ensure understanding; utilising L1 to alleviate learning anxiety and foster motivation; strengthening student-teacher relationships through L1 for disciplinary and integrative purposes.

The focus of many Spanish educational institutions on promoting English immersion with native speakers overlooks the benefits of bilingual educators. This study calls for a re-evaluation of the effectiveness of Spanish teachers of English, urging native English educators to embrace their students' languages and cultures. A broader institutional openness and flexibility towards L1 use, supported by educational reforms and teacher training, could enrich the learning environment and more effectively meet learners' needs.

This research thus not only argues for the thoughtful incorporation of L1 into L2 classrooms but also calls for a paradigm shift in educational policy and teacher training to recognise and harness the full pedagogical potential of bilingual education.

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Original Research

Stance expressions in applied linguistics research articles: A corpus-based contrastive study

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Stance, a crucial aspect of academic writing, is complex and vital for both beginner and advanced writers. However, L2 English learners and experienced writers frequently struggle with using stance markers effectively. Currently, there remains a scarcity of research comparing the utilisation of stance markers in applied linguistics research articles between native English professional writers and L1 Indonesian speakers. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating similarities and differences in the deployment of stance markers in applied linguistics research articles by authors with L1 Indonesian and L1 English backgrounds and discussing the educational implications derived from the analysis results. The analysis involves two corpora: the Indonesian academic corpus (IAC), comprising articles authored by L1 Indonesians, and the English academic corpus (EAC), consisting of articles by native English speakers. The study investigates various types of stance markers and their distribution across the corpora, revealing significant differences in their usage. L2 English authors employ more boosters and attitude markers, while L1 English writers use more hedges and self-mentions, with the most notable disparities observed in the usage of self-references. These findings underscore the necessity for educators, particularly within the Indonesian context, to sensitise learners to the discursive norms surrounding the use of stance markers in applied linguistics research articles and provide targeted instruction to enhance English learners' proficiency in employing stance markers effectively.

KEYWORDS: *stance markers, corpus-based study, academic writing, English for academic purposes, applied linguistics*

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic prose is traditionally seen as an objective and impersonal genre due to the need to provide scientific explanations analytically. However, it has recently been regarded as a persuasive endeavour (Hyland, 2005b) because it saturates the author's perspectives regarding the issue/problem being analysed (Jiang & Hyland, 2015). In academic writing, despite being objective, the author should show their attitude and position towards the issue to show critical thinking ability. Linguistically, this is possible by utilising stance markers. Stance is a textual voice representing the writer's position that reflects a community's epistemological beliefs and values (Hyland, 2005b; Jiang & Hyland, 2015; Hyland & Jiang, 2016). Formerly, Biber

and Finegan (1989) defined stance as features used to express the writer's or speaker's attitudes, feelings, commitment, judgments, or judgement about the propositional content of a message. Writers must articulate something to gain credibility in a way that is persuasive for the readers (Jiang & Hyland, 2015).

Conscious attention to stance-making is as essential as providing facts and discussing results. Writers' competence to establish an authorial identity and manage their presence to persuade their readers is crucial to successful academic writing (Wang & Jiang, 2018; Wingate, 2012). By presenting the authorial presence and attitudes in the text, academic writing can be more analytical and show the author's level of knowledge on the related topic (Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2012). Lancaster

(2014a) demonstrated that students' papers receiving lower grades often lack stance and proved that there is evidence showing that patterns on stances are related to grades. In short, stance might influence readers' judgment of writing quality, especially in the academic context.

Regarding the importance, Aull and Lancaster (2014) emphasised that stance is a complex concept, and it is crucial in academic writing from early and upper-level English as a second language (ESL) (also EFL) writing. The prominence of this concept is supported by the spotlight given to different terms, such as *evaluation, appraisal, evidentiality, metadiscourse*, and *positioning*. However, previous studies showed that second-language students and experienced writers have not fully mastered stance markers in academic writing (Qiu & Ma, 2019; Wu & Paltridge, 2021). Master and doctoral students face significant problems in stance-making, while this concept serves as an important indication of writing proficiency and disciplinary enculturation (Abdollahzadeh, 2019; Qiu & Ma, 2019). It seems that stance-taking and stance-making can be challenging for English as a second language writers (as well as L1 writers) to evaluate evidence and position the readers regarding the author's views (Lancaster, 2014b).

Studies on stance features have predominantly focused on research articles, students' academic writing, and the nativity of the writers. In terms of research articles, some studies examine the use of stance in multiple disciplines (Hu & Cao, 2015; Hyland, 2005b; Hyland & Jiang, 2018; Jiang & Hyland, 2015; Wang & Jiang, 2018). On the contrary, several studies also focus solely on a single discipline, such as Poole et al. (2019), who explored stance use in biochemical research articles. Meanwhile, most studies primarily investigated the stance in applied linguistics research articles (Abdollahzadeh, 2019; Cheng & Unsworth, 2016; Hu & Cao, 2015; Jalali, 2017; Qiu & Ma, 2019; Grishechko, 2024). These studies broadly argued that applied linguistics demonstrates the dominant use of stance markers, a salient feature of the field's rhetorical markers. Qiu and Ma (2019) also pointed out that applied linguistics requires a more careful interpretation of findings than hard sciences. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehensively explore stance markers in applied linguistics research articles.

However, to date, there is still limited research that compares and contrasts the use of stance markers by native English professional writers and L2 English authors in applied linguistic research articles. Most studies tend to employ one set of data or a corpus, thereby lacking an in-depth comparative analysis and often concentrating on specific segments within articles (Abdollahzadeh, 2019; Cheng & Unsworth, 2016; Hu & Cao, 2015; Qiu & Ma, 2019). Additionally, there is a lack of comparative analysis regarding the use of stance markers in applied linguistics research articles by L1 Indonesian speakers and native English speakers. To address this research gap, this article aims to investigate the application of stance markers by professional writers whose native language is English (L1) and those for whom English serves as their second language (L2) or a foreign

language in an extensive collection of academic articles within the discipline of applied linguistics. Specifically, it examines both similarities and differences in the frequency and types of stance markers employed by authors with L1 Indonesian and L1 English backgrounds and discusses the pedagogical implications arising from the findings of the analysis. This study uses a comparative corpus consisting of articles written by L1 and L2 English authors, which will enable a more thorough and explicit comparison (Adrian & Fajri, 2023). The findings of this study could be used to improve the professional development of L2 writers by providing targeted guidance on effectively employing stance markers in their academic discourse, thereby enhancing their scholarly communication skills.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
2.1. Academic writing
Academic discourse as a medium of communication has been long perceived as an objective form of writing. Academic writing has been conceptualised as a means of conveying information in a detached and impersonal manner (Hyland, 2005b). However, as writing constitutes a form of social interaction and text represents a mode of engaging with others within a social framework, as asserted by Hyland (2014), the same sociolinguistic principles apply to academic discourse. Analogous to spoken interactions, where speakers convey their viewpoints and judgments through language, writers similarly employ language to encode their perspectives and evaluations. Within this framework, the perspective of academic writing has evolved from being perceived solely as a product influenced by societal norms to being recognised as a process facilitating the creation and mediation of social connections (Hyland, 2005b). Within the realm of academic writing, authors endeavour to establish an interactive connection with their readers, a process that entails situating the roles of both writers and readers within the text in order to craft compelling academic prose (Hyland, 2005a). The utilisation of language in this context is multifaceted, aiming to persuade, inform, entertain, or simply engage the audience, thereby necessitating the conveyance of a specific attitude towards both the content and the readers themselves (Hyland, 2005a). It is essential to acknowledge, however, that acts of constructing meaning through language are inherently non-neutral and closely intertwined with the interests, perspectives, and values held by those who engage in the act of communication (Hyland, 2005a).

2.2. Academic interaction: stance and engagement
Similar to any other texts, academic writers also interact with the readers of the texts by positioning or adopting a point of view related to the issue being investigated. To convince the readers of a particular discipline, the writer must strengthen the arguments and create dialogue with the readers. According to Hyland (2005b), academic writers manage to situate themselves in two main ways, i.e., *stance* and *engagement.* Stance can be defined as an attitudinal dimension, which refers to the ways

writers present themselves and convey their assessment, perspectives, and commitments (Hyland, 2005b). Previous research predominantly focused on the importance of stance devices, e.g., *hedges* to limit commitment and *boosters* to indicate a high degree of certainty. Meanwhile, engagement is the way the author relates to the readers, considering the position in the text (Hyland, 2005b). Both stance and engagement build up the dialogue between the author and the reader, and they overlap often since one linguistic form can perform more than one function at once. However, it should be noted that the current study focuses on analysing the stance markers only. Figure 1 below illustrates the academic interaction taken from (Hyland, 2005b).
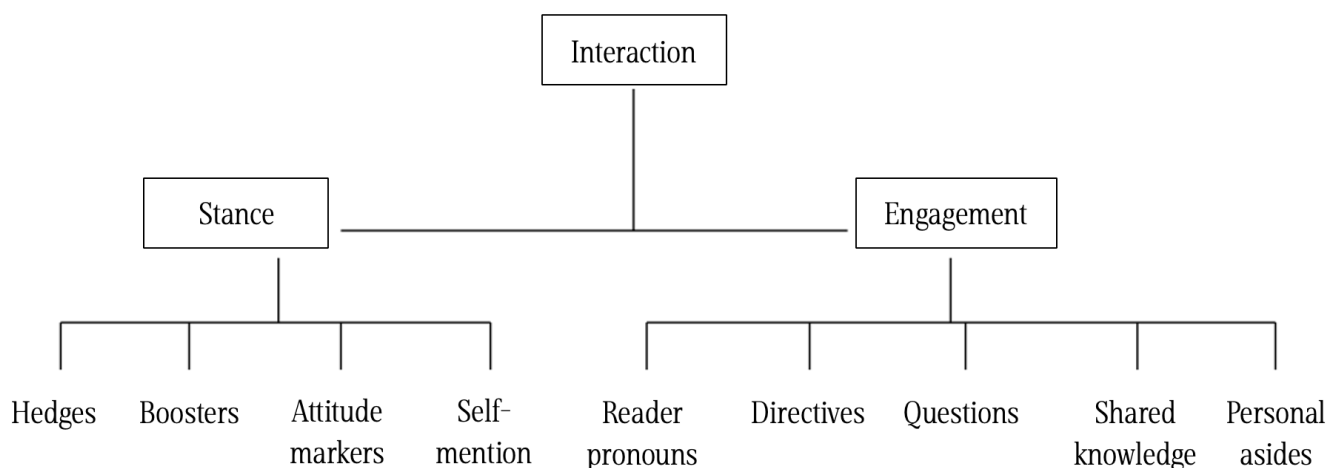

Figure 1. Key resources of academic interaction (Hyland, 2005b)

2.3. Stance

In scientific writing, the authors need some mechanisms that convey their personal attitudes or assessments, which include a set of lexical and grammatical features called stance markers (Gray & Biber, 2013). Hyland (2005b) pointed out that there are four main elements of stance, namely *hedges, boosters, attitude markers,* and *self-mentions.* Hedges represent linguistic constructs utilised by writers to convey their level of certainty or confidence regarding a statement, often through the employment of terms such as *might* or *typically.* Boosters serve as linguistic tools employed by writers to signify a heightened degree of confidence in their written assertions while also indicating a strong engagement with the subject matter and a sense of unity with their audience. Examples of such boosters include terms like *clearly* and *obviously.* Attitude markers manifest as linguistic elements that convey the writer's emotional stance towards a proposition, indicating sentiments such as agreement, frustration, or excitement, as opposed to expressing a commitment, as seen in terms like *important* or *expected.* Self-mention, in the context of language usage, pertains to the deployment of first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives with the intention of conveying prepositional, affective, and interpersonal information. This includes instances such as the utilisation of personal pronouns in discourse.

2.4. Previous studies on stance markers

There have been several previous studies on stance expressions in research articles. Some research compares the use of stance markers in students' writing (novice writers) and research articles (professional writers) (Crosthwaite et al., 2017; Qiu & Ma, 2019; Abdollahzadeh, 2019). For example, Crosthwaite et al. (2017) found the mismatches of stance usage between professional writers and student writers. In their study, professional writers tend to use a more limited set of linguistic devices than student writers, who tend to utilise a larger set of stance expressions. The mismatches were also found in the study of Qiu and Ma (2019) and Abdollahzadeh (2019). Qiu and Ma (2019) identified that master students employed more hedges, boosters, and attitude markers to express stance, but they rarely use self-mentions. This is in contrast with the use of stance markers in doctoral and expert writing that employed more frequent self-mentions. Abdollahzadeh's (2019) study also showed several discrepancies in stance expressions used by professional writers and graduate student writers in that graduate writers use modal verbs as hedges the most frequently, while professional writers produced fewer sets of modal verbs but use them more accurately.

Other studies focus on investigating the use of stance markers in different disciplines. For instance, Hu and Cao (2015) examined the use of stance markers in three different disciplines (i.e., applied linguistics, education, and psychology) and identified some differences. The study demonstrated that applied linguistics research articles employed more reader references but fewer self-mentions compared to psychology research articles. Jiang and Hyland (2015) also investigated stance expressions in eight disciplines, namely applied linguistics, marketing, sociology, philosophy, electronic engineering, medicine, cell biology, and physics. This study focused on the construction of

stance expressions and reported that some differences in structures were noticed and identified, which is due to the different nature of each discipline. In addition, Wang and Jiang (2018) studied stance expressions in four different disciplines, i.e., Physics, Life Science, Material Science and Computer Science, and revealed that pure science writers involve more authorial intrusion and build more authorial interactions with readers compared with hard applied science.

As stance expression is highly sensitive to disciplinary basis, it is necessary to focus on a particular discipline, such as applied linguistics. Some studies analysing stance expressions in applied linguistics research articles have been conducted (Hu & Cao, 2015; Cheng & Unsworth, 2016; Qiu & Ma, 2019; Wu & Paltridge, 2021; Malyuga & Rimmer, 2021). These include limited research that explores the utilisation of stance markers by both native English (L1) and non-native English (L2) academic experts in international journal articles within the domain of applied linguistics (Ansarin & Tarlani-Aliabdi, 2011; Farrokhi & Emami, 2008; Shirzadi et al., 2017; Yotimart & Abd Aziz, 2017). The findings of these studies have generally shown some variations in the use of the linguistic manifestation of stance markers or a specific type of stance device, such as between native English and Iranian authors (Farrokhi & Emami, 2008; Shirzadi et al., 2017), native English and Persian writers (Ansarin & Tarlani-Aliabdi, 2011), native English and Thai authors (Yotimart & Abd Aziz, 2017). Nevertheless, there is still no study that compares and contrasts the use of stance markers in applied linguistic research articles by L1 English and L1 Indonesians by drawing upon comparative corpora. In the Indonesian context, studies of stance markers in applied linguistics research articles focused on specific sections, such as abstracts (Mazidah, 2019) and discussions (Sanjaya et al., 2019). Also, their research was constrained by the utilisation of one corpus comprising a limited quantity of articles, which hindered their capacity to carry out a comprehensive comparative analysis. Therefore, our current

study aims to fill this gap in the literature by analysing the utilisation of stance markers by L1 English and L1 Indonesian professional writers in applied linguistics scientific articles. This study can contribute to the existing body of research on the use of stance devices by L1 and L2 English by providing different contexts, specifically centred on L1 Indonesians.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS
3.1. The corpora of the study

For the purpose of this research, two corpora were assembled to analyse the similarities and disparities in the utilisation of stance markers within each corpus. These corpora consist of the Indonesian academic corpus (IAC) and the English academic corpus (EAC). The IAC was derived from 200 research articles authored by L1 Indonesians, which were published in internationally recognised Indonesian applied linguistics journals indexed by Scopus. Conversely, the EAC was obtained from 200 scientific research articles written by native English speakers published in prestigious journals in the field of applied linguistics, which possess high Impact Factors (IF) and are indexed in both the Scopus database and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) (see Table 1 for the list of the journals). The journals selected for the IAC are considered equivalent to those selected for the EAC for several reasons. Firstly, they are peer-reviewed journals, adhering to the academic conventions in international publications. Secondly, they are indexed by international research article databases. To address the potential issue of excessive use of hedges in a particular issue or a year and to ensure the recency of the data, we decided to include articles published within a 5-year period from 2017 to 2021. Additionally, the decision to select articles from Indonesian journals for the IAC is based on the understanding that these publications are more likely to capture the language used by Indonesian authors within the context of Indonesia, while still catering to an international readership.

Table 1
The overview of the journals

NO.	IAC JOURNALS	EAC JOURNALS
1.	Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics	Applied Linguistics
2.	International Journal of Language Education	Journal of Second Language Writing
3.	Studies in English Language and Education	Language Learning
4.	Teflin Journal	Studies in Second Language Acquisition

Furthermore, to determine the first language of the author(s), we employed the method proposed by Wood (2001). This method classifies individuals as L1 English writers if their first and last names are characteristic of native English speakers and if they are affiliated with institutions in countries where

English is the primary language. L1 Indonesian writers, therefore, are identified as those whose first and last names align with typical Indonesian names and who are affiliated with Indonesian institutions (Fajri et al., 2020). If the articles had multiple authors, only those in which all authors fulfilled the criteria

for either English or Indonesian writers were included in the study. We acknowledge that using the method proposed by Wood (2001) may introduce bias as it relies solely on names and affiliations, overlooking the complexities of global academic mobility and the diverse linguistic backgrounds of researchers. However, it is important to note that despite its limitations, this method has been utilised by many prominent studies in the field (Hyland, 2016; Omidian et al., 2021; Pan et al., 2016; Wang & Zhang, 2021). Given the practical challenges of directly assessing language nativeness on a large scale, this method may rep-

resent one of the most viable approaches currently available. In addition, it is important to note that the chosen texts encompassed the Introduction, Methods, Results/Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion sections, while other components of the articles, such as the author(s)' names and affiliation, journal details, tables and figures, references, and appendices were excluded from the analysis as they typically do not contain academic stance features. Direct quotes and extracts from language data were also removed since they do not show the author(s)' stance markers. Table 2 provides the details of the corpora,

Table 2
Distribution of the corpora

CORPUS	NUMBER OF ARTICLES	WORD COUNT
IAC	200	1,678,773
EAC	200	957,575

There are marked differences in the number of words, with the EAC showing a higher number of tokens. This suggests that articles in the EAC tend to be longer compared to those in the IAC. Thus, the normalisation process will be applied when conducting an analysis of cross-corpora frequencies to ensure fair comparisons and accurate assessments of the stance markers across the corpora. This normalisation process involves dividing the raw frequency of a particular stance marker by the number of words of the corpus in which it occurs and then multiplying the result by 1,000.

3.2. Data analysis

The initial step of the analysis involved converting the data from the two corpora into text files to enable their searchability using the corpus software LancsBox (Brezina et al., 2015). Then, targeted searches were carried out to identify instances of common stance devices as proposed by Hyland (2005a). Both American and British spellings were also checked. Additionally, a qualitative concordance analysis of stance devices was conducted to investigate whether the targeted items fulfilled their stated function, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the findings. Then, the raw frequencies of the stance markers were adjusted by normalising them into a frequency per 1,000 words to address the differences in corpus sizes. We applied the log-likelihood test to determine the statistical significance of the differences in the use of stance markers. The log-likelihood value represents a contingency measure indicating potential significant differences between target wordings and non-target wordings across two or more corpora (Crosthwaite et al., 2017). Significance values of $p < 0.001$ were assigned to LL (log-likelihood) values exceeding 10.83, while significance values of $p < 0.0001$ were assigned to LL values surpassing 15.13. Understanding the implications of these statistical differences is vital for both academic writing and instruction. For instance, if certain stance

markers are significantly more prevalent in one corpus compared to another, it could suggest differing rhetorical preferences or linguistic conventions within distinct academic communities.

4. STUDY RESULTS
4.1. Distribution of stance devices in the corpora

Table 3 presents the distribution of stance devices within both corpora with the normalised frequencies and the values of significance tests.

The results reveal that there was a statistically significant difference in the deployment of stance markers between the two corpora, with the EAC containing higher frequencies of stance devices, which is in line with studies by Al-Zubeiry and Assaggaf (2023) and Seyri and Rezaei (2021) on research articles by L1 Arabic and Iranian writers respectively. However, in each specific type of stance marker, L1 Indonesian authors employed a significantly greater number of boosters and attitude markers, whereas L1 English writers used considerably more hedges and self-mentions. In addition, based on the percentages of the usage of each type of stance marker, the most substantial differences were in the utilisation of self-mentions and boosters, with a notable gap of 14% and 11%, respectively. The subsequent sections provide a detailed comparison of the use of each type of stance device

4.2. Comparison of hedges

From Table 3, it can be seen that hedges were the most recurrent stance markers in both corpora, indicating that expert writers frequently refrain from committing fully to a proposition in order to enable information to be presented as an opinion and create a space for readers to argue their interpretations. This corresponds to Hyland's (2016) study, which demonstrated that hedges had the highest occurrences among other stance markers in journal articles from four different academic disciplines.

Table 3

Distribution of the use of stance markers

STANCE MARKERS	IAC			EAC			
	Raw frequency	Normalised frequency	Proportion	Raw frequency	Normalised frequency	Proportion	P-value
Hedges	9,898	10.34	45%	21,631	12.89	47%	0.0001
Boosters	7,154	7.47	33%	10,048	5.99	22%	0.0001
Attitude	3,017	3.30	14%	4,110	2.54	9%	0.0001
Self-mentions	1,552	1.73	8%	10,332	6.20	22%	0.0001
Total	21,621	22.84	100%	46,121	27.63	100%	0.0001

Nevertheless, there is a significant difference in the application of hedges between L1 English and L2 or L1 Indonesian authors, with L1 employing more hedges. This is in line with previous studies (Samaie et al., 2014; Thuy, 2018; Yagız & Demir, 2014) that compared the use of hedges in academic articles written by native and non-native English writers.

This difference may be due to the culturally diverse backgrounds of the authors (Thuy, 2018; Yagız & Demir, 2014), their intended audiences, the norms of two discourse communities (Thuy, 2018), and the cultural model or belief system of individual authors (Sanjaya, 2015). Sanjana's (2015) study pointed out that Indonesian applied linguistics researchers generally believe that research articles should have an authoritative tone that reflects the absolute authority of the authors, which should not be questioned by the readers. This belief, which may be held by the majority of Indonesians, may inspire Indonesian research articles authors to be overconfident in their presentation of knowledge (Sanjaya, 2015).

However, the fact that the frequency of hedges in IAC is still high may imply that some Indonesian writers used hedges less frequently in their research articles than others, which seems to lend weight to Sanjaya's (2015) argument that the differences in the use of hedges between L1 and L2 English writers might be significantly determined by cultural models concerning the use of hedges embraced by individual authors, instead of sociocultural context.

Table 4

Distribution of the use of specific types of hedges

TYPE OF HEDGES	IAC		EAC	
	Normalised frequency	Proportion	Normalised frequency	Proportion
Modal verbs	3.93	38%	5.15	40%
Epistemic lexical verbs	3.06	29%	3.26	25%
Adverbs, adjectives and nouns	0.72	7%	1.55	12%
Approximators	2.61	25%	2.91	22%
Other phrases	0.01	1%	0.01	1%

In the case of the frequency and proportion of the five types of hedges, both authors preferred to use modal auxiliaries to hedge their assertions (see Table 4). However, there is a difference in the most frequently used hedging items. L1 English writers tended to use *may* and *would,* which accounted for 57% of modal auxiliaries, while L2 authors more frequently applied *could* and *should*, constituting 53% (see Excerpts 1 and 2 for examples of the use of hedges).

(1) *Therefore, self-efficacy in writing is different from self-efficacy in other domains of language learning, and self-efficacy in one writing task may be different from that in another writing task* (EAC).

(2) *In encouraging students' awareness and motivation to learn to speak, the teacher or lecturer should have some roles to provide adequate teaching which can get students to speak English* (IAC).

The high frequency of *may* and *would* in EAC echoes the findings of Thuy's (2018) research on the use of hedges in scientific articles in linguistics and related social sciences and humanities written by native English speakers. This is also consistent with Hyland's (1998, p. 116) study, which stated that *may* is 'the only modal which figures significantly more often in academic than other genres'. *May* and *would* might be used by L1 authors to avoid absolutism, providing more choices of interpretation. Meanwhile, the tendency of L1 Indonesians to use *could* and *should* might indicate that they focus on expressing more certainty and necessity, which is congruent with Adrian and Fajri's (2023) research regarding the use of hedges by Indonesian authors in social sciences articles.

4.3. Comparison of boosters

As demonstrated in Table 3, the occurrences of boosters were higher in IAC than in EAC. This finding is congruent with Öz's (2022) study on the employment of boosters by L1 English and L1 Turkish expert writers, which stated that non-native English authors predominantly used more boosters than their counterparts. This might still be influenced by the tendency of Indonesian writers to use an authoritative tone in their articles, as pointed out by Sanjaya (2015). This also supports Hinkel's (2002) research which stated that exaggeration and overstatements are viewed as suitable and effective methods of persuasion in non-Anglo-American rhetorical traditions including Indonesian, explaining the high frequencies of boosters in L2 writing.

In terms of the distribution of the types of boosters, both writers tended to use epistemic lexical verbs, rather than modal verbs, and adverbs and adjectives of certainty (see Table 5). This is consistent with Hyland's (2018) study in the sense that expert writers frequently employ verbs to bolster their or others' assertions. The lower occurrence of adverbs and adjectives of certainty, particularly amplifying adverbs, could also be explained by the fact that 'advanced academic writers delimit their own view and show caution and deference to alternative views', while novice writers have a tendency to overuse intensifying boosters, showing a less measured and more generalised stance (Aull & Lancaster, 2014, p. 175).

Table 5

Distribution of the use of specific types of boosters

TYPE OF BOOSTERS	IAC		EAC	
	Normalised frequency	Proportion	Normalised frequency	Proportion
Modal verb (must)	0.38	5%	0.20	3%
Epistemic lexical verbs	5.45	73%	4.23	71%
Adverbs, adjectives and nouns	1.64	22%	1.55	26%

Furthermore, there seems to be a similar pattern in the case of the most frequently used verb boosters. Both L1 and L2 expert writers mainly utilised *find/finds/found* and *show/shows/showed/shown*, with total occurrences of approximately 50% in both corpora (see Excerpts 3 and 4 for examples). They were mainly applied emphatically to reinforce their or other scholars' propositions.

(3) *The results showed that there was a positive relation between teacher reflective inventory and teacher reflective practice, efficacy, and autonomy* (IAC).

(4) *In the cued recall task, we found a significant difference in response accuracy between the bolding and the reading-only conditions (z= 2.59, multiplicity adjusted p= .026), but not between bolding + glossing and reading only* (EAC).

4.4. Comparison of attitude markers

The use of attitude markers by both L1 and L2 English authors accounted for a small proportion of stance markers, with around 9% and 14%, respectively (see Table 3), which corresponds to previous research (Lee & Deakin, 2016; Qiu & Ma, 2019; Shen & Tao, 2021; Wu & Paltridge, 2021) on academic discourse. Authors employ attitude markers not only to convey their standpoint on a proposition but also to communicate their emotions and evaluations to readers (Martin & White, 2005). The aim is to establish alignment with the readers regarding shared beliefs and values, fostering a sense of mutual understanding and agreement (Martin & White, 2005) *'so that it can often be difficult to dispute these judgments'* (Hyland, 2005a, p. 180). The occurrences of attitude markers in both corpora, nevertheless, are significantly different, with IAC showing more attitude markers. The greater use of attitude markers by L1 Indonesian authors may reflect their tendency to assert conviction in their writing.

Regarding types of attitude markers, attitudinal adjectives were more frequent than attitudinal adverbs and cognitive verbs in both corpora (see Table 6), which is in line with previous studies on the employment of attitude markers in research articles (Dueñas, 2010; Koutsantoni, 2004; Lee & Deakin, 2016; Qiu & Ma, 2019; Stotesbury, 2003). Both L1 and L2 writers also mostly employed the same adjectival attitude markers, which

Table 6
Distribution of the use of specific types of attitude markers

TYPE OF ATTITUDE MARKERS	IAC		EAC	
	Normalised frequency	Proportion	Normalised frequency	Proportion
Attitudinal adverbs	0.66	21%	0.86	35%
Attitudinal adjectives	2.10	67%	1.42	58%
Cognitive verbs	0.39	12%	0.17	7%

are *important, expected* and *appropriate,* which is congruent with Wu and Paltridge's (2021) finding in MA and PhD dissertations/theses in applied linguistics. Excerpts 5 and 6 show examples of the most frequently used adjectival attitude markers.

(5) *A more acceptable explanation is that TJ is one of the most appropriate scholarly venues for voicing concern about the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Indonesian context* (IAC).

(6) *As suggested, in order to identify playful sequences in classroom talk, it is important to explore extracts where talk is treated as playful by the participants themselves (e.g. laughter)* (EAC).

However, the three adjectives accounted for 47% of all attitude markers in IAC, while in EAC, they constituted 44%, which may suggest that L1 authors utilised slightly a wider range of lexical items as attitude markers. Additionally, attitude markers were applied by both authors in a similar way. They are predominantly used to convey affective attitudes towards their research methodology, findings and contributions in methods, results and discussion sections.

4.5. Comparison of self-mentions

It can be seen from Table 3 that L1 English authors utilised considerably more self-mentions than Indonesian authors. The log-likelihood test also suggested that the difference is statistically significant. This is likely to be influenced by a dramatic increase in the use of self-mentions in leading journals in applied

linguistics over the past 20 years (Rezaei et al., 2021). The high frequency of self-mentions in research articles by L1 English writers may also show the high level of their English proficiency since when writers gain proficiency, they become more comfortable asserting themselves through the usage of self-mentions or self-references (Hyland & Tse, 2004; Qiu & Ma, 2019). This finding is congruent with Pourmohammadi and Kuhi's (2016) and Shirzadi et al.'s (2017) studies in Iranian contexts and Martínez's (2005) research on native speakers of Spanish. This might also extend Hyland's (2002) and Lee and Deakin's (2016) findings in the sense that when it comes to professional writers, L2 English writers still underuse self-mention markers compared with L1 authors.

The lower use of self-mentions by L2 English expert writers could be influenced by the way they were taught in their academic writing classes. Non-native English writers are generally taught to avoid using first-person pronouns in written academic discourses (Çandarlı et al., 2015; Hyland, 2002) as it is connected to subjectivity and seen by conventional educators as inappropriate in academic writing (Hyland, 2002), which seems to occur in Indonesian contexts as well. They, therefore, prefer to employ the passive voice, non-human subjects or *it* as dummy subjects (Hyland, 2002).

In terms of the distribution of the use of the types of self-mention markers, both L1 and L2 professional writers tended to use first-person pronouns rather than nouns and phrases (e.g., the author, the writer) to refer to themselves (see Table 7).

Table 7
Distribution of the use of specific types of attitude markers

TYPE OF SELF-MENTIONS	IAC		EAC	
	Normalised frequency	Proportion	Normalised frequency	Proportion
First-person pronouns	1.51	93%	6.11	99%
Nouns and phrases	0.11	7%	0.04	1%

The use of personal pronouns in the humanities and social sciences indicates that the writer intends to establish a strong relationship with his or her claims, such as by emphasising his or her contribution or pursuing audience agreement (Hyland, 2001, 2005a). The most frequent self-mention markers used in both corpora are exclusive *we* and *our*, which are mostly used to describe the research methodology and findings and present arguments (see Excerpts 7 and 8 for examples).

(7) *After we discussed and negotiated the project with the English teacher, the school principal, and the parents, a total of thirty (30) children (Graders 4-6) were recruited to participate in a digital storytelling (DST) project* (IAC).

(8) *We measured SES using the Highest International Standard Classification of Education (HISCED) proposed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (EAC).

The finding is congruent with Khedri's (2016) study on the use of self-mentions in four different academic disciplines. This, however, contrasts with Qiu and Ma's (2019) research, which found that writers of published research articles more recurrently used the first-person pronoun *I*. This may be potentially explained by the fact that most research articles in these current corpora were written by two or more authors, which is similar to Dueñas' (2007) findings in business management research articles. In addition, it should be noted that while L1 English authors employed more first-person pronouns than L2 writers, they used slightly fewer nouns and phrases to mention themselves than their counterparts. This might be used by L2 writers to give a sense of objectivity without distancing themselves entirely from the texts (Januarto & Hardjanto, 2020).

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study reveal significant differences in the deployment of stance markers between the IAC and the EAC. These may have implications for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or academic writing classes, particularly in Indonesia. Firstly, the significant difference between the two corpora highlights the importance of teaching students, especially postgraduate students in applied linguistics or humanities and social sciences, about the use of stance devices in academic articles. It seems essential for L2 English learners to develop an understanding of how to effectively express their stance and opinions in a manner that aligns with the expectations of English academic writing conventions. This finding emphasises the need to provide explicit instruction and practice opportunities for English learners to enhance their proficiency in using stance markers appropriately.

Secondly, the variation in the usage of specific types of stance markers between L1 Indonesian and L1 English authors suggests that English learners may benefit from targeted instruction in these specific linguistic devices. For instance, since L1 Indonesian authors employed a greater number of boosters and attitude markers, students can be guided to effectively use these devices to strengthen their arguments and express confidence in their writing. Conversely, the underuse of self-mentions and hedges indicate the need to teach L2 students how to use these devices to mitigate the potential for over-generalisation or assertiveness in their academic writing.

Furthermore, notable gaps in the utilisation of self-mentions and boosters highlight areas where specific attention and instruction can be focused. L2 writers can be guided to increase their usage of self-mentions, particularly first-person pronouns, which can enhance personal engagement and authorial presence in their writing, demonstrating their rhetorical decision to establish their credibility and obtain approval or credit for their assertion (Hyland, 2012). Similarly, providing explicit instruction on the appropriate use of boosters can help students effectively emphasise key points and bolster their arguments.

To sum up, to optimise the effectiveness of teaching academic writing, particularly in the field of applied linguistics, educators should consider pedagogical approaches that further sensitise learners to the discursive norms of the research genre and the rhetorical expectations inherent in the writing style appropriate to the discipline (Crosthwaite et al., 2017). This process may begin by narrowing the scope of expressions used for stance markers to those identified as preferred in the professionally written research articles examined in the present study. Also, incorporating interactive instructional methods, such as guided practice exercises, peer collaboration activities, and analysis of authentic academic texts, such as a corpus of research articles, can further facilitate meaningful engagement and application of stance markers within the context of EAP courses. Overall, by leveraging the insights gained from the analysis of stance marker usage, educators can design and implement effective teaching strategies that empower L2 English learners to excel in academic writing and communication.

6. CONCLUSION

The present research compared the employment of stance markers by L1 English and L1 Indonesian writers in the corpora of applied linguistics research articles. The findings reveal a statistically significant difference in the deployment of stance markers between the two professional academic writers. However, a closer examination of each specific type of stance marker uncovers that L1 Indonesian authors demonstrate a higher usage of boosters and attitude markers, while L1 English writers employ more hedges and self-mentions. Understanding the differences in stance marker usage between L1 English and L1 Indonesian writers can enrich our knowledge of how linguistic and cultural backgrounds influence academic discourse. This understanding is particularly crucial in today's globalised academic landscape, where scholars from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds collaborate and communicate across borders. By illuminating the specific linguistic features that shape academic writing practices across different cultural contexts, this research can inform more effective pedagogical strategies for teaching academic writing to L2 English learners. This finding underscores the significance of targeted instruction and practice activities to develop English learners' proficiency in employing stance markers appropriately.

While this study has provided valuable insights, it is crucial to acknowledge its limitations. The study focused specifically on research articles authored by native Indonesian and English writers in the field of applied linguistics. The generalisability of the findings to academic writing in different languages or disciplinary domains may be limited. Thus, future research endeavours could explore the usage of stance markers across various genres of academic writing, encompassing literature reviews, empirical investigations, and case studies across a broader spectrum of academic fields.

Moreover, future studies could delve into a comparative analysis of stance marker usage within distinct sections of research articles. Analysing the deployment of stance markers in sections such as the introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion would offer valuable insights into how writers signal their attitudes and perspectives throughout the different stages of their research. This comparative approach could uncover variations in stance marker usage based on the communicative purposes and rhetorical conventions associated with each section.

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Original Research

Evaluating the BBC's L2 approach to teaching English consonants online: A digitally oriented pedagogic phonetic analysis

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The vast majority of online L2 teaching platforms have always remained preoccupied with digitalising demonstrable pedagogic practices that facilitate the learners' comprehension of linguistic input on the digital screen. This is particularly observable in the field of L2 phonetics where instructors' performance (vocalic, facial, and bodily) typically reflects such pedagogic practices based on their theoretical knowledge of the field. However, it is not always the case that instructors' pedagogic-phonetic performance can demonstrate or stage this form of phonetics knowledge, even with the ubiquitous presence of Internet 'digital gadgets' that are technologically enabled by L2 teaching platforms online. As a corollary to this problem, the present study continues and develops previous research conducted by the author on a pedagogic-phonetic critique of the BBC's Internet-based L2 teaching of English vowels. A synthetic methodology of Bernstein's model of Pedagogic Recontextualising Field (PRF) and Moinuddin's theoretical notion of 'digital gadgets' is utilised as DPRF to demonstrate how the BBC's online L2 teaching of English consonantal pronunciations, though digitally transforming text-theoretic phonetics descriptions, has partially failed to employ crucial aspects of pronunciation pertaining specifically to voicing and manner of articulation. The research data comprises 22 video-based screenshots drawn from the BBC Learning English website with materials archived for public use. Informed by the above synthetic methodology of DPRF, the present study concluded that the BBC's online teaching of English consonants has set up what can be described as a partial digital PRF; this has been ascribed to the proven hypothesis that the BBC-based website proffers a restricted space for digitally recontextualising 'visible' practices associated with consonantal pronunciation to the exclusion of phonetically productive aspects of L2 teaching segmental units of English consonants. As such, these aspects are recommended to be incorporated into the phonetic-pedagogic practices afforded by the BBC's digital PRF (DPRF).

KEYWORDS: *BBC, consonants, digital gadgets, digital pedagogic recontextualising field, DPRF, L2 phonetics, L2 teaching, segmental phonetics*

1. INTRODUCTION

Error analysis research has mainly operated on the methodological grounds of contrasting L2 learners' errors against L1 habits towards a diagnosis of linguistic errors. This study departs from error analysis approaches and their contrastive methods and focuses, instead, on the pedagogic practice of L2 teaching segmental phonetics proper and its mediation through online platforms' technologically enabling digital gadgets. However, the study is restricted in scope to the investigation of English consonants as a way of complementing previous research on the BBC's Internet-based L2 pedagogic practices of teaching English

vowels (Salama, 2022). Indeed, this new digitally oriented focus on the BBC's pedagogic practice of English consonants warrants further research into the remaining sets of data derived from the same BBC Learning English website. The problem-motivated rationale for this continued research is no different from the one adduced in Salama's (2022) pedagogic-phonetic investigation of the BBC-English segmental pronunciation of vowels. Yet, further to this research, the digital dimension is reckoned to be an integral part of such a rationale. Salama's (2022) rationale for proceeding along the same line of research derives from an observation of the shortcomings of contrastive-analytic methods of

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L2 learning of English phonetics. These shortcomings, according to the author, consist largely in their being incapable of 'investigating the pedagogic practices involved in the L2 teaching of English phonetics itself' (Salama, 2022, p. 496). Consequently, the research adopting these methods has rarely shown serious interest in the pedagogic practices facilitating the contrastive aspects conducing a realistic and digitally alert diagnosis of pronunciation problems. In this problem area, Salama (2022) has enlisted Long's (1990) principle of 'maturational constraints' on SL phonology manifested in the latter's observation that starting L2 learning of pronunciation after the age of 6 'appears to make it impossible for many learners [...] to achieve native-like competence in phonology' (Long, 1990, p. 274). But Salama's (2022) foregoing outline of the research problem seems to be lacking in discussing the digital dimension inseparable from the design of online platforms teaching L2 phonetics as being part of the problem itself. Indeed, whereas the pedagogical practice of teaching L2 phonetics online is worthy of research, the L2 teaching platforms technologically enabling such practice are by all means equally significant for revealing the subtleties of techno-human performance.

The present study, then, aims at investigating the BBC's Internet-based L2 teaching of the segmental pronunciation of English consonants and the 'digital gadgets' (Moinuddin, 2021) contributing this form of online teaching. There will be a focus on certain digitally visible pedagogic practices of teaching three consonant-specific features: (i) breathed plosives; (ii) auditory vibration of voiced fricatives, affricates, and nasals; (iii) place of articulation. Taken as a teaching model, the BBC Learning English website is presented with screenshot-style adaptations, so that a full-fledged analysis of the pedagogic practice of the Internet-based L2 teaching of English consonants can be conducted and mediated by the BBC's L2 platform.

In this context of research, a methodological synthesis of Bernstein's (1971, 1975, 1990, 1996) pedagogic-linguistic approach and Moinuddin's (2021) notion of 'digital gadgets', is utilised for the sake of analysing the three segmental aspects of the BBC L2 teaching of English consonants named above. Also, the pronunciation type pertaining to this pedagogic practice has been argued to be typically representative of 'present-day BBC-English pronunciation' (Salama, 2022, p. 499-500).

So, building on the methodological synthesis referred to above, the present study propounds the following research hypothesis: an incomplete DPRF is constituted by the BBC Learning English website whereby the L2 teaching of segmental phonetics can be said to reflect a sort of partial digital transformation of linguistic knowledge into the practical skill of pronouncing consonants. To (dis)prove the foregoing hypothesis, the current study addresses the following overarching question: to what extent is there a full-scale DPRF that is constituted by the BBC Learning English website and that digitally enables the transformation of the theoretical knowledge of English segmental phonetics into an actual practice of the L2 teaching of English consonants?

The remainder of this study is structured in six sections. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature on the pedagogic-phonetic perspectives adopted towards studying English consonants. Section 3 presents the theoretical framework of digital pedagogic recontextualising fields (DPRFs) as utilised in current research. Section 4 outlines the research methodology in terms of data collection and description as well as the procedure followed in the course of data analysis. Section 5 offers the data analysis. Section 6 provides the overall discussion of the study findings and recommendations. Section 7 concludes with a summary of the main research topic, the key findings emerging therefrom, and limitations of study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The research conducted on English consonants from a pedagogic-phonetic perspective abounds. To begin with, Chan (2007) undertook a study with the twofold aim of (i) examining the extent to which Eckman's (1977) Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH) was valid for delineating the process of acquiring word-final consonants by twelve Hong Kong Cantonese L2 learners of English and (ii) investigating the relevance of universal markedness (voiced obstruents > voiceless obstruents > sonorant consonants) to Cantonese ESL learners' interlanguages. The study reached three main findings: (i) voiceless plosives were characterised by a non-release strong tendency, (ii) voiced obstruents by being devoiced, and (iii) the lateral sonorant consonant /l/ by being the most challenging segment to pronounce for the target learners. Likewise, Sridhanyarat (2017) adopted the MDH towards investigating how 45 Thai undergraduates of different proficiency-level groups acquired their L2 English marked and unmarked fricative consonants in their interlanguage. The study demonstrated that the Thai participants encountered pronunciation problems at the level of the marked fricatives of /v/, /z/, /θ/, /ð/, and /ʒ/ and that only advanced participants managed to acquire the unmarked /f/ and /s/ as well as the marked /ʃ/ in word-initial and -final positions.

Also, Rose (2010) probed the question whether the L2 speech model known as Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) could be employed in predicting 'how L2 contrasts in Spanish will be discriminated by L1 speakers of American English' (Rose, 2010, p. 181). The study examined the discrimination of five word-medial intervocalic contrasts of Spanish consonants, viz. /ɾ/-/r/, /ɾ/-[ɾʃ], [r]-[ɾʃ], /ɾ/-/t/, and /ɾ/-/d/. Drawing on a sample of 90 participant Native Speakers or NSs, the study yielded 6,480 responses (1,080 per level) with two results observed. First, NSs could accurately discriminate only four out of the five contrasts; the one that was not discriminated consisted in the fifth contrast of the two allophones of the trill /r/ ([r]-[ɾʃ]). Second, considering such contrasts, the PAM proved to predict two broad contrasts: 'an uncategorised vs. categorised contrast and a both uncategorisable contrast' (Rose, 2010, p. 192-193).

Additionally, Rattanasone and Demuth (2014) used an elicited-imitation-task method to explore the acquisition of coda consonants as performed by twelve three-year-old children

with preschool exposure to Australian English. The study found out that, although being good in respect of /t/ and /s/, the participants' performance was remarkably poor in relation to the phonologically more complex /ts/ coda. The authors' perceptual and acoustic analysis demonstrated this poor consonant-coda performance to be ascribed to possible L1 Mandarin effect. One further study was carried out by Lengeris and Nicolaidis (2016) on the identification and production of English consonants by L2 Greek learners of English. In this study, methodologically, while consonant identification was investigated both in quiet and in two types of noise with a competing talker and an 8-speaker babble, consonant production was assessed with English listeners identifying the Greek speakers' production of English consonants. The study found that higher identification scores were achieved in quiet than in noise, and that a more detrimental negative effect was observed in the scores of the 8-speaker babble than in those of the competing speaker.

Souza (2017) examined L1 Brazilian-Portuguese (BP) EFL learners' awareness of the L2 phonotactics of English and raised the issue of whether there could be a link between L2 pronunciation accuracy and L2 phonotactic awareness. The author tested the learners' awareness of L2 onset consonant clusters, and a Foreign Accent Rating Task was employed to measure L2 pronunciation. The results showed both that L1 BP learners exhibited a high awareness of L2 phonotactics similar to that displayed by L1 English speakers and that higher accuracy in L2 pronunciation was closely connected with high phonotactic awareness. Both results stressed the necessity of teaching phonotactics in foreign language classrooms for the sake of increasing the accuracy of L2 pronunciation. Moving to Arab students L2 pronunciation of English consonants, Alzinaidi and Abdel Latif (2019) attempted to identify which English consonant sounds and clusters posed a pronunciation challenge to Saudi EFL students. The study utilised 40 Saudi female university students with two different proficiency levels of lower-intermediate and intermediate; a four-section productive pronunciation test was completed by the participant students, so that their errors in pronouncing English consonant sounds and clusters could be diagnosed in different word positions. The data analysis demonstrated that the students' highest error percentages were the following: (i) the consonant sounds /ʒ/, /ŋ/, /p/, /ɪ/, and /tʃ/; (ii) the [d] and [t] allophonic realisations of the regular past morpheme known as -ed; (iii) the consonant-cluster sets of 3 and 4 segments.

Also, in the context of Arab L2 learners of English consonants, Khudhair (2023) aimed to (i) measure the capacities of 50 participants (of the Department of English, College of Education for Women at Iraqiya University) to accurately produce consonant clusters and (ii) discover the problem areas of producing consonant clusters in different word positions. The study employed a descriptive-analytic method to explain the following results of data analysis. Apropos their L2 pronunciation of initial clusters, while 33.6% of the participants proved to be correct, 66.4% were incorrect; regarding final clusters, whereas 32%

were correct in their pronunciation, 68% were incorrect. Further, reversing the target L2 from English to Arabic, Aldamen and Al-Deaibes (2023) investigated the pronunciation of emphatic consonants as produced by American L2 learners of Arabic. The study utilised 19 participants (5 native speakers and 14 L2 learners) towards doing an experiment wherein the participants produced pairs of monosyllabic CVC in relation to whether the initial consonant was plain or emphatic. In this study, two consonant-specific acoustic parameters were examined – COG of fricatives and VOT of voiceless stops. The results on consonants showed both that L2 learners produced what the authors called *'comparable VOT values to those of native Arabic speakers'* and that those learners unexpectedly demonstrated that 'the beginning learners produced a higher F3 in the context of fricatives only' (Aldamen & Al-Deaibes, 2023, p. 1).

Recently, working on the BBC Learning English website as an L2 platform of teaching English online, Salama (2024) has offered new insights into the visual semiotics of digital educational practices with kinetic-vectorial design. The study utilised a synthetic methodology of Van Leeuwen's (2016) kinetic design model and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2021) model of ideational vector analysis. The methodology has been applied to the data sets of five images drawn from the BBC website teaching L2 English. The data analysis proved the empirical validity of the synthetic methodology proposed, mainly by investigating the visualised design of the website's vectorial kinetics such as mobility and movability in its L2 teaching practices. Also, a crucial distinction between pedagogic and digital vectors was demonstrated to differentiate how the website's teaching features were controlled by the instructors and the website's techno-semiotic design, respectively. Lastly, the study found that the kinetic-vectorial analysis of the BBC website uncovered a kind of spatiotemporal compression of the pedagogic content mediated by the website. However, these findings have not been discussed in a comparative mode that could weigh the BBC Learning English website against other leading online L2 teaching platforms. Perhaps this is precisely what the present study is intended to achieve while discussing the findings of current research.

Let us now present the theoretical framework adopted in the present study, where the theorised notion of digital pedagogic recontextualising fields (DPRFs) is in focus.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DIGITAL PEDAGOGIC RECONTEXTUALISING FIELDS (DPRFS)

Within Bernstein's (1975) field of sociolinguistic vision, the pedagogy is equated with *'a valid transmission of knowledge'* (Bernstein, 1975, p. 156), though he always staked out the claim that pedagogy itself ought to highlight 'ways of knowing' rather than mere knowledge states. It can be inferred, then, that the Bernsteinian type of pedagogy has remained faithful more to the practical than to the theoretical aspects of knowledge, given the communicative nature of such epistemological aspects. At some later stage of research, Bernstein (1975) developed the practical aspect of pedagogic knowledge into a sociolinguistic

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identification of different, albeit complementary, ways of knowing, and has thus opened new vistas of what can be described as *'the how-to-know aspect of learning input'* (Salama, 2022, p. 498). Indeed, he raised the following relevant question: *'Are there any general principles underlying the transformation of knowledge into pedagogic communication …?'* (Bernstein, 1996, p. 39). This question has been formulated in a bid to investigate the potential for the 'pedagogising of knowledge' (be it linguistic or otherwise); and, ultimately, provide for *'what makes pedagogic communication possible'* (Bernstein, 1996, p. 39).

Bernstein (1996) has introduced the term 'pedagogic device' as notionally distinct from Chomsky's (1957) concept of 'language acquisition device' or LAD. Bernstein's (1996) pedagogic device is strictly focused on external language – as opposed to LAD's internal language (*i*-language) – development and its main concern is the learner's performance as being inseparable from the pedagogising of linguistic knowledge. Practically, the pedagogic device should be viewed as predicated on Bernstein's (1990) seminal distinction between two forms of pedagogic practice, *visible practice* (VP) and *invisible practice* (IP). Whilst a VP will invariably place emphasis on the language learners' performance or their external product, an IP remains known only to the transmitter, and not to the learners themselves. Crucially,

Salama (2022), building on Bernstein (1990), argues that pedagogies (visible and invisible) have different foci: *'whereas the focus of visible pedagogies is an external gradable text, invisible pedagogies focus upon the procedures/competences which all acquirers bring to the pedagogic context'* (Salama, 2022, p. 498).

As part of his sociology of education, Bernstein's (1996) concept of 'pedagogic device' is argued to be associated with three types of rule, viz. distributive, recontextualising, and evaluative. The focus of current study is the recontextualising type of rules, for this type underlies the concept of PRF which constitutes the theoretical basis of the present theoretical framework. Recontextualising rules are proposed by Bernstein (1996, p. 46) to bring forth *'specific pedagogic discourses'*. Bernstein's (1996) definition of 'pedagogic discourse' elucidates the nature of recontextualising rules: *'Pedagogic discourse embeds rules which create skills of one kind or another and rules regulating their relationship to each other […]. We shall call the discourse which creates specialised skills and their relationship to each other 'instructional discourse', and the moral discourse which creates order, relations and identity 'regulative discourse'* (Bernstein, 1996, p. 46). Also, for a full recognition of the PRF, Salama (2022) has had recourse to Bernstein's (1996) schematic presentation of the two types of discourse, instructional and regulative (Figure 1).

INSTRUCTIONAL DISCOURSE   ID

REGULATIVE DISCOURSE   RD

Figure 1. Instructional and regulative discourses in pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1996)

Indeed, Salama (2022) has concluded that *'it is the regulative discourse that affords the rules of the internal order of instructional discourse itself; thus, it is the regulative discourse that dominates the pedagogic field'* (Salama, 2022, p. 498).

Notably, it can be said that Bernstein's (1996) term of 'pedagogic discourse' has offered insights regarding the how-to-know of circulating and reordered discourses, with one pedagogic discourse shifting from its 'original site' to a new one, where a pedagogically discursive transformation is likely to occur. Bernstein's (1996) point has significantly culminated in the identification of the recontextualising principle of pedagogic discourse; or, in his own terms, *'pedagogic discourse is a recontextualising principle'* (Bernstein, 1996, p. 47). This principle has in turn resulted in Bernstein's (1996) core concept of Pedagogic Recontextualising Fields or PRFs. As Bernstein (1990) points out, the sole concern of such fields consists in *'the principles and practices regulating the circulation of theories and texts, from the context of their production or existence to their reproduction'* (Bernstein, 1990, p. 198). Thus, as Salama (2022) argues, *'any form of knowledge or science is liable to be a form of PRF, wherein the actual discourse on theory can pedagogically be transformed into an imaginary discourse that is addressed to some imaginary audience of learners or acquirers of some skills'* (Salama, 2022, p. 498).

However, speaking of online L2 teaching platforms such as the BBC Learning English website, Bernstein's (1996) notion of PRF as proposed above lacks the theorisation necessary for analysing the digital design features of such platforms and their contribution to the recontextualisation of academic discourse into visible pedagogic practices. In the present theoretical framework, Moinuddin's (2021) theoretical notion of 'digital gadgets' is employed in a way that analyses the digital dimension of PRF associated with platforms of the sort. According to Moinuddin (2021), digital gadgets reconstruct *'the meaning and identity of spatiality in virtual notions that are not existing but existing very much in idea, shape and size'* (Moinuddin 2021. p. 16). In this technical sense, such gadgets work out as facilitators of all forms of knowledge and information on a digital or actual click. The interconnectedness of knowledge/information and digital gadgets methodologically renders the latter fitting into Bernstein's (1996) theory of recontextualised fields of knowledge, particularly for the sake of *'understanding digital culture'* (Miller, 2020) on the Internet-mediated level of L2 teaching.

This methodological aspect can readily be maintained if 'the screen space of digital gadgets' is taken into consideration. Moinuddin (2021) defines this kind of space as being *'a space that has an intimate relationship with user and the user interacts*

with screen or gadgets so many times in a day in order to being updated or to being connected to the world' (Moinuddin, 2021, p. 17). This is precisely the case with Internet-mediated forms of knowledge and information as particularly updated daily and through multiple user-screen-space encounters in a day (Malyuga et al., 2016). Educational practices are no exception to this rule (Grishechko et al., 2016). The pedagogic contents of such practices, once screen-spaced, manifest various digital gadgets that play out their typical role in facilitating the transmission of pedagogic discourse – but in its digital screened context. Crucially, this role of educationally oriented digital gadgets may help revisit Bernstein's (1996) instructional type of discourse (ID) schematised in Figure 1 such that it is technologically transformed into Digital Instructional Discourse (DID), without changing Regulative Discourse (RD) as the moral creator of order and determinant of identity. These aspects of revisiting will be discussed as part of the discussion of findings and implications.

One important function of digital gadgets in this respect is their ability *to 'control time and distance at the same moment'* (Moinuddin, 2021, p. 11). But digital gadgets cannot function in the absence of time and location; in other words, their 'operational efficiency' would be dysfunctional should the two dimensions (time and location) fail to exist in any practice, including educational practices (Moinuddin, 2021, p. 165). Indeed, the configuration of digital gadgets is conceived of as 'spatio-digital compression', and this sort of compression is argued to be about all about *'the virtual construction of digital spaces that is embedded in digital gadgets variedly'* (Moinuddin, 2021, p. 169). Thus, viewing Bernstein's (1996) PRFs in this light, the recontextualisation of (invisible) academic knowledge into Internet-mediated (visible) pedagogic practices would entail the operation of varied technological digital gadgets towards a spatio-digital compression of these practices. Also, as a result, the time and location of the same visibly pedagogic practices are controlled by the same operating digital gadgets.

The coming section is dedicated to presenting the BBC Learning English website as a digital pedagogic recontextualising field (DPRF) of the Internet-based L2 teaching of English consonants and the DPRF-bound methodological procedure followed in the present study towards conducting data analysis.

4. METHODOLOGY
4.1. Data
The current study's data comprises a set of 22 screenshot-style audio-visual videos archived for the public use of English-language learners on the BBC Learning English website (BBC, 2024). Established in 1943, the website has had a long pedagogical pedigree of around 80 years now. The target videos cater pedagogically for the L2 teachers and leaners of the pronunciation of BBC-English consonants online. Ideally, these videos can be considered a practical form of segmental-phonetics education with a particular focus on certain articulatory and, on occasions, auditory aspects of pronunciation in relation to consonant sounds, with a view to facilitating the pedagogic practice of such

sounds. The BBC's current pedagogic field is filled by one and the same L2 English female instructor. Thus, this instructor seems to occupy and manipulate the whole pedagogic field on the BBC website in terms of the practice of the L2 teaching of English consonants – and vowels (Salama, 2022) – as phonetically segmental units. Indeed, the teaching behaviour of the BBC instructor and its digital-gadget enactments will be the focus of the digitally oriented pedagogic phonetic analysis presented below. Apropos the methodological question of what kind of English the instructor seems to use as a form of L2 teaching, the present study follows Salama's (2022) detailed argument for electing to describe this type of English by the amalgam term *BBC-English pronunciation* (Salama, 2022, p. 499-500).

There is yet another set of data drawn from the British Council website on Teaching English Pronunciation Online (British Council, 2024). This is provided in the context of current research as a reference point to another prestigious platform for L2 teaching English pronunciation. The present data set is again captured in one screenshot-style image of the British Council presentation video. This empirical reference point is presented as part of the discussion of findings in the Conclusion to demonstrate how the digital gadgets of the British Council's L2 teaching practice online compare and contrast with the BBC's in terms of their DPRFs.

4.2. Procedure
The present study follows Salama's (2022) methodological procedure towards data analysis, yet with a different twofold focus on a form of data analysis and a digitally enhanced theoretical framework. As concerns the data analysis, it involves the two sets of BBC's L2 teaching of English consonants and the British Council's L2 teaching of English pronunciation; the latter set is delayed as a reference point till the Conclusion. Regarding the theoretical framework, it consists in applying the DPRF as a more developed theoretical notion than the one (PRF) proposed in Salama (2022). In what follows, the study outlines the workings of the procedural approach methodologically adopted here towards analysing and comparing the BBC-specific data on the L2 teaching of English consonants online.

The procedure is informed by the Digital Recontextualising Pedagogic Field (DPRF) as methodologically emerging from Bernstein's (1990, 1996) pedagogic-linguistic approach and Moinuddin's (2021) theoretical notion of 'digital gadgets'. Thus, the starting point of current procedure was recognised through the digitally enabled pedagogic space of the BBC website itself in its form as a potentially recontextualising field whose relevant pedagogic scope has been the L2 teaching of English consonants in terms of specific digital gadgets. On account of these digital gadgets, such a pedagogic scope has been embodied as a spatio-digitally compressed visible form of the videos taught on the educational website. There is a threefold operationalisation of the procedure: (a) data pedagogic observation, (b) linguistic-phonetic description, and (c) assessment of the digitally enhanced input of teaching reproduced.

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'One important function of digital gadgets in this respect is their ability to 'control time and distance at the same mo-ment' (Moinuddin, 2021, p. 11). But digital gadgets cannot function in the absence of time and location; in other words, their 'operational efficiency' would be dysfunctional should the two dimensions (time and location) fail to exist in any practice, including educational practices'

Let us briefly sketch out each stage. First, the pedagogic observation of data relied on capturing video screenshots at some pedagogically visible moments when the digital recontextualisation of particular pronunciation details from the theoretical domain of English segmental phonetics transpired. Second, the digital recontextualised pronunciation details were then linguistically (i.e., phonetically) examined in relation to the pedagogic behaviour of the BBC's instructor; this sort of behaviour proved to be significant to the L2 learners' performance of relevant consonant sounds in their phonetic contexts, particularly when considering the digital gadgets coterminous with the same pedagogic behaviour. Third, and last, an assessment of the reproduced pronunciation details was highlighted in terms of the significant missing (or invisible) aspect of pedagogy on the BBC website as a spatio-digitally compressed pedagogic field.

5. STUDY RESULTS
5.1. BBC English consonants as DPRF
As mentioned earlier above in the Introduction, the same pedagogic-linguistic approach (Bernstein, 1971, 1975, 1990, 1996) has been applied to the BBC English vowels with analytic focus placed on certain linguistic criteria that fit the phonetic description of vowel sounds as discrete segments taught on the given pedagogic field of the BBC Learning English website. These criteria have been covered, and they included tongue height, lip position, duration, and vocalic complexity (Salama, 2022, p. 500-508). But, as argued in Section 3, in current research, this pedagogic-linguistic approach has been digitally augmented and enhanced in a way that develops Bernstein's notion of PRF into a spatio-digitally compressed form of Digital Pedagogic Recontextualising Field or DPRF.

Thus, now, the present study shifts the focus of analysis to consonant sounds as the second half of the BBC's tutorials on segmental phonetics, yet with a freshly widened scope of the DRPF. It should therefore be stated at this point of analysis that the (descriptive) pedagogic criteria involved have turned out to be starkly different at two levels of co-analysis. First, the analytic level of consonant-focused investigation is highlighted since the classification criteria of vowels and consonants are not identical (Jones, 1922; Gimson, 1989; Laver, 1994; Kreidler, 2004). Second, the BBC's pedagogic-linguistic field is examined in terms of digital gadgets that control the time and distance virtually co-constructed through the BBC website itself. Thus, in view of the two levels outlined above, it has been observed that

there is a specific digitally mediated pedagogic recontextualisation of three consonant-oriented criteria: (i) breathed plosives; (ii) auditory vibration of voiced fricatives, affricates, and nasals; and (iii) place of articulation. A fully illustrated account is provided in the coming subsections.
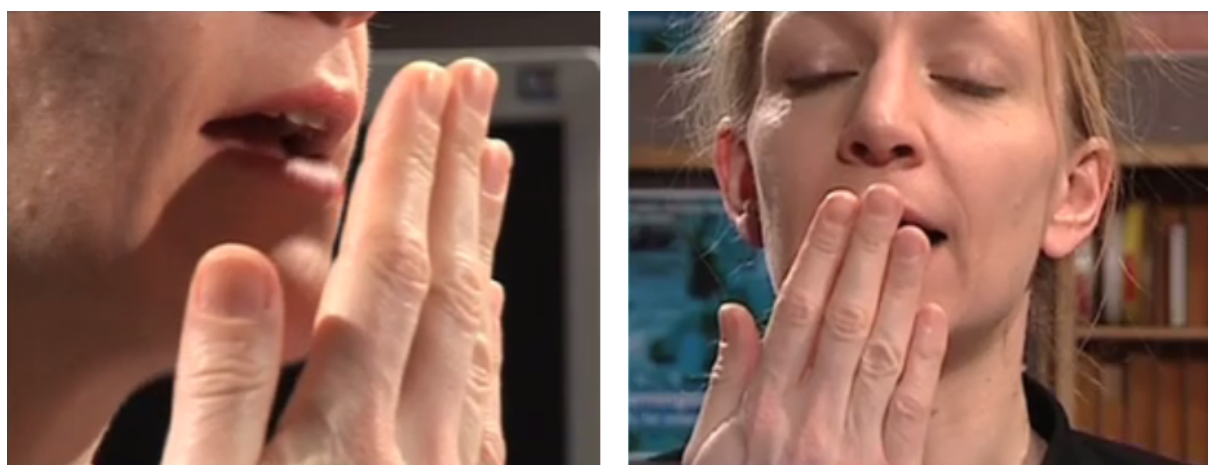
5.2. Breathed plosives
In the pronunciation of English plosive stops /p, b, t, d, k, g/, the BBC L2 platform pays meticulous attention to the difference in voicing between the breathed and voiced sound segments; this is exhibited in the use of the visible pedagogy of the classic piece-of-pair technique in Figure 2. This technique is utilised as a practical test of the strong puff of air accompanying the voiceless plosive consonant /p/; the same consonantal feature is missing from the counter voiced plosive consonant /b/, which is comparatively far less strong than /p/. Obviously, the BBC's instructor is keen on visually demonstrating this pedagogic practice in the hope that L2 learners of English – whose L1 phonological system does not include such a voiceless counterpart of /b/ – may form the new habit of producing voiceless /p/. Indeed, the uninitiated native speaker of Egyptian Arabic typically makes the phonetic error of 'substituting /b/ for /p/'; and, thus, instead of pronouncing the English word [plastic] as /plæstɪk/, s/he would typically mispronounce it '/bɪlæstɪk/' (Broselow, 1993, p. 74). This type of error is further observed to be concomitant with the other error of inserting the extra vocalic epenthesis of /ɪ/ immediately after erroneous /b/. But, in addition to this technical phonetic detail, the classic piece-of-paper technique can be viewed as a traditional gadget with an educational value, i.e., empirically facilitating the demonstration of the typical voicelessness of /p/. Having said that, the same traditional gadget can also be said to have the BBC-enabled digital gadget of screen-spaced demonstration. It is through this digital gadget that the instructor is pedagogically connected with the potential L2 learners watching the tutorial videos. This sort of pedagogical connection offers a spatio-digital compression of the teaching situation, particularly in terms of the time and location of the pedagogical practice captured, which are controlled by such a digital gadget of screen spacing. Notice, also, that the piece-of-paper technique itself, being screen-spaced, has become a digital gadget.

Further, as demonstrated in Figures 3 and 4, the BBC instructor continues with the same digital gadget of screen-spacing to demonstrate the contrastive voicing of /p/ and /b/, yet more practically through the different less-digital gadget of *hand technique*. Thus, it can be said, here, that there exists a form of digital-non-digital visible pedagogy that opens up a spatio-digitally compressed pedagogic space for L2 learners to follow up the same practice. Interestingly, it is through this sort of space that the learner becomes empirically sensitive to the extra puff of air associated with the production of breathed /p/, which is technically known as 'aspiration' (see below). Indeed, but for such a digitalised phonetically distinctive feature of voicing, the two words *pack* and *back* (Figures 3 and 4) would exhibit no auditory signal or cue for their distinction in meaning.

Figure 2. The BBC-mediated piece-of-paper technique of testing the lack of voicing in /p/

pack /pæk/

Figure 3. The BBC-mediated hand technique of testing the lack of voicing in /p/

back /bæk/

Figure 4. The BBC-mediated hand technique of testing the voicing in /b/

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Indeed, the screen-spaced piece-of-paper technique of testing breathed plosive stops continues to be visibly pedagogised by the BBC instructor in Figures 5 and 6. The video screenshots appearing on the BBC-mediated L2 teaching of the breathed consonants of /t/ and /k/, then, seem to digitally recontextualise the phonetic aspect of aspiration, which represents *'a slight h'* that is heard after consonantal explosion and before the vowel (Jones, 1922, p. 24). This form of phonetic recontextualisation

can be recognised here as digitally non-captioned performance by the BBC instructor. Thus, the pedagogic tool of the piece of paper (utilised in Figures 5 and 6) amounts to being a BBC-screen-spaced virtually constructed test of the presence of phonetic aspiration in the production of [tʰ] and [kʰ]; the piece of paper is physically affected by the presence of *'an audible release of air after the opening of the closure and before the onset of vocal fold vibration for the vowel'* (Gut, 2009, p. 56).

tin /tɪn/   din /dɪn/

Figure 5. The BBC-mediated pedagogic technique of testing the aspiration of breathed [tʰ]

came /keɪm/   game /geɪm/

Figure 6. The BBC-mediated pedagogic technique of testing the aspiration of breathed [kʰ]

Even so, phonetically problematic is the restricted pedagogic presentation of aspirated breathed [pʰ, tʰ, kʰ], not least because it dismisses from the BBC's DPRF the other possible allophones in the articulation of these breathed plosives. Table 1, taken from Gut (2009, p. 57), offers some of these allophonic variations of /p, t, k/, which are popular in the accent of present-day BBC-English pronunciation.

As the table shows, besides the aspirated breathed plosives, there are other allophonic variants with different phonetic contexts that would enhance the complementary distribution of the consonantal segments of breathed plosives in BBC-English pronunciation, and that would in turn enrich the sound inventory of L2 learners or acquirers in the BBC's DPRF (Table 1).

Table 1

Allophonic variations of English breathed plosive consonants (Gut, 2009)

BREATHED PLOSIVE STOPS	ALLOPHONIC VARIATION	PHONETIC CONTEXT
/p, t, k/	[pʰ], [tʰ], [kʰ]	as only before stressed vowel
	[ʔp], [ʔt], [ʔk]	syllable-final after vowel
	[p], [t], [k]	elsewhere
	[pʷ], [tʷ], [kʷ]	before rounded segment

5.3. Auditory vibration of voiced fricatives

The phonetic quality of contrastive voicing is pedagogically recontextualised in the video presentations of certain consonant sounds. The video screenshots in Figures 7 and 8 manifest alteration between what the BBC instructor describes as 'voiced and voiceless consonants'. In Figure 7, the instructor opts to introduce the voiced /v/ in contrast to the voiceless /f/; but in Figure 8, she begins with the voiceless /s/ and then moves to its voiced counterpart /z/. Crucially, here, the instructor's pedagogic discourse is certainly synchronous with the digital visibility of the phonetically contrastive pairs of /v/ vs. /f/ and /s/ vs. /z/. The digital gadget employed here can be said to be captioned performance of such contrastive pairs, with captioning being in digital synchrony with the instructor's mediated oral performance (phonetically screen-spaced). This offers a spatio-digitally controlled pedagogic space with different pronunciation points for training, where the L2 learner of English can experiment with fricative vibration as entry- and endpoints throughout the different tutorial videos. Interestingly, Catford (2001) pays special attention to such an experimental aspect of vibration and lack of vibration with the same fricative examples used on the BBC website. Catford (2001) makes specific reference to *'an obvious*

difference in sound: the prolonged [f] is simply a long-drawn-out hissing sound, but the prolonged [v] is a long-drawn-out buzzing sound' (Catford, 2001, p. 36). Proceeding with the same features of hissing and buzzing, Catford (2001) points out that it is practically possible for the learner to carry out *'the same experiment with [s] and then with [z] as in zero: [s s s s s …] [z z z z z …]'* (Catford, 2001, p. 36). Indeed, the BBC instructor follows almost the same strategy of digitally screen-spaced buzzing, which strongly indicates the phonetic feature of voicing, in such a way that contrasts the voiced with the breathed (or voiceless). There is, however, another pedagogic tool that has been dismissed from the recontextualising field of the BBC in distinguishing the hissing of [s] and the buzzing of [z]. The tool is underscored by Laver (1994), who points out that the *'difference between voiceless [s] and voiced [z] can be heard very easily if one pronounces these sounds while covering the ears with the hands'* (Laver, 1994, p. 128). The fact is that Laver's (1994) experimental technique of ear covering seems to be more visibly effective (than that adopted by the BBC instructor) at the virtually constructed pedagogic level of phonetic recontextualisation, since it leaves good enough digitally compressed space for L2 learners to mimic the same technique and try it on their own.

/v/   **/f/**

Figure 7. BBC-English contrastive presentation of /v/ and /f/

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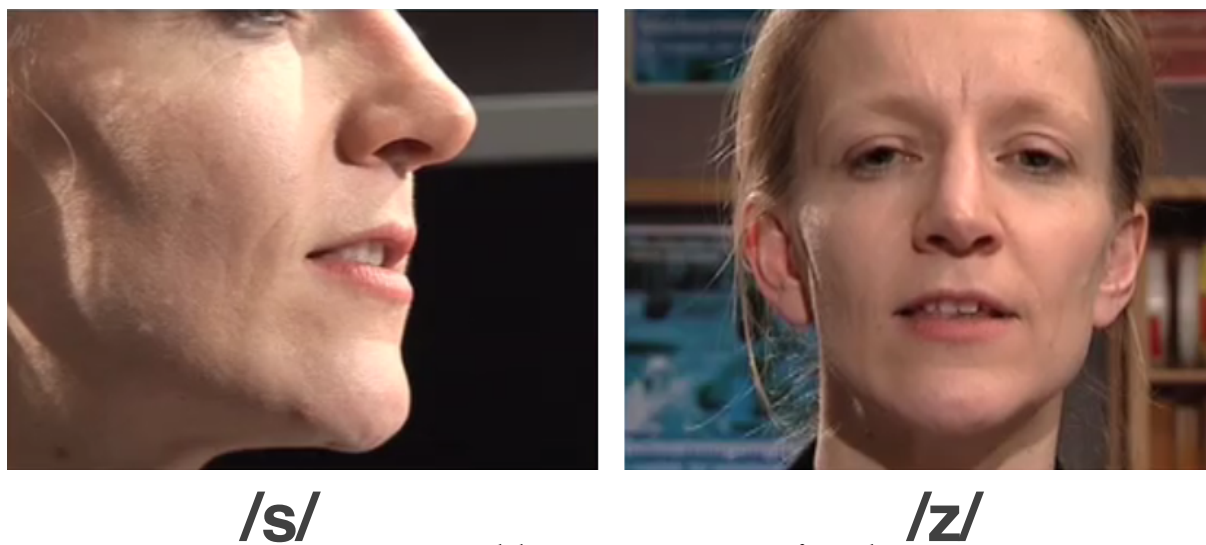
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/s/ /z/

Figure 8. BBC-English contrastive presentation of /s/ and /z/

Again, the contrastive voicing is utilised on the BBC website's screen-spaced demonstration of differentiating the two English affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. As shown in Figure 9, the instructor brings these two affricate sounds together in order to recontextualise the phonetic difference in voicing, where the breathed /tʃ/ lacks the vibration associated with the voiced /dʒ/. Again, this has been virtually constructed and compressed through the co-production/work of the two digital gadgets of a screen-visualised caption (/tʃ/ and /dʒ/) and the video-mediated instructor's oral/aural performance per se – a captioned-per-

formance digital gadget. Indeed, English affricates are classified under the category of what Gussenhoven and Jacobs (2005, p. 13-14) describe as *complex consonants*. According to them, an affricate is *'a combination of a plosive and a fricative at the same place of articulation (i.e., homorganic); thus, they are like plosives, but the release is so slow that friction is heard'* (Gussenhoven & Jacobs, 2005, p. 14).

The two affricates are argued to occur distinctly in *'the speech of the speakers of certain accents of English'* (Carr, 2013, p. 12).

/tʃ/ /dʒ/

Figure 9. BBC-English contrastive voicing of /tʃ/ and /dʒ/

However, dismissed from the BBC's recontextualising field is the phonetically significant affricative feature coming out of certain sound sequences such as [tr] and [dr]. As Ball and Rahilly (1999) explain, despite the phonological fact that the
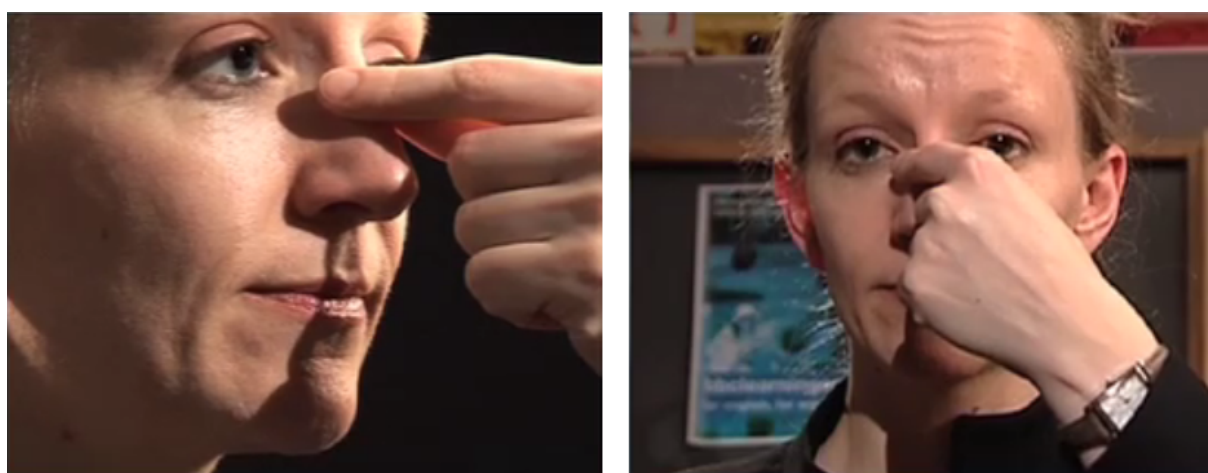
English affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are normally treated as 'single units', there emerge 'affricate combinations' with regular patterns in the initial sounds of *train* and *drain*. In such a phonetic context, the [r] element *'has a narrower channel than the normal*

approximant-r, which means that the [t] and [d] are released with an affricated airflow' (Ball & Rahilly, 1999, p. 69). As a result, once followed by [r], the two English consonants [t] and [d] do have a recurrent allophonic feature of affricativity, which may deserve some digitally aided pedagogic emphasis in the L2 teaching of English segmental phonetics.

Further, as concerns voicing, the BBC continues with the mediated L2 teaching of English nasals /m, n, ŋ/, with a digitally featured pedagogic focus on the vibration felt through the nose as exhibited in Figures 10, 11, and 12. As visually demonstrated, the BBC instructor pedagogically draws the attention of L2 learners of English to the nose as the physiological medium wherein the phonetic feature of nasal vibration can be tested and tried by the learners by means of screens-spaced mimicry.

Significantly, this type of pedagogic behaviour should be recognised as a spatio-digitally controlled virtual (i.e., potentially open up for L2 learners' receptivity online) performance via the BBC-enabled oral/aural content and its concomitant finger-nose play-out.

According to the instructor, if this acting out of nasal vibration fails, then these sounds are not correctly produced; thus, such a phonetic feature is brought within the visible pedagogy of teaching nasal consonants, alongside their captioned performance. Indeed, this can be justified on the grounds that the feature of nasal vibration – which is a distinctive phonetic feature of all three English nasals – is perceptible enough should the L2 learners of English touch their noses with the fingers in the same acting-out style of the instructor.

/m/

Figure 10. BBC-English pronunciation of /m/
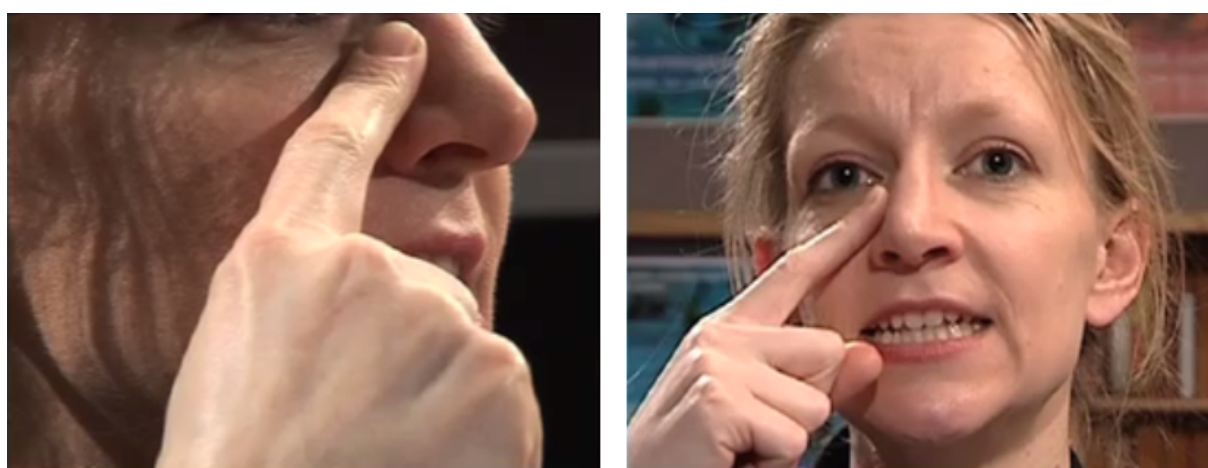
/n/

Figure 11. BBC-English pronunciation of /n/

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/ŋ/

Figure 12. BBC-English pronunciation of /ŋ/

Despite having digitally demonstratively pedagogised the phonetic feature of nasal voicing, the BBC has partially failed to recontextualise the significant devoiced allophones of English nasals /m/ and /n/. *'Although no opposition occurs between voiced and voiceless nasals in English, a somewhat devoiced allophone of /m/ and /n/ may be heard when a voiceless consonant precedes'* Cruttenden (2014, p. 211). Cruttenden (2014, p. 211) provides typical examples of partially devoiced English nasal consonants, e.g., '*smoke, smart, topmost; snake, sneeze, chutney*' (Cruttenden, 2014, p. 211). Offering voiceless nasal instances of the sort would certainly be pedagogically beneficial to the complementary distribution of nasal voicing in English; at least, it should enhance the allophonic repertoire of nasality on the part of L2 learners of English.

5.4. Place of articulation

Also, the BBC website recontextualises the place of articulating sounds as one of the readily and digitally demonstrable aspects of the segmental phonetics of English consonants. This is feasible since it allows the classification of consonant sounds according to *'the organs which articulate them'* (Jones, 1922, p. 13). Employing the chief articulatory organs, Jones (1922) distinguishes six main classes of consonants: (i) labial sounds, with two subdivisions of bi-labial sounds (e.g., /p, m, w/) and labio-dental sounds (e.g., /f/); (ii) dental sounds, with two subdivisions of pre-dental sounds (e.g., /θ/) and post-dental, or alveolar, sounds (e.g., /z, ʃ, t/); (iii) palatal sounds (e.g., /j/); (iv) velar sounds (e.g., /k, ŋ/); (v) uvular sounds, with no English examples available; (vi) glottal or laryngeal sounds, exemplified with the glottal stop /ʔ/ or [ʔ] – dialectally depending on its phonemic or allophonic status.

The BBC's spatio-digitally recontextualising field seems to be selective of certain consonants that can visibly be pedagogised in terms of their place of articulation. The first example is presented through the digital gadget of captioned performance in the screen-spaced video appearing in Figure 13. Here, as the screenshot exhibits, the instructor displays the pre-dental status of /θ/ by sticking the tongue-tip out of the mouth between the upper and lower teeth in a played-out style. Obviously, this is a digitalised visible form of pedagogy, which is calling for sound mimicry on the part of L2 learners of English.

Of course, this is also accompanied by the digitally mediated manner-of-articulation feature of *audible* fricativity, where *'the air is squeezed out between tongue and teeth (apicodental articulation)'* (Kreidler, 2004, p. 36). However, notably, the voiced counterpart /ð/ is not presented in relation to /θ/ in terms of the phonetic feature of contrastive voicing; it is rather phonetically pedagogised as an independent sound segment that distinctly carries the same place of articulation as its breathed counterpart /θ/ shown in Figure 14.

Notably, again, the instructor's pedagogic behaviour is mediated through the gadget of playing out finger-tongue-demonstrated voiced fricativity. The gadget's effectiveness cannot be perceived aside from the BBC's spatio-digitally compressed medium. After all, the instructor would not be able to play out this current pedagogic behaviour in the absence of such a BBC-enabled medium.

Moving to the English nasal consonants /n/ and /ŋ/, the BBC instructor emphasises their different places of articulation in Figure 15, mainly through a similar mediated gadget of playing out the vocal-tract interior and the vocal performance of distinct alveolar-velar place-of-articulation productions. Thus, here, the BBC focuses on how the two English nasals /n/ and /ŋ/ can phonetically be differentiated in terms of their distinct digitally-visualised as well as vocally-performed and captioned place – and not manner – aspect of articulation.

Perhaps, for the great majority of L2 learners of English, the nasal /ŋ/ is a problem area of pronunciation, mainly because *'many languages do not have a consonant formed like /ŋ/'* (O'Connor, 1980, p. 51).

/θ/

Figure 13. BBC-English place of articulating /θ/

/ ð/

Figure 14. BBC-English place of articulating /ð/

In Figure 15, /n/ is pedagogically differentiated from /ŋ/ on the phonetic grounds that, whereas the former consonant is alveolar, the latter is velar; thus, the digitally demonstrated alveolar-velar distinction would enable the L2 learner of English to produce the two nasals from their different points of articulation inside the vocal tract based on a complex network of pedagogically effective digital gadgets. This spatio-digitally controlled recontextualised aspect of place-of-articulation distinction has been further pedagogically enhanced with examples of /ŋ/ that contrast with other examples of /n/ in different phonetic contexts, medial and final, in Figures 16 and 17, respectively.

Indeed, the BBC's foregoing screen-spaced pedagogic recontextualisation of the nasals /n/ and /ŋ/ can be better fine-tuned should the instructor present the nasal /ŋ/ in place-of-articulation contrast with the English plosive /g/, where another phonetically significant distinction emerges: whilst the articulation of /ŋ/ demonstrates velar closure but absence of velic closure, /g/ shows both velar closure and velic closure (Collins & Mees, 2008, p. 38). Interestingly, this can be ascribed to the phonetic fact that the velic closure of /g/ renders it oral in articulation, i.e., the velum is raised to shut off the nasal cavity in a way that forces the air to go through the oral cavity; on the other hand, the same velic closure is missing in the course of articulating /ŋ/ in a way that lowers the velum to allow the air to escape through the nasal cavity.

Thus, it may be more pedagogically advisable for the BBC to integrate this contrastive phonetic aspect between /ŋ/ and /g/ on the distinctive grounds of nasality versus orality; or, more specifically, besides the distinctive places of articulating /ŋ/ and /n/, there needs to be some further digitally controlled and enriched space on the BBC for pedagogically featuring the contrastive manner of articulating /ŋ/ and /g/.

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/ n/   / ŋ/

Figure 15. BBC-English places of articulating /n/ and /ŋ/
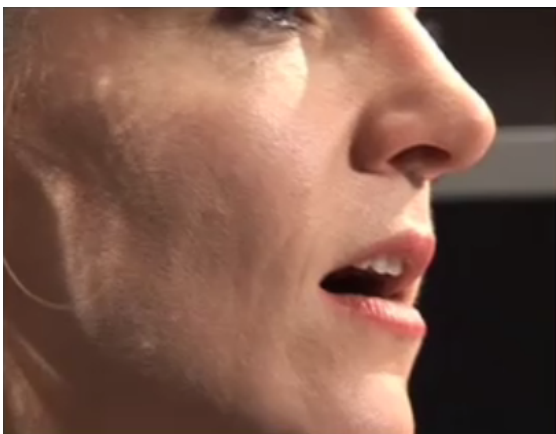

singer /'sɪŋə/   sinner / 'sɪnə/

Figure 16. BBC-English contrastive places of articulating /n/ and /ŋ/ in medial positions

son /sʌn/   sung / sʌŋ/

Figure 17. BBC-English contrastive places of articulating /n/ and /ŋ/ in final positions

Crucially, this pedagogic aspect of contrasting /ŋ/ and /g/ can be substantiated if the recurrent English orthographic pattern of the letters ng is taken into consideration. English words like sing, sang, song, sung, ring, rang, wrong, rung, have been cited by O'Connor (1980, p. 52) in order that the L2 pronunciation difficulty of avoiding, say, [sɪŋg] instead of standard [sɪŋ], may pedagogically be highlighted. According to O'Connor (1980), in phonetic contexts like this, the /g/ should be avoided if possible.

Regarding the BBC's digitally enabled recontextualisation of consonantal place of articulation, there remain two problematic cases of /l/ and /r/. But, prior to taking each in turn, it should be noted that for some L2 speakers of English – most notably Japanese speakers – the two consonants (/l/ and /r/) are almost impossible to differentiate on a phonemic level. This is so because of the phonological fact that the sound system of Japanese lacks the English phonemic contrast between /r/ and /l/: *'the Japanese /r/ phoneme having a range of allophones which to English ears sound similar to either English /l/ or /r/'* (Collins & Mees, 2013, p. 218).

Of course, a problem area like this is not encountered, for example, by L2 Arabic speakers of English, since in their L1 sound system the same phonemic contrast /r-l/ holds, e.g., the Arabic word /raʒul/ or man shows initial-final phonemic contrast between /r/ and /l/, respectively. Thus, considering L2 Japanese learners of English, the BBC's screen-spaced pedagogic recontextualisation of contrasting /r/ and /l/ may be justified in Figure 18.

Figure 18. BBC-English contrastive articulation of /r/ and /l/

Taking the English consonant /l/ as part of the BBC's PRF, one may assume the instructor's focus on its place of articulation. This is easily demonstrable in Figure 19, where the BBC instructor exhibits a visible form of played-out pedagogy with her index finger drawing the L2 learners' attention to the exact point of articulating English /l/ inside the vocal tract; that is, apicoalveolar place of articulation, with *'the tip of tongue in contact with the upper teeth ridge, allowing the air to escape on both sides'* (Gimson, 1989, p. 203-204). Here, it is easy to observe how the digitally mediated gadget of playing out the academic knowledge/discourse of phonetics finds its way through the digitally compressed pedagogic space permitted by the BBC website.

Additionally, the BBC is pedagogically keen on the digital screen-spaced recontextualisation of the allophonic variants of English /l/; these are known as clear [l] and dark [ɫ] as demonstrated in Figure 20. The example words *loaf* and *foal* cited by the BBC's instructor in the screenshot indicate that clear [l] occurs before a vowel sound, whereas dark [ɫ] in a final position. Again, but more informatively, the co-work of gadgets can be said to ideally pedagogise the concerned aspect of allophonic variation, basically by means of the instructor's played-out lip work and the digitally enabled visibility of the transcribed instances of *loaf* /ləʊf/ and *foal* /fəʊl/ as video captions. But, here, there exist other phonetic contexts conspicuously missing from the BBC's screen-spaced pedagogic field, particularly if one follows the theoretically phonetic fact that clear [l] occurs also before the semi-vowel /j/ as in the word *value*, and dark [ɫ] occurs, not only before a pause, but before consonants as well (Collins & Mees, 2008, p. 90). The present allophonic distinction between [l] and [ɫ] can be ascribed to the phonetic aspect of tongue velarisation, where the articulation of [ɫ] is slightly velarised with *'a concave upper surface'*; and this is not the case with [l] as being the non-velarised allophone with *'a convex upper surface'* (Collins & Mees, 2008, p. 90).

The BBC's last consonant considered in terms of its place of articulation is /r/ as exhibited in Figure 21. Scrutinising the production of English /r/ in the screenshot reveals the BBC instructor's pedagogic indexing to the back of her vocal tract. By now, it has become clear that pedagogic behaviour of the sort is enabled

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/l/

Figure 19. BBC-English place of articulating /l/
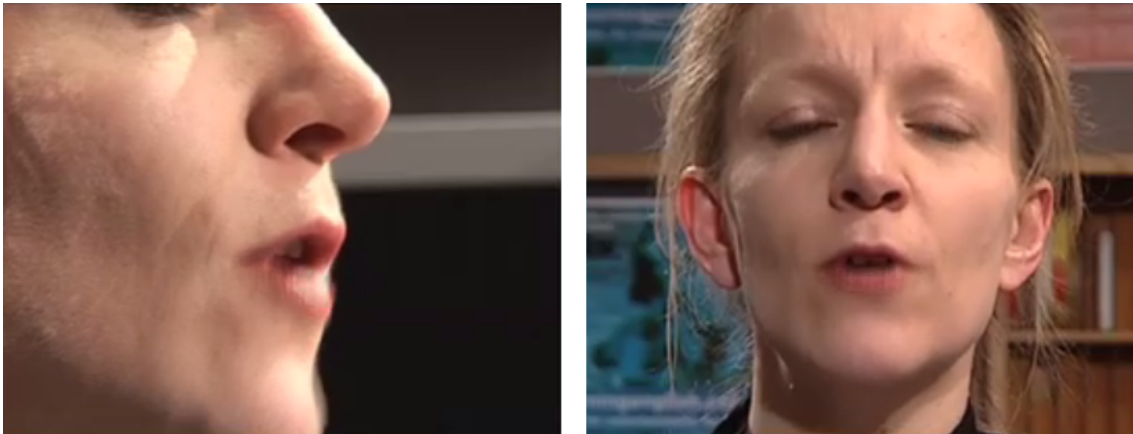
loaf /ləuf/   foal /fəul/

Figure 20. BBC-English articulating of clear [l] and dark [ɫ]

/r/

Figure 21. BBC-English place of articulating /r/

by a spatio-digitally controlled teaching platform that is based on a mediated gadget. I prefer to call it a functional spatialisation of 'co-speech gesture' (Enfield, 2009): the pedagogic performance of /r/ is screen-spaced to be coterminous with the functional gesture of the instructor's index finger. Of course, this spatialisation is itself a digital gadget whereby a phonetic technical detail is pedagogically recontextualised and made part of the current DPRF. Unsurprisingly, due to the same DPRF, the instructor is confined to the phonemically prototypical place of articulating English /r/, which is characteristically described as being *'a voiced post-alveolar frictionless continuant (or approximant) [ɹ]'* (Gimson, 1989, p. 207). But, again, the BBC's PRF seems to be missing other phonetically significant allophones of English /r/. Two allophonic variants are dismissed here: (i) following the consonants /t, d/, /r/ may be slightly fricativised, e.g., *drive* and *tree*; (ii) following /θ/, /r/ can be realised as a quick tap against the dental ridge [ɾ], e.g., *three* (Brown, 1990, p. 26-27). Also, the BBC L2 platform is keen to pedagogically mark the non-rhotic

status of the type of English taught on its digitally enabled website; this non-rhotic status is associated with all those varieties of English that have pre-vocalic /r/. This aspect can readily be recognised in the two video screenshots in Figures 22 and 23. In the screenshots, the BBC instructor exemplifies the phenomenon of linking 'r' in two contrastive instances. In Figure 22, the final /r/ followed by pause in *this is my car* is dropped in the pronunciation of the instructor; but, in Figure 23, the /r/ is linking since it precedes the initial short vowel /ɪ/ in the word *is* as demonstrated in *my car is blue*; at this point of pedagogic presentation the /r/ is pronounced by the instructor so long as she does not stop across the word boundary of *car is*. Here, the complex digital gadget of captioned performance is observed to control the time and location of such a pedagogic moment of cross-video contrast between rhotic and non-rhotic varieties of English. The phonetic knowledge frame here is dialectal, and its digital transformation into mediated pedagogic behaviour is, again, part of the BBC's DPRF of teaching L2 phonetics.
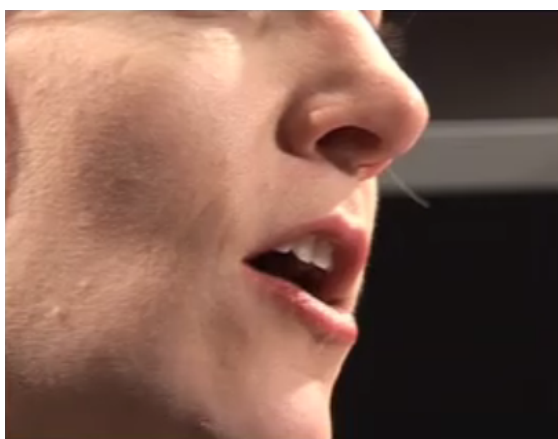
this is my car

Figure 22. BBC-English exemplification of final (non-linking) /r/

my car is blue

Figure 23. BBC-English exemplification of linking /r/

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Thus, the two video screenshots (Figures 22 and 23) can be deemed one pedagogical unit through which the non-rhotic status of BBC English is digitally recontextualised by means of contrasting final /r/ versus linking /r/ as speech phonetic entities in BBC-English pronunciation.

6. DISCUSSION

The BBC Learning English website has accurately answered Bernstein's (1990) description of a pedagogical praxis, i.e., the recontextualisation of invisible pedagogies (IPs) into visible pedagogies (VPs). Further, as a platform of teaching L2 phonetics, the website has demonstrated the functional work of 'digital gadgets' (Moinuddin, 2021) as enabling the spatio-digital compression of the pedagogical recontextualising field of the BBC. Hence the notion of DPRF claimed to be a contribution in current research. At this point, I may revisit Bernstein's (1996) instructional discourse that is schematised in Figure 1 and adapt it to the present context of researching the BBC-mediated L2 teaching of English consonants. This can be re-schematised in Figure 24, where the textbook domain of segmental phonetics was shown to represent a form of invisible pedagogy, known strictly to the transmitter via his/her technical expertise in this domain; on the other hand, the website-enabled actual performance of the instructor proved to be the visible form, known to L2 learners or acquirers of the BBC-English pronunciation of consonants as segmental units.
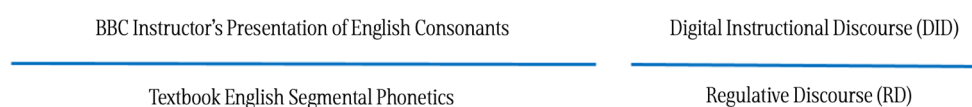
BBC Instructor's Presentation of English Consonants	Digital Instructional Discourse (DID)
Textbook English Segmental Phonetics	Regulative Discourse (RD)

Figure 24. Digital instructional discourse and regulative discourse on BBC Learning English website

Invoking Bernstein's (1990, 1996) notion of academic discourse (and its regulative nature), one may conceive of an academic type of segmental-phonetics discourse on English consonants; this type of regulative discourse (RD) seems to have regulated the digital instructional discourse (ID) proposed in the present study. Indeed, the current context of research has significantly contributed to Bernstein's academic discourse and has systematically bifurcated into two types of DID and RD (Figure 24). Demonstrably, RD was presented as the theoretical knowledge of segmental phonetics that is established as textbook format offstage, and that can possibly be interpreted as the 'invisible pedagogy' known only to the transmitter, or in this case, to the BBC website's instructor. Demonstrably, again, the BBC instructor's L2 teaching of English consonants has been recognised or categorised as a type of DID that took the form of *digitally enabled* 'visible pedagogy', being known to the learner/acquirer and being a performance-specific aspect, spatio-digitally controlled by a number of digital gadgets. Two primary digital gadgets have been analysed and proved to be constitutive of the BBC website's DPRF. The first digital gadget was the screen-spaced demonstration of the BBC-mediated pedagogic behaviour which controlled the time and location of this behaviour and shaped its transmission to potential L2 learners. The second was the captioned performances which subsumed three main digital sub-gadgets: (i) the visuo-vocal production of pedagogic behaviour where speech and captions co-occurred (Figures 2-5); (ii) the visuo-aural production of pedagogic behaviour with a phonetic-feature (e.g., fricativity) concomitant with captions and playing out (Figures 13 and 14); (iii) the functional spatialisation of co-speech gestures (Figure 21).

Specifically at the level of DID, the BBC learning website can be compared with other equally prestigious platforms teaching L2 phonetics online. The one selected in the present context of research is the British Council-mediated presentation video on teaching English pronunciation online, given by Maxim Barkov (British Council, 2024). For space considerations here, I focus strictly on the digital gadgets exhibited in the video presentation. The comparative scope of the BBC and the British Council particularly includes the digital gadgets enabling the DPRF. There is a rich repertoire of digital gadgets that aggregately seems to control the spatio-digital educational environment of the British Council website. Like the BBC website, here the British Council video is the primary screen-spaced-medium digital gadget that enables all the remaining pedagogically recognised digital gadgets. Missing from the BBC's DPRF is the interactive screen-spaced practical tips verbo-visually featured as bullet points in the video: Google Classroom, Edmodo, Kialo, etc. Yet, unlike the BBC website, here again the British Council website seems to be confined in the recontextualising pedagogic field to shadowing; that is, the pronunciation techniques of imitating and mimicking dominantly native speakers of English.

Also, notably, the British Council appears to outnumber the BBC website in terms of the spatiotemporally demarcated digital gadgets of calendaring on pronunciation-bound events. There are varied approaches to pronunciation virtually constructed as digitally timed and located events – *Online Events*. The digitally designed panel of *Events Calendar* orders or chronicles certain occasions with technical and practical inputs, e.g., collaborative approaches for teacher learning and innovation, virtual exchange: internationalising the ELT classroom, etc. The instructor's image appearing in the video uploaded on the British Council website also seems to be another digital gadget; it serves to connect the L2 learners with the pedagogue transmitting the technical knowledge on pronunciation as well as the British Council's instructional discourse guiding the potential L2 learners viewing the website and watching this video. Even so,

it also seems that the BBC's pedagogic performance and digitally recontextualised field are more reflective of L2 phonetics than the British Council is. This is clear in the BBC website's detailed pedagogical videos introduced on the L2 phonetics of consonants (analysed here) and vowels (Salama, 2022) as well as on other non-/integrated skills of grammar, suprasegmental phonetics, and reading comprehension (Salama, 2024).

Reverting to the BBC's DPRF of L2 teaching of English consonants as analysed in current research, it can be said that such a DPRF is mainly concerned with three descriptive aspects. First, the contrastive aspect of voicing has been utilised in drawing phonetic distinction between breathed (voiceless) plosive stops and their voiced counterparts. In this respect, the piece-of-paper pedagogic technique has been mediated and made a digital gadget whereby the lack of voicing of the breathed consonant /p/ was empirically tested; also the same digital gadget has been used for differentiating the voicing contrastively holding between /t/ and /d/; further, through the same gadget, the phonetic aspect of aspiration has been tested in the production of the allophonic variant [kʰ]. Second, the aspect of auditory vibration of voiced fricatives and affricates has been digitally recontextualised mainly by contrasting the audibly vibrating sets of /v/, /z/ and /dʒ/ with their non-vibrating counterpart sets of /f/, /s/ and /tʃ/, respectively; this aspect has also been pedagogically enhanced through the space-screened recontextualisation of the typical model of hissing friction [s s s s s …] versus buzzing friction [z z z z z …]. Besides, the same aspect of recontextualised audible vibration has been tested at the level of the nasal consonants /m/ and /n/, where the element of nasal vibration has been digitally pedagogised as an empirical test of the phonetic feature of English nasality – as being potentially differentiated from non-nasal vibration.

Third, and last, the aspect of contrasting the places of articulating consonants has been equally digitally recontextualised; for example, the pre-dental sounds /θ/ and /ð/ were demonstrated through pedagogically visualising the captioned performance of contact between the tongue-tip and the teeth in a way that yielded an apicodental form of pronunciation. Another example is the sounds /n/ and /ŋ/; the two consonants – having the same nasal manner of articulation – have been pedagogised in terms of their digitally captioned performed contrastive places of articulation, with apicoalveolar /n/ differentiated from dorsovelar /ŋ/. Indeed, the contrastive meeting points of /n/ and /ŋ/ were recontextualised through the same digital gadgets of captioned performance: Whereas in the production of /n/ the tongue-tip is in contact with the alveolar ridge, /ŋ/ has the back of the tongue (dorsum) in contact with the velum. Further, the contrastive articulation of English /r/ and /l/ has been recontextualised through the visuo-indexically pedagogic practice of the BBC's instructor pointing to their exact points of articulation inside the vocal tract, with the post-alveolar /r/ placed in contrast with the lateral /l/. Obviously, there has been recontextualisation of the /l/ allophonic variants of clear [l] versus dark [ɫ] in terms of the phonetic feature of velarisation. Also, finally in this

regard, the non-rhotic status of BBC English pronunciation has been visually captioned and orally performed by means of the pedagogic exemplification of final-position non-linking [r] versus pre-vocalic linking [r].

At this point, there emerges one pedagogic recommendation which seems to enrich the BBC's DPRF in terms of its L2 teaching of English consonants. It is concerned with the practical necessity of incorporating a digitally enabled manner-of-articulation phonetic feature into this DPRF when it comes to the L2 teaching of English consonants. A typical case in point is the difficulty encountered by L2 learners of English when pronouncing the nasal consonant /ŋ/. Whilst the BBC's DPRF focuses on how this consonant phonetically contrasts with the nasal consonant /n/ in terms of place of articulation (i.e., velar versus alveolar), there is no spatio-digital pedagogic space for contrasting the same nasal /ŋ/ with the plosive stop consonant /g/ in terms of their phonetically distinctive manner of articulation (i.e., nasality versus orality). Indeed, it would be a pedagogic facilitator for L2 leaners of English to be aware of the phonetic fact that the velic closure present in the production of /g/ is missing from that of /ŋ/; this can be justified in the light of having the orthographic spelling ng as a pattern in words such as wing and singer, whose typical BBC-English pronunciation is /wɪŋ/ and /sɪŋəʳ/, respectively. Also, on a more digital level, the gadgets digitalising the BBC Learning English website can be further enhanced should proper attention be duly paid to further educational multimedia with interactive features, such as Google Classroom. Such digital gadgets would certainly enhance the educational spheres recontextualising fields of technical knowledge into effective visible pedagogic practices of L2 teaching and learning.

7. CONCLUSION

The study has problematised the performance of L2 teaching platforms, with a particular focus on the BBC's L2 approach to teaching English consonants. Such an approach was argued to stage only a restricted pedagogic field of the theoretical knowledge of phonetics, even in the presence of observable Internet 'digital gadgets'. As a result, the study continued a pedagogic-phonetic critique of the BBC's Internet-based L2 teaching of English vowels, but further developed such a critique into a critical evaluation of the same platform's L2 approach to teaching English consonants online as a form of digitally oriented pedagogic phonetic analysis. To this end, a synthetic methodology of Bernstein's model of Pedagogic Recontextualising Field (PRF) and Moinuddin's theoretical notion of 'digital gadgets' was utilised as DPRF (Digital Pedagogic Recontextualising Field). The methodology has been operationalised towards analysing a total of 22 video-based screenshots derived from the BBC Learning English website with materials archived for public use. The analysis has empirically proven the hypothesis that the BBC-based website offered a restricted pedagogic space/field for digitally recontextualising 'visible' phonetic practices pertaining to L2 consonantal pronunciation to the exclusion of phonetically productive aspects of L2 teaching of segmental English consonants.

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Following Bernstein's notions of 'instructional discourse' (ID) and 'regulative discourse' (RD), the digitally oriented analysis of the BBC-archived data has demonstrated the presence of two types of discourse: (a) the RD of theoretical knowledge of segmental phonetics, realised in 'invisible pedagogy' known to the BBC website's instructor; (b) the ID representing the instructor's actual performance, embodied as 'visible pedagogy' in the context of L2 teaching. At this point, the current study contributed to Bernstein's ID, mainly by proving it to be a form of digital instructional discourse (DID); that is, a form of digitally enabled 'visible pedagogy'. With this contribution, Bernstein's classic notion of 'PRF' has been revisited and reformulated as a digital PRF, or DPRF, which was shown to be the BBC website's DPRF through a number of Internet-enabled digital gadgets. Two primary digital gadgets were analysed: (i) screen-spaced demonstration of the BBC-mediated pedagogic behaviour controlling the time, place, and manner of instructor's transmission of content; and (ii) captioned performances including three digital sub-gadgets, viz. visuo-vocal production of pedagogic behaviour with speech and captions co-occurring, visuo-aural production of pedagogic behaviour with audible phonetic features concomitant with captions and playing out, and functional spatialisation of co-speech gestures.

Further, at the level of DID, the study compared the BBC learning website against the British Council-mediated presentation video on L2 teaching English pronunciation online – two equally prestigious educational platforms with digitally mediated spaces for teaching L2 phonetics. The analysis has revealed the presence of different digital gadgets for enabling the DPRF of each. Whereas the British Council website adopted a richer and more interactive repertoire of digital gadgets controlling the spatio-digital educational environment of the platform, the BBC website proved to be broader in its DPRF than the former, which was confined to the educational practice of 'shadowing'. Also, notably, the British Council's DPRF was observed to out-number the BBC's in terms of the spatiotemporally demarcated digital gadgets of calendaring on pronunciation-specific events.

Leaving the comparative mode of the BBC and the British Council websites and focusing on the main educational platform of the former, the study brought out and discussed more findings in terms of the BBC's DPRF. The main finding at this point was presented in relation to the presence of three visibly pedagogised descriptive aspects (dominantly contrastive) in this DPRF: (i) contrastive voicing between breathed (voiceless) plosive stops and their voiced counterparts, (ii) auditory vibration of voiced fricatives and affricates, and (iii) contrastive places of articulating consonants. Following this, there was a significant recommendation for enriching the BBC's DPRF in terms of its L2 teaching of English phonetics: the necessity of incorporating a digitally enabled manner-of-articulation phonetic features into its current DPRF. The recommendation was practically illustrated with hypothetical digitally enabled visible pedagogies.

Finally, one limitation of this study is to be voiced here. That is, for space considerations, the present study has not been extended further towards investigating the BBC's DPRF at the suprasegmental level of L2 English phonology, including stress, rhythm, pitch, intonation patterns, etc. This would have certainly revealed other digitally enabled potentials for the workings of such a DPRF, particularly on the wider scale of teaching L2 phonology. Crucially, this area of suprasegmental phonology may productively open up prospects for future research on the same educational platform (BBC Learning English website).

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Original Research

Power and solidarity in pronominal forms of address: A case study of Chinese and Russian teacher-student interactions

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In the evolving landscape of global education, understanding the intricacies of interpersonal dynamics in academic settings across different linguacultures is paramount for building effective multicultural teaching environments. This study investigates the usage of T/V pronominal forms of address within teacher-student interactions in Chinese and Russian academic contexts. It aims to reveal similarities and differences in the usage of pronominal forms of address in the two linguacultural contexts and unveil the impact of sociocultural factors, namely power and solidarity, on their choice. The data were obtained from a parallel questionnaire survey with the participation of 360 students (260 Chinese mainland students and 100 Russian students) and an interview with 30 students from each country. Employing a comprehensive dual-methodology approach, this study combines quantitative analyses of T/V forms of address frequencies with qualitative insights on their pragmatics, appropriateness, and students' preferences from interviews. The findings revealed distinct T/V form usage strategies in Chinese and Russian academic discourse. They showed that Chinese teachers predominantly use the T form for students, while students use both V and T forms for teachers. Conversely, Russian settings show a prevalence of the reciprocal V form in teacher-student interactions, with some limited usage of the T form by teachers with students. The results underscore the significance of hierarchical relationships, the demonstration of power distance, and, at the same time, solidarity in the Chinese context, while Russian students and teachers emphasise reciprocal formality in relationships and maintain boundaries. We suggest that different types of interaction between teachers and students in two cultural contexts are due to differences in the sociocultural organisation of society and cultural values. The study provides insights for educators and researchers navigating linguistic and cultural diversity in academic contexts and contributes to effective interaction in a multicultural educational environment.

KEYWORDS: *academic discourse, teacher-student interaction, pronominal forms of address, power, solidarity, Chinese linguaculture, Russian linguaculture*

1. INTRODUCTION

As academic environments experience greater internationalisation, it becomes increasingly important to give scholarly evaluation of interpersonal dynamics within these multicultural settings. Due to the growing academic mobility in higher education resulting in multicultural classes, research on university discourse from a socio-cultural perspective has become indispensable (Zbenovich et al., 2023). The divergence in cultural back-grounds between teachers and students, coupled with adherence to distinct sociocultural communicative norms, poses challenges to mutual understanding and perception. This complexity introduces obstacles to the communication process (Rapanta & Trovão, 2021; Voevoda, 2020; Zhou et al., 2023). To interact successfully and to avoid misunderstandings in multicultural educational environments, effective teachers must also be effective intercultural communicators (Le Roux, 2002, p. 38) and be

'The speech act of address is one of the most socially and emotionally sensitive acts, as forms of address show how interlocutors present discursively different aspects of their interpersonal relationships and regulate them. They may signal either closeness or distance, formality or informality, love, or hostility. Moreover, they vary across languages and cultures, encode sociocultural norms, cultural values of interlocutors, and their conceptualisations of polite and impolite behaviours, and signify an essential component of social and cultural identity'

aware of their students' cultural traditions. Cultural differences may relate to the levels of power and solidarity and, as a result, to the degree of formality and informality acceptable within specific cultures. They can be observed in any speech act of everyday classroom interaction, e.g., addressing, requesting, complimenting, providing arguments and critical remarks, etc., and can potentially cause communicative failures, interfering with the learning process and students' adjustment to a new cultural and academic environment (Zbenovich et al., 2023).

The speech act of address is one of the most socially and emotionally sensitive acts, as forms of address show how interlocutors present discursively different aspects of their interpersonal relationships and regulate them. They may signal either closeness or distance, formality or informality, love, or hostility (Larina et al., 2019, p. 40). Moreover, they vary across languages and cultures, encode sociocultural norms, cultural values of interlocutors, and their conceptualisations of polite and impolite behaviours, and signify an essential component of social and cultural identity (Bilá et al., 2020; Clyne, 2009; Khalil & Larina, 2022; Raymond, 2016; Suryanarayan & Khalil, 2021; Wierzbicka, 2020, 2022; Yusra et al., 2023; Grishechko, 2021; Akopova, 2023). In many languages, including Russian and Chinese, a dichotomy exists in the use of second-person singular pronominal forms of address, commonly denoted as formal (henceforth referred to as *V*, derived from the Latin *vos*) and informal (*T*, derived from the Latin *tu*). The *V* form symbolises power or status, while the *T* form denotes solidarity or intimacy between interlocutors (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Pager-McClymont et al., 2024). Speakers of these languages are compelled to select one of these forms in communication drawing on communicative norms and conventions of their culture. Thus, *T/V* dichotomy encompasses not only linguistic formalities but also socio-cultural dynamics within these language communities.

Nonetheless, a substantial research gap exists, characterised by an absence of comprehensive and systematic inquiries into the pronominal usage patterns in cross-cultural perspective. In this study we explore pronominal forms of address in academic discourse, an area that has only received marginal attention in previous literature and lacks systematic, up-to-date investigation (cf. Al Abdely, 2016) and focus on Chinese and Russian contexts.

Despite the increasing academic mobility between Chinese and Russian higher education institutions, the nuanced use of second-person pronominal forms of address (*T/V* forms) in teacher-student interactions remains underexplored from a sociolinguistic, cultural, and pragmatic perspective. This study aims to elucidate the use of *T/V* forms within teacher-student interactions in Chinese and Russian academic discourse and unveil the impact of sociocultural dimensions, such as *power* and *solidarity*, on their choice. To achieve this goal, the following research questions will guide our study.

1. How often do teachers and students in Chinese and Russian universities employ the *T* and *V* forms in student-teacher interactions (when students address their teachers), and under what circumstances students might opt for the less commonly used form?

2. How often do teachers and students in Chinese and Russian universities employ the *T* and *V* forms in teacher-student interactions (when teachers address their students), and what pronominal address form do Chinese and Russian students typically prefer when being addressed by their teacher?

3. What similarities and differences can be identified between the two linguacultures regarding the use of *T/V* forms, and how can they be interpreted from a sociocultural and pragmatic perspective, particularly in terms of *power* and *solidarity* dimensions?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Address forms in academic discourse: power distance and social distance between teachers and students

This section will provide a concise overview of the research background concerning address forms in academic settings, with a specific focus on the relevant literature addressing the use of address pronouns, particularly the *T* and *V* forms.

Forms of address play a key role as the 'first step' in interpersonal communication, often entwined with various other speech acts that collectively constitute a crucial aspect of communicative interaction. Sociolinguists have dedicated significant attention to studying forms of address in human communication (Dickey, 1997; Fang & Heng, 1983; Kluge & Moyna, 2019; Norrby & Wide, 2015; Wood & Kroger, 1991). On the individual level, forms of address serve as tools for conveying attitudes toward the interlocutor and even emotional states, as they indicate the level of formality or intimacy, proximity or distance in their relations. On a broader social level, these forms reflect social relations, power dynamics, and solidarity within cultural and social frameworks. This exploration discusses human communication, emphasising the multifaceted nature of forms of address and their impact on both individual interactions and broader societal dynamics (Clyne et al., 2009; Leech, 1999; Ton, 2019).

As global cultural exchanges increase, sociolinguists have noted variations in forms of address across different languages and cultures (Braun, 1988; Clyne, 2009; Li, 2015; Ørsnes, 2016; Ozyumenko, 2020; Tazik & Aliakbari, 2023). These variations encompass the use of various categories of forms of address,

namely proper names, kinship terms, identity-related nominal forms of address, and pronoun forms of address. The distinctions in forms of address are often intertwined with the influence of social backgrounds, cultural norms, and values on linguistic practices (Leech & Larina, 2014, p. 11). In intercultural communication, these factors give rise to diverse linguistic behaviours, including address practices. Beyond these linguistic variations, Braun (1988, p. 66) emphasises that speakers' address practices are not solely linked to the social or cultural context of their interlocutors; they also reflect notions such as superiority/inferiority, formality/informality, distance/intimacy, etc. Thus, comprehending how speakers perceive and interpret their relationships with interlocutors is essential for intercultural understanding.

Since the late 1960s and 1970s, there has been a growing focus on address studies in specific social contexts (Ton, 2019). Within academic interactions, researchers have examined the forms of address used by both students and teaching staff (DeLisle, 1993; Formentelli, 2009; Larina & Suryanarayan, 2023; Lehtimaja, 2011; McIntire, 1972; Nicodemus et al., 2021; Soomro & Larina, 2022, 2023). The exploration of address forms in academic interactions, akin to other specific social settings, is focusing on social hierarchy and power distance (Formentelli & Hajek, 2015, 2016). teacher-student interactions are shaped by occupational hierarchy, the social status of teachers (Hofstede, 1986, p. 303), the communication context, and the level of intimacy between teachers and students. These factors are considered pivotal in influencing address practices within academic settings. In intercultural academic settings, inappropriate address forms violating not only linguistic norms, but also social norms can elicit instinctive negative reactions.

2.2. T/V forms of address: power and solidarity

In Chinese and Russian, as in many other languages (e.g., Dutch, Italian, French, German, Spanish) there are two singular second pronouns of address: the informal *T* form (in Chinese *ni*, in Russian *ты*, hereafter for short *T*) and the formal *V* form (in Chinese *nin*, in Russian *вы*, *V* for short). However, the use of *T/V* forms in interactions conveys more than the formality or informality; it also serves as a significant indicator of the identities belonging to specific social groups of interlocutors (Bilá et al., 2020; Brown & Gilman, 1960; Clyne, 2009; Shubina, 2023; Mahmud & Salehuddin, 2023). Second-person pronoun usage serves as a nuanced reflection of the social and linguistic backgrounds of interactants, bearing the imprint of various sociolinguistic conventions. Friedrich (1972) summarises the significance of pronominal usage as follows: *'Just two words (the second-person pronoun pair), operating in all speech events that involve two interlocutors, signalled the relative position of each role in hundreds of dyadic relationships'* (Friedrich, 1972, p. 270). In other words, pronominal usage is of unique theoretical significance because it can link the obligatory categories grammatically and semantically with the social culture, occupying a boundary zone between linguistic forms and the deep level of attitude and norm by which a society is organised (Friedrich, 1972).

Sociolinguists have connected the pronominal forms of address research, specifically *T/V* forms, intricately to *power* and *solidarity* dimensions (cf. Brown and Gilman, 1960) in various interaction dyads (Kuo, 2002; Lee & Cho, 2013; Stewart, 2001). According to Brown and Gilman (1960), the *power* dimension involves the vertical, asymmetrical relationship between speakers, determined by social status differences; *solidarity* in contrast emphasises similarities, a degree of closeness and intimacy between people. According to Tannen's (1990) framework, the dynamics of *power* and *solidarity* in the actual interaction between interlocutors are linked to nonreciprocal or reciprocal forms of address. Illustratively, in the Chinese language, the use of the *V* form signifies imbalances in power relations, with individuals of higher status being addressed with the *V* form by subordinates to show deference. Meanwhile, the non-reciprocal *V* forms may denote a sense of alienation and estrangement. Conversely, the *T* form symbolises cordial and solidarity-based relations. The reciprocal use of the *T* form serves to express familiarity within identical social strata, such as between family members or friends, and may also be employed by superiors when addressing subordinates (Wang, 2022). In the Russian language, a similar dichotomy is observed, with the *V* and *T* forms serving as direct indicators of social distance, whereby the *V* form conveys respect or emotional distance, and the *T* form expresses affection or, conversely, contempt (Friedrich, 1972).

In this conceptual framework, the pronominal forms of address employed by the speaker are contingent upon *'the objective relationship existing between speaker and addressee'* (Brown & Gilman, 1960, p. 156, as cited in Villarreal, 2014, p. 3). Pronominal forms of address signal aspects of both the interlocutors' relationship and the nature of the interactional context. The selection between *T/V* pronominal forms by a speaker *'has a strong bearing on social identity, giving speakers a strong incentive to use address forms in a way that will project the identities that they desire'* (Villarreal, 2014, p. 3). In teacher-student communication, the perception of social identity, status, and the communicative context significantly influence the choice between *T/V* pronominal forms. Cultural factors, inherent in these interactions, also warrant heightened consideration. Subsequently, the linguistic choices encompassed in pronominal forms of address operate as social deixis (Bilá et al., 2020; Ahmed et al., 2023), offering insights into power dynamics, social hierarchies, and solidarity within interpersonal interactions. The pragmatic nuances and divergent interpretations of social roles contribute to deixis variations within distinct cultural contexts.

While there are some studies which explore Chinese and Russian forms of address in teacher-student interactions (Blacher & Brehmer, 2024; Hu & Luo, 2017; You, 2014), they predominantly focus on the cultural and linguistic aspects within each context, such as the hierarchical Confucian influence in China or the blend of formal and informal linguistic expressions in Russian academic discourse. There is a noticeable gap in the literature that provides a direct comparative analysis between these two cultural and linguistic contexts. This study addresses

the comparative perspective and explores the use of *T/V* forms within teacher-student interactions in Chinese and Russian academic discourse focusing on the impact of sociocultural dimensions, such as *power* and *solidarity*, on their choice.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS
3.1. Research procedure

To ensure comprehensive and unbiased data collection, this study employed a parallel social survey methodology. The research encompassed the distribution of parallel questionnaires and conducted oral interviews in two countries, China and Russia (see Appendices 1 and 2). The quantitative section of the questionnaire involved participants indicating the frequency of their use of second-person pronouns (*T/V* forms) when interacting with their teachers in academic contexts. Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' (1) to 'always' (5), participants were also asked to articulate their preferred form of address (*T/V* forms). Moreover, to further enhance our comprehension of the subject matter, an additional qualitative component was integrated into the study. This involved voluntary participation from 30 Chinese and 30 Russian students who took part in follow-up interviews. Participants shared their personal experiences, providing insights into the situations in which they choose to address their teachers using the *T* form, and expressed their preferences regarding *T* or *V* form they would like to be addressed by their teacher. Participants also offered their interpretations and perceptions of these two pronouns in interactions with university teachers and identified the factors influencing their choices. This additional qualitative component provided richer insights into the participants' perspectives, complementing the data obtained through the questionnaires.

3.2. Participants

The study involved a representative sample of participants from both Chinese and Russian higher educational contexts, encompassing a total of 360 university students (260 respondents from mainland China and 100 respondents from Russia). For the quantitative aspect, a stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure a balanced representation of students across different academic levels, disciplines, and institutions in both countries. In China, participants were drawn from various universities and disciplines. In addition, to mitigate potential bias arising from geographic distribution, Chinese participants in the survey were diverse, spanning 30 various provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions (e.g., Guangdong, Zhejiang, Hunan, Beijing, Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, and others), ensuring a balanced representation by conscientiously collecting responses from different regions of China. In the Russian questionnaire segment, participants were invited from a range of educational institutions and academic programmes (RUDN University, MGIMO University, Moscow State University and Kazan Federal University) ensuring a broad range of perspectives. However, our focus was on cultural differences, with acknowledgment that regional variations might exist in address pronominal usage, though not within this study's scope. The student participants were undergraduate, graduate and PhD students, contributing to a cross-sectional understanding of address form preferences and usage patterns. The inclusion criteria comprised students with diverse cultural backgrounds and academic proficiency levels to capture a comprehensive overview of linguistic practices within the educational context. The more detailed demographic information (gender, age, education background) about participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic information of Chinese and Russian respondents

PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
Chinese participants (n=260)	Male (62.31%) Female (37.69%)	Under 20 y.o. (12.31%) 20-25 y.o. (77.31%) 26-30 y.o. (8.46%) Over 30 y.o. (1.92%)	Undergraduate (77.31%) Graduated (12.69%) PhD students (10%)
Russian participants (n=100)	Male (29%) Female (71%)	Under 20 y.o. (12%) 20-25 y.o. (75%) 26-30 y.o. (9%) Over 30 y.o. (4%)	Undergraduate (70%) Graduated (15%) PhD students (15%)

In the qualitative phase, students from both countries were purposively selected to participate in in-depth interviews. The criteria for interview selection considered varying levels of learning experience, academic disciplines, and institutions to ensure a diverse representation. This approach aimed to gather rich, context-specific insights into the factors influencing the use of address forms in teacher-student interactions.

3.3. Data analysis

The study employed a mixed-methods approach to gather insights into teacher-student interactions in both Chinese and Russian higher educational settings. Quantitative data were collected through structured surveys distributed to a representative sample of Chinese and Russian students, capturing their preferences and practices in addressing teachers. Additionally,

qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews with students from both cultures, allowing for a deeper exploration of the underlying dynamics. The surveys, available in both languages, included questions about preferred forms of address, frequency of usage, and contextual factors influencing linguistic choices.

The quantitative data was analysed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, were employed to characterise the prevalence of specific address forms among Chinese and Russian students. The findings were visually represented through charts and graphs to enhance clarity and facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the quantitative results.

For the qualitative aspect, a systematic approach was taken to transcribe and code the interview data. Transcriptions of teacher-student interactions were undertaken, ensuring accurate representation of spoken language nuances. A coding scheme was developed based on recurring themes and patterns identified during the initial phases of data immersion. Thematic content analysis was then applied to extract meaningful insights from the qualitative data, exposing the underlying factors influencing language choices within teacher-student interactions.

By scrutinising both quantitative data on the frequency of pronoun usage and qualitative insights into students' preferences and explanations, this study provides a comprehensive comparative analysis of student-teacher and teacher-student interactions in Russian and Chinese linguacultural contexts, with a focus on the usage of T/V pronouns within the specific social contexts of *power* and *solidarity* that characterise academic environments.

The analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires revealed that both T and V forms are employed by Chinese and Russian teachers and students within academic settings. Section 4.1. delineates the frequency of usage patterns of T and V forms

in Chinese and Russian student-teacher interactions, presenting the perspectives of respondents on situations where students would address their teacher using the T form. Section 4.2. looks into the frequency of T and V form usage in Chinese and Russian teacher-student interactions. Additionally, it presents the preferences of therespondents regarding pronominal address forms from their teachers and explores their perceptions of the use of T and V forms in teacher-student interactions.

4. STUDY RESULTS
4.1. Pronominal address terms usages in Chinese and Russian student-teacher interactions

This section entails a comparative analysis of the usage of T and V address forms in Chinese and Russian student-teacher interactions. The results assigned that Chinese and Russian students employ both T and V forms when addressing teachers. Yet, their frequency and usage scenarios demonstrate considerable differences.

4.1.1. T/V address forms by students to teachers

The quantitative analysis of the results from Chinese and Russian questionnaires, showed that the use of the V form in addressing teachers holds significant prominence. Notably, in the responses from Russian students, 96% explicitly indicated that they consistently use the V form when addressing teachers, with an additional 4% opting for frequent usage. In contrast, the frequency among Chinese students has shown a decrease overall, with only 52.3% consistently using the V form. Furthermore, 26.5% and 16.2% chose 'often' and 'sometimes,' respectively, while 3.5% and 1.5% of students indicated 'seldom' or 'never' addressing teachers with the V form (Figure 1). From this we can see that in the Chinese and Russian student-teacher interactions, the V form dominates, but is not used as often by Chinese students as by Russian students.
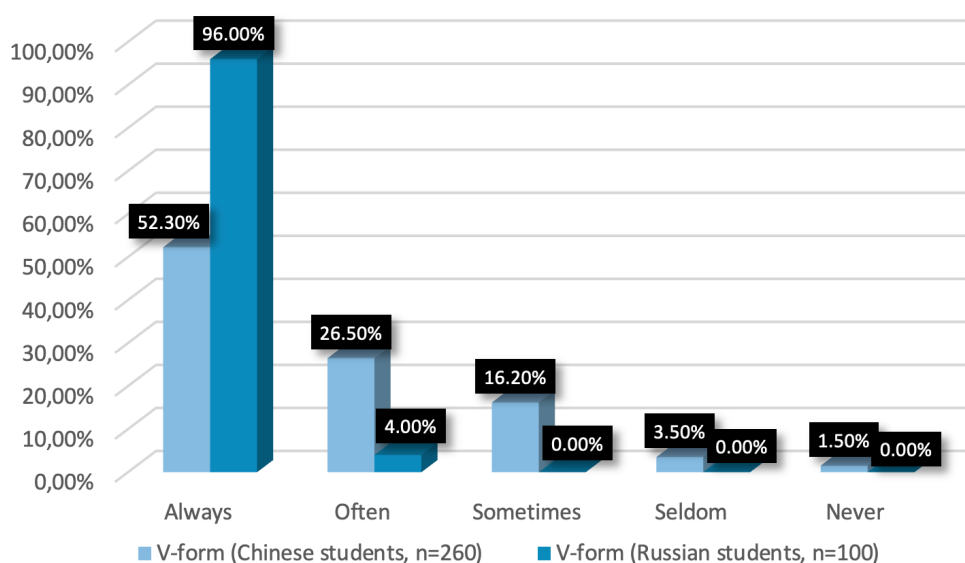

Figure 1. Frequency of V form usage in the student-teacher interaction

Regarding the *T* form in student-teacher interactions, the Russian data reveals a distinct pattern, where a mere 3% of students reported using the *T* form sometimes, 15% – seldom, and a substantial 82.6% – never. Conversely, Chinese students demonstrated a more varied usage of the *T* form, with only 26.9% stating they never use it. Meanwhile, 9.2% use it always, 17.7% – often, and 20% – sometimes (Figure 2). So, while the *T* form is relatively rare for Russian students, some of the respondents among Chinese students still use this form of addressing their teachers more often.
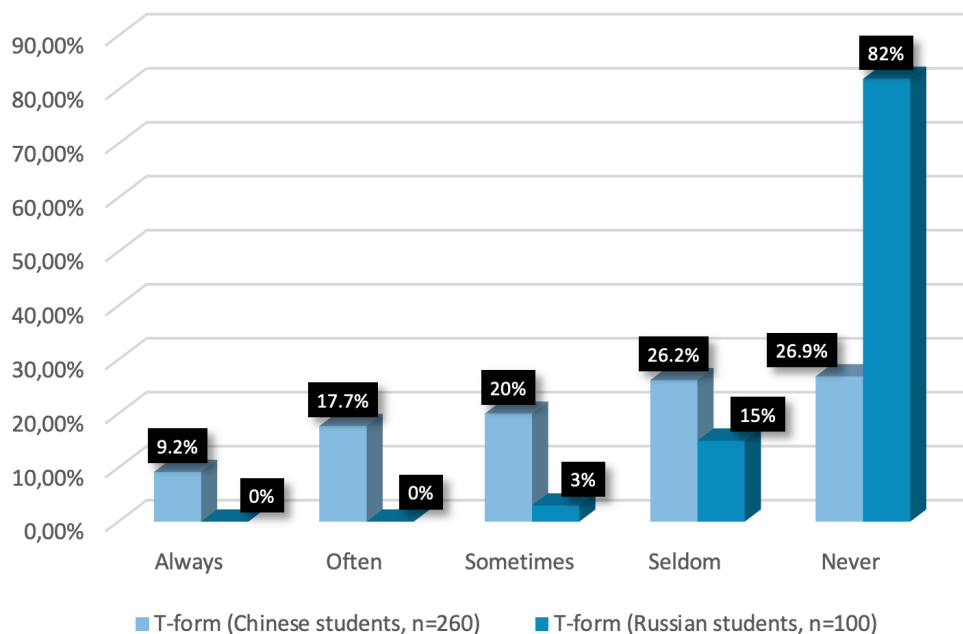
Figure 2. Frequency of T form usage in the student-teacher interaction

Based on the analysis summarised in Table 2, a clear distinction emerges in the Russian and Chinese student-teacher interactions. Russian students overwhelmingly opt for the *V* form when addressing their teachers, demonstrating a robust commitment to this pronominal choice, while the *T* form is selected by only a small fraction of Russian students who participated in the study. In contrast, Chinese students exhibit a more varied pattern of pronominal choice in addressing teachers. While the *V* form remains the predominant choice among most respondents, it is not the sole preference.

Notably, a significant number of Chinese students (73.1%) also incorporate the *T* form into their communication with teachers, which suggests that the *T* form of address is not uncommon in the Chinese classroom setting.

Table 2

V/T pronominal address forms in student-teacher interaction: A comparison between Chinese and Russian

PRONOMINAL FORMS OF ADDRESS	RUSSIAN		CHINESE	
	Usage (with frequency variation)	Non-usage	Usage (with frequency variation)	Non-usage
V form	100%	0%	98.5%	1.5%
T form	18%	82%	73.1%	26.9%

4.1.2. Situations of T pronoun usage in Chinese and Russian student-teacher interactions

To gain further insights, we conducted additional interviews with a specific focus on students' use of the *T* form when addressing their teachers. The primary aim was to explore in depth the circumstances in which both Russian and Chinese students employ the *T* form and to identify the influencing factors behind their choice. We asked students to describe situations when they choose to address their teacher using the *T* form, specify the teacher's age, gender, and context and choose a factor that impacts their choice of the *T* or *V* form (e.g., special permission from the teacher, age of the teacher, closeness to the teacher, formal or informal situations, or other factors). In their responses, the Russian interviewees predominantly emphasised

the importance of factors such as the teacher's preference, the teacher's age, and social relationships with the teacher, as well as the informality of circumstances, when opting for the *T* form. The following responses bear witness to these considerations.

(1) *When the teacher explicitly requests to be addressed in this manner, such as in extra courses, where informal communication is encouraged.*

(2) *I use T when addressing the Spanish language teacher because she specifically asked to be addressed that way.*

(3) *Addressing teachers under 30, gender-neutral, in informal situations, often signifies a friendly relationship with the faculty member.*

(4) *Age is a significant factor, especially with master's students or PhD students, where mutual agreement fosters a switch to T for more comfortable and effective communication, extending beyond the subject matter.*

(5) *The only scenario where T forms are employed is when the teacher is a friend or a long-time acquaintance, strictly within an informal setting.*

(6) *While personally uncommon, there may be instances where individuals use T forms with lecturers they know personally, usually young candidates of sciences. However, even in such cases, formal settings demand adherence to 'V' forms to maintain respect for hierarchical structures.*

Apparently, the primary determinants shaping the pronominal choices of Chinese students markedly differ from those observed among Russian students. The most frequently mentioned factor by Chinese students that encourages them to use the *T* form of address is the degree of intimacy in their personal relationship with the teacher and the informality of the usage scenario:

(7) *Initial greetings typically employ the V form, contingent upon the evolving nature of subsequent conversations. If the teacher appears approachable, the T form is adopted; conversely, in instances of perceived strictness, the V form is utilized. Should the relationship evolve or involve heightened interaction, the formality may transit from V to T.*

(8) *I believe that the choice of pronouns primarily depends on the closeness of the relationship with the teacher. If the teacher is not close to me, I address them with the V form, regardless of the circumstances.*

(9) *I use T forms without explicit permission, but only in informal occasions and when I have a good relationship with the teacher.*

When queried during the interview about whether teachers would mandate or permit a specific *T/V* form, the responses revealed that in Chinese university settings, teachers typically do not have specific requirements for students' *T/V* designations. One interviewee expressed this sentiment as follows:

(10) *It seems like no teacher has explicitly instructed me not to use V form, so generally, regardless of the teacher's age, I tend to address them as 'nin' (V form) in most situations. However, we don't have a strict rule about using the V form, so occasionally in* *casual conversation, I might use 'ni' (T form), if it feels more comfortable. But when it comes to written communication, I consistently use the V form.*

(11) *My supervisor is relatively young and has no special requirements in this regard, so I usually use T form to address my teacher when communicating in person.*

In response to the question about the impact of the factor of teacher's age, Chinese respondents indicated that the age of the teacher has only a slight effect on their choice of pronouns address but it is not the dominant one. Generally, they tend to use *V* form more when their teachers are older, and conversely, they lean towards using *T* form when their teachers are younger. For instance, one respondent stated:

(12) *The choice of pronouns does not depend much on the age difference between me and my teacher. However, I prefer to use T form if there is not much age difference between me and my teacher, whereas I prefer to use V form if my teacher is older. If my teacher is not much older than me, addressing them with V form would make me feel a bit accustomed.*

What's more, one of the Chinese interviewees mentioned that she typically employs the *T* form only when addressing a teacher who perceives her as a daughter, even if the teacher is much older.

(13) *I consistently use V form in all cases, except for one teacher who treated me like a daughter, even though she is much older than me.*

Furthermore, there were interviewees who maintained a steadfast perspective of never using the *T* form to address teachers under any circumstances, regardless of the relationship's closeness or formality, they consistently opted for the *V* form, prioritising respect for the teacher's role. For instance (14), a female interviewee from Beijing (23 years old, postgraduate student) exemplified this stance by sharing her chat logs with her teacher. It was evident that she exclusively employed the *V* forms, while her teacher reciprocated with solely the *T* forms. She perceived this dynamic as a manifestation of respect towards her teacher, underscoring the significance of upholding hierarchical norms despite the amicable positive nature of their relationship.

Hence, the influencing factors on whether students will choose the *T* form to address their university teachers are various in Russian and Chinese settings. However, Russian students showed an evident reluctance to use the *T* form, only if several conditions are fulfilled at the same time: the teacher's request, not substantial age gap with the teachers, a very close relationship with the teacher, and in an informal setting (examples 1-6). Whereas for Chinese students, the main factors they consider are the relationships with their teachers (examples 7-13).

4.2. *T* and *V* pronoun usage in Chinese and Russian teacher-student interactions

This section presents a comparative analysis of the use of *V* and *T* address forms in Chinese and Russian teacher-student interactions. Section 4.2.1. provides a quantitative analysis of the

usage of *V* and *T* forms by Russian and Chinese teachers when addressing students. Section 4.2.2. explores the perceptions of respondents regarding their preferred pronoun and offers detailed explanations for them.

4.2.1. T/V address forms by teachers to students

In the realm of teacher-student interactions within the academic contexts of Chinese and Russian, both the *T* and *V* forms are observed. However, discernible distinctions emerge in the respective frequencies and conventionality of their use. As elucidated by the outcomes delineated in Figure 3, Russian teachers notably exhibit a predilection for the *V* form in their interactions with students, whereas the frequency of *V* form usage in Chinese teacher-student interactions is considerably lower. In

the Russian dataset, only 1% of students informed that they never got addressed by teachers with the *V* form, and 6% are addressed by the *V* form 'seldom'. The majority indicated that Russian teachers 'often' (31%), 'always' (31%), 'sometimes' (23%) address students with *V* forms. In contrast, Chinese students rarely experienced being addressed by teachers with *V* forms: almost on average (40.4%) students were 'never' addressed by a teacher with a *V* form of address, 20% 'sometimes', and 21.2% 'seldom' being addressed in this manner (Figure 3). It can be seen that there are some differences in the use of the *V* form of address between Chinese and Russian teachers, with Russian teachers using this form with a high frequency, whereas the majority of Chinese teachers do not use this form of address with their students.
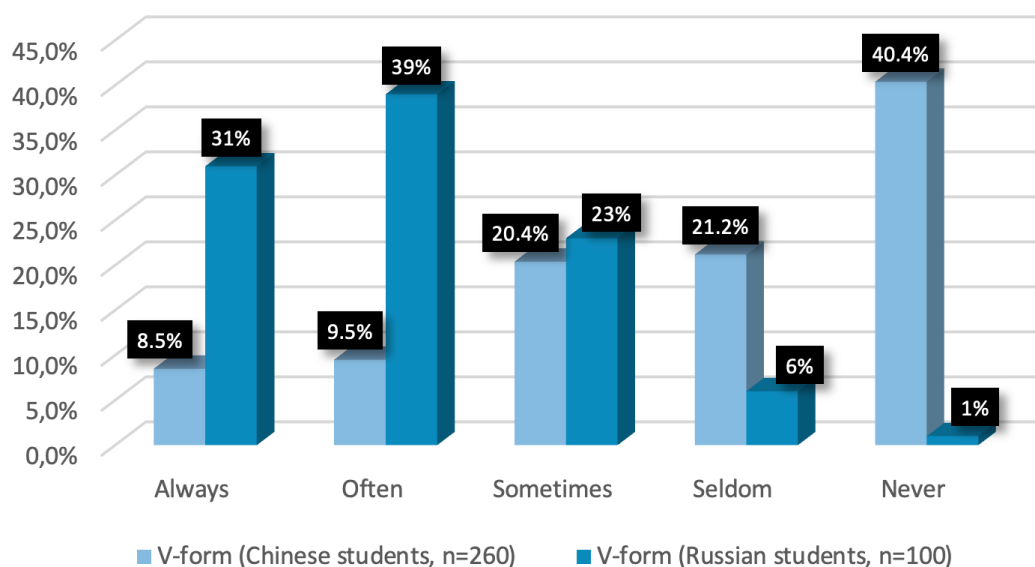
Figure 3. Frequency of *V* form usage in the teacher-student interaction

As clarified by the findings presented in Figure 4, Chinese teachers exhibit a preference for employing the *T* form when communicating with students. In the analysis of the frequency of *T* form usage, variations emerge, with 49.6% of Chinese teachers 'always' opting for the *T* form, 26.6% 'often' using it, and 9.6% 'sometimes' employing it. Instances of *T* form usage are also observed in Russian teacher-student interactions, albeit at a lower frequency. Russian teachers predominantly use the *T* form 'sometimes' (38%), with 24% using it 'often', 16% using it 'seldom', 14% 'never' using it, and only 8% 'always' use it (Figure 4). Therefore, a notable distinction emerges between Chinese and Russian teachers in the use of the *T* form of address towards their students. Most Chinese teachers consistently employ this form of address when interacting with students. In contrast, Russian teachers exhibit a less frequent use of this form, deviating from the common practice observed among their Chinese counterparts.

Based on the outcomes delineated in Figures 3 and 4 and Table 3, Chinese teachers demonstrate a proclivity towards the application of the *T* form when addressing students. Conversely, Russian teachers notably exhibit a predilection for the *V* form in their interactions with students. Simultaneously, it is noteworthy that in Russian teacher-student interactions, instances of *T* form usage are also discernible.

4.2.2. Students' preferred form of teacher address

Both Chinese and Russian respondents were asked a similar question: '*Regarding the way your teacher addresses you, do you have a preference for either the T or V form? Could you provide more insight into your preference?*' Three different opinions arose among both Chinese and Russian respondents: *T* form, *V* form, and 'whatever'. Figure 5 summarises the quantitative findings of these inquiries, which resulted in the following observations: There are substantial differences in the responses
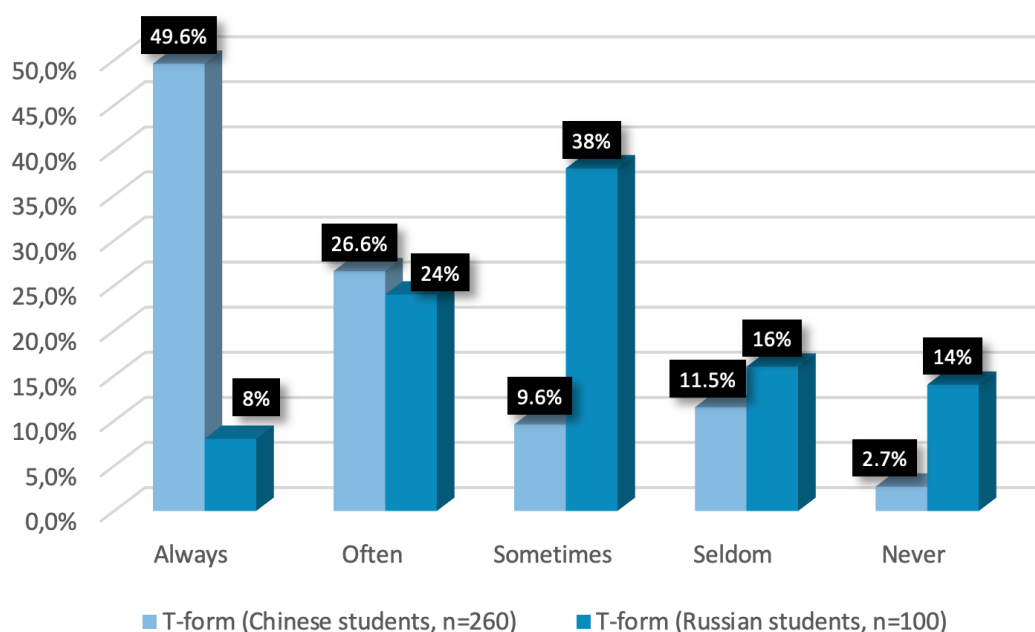
Figure 4. Frequency of T form usage in the teacher-student interaction

Table 3

V/T pronominal address forms in teacher-student Interaction: A comparison between Chinese and Russian

PRONOMINAL FORMS OF ADDRESS	RUSSIAN		CHINESE	
	Usage (with frequency variation)	Non–usage	Usage (with frequency variation)	Non–usage
V form	99%	1%	59.6%	40.4%
T form	86%	14%	97.3%	2.7%

elicited from the two student cohorts. A conspicuous majority, exceeding 90% of Chinese students, expressed a sentiment favouring the appropriateness of teachers employing the *T* form when addressing them. This sharply contrasts with the perspectives of Russian respondents. Only 16% of Russian students expressed a preference for teachers using *T* forms in pronominal addresses. 41% of Russian students believe the *V* form is more suitable for teachers to address them, while 43% believe both forms are acceptable. Thus, a notable and significant distinction is evident in the preferences of Chinese and Russian students regarding the use of address forms by teachers. The overwhelming majority of Chinese students preferred the *T* form when being addressed by their teachers, while almost half of the Russian students opted for the *V* form. Upon aggregating the comments, noteworthy disparities in the perspectives on pronominal address from teachers emerge between the two cohorts of students. The opinions of Chinese and Russian informants will be given separately. Most Chinese students supported the *T* form from teachers, the reasons why they find it inappropriate to be addressed with the *V* form are mainly rooted in the distinctions of status, age, and knowledge between them and their teachers:

(14) *The use of the T form by teachers corresponds to our identities and adheres to appropriate boundaries. It is imperative for me to adopt a humble stance, considering my relative lack of experience in both age and qualifications compared to the teacher.*

(15) *I can't afford to be called V form by my teachers, neither in terms of age nor in terms of knowledge. Because teachers are older than me, they cannot use honorifics (V form) with me.*

Several Chinese students supported their stance by invoking cultural values, such as emphasising a deep-seated, familial respect for their teachers, akin to the proverb '*once a teacher, always a father.* Similarly, some of them highlighted the significance of maintaining order and hierarchy in relationships with teachers, acknowledging the elevated status and elder position of teachers: '*respect and hierarchy are integral; acknowledging distinctions between seniors and junior*s'. The existence of status differentials, resembling father-son dynamics and notions of superiority, inferiority, seniority, and the like, renders it inappropriate for them to be addressed with the *V* form by their teachers.

In addition, some Chinese respondents express the belief that the use of the *T* form can foster a closer relationship with their teachers:

(16) *The T form makes us feel closer, more intimate, eliminating any sense of distance. It signifies a positive rapport, indicating our readiness for further interaction.*

Furthermore, proponents of this perspective asserted that they would experience discomfort if addressed with the *V* form:

(17) *Considering the teacher's seniority and role as an instructor, where I am not in a superior position, so I would feel uncomfortable if he/she addressed me with V form, teachers do not need to be so polite.*

(18) *It is customary for teachers to use the T form when addressing junior students. It would be disturbing if addressed with V.*

In contrast to the homogeneity in agreement observed among Chinese students, Russian interviewees exhibited a tripartite divergence of opinions: preference of the *V* form, preference of the *T* form, acceptability of both.

Those who favored the *V* form (48%) believed that they were already adult, so they are equal and mutually respectful with their teachers, thereby asserting the appropriateness of being addressed with the *V* form:

(19) *It is important for me to know that I am respected, as reflected in the use of the V form by the teacher. V form is a respectful address form, it feels like the instructor considers you an adult and not a child, establishing a sense of equality between us.*

(20) *I prefer to be addressed with V form as I think it shows politeness, courtesy, and respect towards the student.*

(21) *Reciprocal V form signifies equality and eliminates any perception of condescension from the teacher. There is no feeling that the teacher is looking down on you.*

Furthermore, certain Russian students (4% from those 48%) highlighted the necessity of employing the *V* form to maintain a sense of distance between teachers and students:

(22) *Our relationship does not equate to that of friends or family, warranting communication with the T form.*

(23) *The use of the V form when addressing the student underscores formality and preserves a necessary sense of distance between us.*

Among those favouring the *T* form from teachers (22%), their opinions centre around the solidarity function attributed to the *T* forms:

(24) *Because T form indicates a closer and trusting relationship with the teacher.*

(25) *As if we (teacher and student) know each other, shows a closer relationship. It (by using T form) means I can pass exams easier, for example, or I can ask questions more often, ask for help and advice.*

Simultaneously, a minority of Russian students (4% from those 22%) shared analogous perspectives with Chinese students, asserting that the existing status disparity between teachers and students justifies the preference for the *T* form:

(26) *I am not yet of the age or degree to be addressed with V form by teachers.*

(27) *Subordination. I am inferior to the teacher. Since the teachers are older, to me there is nothing rude about being addressed with T.*

Moreover, Russian students who maintain an ambivalent stance on the acceptability of both forms (30 %) posit that it hinges on individual factors, such as the teacher's age, or situation, notably the formality of the occasion:

(28) *I don't have a preference for T or V; if the teacher is much older, it is more pleasant to be addressed with T (you associate yourself with a granddaughter, a child, facilitating psychological ease). However, with teachers of the same age, it is more convenient to use V to maintain a certain distance.*

(29) *Both forms of address are interchangeable, but the T form is preferable in personal dialogues, whereas the V form is more suitable in a classroom setting.*

Overall, there is a substantial disparity between Chinese and Russian respondents. Examining responses (examples 15-19), the Chinese informants emphasised the importance of a hierarchical relationship with their teachers. Being addressed with the *V* form was associated with stress or discomfort, while the *T* form conveyed a sense of intimacy from their teachers. In contrast, Russian students displayed diverse opinions. A minority supporting the *T* form shared perspectives similar to their Chinese counterparts (examples 20-23), while other groups of Russian students expressed entirely distinct views (examples 24-26). They emphasised that their relationships with teachers are more akin to those between adults, and teachers are not their relatives, asserting that there is no reason for university teachers to address them using the *T* form. Notably, this contradicts the perspective of Chinese students, who perceive the teacher-student relationship as resembling a father-son or family connection. The variation in perspectives can be attributed to the dual desire of Chinese students to show deference and reverence to their teachers while simultaneously maintaining a closer, familial bond.

5. DISCUSSION

When examining the results from a broader perspective, it is evident that there is a substantial disparity between Chinese and Russian respondents which can be viewed through the notions of *power* and *solidarity* as well as cultural values and identity. Based on the frequency of *T* and *V* pronominal usage, we have derived the primary trends in the deployment of pronominal forms of address in Chinese and Russian teacher-student interactions. As summarised in Table 4 below, Chinese and Russian university settings exhibit both reciprocal and non-reciprocal tendencies in address between teachers and students. However, notable distinctions become evident. In Chinese teacher-student interactions, the reciprocal form is the *T* form, while in Russian, it is the *V* form. Moreover, within Chinese university contexts, non-reciprocity is observed in the infrequent use of the *V* form by teachers when addressing students, juxtaposed with the students' regular adoption of this form. In contrast, in Russian teacher-student interactions, non-reciprocity manifests in the limited instances of students addressing their teachers with the *T* form, while teachers retain the option to employ the *T* form in addressing students.

Table 4
Reciprocal and non-reciprocal T/V forms of address in Chinese and Russian universities

IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES	IN RUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES
Teacher	Teacher
T ↕ ↑V	V ↕ ↓T
Student	Student

Considering the *power* dimension, both quantitative and qualitative analyses illuminate the existence of power dynamics and inequalities within university environments in both Chinese and Russian contexts. For example, in Section 4.2.2., when discussing how students prefer to be addressed by teachers with which forms, Chinese students explicitly acknowledged the existence of inequality within the teacher-student relationship and emphasised the importance of a hierarchical relationships (examples 14-19). A prevailing opinion among Chinese students is that it is unnecessary for teachers to employ the more polite and honorific *V* form when addressing students. This research finding aligns with Wetzel's (1993) perspective, suggesting that *power* is typically associated negatively with authoritarianism, but in Asian contexts, it is often correlated positively with kindness and supportiveness. Our findings highlight that Chinese students recognise and respect the authority of their teachers, and inequality in the relations is perceived as expected and desirable. In contrast to the Chinese context, most Russian students did not explicitly convey similar sentiments in their responses. Only a small number of Russian students indicated that they perceive themselves as occupying a lower status than their teachers (examples 27-28). Moreover, they prefer to be addressed with the *V* form as it shows equality and respect (examples 20-22). This fact might suggest that Russian teachers are given less power than their Chinese colleagues, and they prefer equality in relations with teachers rather than hierarchy.

When considering the dimension of s*olidarity*, it becomes evident that the reciprocal use of the *T* form is prevalent in Chinese teacher-student interactions, whereas this tendency is not as prominent in Russian interactions. Our study suggests that Chinese students articulated views portraying teachers as akin to family members or friends. For them, the use of the *T* form fosters a closer, more intimate relationship, eliminating a sense of distance and indicating a positive interaction (examples 7-9; 13). This finding is consistent with Chen and Ren's (2020) perspective, emphasising the impact of Chinese family culture as a cultural meme on addressing practices within the academic setting in China. Concurrently, the Russian teacher-student relationship is characterised by a sense of distance, attributed to the widespread use of the mutual *V* form. Russian respondents believe that maintaining a certain distance between them and the teacher is essential, as the teacher-student relationship is not equivalent to that of friends or family (examples 23-24). This

contradicts the perspective of Chinese students, who perceive the teacher-student relationship as resembling a father-son or family connection.

In summary, the findings underscore the pivotal role of the power and solidarity dimensions in guiding the choice of *T/V* forms in teacher-student interactions. In navigating power dynamics and social distances, speakers articulate a desire either to foster intimacy or to establish a degree of distance from their interlocutors (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987) and to achieve a particular goal, they use appropriate politeness strategies. Based on the findings, the politeness strategies of Russian and Chinese students in addressing teachers exhibit ambivalence. Both negative politeness (demonstrating deference) and positive politeness (aimed at building rapport) are employed with an obvious preference for one or the other type.

Moreover, the results of the study confirm the idea that informality does not equate to impoliteness as politeness can be both formal and informal (Larina, 2020). The findings show that in academic discourse, Russian students tend to lean towards *formal politeness* in interaction with university teachers, while their Chinese counterparts, despite hierarchical relations, gravitate towards *informal politeness* which might be perceived as inappropriate familiarity and even impoliteness from the Russian perspective.

We suggest that, influenced by a pronounced *we-culture* (Larina et al., 2017), Chinese teachers and students might perceive the teacher-student relationships as akin to a familial connection, and by employing the *T* form they emphasise closeness rather than distance. The variation in perspectives can be attributed to the dual desire of Chinese students to show familial deference and reverence to their teachers while simultaneously maintaining a closer, familial bond. This is apparent not only in their use of pronominal forms of address but also in nominative forms of address, such as the usage of kinship terms in academic discourse (Barbalet, 2021; Ren & Chen, 2019), which needs additional study.

Additionally, the obtained results clearly highlight the influence of social and cultural contexts when making decisions about choosing *T/V* forms to express deference or intimacy (Al Abdely, 2016, p. 41). Due to the differences in teacher and student roles and status as well as socio-cultural factors and values, the strategies adopted by Chinese and Russian teachers and students in addressing practices differ significantly.

It is worth noting that the nature of the relationship between the interlocutors, the specific situational context, whether it is a formal classroom setting, a casual discussion, or an online platform, can also impact the choice of address forms. In addition to the level of formality required by the academic institutions, the overall cultural norms prevalent in the educational environment contribute to the complexity of pronominal choices. Understanding these contextual factors is crucial for appropriate choice of pronominal address forms and effective communication in academic settings. These factors extend beyond mere linguistic considerations and as, it has been shown, encompass broader socio-cultural dynamics.

6. CONCLUSION

This study explored the usage of pronominal forms of address in the interaction of teachers and students in Chinese and Russian academic discourse. It aimed to reveal similarities and differences and the impact of sociocultural factors on the choice of T/V pronominal address forms. The results underscore the significance of cultural and social factors in linguistic choices, particularly power, solidarity, and intimacy. In Chinese academic discourse, there is a tendency to emphasise power dynamics and hierarchical order between teachers and students, concurrently favouring solidarity to facilitate teacher-student interaction. As a result, the teachers' *power* gives them the right to demonstrate it and address students using *T* form; at the same time, *solidarity* allows for closer family-like relationships to be established

between students and teachers, resulting in a *T* form of address to the teacher. These addressing practices might be perceived as inappropriate and impolite in Russian context where the emphasis is placed on mutual respect and formality, with a clear perception of boundaries between teachers and students. Thus, the findings suggest that the teacher's power, i.e., vertical distance in Chinese culture seems to be more pronounced than in Russian culture, while the social distance is shorter, and these sociocultural differences predetermine the choice and pragmatics of *T/V* forms.

The results of the study contribute to the theory of address terms by providing new data on the use of pronominal forms of address in the two linguistic and cultural academic contexts. They reveal the influence of sociocultural factors on their choices and provide pragmatic insights that can be directly applied to the interpretation of linguistic and strategic communication complexities. Recognising the divergent strategies employed by teachers and students in these distinct cultural contexts is essential for fostering effective communication. Given the increasing academic mobility between Chinese and Russian academic and research institutions, an awareness of these linguistic subtleties becomes crucial for promoting mutual understanding and successful intercultural interactions in educational environments. The study can contribute to a better understanding of teacher-student interactions from a sociocultural and sociolinguistic perspective and provide some guidelines for intercultural communication in academic settings.

Appendix 1. Questionnaire (distributed in Russian and Chinese)

Dear Student, this questionnaire is aimed at collecting data on address forms. The survey is anonymous, and the results will be used for research purposes only. Please fill in the form and answer the questions.

University _____   Year of study _____   Age _____   Gender _____

1. How frequently do you use *T* and *V* forms to address your teachers?
    [T: Ты/ni] Always / Often / Sometimes / Seldom / Never.
    [V: Вы/nin] Always / Often / Sometimes / Seldom / Never.

2. How frequently do your teachers use *T* or *V* form addressing you?
    [T: Ты/ni] Always / Often / Sometimes / Seldom / Never.
    [V: Вы/nin] Always / Often / Sometimes / Seldom / Never.

3. Which address form (*T/V*) would you prefer from teachers?
    [T: Ты/ni] /   [V: Вы/nin] /   Whatever

Appendix 2. Interview questions

1. Do you typically use the *T* or *V* form when addressing your teacher?
2. In what situations do you choose to address your teacher using the *T* form? Specify the teacher's age, gender, and the context.
3. What factors play a role in influencing your choice of the *T* or *V* form when addressing your teacher? (e.g., special permission from the teacher, age of the teacher, closeness to the teacher, formal or informal situations, or other factors).
4. Regarding the way your teacher addresses you, do you prefer either the *T* or *V* form? Please elaborate.
5. How do you perceive and feel about the use of these two address forms in your interactions with university teachers?

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Original Research

Teacher practices and student preferences of oral corrective feedback in Indonesian EFL classrooms: A Vygotskian perspective

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Oral corrective feedback (OCF) is considered a salient pedagogical process which teachers use to assist students to enhance their language learning. Less is known about which feedback practices students prefer or consider effective for particular language learning processes. From a sociocultural perspective, this study investigated the extent of congruency between teacher practices and student preferences for OCF in Islamic Senior High Schools in Indonesia. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were collected from 444 students using a five-point Likert scale and administered across one province. Complementary data were collected from classroom observations, teacher interviews and student focus groups. The analyses of these multiple datasets illustrate that teacher practices are not congruent with student preferences for OCF. Findings show that students favour feedback on vocabulary errors, whereas in practice, teachers respond more often to pronunciation errors. Students prefer negotiated feedback, but in practice teachers mostly use clarification requests. The groups are aligned in relation to one area; students indicate a preference for teacher feedback, likewise teachers' practice demonstrably favours teacher feedback. Pedagogically, the findings indicate a need for teachers to transform their conceptual understanding and practices of OCF to better support student collaboration and mutual meaningful scaffolding for L2 development.

KEYWORDS: oral corrective feedback, Indonesian EFL classroom, congruency, sociocultural theory, Zone of Proximal Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Oral corrective feedback (henceforth, OCF) in L2 learning is provided in response to students' errors during classroom speaking activities which are designed to practice the use of a target language. Previous studies have evidenced that OCF is considered a salient pedagogical process used by teachers to assist students in recognising the differences between correct and incorrect utterances (Li, 2010, 2018; Li & Vuono, 2019; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Nassaji, 2016; Russel & Spada, 2006). Further OCF studies explore how, when and by whom OCF should be provided, and for what type of error (Agudo, 2014; Argüelles et

al., 2019; Fadilah et al., 2017; Kaivanpanah et al., 2015; Papangkorn, 2015; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014; Zhu & Wang, 2019). Research has been conducted on the aspect of beliefs of OCF focusing merely on students' beliefs (Rassaei, 2013; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014) or on teachers' beliefs (Kirgoz & Agcam, 2015; Rahimi & Zhang, 2015; Uysal & Aydin, 2017). The exploration of both students' and teachers' beliefs have also been reported (Faharani & Salajegheh, 2015; Li & Vuono, 2019) alongside those which focus on teachers' beliefs and practices (Ha & Murray, 2020; Kartchava et al., 2020; Nassaji et al., 2023). However, there are a limited number of studies examining the congruency

of student preferences and teacher practices of OCF (Bulbula & Areda, 2020; Huong, 2020; Lee, 2013; Sung & Tsai, 2014; Yoshida, 2008). Misalignment between student preferences and teacher practices of OCF are shown to have an impact on language learning (Plonsky & Mills, 2006; Roothooft & Breeze, 2016), contributing to students' sense of satisfaction with their teachers emerging from how they are treated relative to their expectations (Li & Vuono, 2019). Therefore, it is important to examine the extent of congruency between student preference and teacher practices of OCF as it is experienced in classroom contexts. Moreover, Loewen et al. (2009) recommend more studies on context-specific settings to explore how student preferences for OCF may vary depending on the circumstances under which they are learning the language, and the cultural contexts underlying teachers' decision whether to implement OCF (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). Therefore, this study of OCF in Islamic high schools in Indonesian offers a unique perspective, which has not yet been evidenced in the literature.

Additionally, previous studies on student preferences and teacher practices of OCF are largely conducted within a cognitive/interactionist perspective which regards OCF as a means that helps learners acquire linguistic knowledge (Lyster et al., 2013; Sheen, 2011) using certain kinds of strategies employed in isolation or in combination (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). It is argued that students' modification of erroneous utterances indicates cognitive development of a particular linguistic feature (Lyster, 2004; Sheen, 2011). An alternative way to research OCF is by considering an approach drawing on Sociocultural Theory (SCT). This Vygotskian perspective prioritises interactionally supported student development (Vygotsky, 1986). Poehner (2008) attests that each individual student deserves a certain support (mediation) suitable to the specific situation of the student. Such support may differ from person to person, even for similar errors. With a limited number of studies on OCF employing this framework, further observation in specific contexts is much deserved. Hence, the current study focuses on examining the congruency between student preferences and teacher practices of OCF in EFL setting drawing on SCT.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
2.1. Student preferences and teacher practices of OCF
Research on student preferences and teacher practices of OCF is primarily aimed to identify whether student preferences for OCF match or mismatch teachers' instructional practices. Previous research on this focus delved into the congruency between the two groups in terms of the five pivotal issues of OCF provision proposed by Hendrickson (1978) including the necessity, timing, error type, provider, and strategy of OCF either fully or partially. In relation to who provides feedback and OCF strategies used, Yoshida's (2008) qualitative study of teachers' choice of OCF strategies and student preferences in Japanese classes at a university in Australia found that teachers mostly employ recast as their OCF strategy, believing that it effectively corrects errors without having a negative impact on

emotionality of students. For students, their preference was for an opportunity to self-correct their errors under the teachers' guidance, indicating that OCF provider and strategy use was somewhat incongruent across the two groups. Likewise, Lee (2013) shows how in an examination of the patterns of strategies teachers employed in an advanced level ESL classrooms in the US, teachers mostly employ recast, but most students prefer explicit corrections and direct feedback, provided immediately. It is also reported that, contrary to students' preferences, teachers in the study applied selectivity in providing OCF. They were not keen to respond to all errors. Such a mismatch is also significantly evident in Huong's (2020) study of student and teacher preferences for OCF strategies in speaking classes at a Vietnamese university where recasts were favoured by teachers, but not by students. However, it is important to caution against depicting an overgeneralised picture. As Sung and Tsai (2014) illustrate, investigations of congruency between student preferences and teacher practices of OCF can furnish mixed results. In their study of Chinese language classrooms, teacher practices and beginner learner preferences align, however this alignment shifts as learners increase in proficiency with advanced students preferring different types of OCF strategy than those used by their teachers. Similarly, studies with different age groups and in different learning environments can indicate the contextual influences on the congruency of teacher practices and student preferences. For example, Bulbula and Areda (2020) reveal in their investigation of school language classrooms in Ethiopia that there is a certain amount of congruency between student preferences and teacher practices of OCF in terms of necessity, error type, provider, and timing of OCF. Both are in favour of correction of most errors that are focused on grammatical mistakes and provided by teachers with delayed feedback.

From these investigations on the congruency between student preferences and teacher practices of OCF, it seems that relationships have the potential to be congruent (Bulbula & Areda, 2020), partially congruent (Huong, 2020; Sung & Tsai, 2014), or incongruent (Lee, 2013; Yoshida, 2008). The instances of congruency are apparent in terms of necessity, error type, provider, timing of OCF (Bulbula & Areda, 2020), and strategies of OCF (Sung & Tsai, 2014). Meanwhile, the incongruent instances are mostly related to OCF strategy in which teachers are in favour of recast (Huong, 2020), yet students prefer output-prompting strategies such as metalinguistic cue or elicitation (Yoshida, 2008), explicit correction (Lee, 2013) or various kinds of OCF strategy (Sung & Tsai, 2014). The evidence of mixed findings from these studies suggests there is a need for further research, particularly focused on currently underrepresented learning contexts which can enrich the overall field of research on classroom based OCF. Thus, this study was conducted in the context of EFL learning at Islamic senior high schools in rural areas of Indonesia, focusing on such critical issues of OCF provision as error type, provider, and strategy of OCF.

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2.2. SCT perspective of OCF

To date, there is somewhat of a paucity of prior research from an SCT perspective on OCF queries. SCT is a theoretical framework initiated by a Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978, 1986), and later developed by his colleagues and followers such as Leontyev (1978) and Luria (1982). This framework considers knowledge to be social and can only be acquired through an interaction between students/children and more knowledgeable others such as teachers, adults, and more proficient peers. However, in this regard learning does not occur as the end result of interaction but along the process of the interaction (Lantolf, 2000a, 2000b). Accordingly, students' L2 development is undoubtedly dependent on dialogic interaction occurring in the classrooms between students and teacher or among students.

Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) landmark study established a protocol for the provision of OCF within an SCT perspective. Through dyadic conversations, they collaborated with the research participants to revise grammatical errors in essays. Via the longitudinal study of negotiated feedback between the teacher and the students, four keys are of note: (i) both explicit and implicit feedback are effective, if relying on the students' potential development (ZPD); (ii) the same students may have different ZPD for different linguistic features, and different students may have different ZPDs for the same linguistic feature; (iii) language development depends on mediation between the teacher and the students; (iv) the students' performance, as well as shifting between explicit and implicit mediation, reveals their language development (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009). The protocol comprises a list of regulation or steps of assistance the mediator might provide during the dyadic interaction with students to correct writing errors in accordance with their ZPD. These steps are arranged from the most indirect to the most direct regulation. It is important to note that derived from Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) investigation there are three fundamental characteristics of providing mediation (interactional feedback) tailored to the students' ZPD. It should be negotiated, graduated, and contingent. Firstly, the hints provided by the more proficient interlocutor are negotiated and graded from implicit to explicit in nature to encourage the students to self-correct. Secondly, the feedback should be adapted to the individual student's ZPD. Lastly, it should be provided only when needed (Rassaei, 2019). In short, the provision of OCF moves from providing generic to more specific, implicit to more explicit responses.

Inspired by the study of Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994), Nassaji and Swain (2000), Nassaji (2011), Erlam et al. (2013), Han and Hyland (2016) and others have researched OCF form this perspective. These studies employed the protocol introduced by Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) to provide OCF during the dyadic interaction between OCF provider and students to correct their written errors. Rassaei (2014, 2019), modified the protocol and carried out inquiries to provide OCF to respond to students' oral errors. All these studies evidenced the effectiveness of negotiated feedback, the OCF strategy within the perspective of SCT, compared to other OCF strategies.

Further research within the scope of OCF with a SCT perspective was conducted by de Guerrero and Villamil (2000), Ohta (2000) and van Compernolle and Smotrova (2014). In their study, De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) through micro genetic analysis scrutinise interaction between 2 ESL students in revising a written work of one of the students. They report that peer collaboration does not only result in one way scaffolding but is in fact, mutual in both students benefit from the interaction. Ohta (2000), focusing on analysing one important aspect of SCT in the process of learning – inner speech or private speech – collated students' private speech as they responded to OCF. It is reported that the students produce private speech in response to recasts from their teacher. Surprisingly, the private speech is produced not only by those who receive OCF, but also by other students attending to the OCF provision. This indicates that student uptake can be in the form of private speech, and that recasts addressed to a particular student may also benefit others. Interestingly, van Compernolle and Smotrova's (2014) study on OCF focuses on the use of gestures in classroom interaction. The study finds that gesture might serve as a supportive mediational symbolic tool for the provision of OCF, and this can assist students to appropriate the mediation provided.

Although many previous studies on the congruency of student preferences and teacher practices of OCF were conducted using cognitive/interactionist perspective, researching OCF from an SCT perspective affords an opportunity to views OCF as a kind of mediation which gradually assists students to develop their linguistic cognition by considering how this can be achieved through dialogic interactions in the classroom context between teacher and students or among students.

2.3. Research questions

Drawing on the SCT perspective, this study investigated the following questions. 1. What are EFL student preferences for OCF during classroom interaction in state Islamic senior high schools in Lampung, Indonesia? 2. What are EFL teacher OCF practices during classroom interaction in state Islamic senior high schools in Lampung, Indonesia? 3. To what extent are EFL student preferences for OCF during classroom interaction in state Islamic senior high schools in Lampung, Indonesia, congruent with EFL teacher OCF practices in the classroom?

3. Methodology
3.1. Context

This study focuses on English language learning in an Indonesian senior high school setting. Generally, students at this stage of education are 16 to 18 years old. English as a subject at senior high school is usually taught for two instructional hours a week. In terms of error correction in the classroom, evidence suggests that Indonesian EFL teachers are keen to improve students' accuracy and lessons with a form-focused or grammar-oriented nuance (Jayanti & Norahmi, 2014). Hence, it is likely that students in this context may be preoccupied with the expectation to produce accurate utterances, which in turn can produce

feelings of nervousness and anxiety about using English. As observed by Eddraoui and Wirza (2019), students in this context fear committing errors, in anticipation that they will be laughed at, receive negative judgments, or be considered unintelligent. Hence, it is important to explore how error correction or OCF is preferred and practised by students and teachers in Indonesia.

3.2. Participants

Through cluster random sampling techniques, 444 students were selected from 15 state Islamic senior high schools in the rural area of Lampung Province in Indonesia to be questionnaire respondents. Through purposive random sampling technique 12 of the students took part in focus groups, and 12 teachers participated in semi-structured interviews and agreed to non-participant classroom observations. The student sample for surveys comprised 279 (63%) females and 165 (37%) males. For the focus groups, the application of student variation strategy in terms of gender and self-perceived English proficiency was applied in selecting the sample. The proportional distribution regarding the year group of study was as follows: 156 (35%) students from year group 16/grade X, 143 (32%) from year group 17/grade XI and 145 (33%) from year group 18/grade XII. For the self-perceived English proficiency, 426 (96%) and 18 (4%) of respondents claimed to be in basic and intermediate level of English proficiency respectively.

Proportional distribution was also applied to teacher participants of classroom observations and interviews. For practicality reason, the researcher selected the teachers to be observed and interviewed by referring to the strategy of maximal variation sampling. The criteria included the variation in terms of gender (male or female), educational background (bachelor, master's or doctorate degree) and length of service (under five years, more than five but fewer than ten years, or more than ten years). This way, the researcher might obtain varied sources of information to gain a variety of insights into the issues under study, teachers' beliefs and practices of OCF in the classroom. The teacher participants consisted of 9 (75%) females and 3 (25%) males, 6 (50%) master's degree in TESOL and 6 (50%) bachelor's degree in TESOL, 3 (25%) less than five years of teaching experience, 6 (50%) 5 to 10 years of teaching experience and 3 (25%) more than 10 years of teaching experience.

3.3. Data collection

Following ethical approval and consent from the participants, a mixed methods convergent design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) was utilised to obtain data through questionnaires, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Data of student preferences for OCF were collected through questionnaire and focus groups, while those of teacher practices were gathered via classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was designed to identify student preferences for OCF by considering the five pivotal issues of OCF provision recommended by Hendrickson (1978) including the necessity, timing, error type, provider, and strategy of OCF.

As this paper focuses on error type, provider, and strategy of OCF provision, the two other issues are not discussed in this paper (Irfani, 2023). The questionnaire was in Bahasa Indonesia to make sure that the respondents understood the questions and the optional answers. To ascertain the 34 item questionnaires' validity and reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 40 students from state non-Islamic senior high schools (see Appendix). Measured with *Cronbach alpha* formula, it was found that the questionnaire had high reliability with $\alpha = 0.94$.

Classroom observations were then carried out to collect data on teacher practices of OCF. For this, four teachers were observed once for the full session of the instructional activity. To obtain more comprehensive and in-depth data of student preferences and teacher practices of OCF, students focus groups and teacher semi-structured interviews were conducted. The classroom observations, the focus groups and the interviews were video recorded and transcribed for analysis.

3.4. Data analysis

Quantitative data of the study were analysed to produce descriptive statistics and frequency measurements. Qualitative data from the study are in the form of transcripts from the student focus groups and teacher interviews which were analysed using thematic content analysis. As this study adopts the mixed methods design, the results of the quantitative and the qualitative analysis were integrated to determine areas of divergence and convergence in the analyses of the multiple datasets.

S2G1 means the excerpt was taken from student participant 2 in focus group 1. *T1* means the excerpt was taken from teacher participant 1.

5. STUDY RESULTS
5.1. Student preferences for OCF

Table 1 shows the results of the student questionnaire in relation to student OCF preferences: error type, provider, and strategy of OCF. In terms of the error type of OCF, students preferred to receive feedback on all types of linguistic errors – vocabulary (34.47%), pronunciation (34.03%) and grammar (31.50%) – during classroom interaction with a primary preference for feedback on vocabulary errors. The focus groups also evidence this focus on vocabulary and reveal reasons for this preference, which is the difficulty finding equivalent words in English. As one interviewee stated, *'My vocabulary is so limited. I often have problems with vocabulary. So, the teacher should pay more attention to vocabulary errors to make sure that my utterances are understandable'* (S2G1). Another interviewee emphasised this point by making a comparison of the effects of linguistic errors: *'My English is not good. Although I make mistakes in grammar or pronunciation, I think people still can understand me. But, if error in vocabulary, it's hard to understand. So, I prefer vocabulary'* (S7G2). OCF on other error types was also strongly expected for the sake of students' L2 growth, as stated by an interviewee: *'I want all my errors to be corrected, all types of errors. I need feedback to improve my English'* (S5G1).

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Table 1

The rank of student preferences for OCF per fundamental issue of OCF

OCF ISSUES	CATEGORY	ITEMS	MEAN	AVE	%	RANK
ERROR TYPE	Pronunciation	I prefer correction of any of my mispronunciations in oral classroom activity.	3.94	3.90	34.03	2
		I don't like it when my teacher ignores my errors in pronunciation.	3.86			
	Vocabulary	I learn something when I get correction of my errors when using words or phrases to express my ideas orally.	3.84	3.95	34.47	1
		Any correction of my errors in using words or phrases is preferable to me.	4.05			
	Grammar	When my teacher ignores my grammatical errors during the oral activity of classroom interaction, I just feel neglected.	3.61	3.61	31.50	3
			19.30	11.46	100	
PROVIDER	Teacher	I prefer to have corrections of my oral errors from my teacher.	3.89	3.86	53.24	1
		I expect to receive corrections only from the teacher.	3.84			
	Peer	Receiving correction from friends is fine with me.	2.77	3.39	46.76	2
		I feel happy if my friends correct my errors in speaking.	4.01			
			14.51	7.25	100	
STRATEGY	Repetition	T: 'Go?'	3.30	3.25	13.44	5
		T: 'Ali have?'	3.20			
	Elicitation	T: 'Yesterday you ....'	3.24	3.24	13.39	6
		T: 'No, not like that. Ali ...'	3.23			
	Metalinguistic feedback	T: 'Use verb two for past action'	3.35	3.50	14.47	4
		T: 'In Simple Present Tense, use verb 1 plus 's' or 'es' for the 3rd singular subject like Ali'.	3.64			
	Clarification request	T: 'Pardon me?'	2.97	2.94	12.15	7
		T: 'What do you mean by 'have'?'	2.91			
	Recast	T: 'Yesterday you went to the zoo'.	3.94	3.71	15.34	2
		T: 'Has'.	3.48			
	Explicit correction	T: 'You mean, yesterday you went to the zoo'.	3.68	3.61	14.92	3
		T: 'You should say, Ali has ...'.	3.53			
	Negotiated feedback	T: 'Ali have?' (If the response is still incorrect) T: 'Ali is a 3rd person singular.' (If the response is still incorrect) T: 'Use verb 1 plus 's' or 'es'. (If the response is still incorrect) T: 'For example. 'Goes' is derived from 'go' plus 'es'. (If response is still incorrect) T: 'You should use 'has' instead of 'have'. (If the response is still incorrect) T: 'You should say: 'Ali has no brothers'.	3.94	3.94	16.29	1
			46.32	25.15	100	

As for the provider of OCF, students preferred teacher feedback (53.24%) to peer feedback (46.76%) during classroom interaction (see Table 1). The focus groups reveal that expectation of acquiring accurate feedback is the underlying reason for this preference. For instance, an interviewee remarked: *'The teacher knows better about English subject than our friends'* (S1G1). Another interviewee added: *'I also prefer teacher feedback because it is accurate and clear'* (S2G1). Another expressed his concern about peer feedback: *'It's fun when we have a debate with friends because of the feedback. Our friends sometimes are only guessing. They are not really sure with the accuracy of their correction'* (S11G2).

Regarding the strategy of OCF, students prefer receiving OCF mostly using negotiated feedback (16.29%), followed by recast (15.34%), explicit corrections (14.92%), metalinguistic feedback (14.47%), repetition (13.44%), elicitation (13.39%), and clarification requests (12.15%) during classroom interaction (Table 1 above). The focus groups reveal that this preference is driven by their expectation to be guided in carrying out self-repair. For instance, a student interviewee opined: *'The teacher should help us or guide us to do self-correction'* (S3G1). Another interviewee associated the ability to do self-repair with his feelings: *'I feel so happy If can do self-repair'* (S10G2). Another highlighted the positive impact of self-repair opportunities: *'I will feel more motivated to study. I feel being challenged if the teacher encourages me to do self-repair'* (S6G1).

These findings indicate a preference for high school students in this context to undertake self-repair under teacher guidance to boost their learning motivation and further improve their English language development. From the data of the student questionnaire and the student focus groups, it can be in-

ferred that students liked to receive feedback on all types of linguistic errors – vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar – with the priority on vocabulary, as they often had difficulty finding equivalent words in English. Students reported that they would rather receive feedback from teachers, as they might provide more accurate feedback than peers.

5.2. Teacher practices of OCF

Table 2 shows the results of the analysis of classroom observation data by scrutinising teacher practices of the fundamental issues of OCF – the error type, provider, and strategy of OCF. These results are discussed below with the findings of the semi-structured interviews.

In terms of the error type of OCF, teachers corrected 61.70% pronunciation errors, 31.92% grammatical errors and 6.38% vocabulary errors, indicating that teachers respond to all types of linguistic error types. The semi-structured interviews reveal that teachers provide OCF to respond to students' errors that they thought necessary to correct, regardless of type, with the major purpose of enhancing students' L2 development. A teacher interviewee stated: *'All kinds of errors are necessary to correct. We should not let students make mistakes without feedback. This is the ideal principle, I think'* (T1). Another interviewee shared similar reasons for responding to the whole range of linguistic errors: *'I think those errors needed correction. That's why I responded to them. I think students needed the feedback to improve their linguistic knowledge'* (T3). Another explained why pronunciation errors got most attention from teachers during oral activity: *'Mispronounced words may cause misunderstanding. I just wanted my students to produce understandable utterances'* (T2).

Table 2

Teacher practices of OCF

OCF ISSUES	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ERROR TYPE	Vocabulary	3	6.38
	Pronunciation	29	61.70
	Grammar	15	31.92
		47	**100**
PROVIDER	Teacher feedback	63	85.13
	Peer-feedback	10	14.87
		73	**100**
STRATEGY	Clarification request	17	26.98
	Recast	15	23.81
	Negotiated feedback	12	19.05
	Explicit correction	10	15.87
	Repetition	6	9.52
	Metalinguistic feedback	3	4.76
	Elicitation	0	0.00
		63	**100**

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Regarding the provider of OCF, teachers dominated the provision of OCF, 85.13%, compared to peers, 14.87%, in responding to students' oral errors during classroom interaction (see Table 2). The results of semi-structured interviews indicate that teachers' domination was due to feedback accuracy and time constraint. A teacher interviewee explained why she did not involve peers to provide feedback: *'I think it's more about the accuracy and time'* (T12). Another interviewee mentioned a similar view: *'My feedback was mostly concerning about students' pronunciation, so I didn't ask students to correct their friends' errors. I was not sure if they could help with the pronunciation errors'* (T9). Another added: *'I didn't need to involve them as they might not do any help. I mean if I ask students to help their friends, I'm afraid that they cannot provide the right feedback, and it may just cause confusion among them'* (T4).

Regarding the strategy of OCF, to respond students' oral errors during classroom interaction teachers employed 26.98% clarification requests, 23.81% recast, 19.05% negotiated feedback, 15.87% explicit correction, 9.52% repetition, 4.76% metalinguistic feedback, and no elicitation (see Table 2). The results of semi-structured interviews reveal that mostly teachers purposefully picked strategies to cope with students' oral errors by considering their effectiveness regardless of their unfamiliarity with the names and characteristics of the OCF strategies. A teacher interviewee described her knowledge of OCF strategies: *'Frankly, I don't know much. I don't even know the names. I use the ones which I think effective. That's it'* (T8). Another interviewee remarked: *'I'm not really sure about the names of the strategies. I used the ones which I think were suitable or effective to make students realise their errors and make corrections'* (T10). When asked further about the criterion of effective OCF strategy, an interviewee replied: *'The one which may make students aware of the wrong and the right version of utterances'* (T7). Another added: *'The strategy which can make students understand their errors and the correction, so they can improve their linguistic knowledge'* (T6). Apparently, teachers think that clarification requests are the most effective strategy, which made it the most frequently employed (26.98%) among the seven types of OCF strategy to respond to students' oral errors during classroom interaction. Overall, from the data of classroom observation and teacher semi-structured interviews, teachers respond to all types of linguistic errors, but mostly pronunciation, considering that mispronunciation might give rise to misunderstanding. Teachers dominate the provision of OCF, due to feedback accuracy and time constraint. They apply all types of OCF strategy, but mostly use clarification requests to provide more chances for students to carry out self-repair.

5.3. The congruency of student preferences and teacher practices of OCF

Table 3 displays the comparison of the highest percentage weight of each fundamental issue of student preferences and teacher practices of OCF indicating the extent of congruency or incongruency. In terms of the error type of OCF, student preference for feedback on vocabulary errors (34.47%) was not congruent with teacher practice of responding more to pronunciation errors (61.70%). Concerning the provider of OCF, student preference for teacher feedback (53.24%) was congruent with teacher practice of dominating OCF provision (85.13%). For the strategy of OCF, student preference for negotiated feedback (16.29%) was not congruent with teachers' practice of mostly employing clarification requests (26.98%).

Table 3

The comparison of student preferences and teacher practices of OCF

OCF ISSUES	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF PREFERENCES	PERCENTAGE OF PRACTICES
ERROR TYPE	Vocabulary	34.47	6.38
	Pronunciation	34.03	61.70
	Grammar	31.50	31.92
		100	**100**
PROVIDER	Teacher	53.24	85.13
	Peer	46.76	14.87
		100	**100**
STRATEGY	Clarification request	12.15	26.98
	Recast	15.34	23.81
	Negotiated feedback	16.29	19.05
	Explicit correction	14.92	15.87
	Repetition	13.44	9.52
	Metalinguistic feedback	14.47	4.76
	Elicitation	13.39	0.00
		100	**100**

Moreover, the results of the analyses of the focus groups and the semi-structured interviews indicate the underlying reasons for the instances of congruency or incongruency between student preferences and teacher practices of OCF. In terms of the error type of OCF, the results of the focus groups and semi-structured interview analyses reveal the underlying reasons for difference of priority between student preferences and teacher practice. Student preference for vocabulary errors was because they often had difficulty finding equivalent words in English. A student interviewee remarked: *'My vocabulary is so limited. I often have problems with vocabulary. So, the teacher should pay more attention to vocabulary errors to make sure that my utterances are understandable'* (S2G1). Nevertheless, in practice teachers provided more OCF on pronunciation errors to help students produce comprehensible utterances as pointed out by a teacher interviewee: *'Mispronounced words may cause misunderstanding. I just wanted my students to produce understandable utterances'* (T2).

As students make nearly as many pronunciation errors as grammatical and vocabulary errors combined (pronunciation errors = 47, grammatical errors = 12, and vocabulary errors = 11), it is understandable that teachers mostly provide OCF on pronunciation errors. Teachers respond to students' errors which they think urgently need correction, regardless of the type, as stated by a teacher interviewee: *'I corrected all errors which I thought necessary. I didn't really care about the types'* (T4).

Regarding the provider of OCF, the results of the focus groups and semi-structured interview analyses reveal students' and teachers' reasons for preferring teacher feedback. The focus groups reveal that expectation of acquiring accurate feedback is students' underlying reason for this preference. For instance, a student interviewee opined: *'The teacher knows better about English subject than our friends'* (S1G1). Another student added: *'I also prefer teacher feedback because it is accurate and clear'* (S2G1).

Meanwhile, the semi-structured interviews indicated that teachers' reasons for preferring teacher feedback were feedback accuracy and time constraints. As a teacher interviewee noted, *'I think it's more about the accuracy and time. Correction from peers is not always accurate, so it may take more time to deal with one error only. Meanwhile, there are many errors that need attention'* (T1). Another teacher mentioned the impact of inaccurate feedback from peers: *'I mean if I ask students to help their friends, I'm afraid that they cannot provide the right feedback, and it may just cause confusion among them'* (T4).

Regarding the strategy of OCF, the results of the focus groups and semi-structured interview analyses reveal the underlying reasons for difference of priority between student preference and teacher practice. Student preference for negotiated feedback is profoundly driven by their expectation of being guided in self-repair. A student interviewee said: *'I like it better if I have the chance to correct my own errors'* (S1G1). Another student added: *'The teacher should help us or guide us to do self-correction'* (S3G1).

Nevertheless, in the instructional practice teachers did not consistently guide their students to carry out self-repair by employing negotiated feedback as expected by students. To respond to students' errors, teachers mostly employ clarification requests to generate self-repair. When students failed to do that, instead of employing other strategies which might generate self-repair, teachers tend to supply corrections. This could happen due to their limited understanding of the realm of OCF strategies. For instance, when asked about her knowledge of OCF strategies, a teacher interviewee replied: *'Frankly, I don't know much. I don't even know the names. I use the ones which I think effective. That's it'* (T1). Another teacher expressed a similar situation: *'I'm not really sure about the names of the strategies. I used the ones which I think were suitable or effective to make students realise their errors and make correction'* (T4).

Moreover, teachers thought that it would be time-consuming to keep guiding students to carry out self-correction. A teacher who mostly uses negotiated feedback, elucidated why she did not always employ this strategy to cope with all student errors: *'It's because of the time. It takes time to guide students to do self-correction'* (T3).

Apparently, teachers' understanding of the OCF strategies and the availability of time might affect their instructional practices of OCF. In short, student preferences for OCF are not congruent with teacher practices of OCF, especially in terms of the error type and strategy of OCF. However, they are congruent regarding the provider of OCF.

In general, from the data of student preferences OCF and teacher practices of OCF, supported by the student focus groups and teacher semi-structured interviews, it is evident that student preferences for OCF are not congruent with teacher practices of OCF, as there are more incongruent instances than the congruent ones. Some degree of congruency between student preferences and teacher practices of OCF during classroom interaction is evident only in terms of the provider of OCF. Both students and teachers indicated that they preferred teacher feedback for the sake of feedback accuracy. Nonetheless, incongruency instances occur in terms of the error type and strategy of OCF. Students prefer vocabulary errors to be prioritised, while teachers tend to provide feedback more on pronunciation errors. Students prefer receiving feedback using negotiated feedback strategy, yet teachers mostly employ clarification requests.

6. DISCUSSION

In terms of error type of OCF, this study reveals students' and teachers' alignment in preference and practice of receiving or providing all types of linguistic errors during classroom interaction. This might be driven by their awareness of the students' phase of target language development. Both realise that students are at the other-regulation phase. This means that they depend on assistance from more knowledgeable others to develop their linguistic knowledge (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). They highly depend on others who serve as sources and mediators of development (Lantolf, 2006b). In this context, students very much rely

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on their mediator to provide OCF regarding all types of linguistic error to support them in regulating language-learning, as their language cognition is not yet sufficiently developed. Nevertheless, as they gradually internalise the knowledge and develop their language cognition, they may become less dependent on others. Once they have developed their capacity and can perform tasks without assistance, they become self-regulated (Lantolf, 2006b). At this point, they become independent, and the presence of external sources might not affect their task or activity completion to the same extent (Sadri & Tahririan, 2018). As this finding suggests that teachers are seemingly ready to act as mediators by providing OCF on all types of linguistic errors, students may be facilitated to self-regulate more language features and further develop their linguistic knowledge.

However, the study also evidenced that students and teachers show a difference of priority among the three types of linguistic errors. Students expect to receive more vocabulary feedback, but teachers provide more pronunciation feedback. This might suggest that students are focused more on achieving communication and fluency, whereas teachers are focused on accuracy, e.g., correct pronunciation of known words. In terms of error correction in the classroom, evidence suggests that Indonesian EFL teachers are keen to improve students' accuracy (Jayanti & Norahmi, 2014). Hence, it is likely that students in this context may be preoccupied with the expectation to produce accurate utterances, which in turn can produce feelings of nervousness and anxiety about using English. As observed by Eddraoui and Wirza (2019), students in this context fear committing errors, in anticipation that they will be laughed at, receive negative judgments, or be considered unintelligent. Hence, it is important to explore how error correction or OCF is preferred and practised by students and teachers in Indonesia.

Regarding the OCF provider, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the multiple datasets show the extent of congruency between student preference and teacher practice. Both groups favour teacher feedback considering this to be the most accurate feedback. English lessons in Indonesian EFL setting have a form-focused or grammar-oriented nuance (Jayanti & Norahmi, 2014; Sahiruddin, 2013) in which teachers are very prone to correcting students. Consequently, the provision and reception of accurate feedback is highly expected, and this is most possibly provided by teachers. This entails some pros and cons which might affect students' L2 development. On the one hand, it is not a strategic decision, as it indicates that teachers are not confident about giving more opportunities to their students to interact and help each other through peer collaboration or peer feedback which might lead to peer scaffolding (Barnard, 2002; Lantolf, 2006b; Nguyen, 2013; Sadri & Tahririan, 2018), even mutual scaffolding (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Nguyen, 2013). The teachers in this study indicate that such an approach would be time-consuming and end up confusing, as students are unsure of the accurate version of the issues being discussed. This might happen, as when working with peers without the presence of teachers with their embedded-authoritative nature,

students feel free to experiment with their language production (Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Philp et al., 2013; Sato & Ballinger, 2012), so there would be plenty of emergent, uncontrolled ideas delivered with inaccurate utterances. They might also get involved in a long debate to discuss a certain topic (Foster & Ohta, 2005; Philp et al., 2013). In such an activity, students may in fact gain both from providing and receiving assistance (Sadri & Tahririan, 2017) which undoubtedly may help them develop their linguistic cognition. On the other hand, it seems a practically focused decision for teachers with limited time available to provide more accurate feedback, or more opportunities for students who produce errors to carry out self-repair under the guidance or scaffolding process of teachers as the more knowledgeable other (Aljafreeh & Lantolf, 1994).

Concerning OCF strategy, the study evidenced that student preferences are not congruent with teacher practices in which students highly preferred negotiated feedback, but teachers mostly used clarification request. From the perspective of SCT, OCF as a mediation is aimed at developing students' language. It should be carried out with students, not for students, through a negotiation to determine the students' ZPD to ensure that the mediation provided is within the students' ZPD (Lantolf, 2006a, 2011). The strategy to achieve this is by employing negotiated feedback, borrowing the terminology from Nassaji and Swain (2000) and Nassaji (2011). In fact, this study evidenced that students favour the employment of negotiated feedback. They expect that it should be prioritised to guide them to carry out self-repair. This indicates that they believe mediation should be provided gradually to cope with the difficulties they face with certain language features while completing classroom assignments. It is worth noting that negotiated feedback is carried out in a dialogic nature by employing combinations of strategies which are thoughtfully and purposefully selected (Nassaji, 2015, 2016), not randomly employed strategies, from the generic to the more specific responses, and from the implicit to more explicit responses, to ensure that the feedback provided is within the students' ZPD (Ellis, 2009). This strategy is employed by considering graduated, contingent, and negotiated interactional feedback within the learners' ZPD (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Rassaei, 2014, 2019). From the students' viewpoint, the employment of negotiated feedback is beneficial in several ways. First, it suits their current needs under development, considering their ZPD. Second, it is timely, as they receive mediation only when they need it. Third, it accommodates their need to develop their linguistic cognition by trying to self-correct their errors.

Teachers' use of clarification requests as the strategy of OCF to cope with oral errors during the classroom interaction in this study indicates teachers' good intention to provide an opportunity for students to self-correct their errors, but its overuse indicates a lack of creativity in feedback. They may variably employ other output-prompting strategies, such as repetition, metalinguistic feedback, or elicitation, as they did in this study, but unfortunately may do so with a very limited frequency. This

'ZPD is not naturally in stasis but may expand or narrow as the interactional process is progressing or regressing (Wells, 1999). Therefore, in the context of language learning, language teachers play a vital role in fostering learning by carrying out dialogic interactions with each individual student or a group of students to determine their ZPD, later providing the mediations or scaffolding accordingly. Also, teachers should encourage their students to help each other through peer scaffolding by allowing them to work collaboratively'

could be due to the restriction of time or their unawareness of alternative strategies, as discussed earlier. Nassaji et al.'s (2023) study reported that time constraints and a lack of understanding of the OCF strategy profoundly affect teachers' practice of OCF. From the perspective of SCT, OCF as mediation should be provided by considering students' ZPD. To determine students' ZPD OCF provision begins with providing the opportunity for students to locate and correct their own errors by employing clarification requests or repetition strategy. This is gradually followed by other strategies providing more explicit feedback, e.g., metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, recast and explicit correction (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Rassaei, 2014, 2019). This means that teachers in this study are already off to a 'good start' by employing clarification request strategy, but unfortunately not followed by a gradual order of strategy combination to suit students' ZPD. Some teachers made some combinations of strategies in practice as they claimed, but very few belonged to negotiated feedback.

Most of the combined strategies employed by teachers in this study were created without considering the level of implicitness or explicitness of the strategies. Consequently, these combinations cannot be categorised as negotiated feedback as the mediation was provided without considering students' ZPD. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) and Nassaji and Swain (2000) argue that OCF is not effective in developing students' language if it is not provided within the students' ZPD. As a result, even though students have received feedback and repair their incorrect utterances, this does not guarantee that their L2 development optimally occurs. Thus, consideration of students' ZPD is of paramount importance when providing mediation – OCF – to enhance their L2 development.

ZPD is not naturally in stasis but may expand or narrow as the interactional process is progressing or regressing (Wells, 1999). Therefore, in the context of language learning, language teachers play a vital role in fostering learning by carrying out dialogic interactions with each individual student or a group of students to determine their ZPD, later providing the mediations or scaffolding accordingly. Also, teachers should encourage their students to help each other through peer scaffolding by allowing them to work collaboratively. This may effectively develop

their interlanguage and broaden their ZPD (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995). The alignment between students' preferences and teachers' practices of OCF may intensify the dialogic interactions to co-construct their ZPD during the process of OCF provision to further develop their linguistic knowledge. Otherwise, the misalignments may hinder the development of students' ZPD and their interlanguage as well.

7. CONCLUSION

The study examined the congruency between student preferences and teacher practices of OCF in senior high school classroom context in Indonesia. While students are in favour of receiving more feedback on their vocabulary errors to help them construct meaningful utterances, teachers respond more to students' pronunciation errors to help them produce understandable sentences. Students expect to receive OCF using negotiated feedback to assist them to do self-repair, but teachers used more clarification requests. However, both groups are aligned regarding the OCF provider in which they favour teacher feedback considering the accuracy of the feedback.

To better align the incongruencies between teacher and students in terms of OCF provision, both could openly share their views and preferences along with the underlying reasons and participate in discussions to negotiate differences. In this manner, both teachers and students may gain a better understanding about each other's views and preferences and about the theoretical and practical concept of OCF provision. Loewen et al. (2009) emphasise the significant role of understanding the students' sociocultural context affecting their OCF preferences. Students, on the other hand, deserve explanation about the cultural contexts underlying teachers' decision in providing OCF (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). For the sake of the alignment, teachers are also encouraged to broaden their knowledge about the variety of OCF strategies with their pros and cons and discuss with students to decide which ones suit them better. Recognising that even with a mutual understanding of OCF incongruencies may still occur, however, it might be expected that there will be no detrimental impacts on students as indicated in the literature (Plonsky & Mills, 2006; Roothooft & Breeze, 2016). Considering the students and teachers' high expectation of negotiated feedback and its benefits, it may be a priority to recommend an increased awareness and training in the use of negotiated feedback for day-to-day classroom interactions. This awareness could be cascaded to students or implemented as a strategy to enable greater peer collaboration. Indeed, Ha and Murray (2021), Ha (2022) and Nassaji et al. (2023) recommend professional development programmes for teachers to improve their conceptual understanding and practical effectiveness of OCF provision.

Given that this study was conducted at state Islamic senior high schools in the rural area of Lampung province, Indonesia, contextually driven studies such as this can help to better inform the potential of such professional development and future transformation.

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Appendix. The coefficient correlation of student questionnaire

ITEMS	PEARSON CORR.	SIG.	STATUS
I like it when my teacher corrects my oral errors in grammar.	.053	.748	Dropped
I like it if all my errors during classroom interaction are corrected.	.483	.002	Valid
I would prefer to have correction of my oral errors immediately following the errors.	.300	.060	Dropped
I prefer to have correction of any of my mispronunciations in oral classroom activity.	.462	.003	Valid
I prefer to have corrections of my oral errors from my teacher.	.692	.000	Valid
I learn something when I get correction of my errors in using words or phrases to express my ideas orally.	.495	.001	Valid
I prefer to have correction only on errors which may interfere with communication.	.801	.000	Valid
I feel uneasy and disturbed when my teacher interrupts me to correct my errors.	.715	.000	Valid
When my teacher ignores my grammatical errors during oral activity of classroom interaction, I just feel neglected.	.737	.000	Valid
Receiving correction from friends is fine with me.	.521	.001	Valid
I dislike at all having correction on my errors during classroom interaction.	.746	.000	Valid
I don't like when my teacher ignores my errors in pronunciation.	.740	.000	Valid
I feel fine when my teacher interrupts me to correct my error.	.677	.000	Valid
I feel happy and grateful if my teacher corrects all oral errors I make to help me improve my English proficiency.	.308	.053	Dropped
I don't like to receive corrections from my friends.	.569	.000	Valid
Any correction of my errors in using words or phrases is preferable to me.	.608	.000	Valid
I would rather have correction of my errors after I finish my speaking task.	.475	.002	Valid
I would prefer if my errors which do not cause misunderstanding are not corrected.	.661	.000	Valid
I feel happy if my friends correct my errors in speaking.	.698	.000	Valid
I feel disturbed when my errors during the oral classroom activities are corrected.	.686	.000	Valid
T: Go?	.500	.001	Valid
T: Yesterday you ….	.563	.000	Valid
T: Use verb two for past action.	.532	.000	Valid
T: Pardon me?	.620	.000	Valid
T: Yesterday you went to the zoo.	.540	.000	Valid
T: You mean, yesterday you went to the zoo.	.620	.000	Valid
T: Yesterday? (If the response is still incorrect) *T: What did you do yesterday?* (If the response is still incorrect) *T: Yesterday indicates past action, so you should use Verb 2.* (If the response is still incorrect) *T: For example, 'wrote' is the past form of 'write'.* (If the response is still incorrect) *T: You should say: 'Yesterday I went to the zoo'.*	.075	.645	Dropped

ITEMS	PEARSON CORR.	SIG.	STATUS
T: You should say, 'Ali has…'	.627	.000	Valid
T: Ali have?	.366	.020	Valid
T: What do you mean by 'have'?	.454	.003	Valid
T: In Simple Present Tense, use Verb 1 plus 's' or 'es' for the 3rd singular subject like Ali.	.541	.000	Valid
T: No, not like that. 'Ali…'	.447	.004	Valid
T: Has.	.747	.000	Valid
T: Ali have? (If the response is still incorrect) *T: Ali is a 3rd person singular.* (If the response is still incorrect) *T: Use Verb 1 plus 's' or 'es'.* (If the response is still incorrect) *T: For example, 'goes' is derived from 'go' plus 'es'.* (If the response is still incorrect) *T: You should use 'has' instead of 'have'.* (If the response is still incorrect) *T: You should say: 'Ali has no brothers'.*	.427	.006	Valid

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Original Research

The subject and non-subject agreements in the Yemsa relative clauses

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This study aims to elucidate the subject and non-subject agreement mechanisms within Yemsa relative clauses, an area not comprehensively covered by existing research. By analysing these agreement forms, the study seeks to bridge the identified gap in the understanding of Yemsa's syntactic structures. The research questions guiding this study focus on the mechanisms through which subject agreements are manifested in Yemsa's relative clauses and the morphological markers they employ, alongside an examination of how non-subject agreements within these clauses diverge from subject agreements. The data were collected through the elicitation technique through informant interviews about subject and non-subject agreements in the Yemsa relative clauses. The data were analysed using a descriptive approach. The person-marker inventories are suffixes. Siewierska's Prominence Hierarchy works in Yemsa. The order of the suffixes is modifier > head. Person markers simultaneously indicate masculine and feminine referents and numbers. Siewierska's Predicate Hierarchy works on Yemsa. The suffix element -nà appears in the relative verbs. The word order in the relative clause is (O)VS. The nominative case is unmarked, whereas the accusative case is marked. The subject argument is expressed in the same manner as an independent clause. The description of the subject and the non-subject agreement in the Yemsa relative clauses has significant implications for developing the general features of Omotic and Afroasiatic languages. The study will serve as an input for the preparation of pedagogical materials in the language.

KEYWORDS: *Yemsa, relative clause, subject agreement, non-subject agreement, transitive verb, intransitive verb, ditransitive verb, Afroasiatic language, Omotic language*

1. INTRODUCTION

There is significant variation in the classification and organisation of languages in the Afroasiatic language family among linguists. Each linguist proposes a different hierarchical structure, indicating the relationships between the languages and subfamilies within the Afroasiatic phylum. This diversity of perspectives leads to differences in how the internal structure of the Afroasiatic language family is categorised. Blench (2005) highlights the diversity within the Afroasiatic phylum, noting that the classification and internal branching of its subfamilies vary as widely as the scholars who have examined them. This is evidenced by the differing branches proposed by linguists such as Greenberg (1963), Ehret (1979, 1995, 2005), and Hetzron (1990). Childs (2003) points out that Afroasiatic languages, encompassing 200-300 African languages, boast the largest number of speakers across the continent. According to Frajzyngier

and Shay (2012), these languages are spoken across a vast geographical area that includes Northern Africa, Central Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and parts of Central Asia, such as where Arabic is spoken. Hetzron (1990) further specifies that speakers of Afroasiatic languages are found in the Middle East, North Africa, Northeast Africa, and the north-western regions of Central Africa. Hayward (2000, 2003) classifies the family into six language families: Semitic, Berber, Egyptian, Chadic, Cushitic, and Omotic. Within this extensive family, Yemsa is identified as part of the Kafa-Gimojan group of the Western Omotic languages, which falls under the Gimojan subgroup, as documented by Bender (2000) and Azeb (2017).

The Omotic language family includes many languages in the Omo Valley of Southern Ethiopia (Theil, 2007; Hetzron & Frajzyngier, 2018). Several Omotic languages are spoken within the borders of Ethiopia, particularly in the southwestern part of

the country (Tosco, 2000; Frajzyngier & Shay, 2012). Yemsa is spoken in southwestern Ethiopia in the Central Ethiopia Regional State, particularly in the Fofa area.

According to the Central Statistical Agency, the Yem community numbers 159,923 individuals (CSA, 2007). Azeb (2012) notes that their nearest neighbours include speakers of Cushitic and Semitic languages, particularly the Gurage. Getachew (2001) expands on this, indicating that the Yem are geographically situated with the Gurage, Hadiyya, and Kambata communities to their east across the Gibe River, and are surrounded by the Jimma zone to the south, north, and west.

This study targets the underexplored domain of subject and non-subject agreements within Yemsa relative clauses, a dialect of the Omotic language from southwestern Ethiopia. Although some linguists have ventured into Yemsa's linguistic features, their focus primarily hovers around its phonology and basic morphosyntax, leaving a notable gap in the analysis of agreement patterns in relative clauses, an essential feature that could reveal much about its syntactical organisation and typological classification. This oversight exposes a critical area for linguistic inquiry and brings to the fore Yemsa's significance within the Afroasiatic language family, where comprehensive studies on its agreement systems are markedly scarce.

Aiming to fill the identified gap, this study seeks to identify Yemsa's morphological and syntactical features to describe its linguistic framework and contribute to the comparative studies of agreement systems in Afroasiatic languages. In addition, this study investigates the mechanisms of subject and non-subject agreements within the relative clauses of Yemsa. Specifically, the study seeks to analyse the morphological markers and syntactical structures that facilitate agreement in Yemsa, thereby contributing to a better understanding of its grammatical functioning.

To that end, the study will address the following research questions: 1. How are subject agreements manifested in Yemsa's relative clauses, and what morphological markers are involved? 2. In what ways do non-subject agreements within these clauses differ from subject agreements, particularly in terms of morphological and syntactical representation?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The linguistic research on Yemsa, a language of notable interest, encompasses extensive studies in phonology, morphology, and syntax, conducted by various scholars over the years. Phonological aspects of Yemsa have been delineated by Wedekind (1990) and Eba (2012), who provided comprehensive phonological descriptions. Morphological analysis was advanced by the works of Hirut (1993) and Zaugg-Coretti (2013), focusing on the language's morphological structures. In the field of syntax, Derib (2004) and Teshome (2007) have contributed significantly with their studies on the structure of noun phrases and the composition of simple nominal and verbal clauses, respectively. Further elucidation on Yemsa's noun phrase structure was provided by Derib (2004) through the application of

Principle and Parameters Theory, specifically employing the DP hypothesis to illuminate the language's internal noun phrase architecture. Complementarily, Teshome (2007) investigated the syntactic structure of simple nominal and verbal clauses in Yemsa, employing a Minimalist Programme approach.

The tonal system of Yemsa, as agreed upon by Zaugg-Coretti (2013), Wedekind (1990), and Hirut (1993), consists of three distinct levels: mid, low, and high. This agreement among scholars highlights the importance of tone in the linguistic structure of Yemsa and underscores the coherence in scholarly conclusions regarding its phonological characteristics.

The study of agreement has been one of the areas of interest in descriptive grammar, attracting rather significant scholarly attention due to its complexity and importance in the construing and interpreting of language structure (Moravcsik, 1978; Corbett, 1979; Avgustinova & Uszkoreit, 2003; Ouhalla, 2005). This area has been the focus of numerous studies aiming to define and understand the nature of agreement within various languages, as evidenced by the work of Lehmann (2015), among others.

Agreement is a grammatical feature of the person, number, gender, and class of arguments in the verb (Blake, 2004; Corbett, 2001a). There are two types of agreements: concord and pronoun-antecedent (Ravera, 1992). An agreement is a marking of person, number, and sometimes gender or class of arguments on the verb, which describes a specific argument and any noun phrase (NP) representing the same argument (Blake, 2004). In addition, it has grammatical features in which the controller and target are both overt in the same clause (phrase) and an anaphoric agreement where there is no overt controller in the clause (phrase) featuring the target (Siewierska & Bakker, 2009).

Different types of agreement in natural language are subject-verb agreement, DO-verb agreement, and ID-verb agreement; possessor-possessum agreement; adjective-noun agreement; prepositional object agreement; and complementizer-NP agreement.

In many African languages, the subject or object marker attaches to a verb that contains grammatical qualities such as person, gender, number, and humanness represented by the subject or object (Kari, 2017). Subject markers are also known as pronominal subject markers (Dimmendaal, 2000). The element that determines the agreement is the controller. The element whose form is determined by agreement is the target. A number is an agreement feature that has singular, dual, and plural values (Corbett, 2001b).

Person agreement indicates referents (Siewierska & Bakker, 2009). Person/number indicators on verbs can constitute agreement; the NPs are the arguments, and the agreement markers index these arguments (Bybee, 2000). The primary targets of person agreement are predicates, possessive nouns, and adpositions (Siewierska, 2004). Person markers rarely mark a person alone, but they can show other grammatical categories such as number, gender, and case (Siewierska, 2004).

Gender features are any non-quantificational, non-referential, deictic, and non-case-related properties (Moravcsik, 1978). Morphological devices and alliterative concord are devices of gender marking (Corbett, 1991). Furthermore, speakers assign gender through the meaning, the phonology, or the morphology of a noun (Corbett, 1991; Corbett, 2005). Gender is an affix adjacent to the stem, an agreement marker associated with some other constituent, or both (Moravcsik, 1978; Grishechko & Akopova, 2015; Grishechko et al., 2015). It is more common for gender to be identified in the third person than in the second and more common in the second than in the first person (Bybee, 2000). Gender assignment can be done using two types of information about a noun: its meaning (semantics) and its form. Information about the form can be word structure (including derivation), inflections (morphology) and sound structure (phonology) (Corbett, 1991). Formal gender assignment rules are phonological rules that refer to a single form of a noun, whereas morphological rules require more information about it; they must refer to more than one form (Corbett, 1991).

The most basic type of number agreement appears in sentences involving nominals with an overtly marked singularity or plurality (Moravcsik, 1978). Clauses headed by plural nouns display different possibilities of agreement morphology on the relative pronoun and the RC (Arsenijević & Gračanin-Yuksek, 2016). The plural expresses itself through individuation, numeration, and participation (Moravcsik, 2017). Siewisrska (2004) states that agreement markers, such as affixes, can be located in verbal, nominal, or adpositional stems; they appear to be *stem + affix*, *affix + stem*, or a fused stem.

The number of arguments in predicates falls into three categories: intransitive, monotransitive, and ditransitive (Dryer, 2007; Siewierska, 2004). All languages have intransitive clauses, which are clauses with a verb and only one NP participant, and transitive clauses, which are clauses with a verb and two NP participants (Tallerman, 2015). Any language can construct a clause with an intransitive or transitive predicate (with possible subtypes of extended intransitive and transitive) (Dixon, 2010).

The marking of S, A, and P is determined based on various criteria, such as morphological marking, syntactic behaviour, and semantic properties (Siewierska, 2004). In transitive clauses, both A and P may bear overt case marking under appropriate circumstances (Siewierska & Bakker, 2009). Agentive before patient argument languages are the A and P person markers, which are prefixes, both suffixes, and those in which the two markers occur on opposite sides of the stem (Siewierska, 2005b). Concerning argument discrimination, word order is a better alternative strategy than agreement, at least when it is relatively stable (Siewierska & Bakker, 2009).

The ditransitive verb is a verb with a subject, a recipient (addressee) argument, and a theme argument, which is indirect-object construction, double-object construction, secondary-object construction, and mixed (Haspelmath, 2005). It is a three-argument construction (Malchukov et al., 2011).

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study adheres to Payne's (1997) framework, which posits that a comprehensive linguistic analysis should encompass both communicative and formal symbolic aspects of a language. The examination of subject and non-subject agreements within Yemsa's relative clauses is informed by seminal works in the field, notably those by Corbett (1991, 2001a, 2001b) and Siewierska (2004, 2005a, 2005b), among others. The typological framework adopted aligns with the objectives of the study, underscoring a descriptive analytical approach. This methodology resonates with Wells' (1963) principles for descriptive linguistics, which advocate for a language description that is idioglottal, asemantic, static, nonfictive, agglutinatively oriented, economical, procedural, and grammar-reducing.

Participant selection criteria focused largely on linguistic proficiency, with all participants being native Yemsa speakers. Data collection was conducted in the Saja and Fofa regions, home to the Yemsa-speaking community. The key informants included Demeke Jenbere (42), Tekalegn Ayalew (60), Almaz Tesfaye (40), and Adanche Kebede (54), representing a targeted balanced gender distribution. These informants contributed linguistic data and engaged in discussions to refine the collected material.

Data gathering methodologies encompassed informant interviews, utilising elicitation techniques to probe subject and non-subject agreements in Yemsa's relative clauses. Elicitation prompts were initially presented in Amharic, prompting informants to provide the corresponding Yemsa equivalents. Subsequent discussions with informants aimed to clarify and refine the data gathered.

The analysis employed a descriptive framework to identify the subject and non-subject agreements observed in Yemsa's relative clauses. Data were transcribed, annotated, segmented, analysed, translated, and interpreted, drawing from linguistic evidence gathered.

This approach allowed for the identification of grammatical patterns and regularities within the data. Despite time constraints posing inevitable challenges, the data were phonetically and phonemically transcribed using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols. Discrepancies between phonetic and phonemic representations were addressed through four-line glossing, comprising phonetic transcription, morpheme-by-morpheme segmentation, morphological glossing, and free translation, to ensure clarity and accuracy in the presentation of the findings.

4. STUDY RESULTS
4.1. Subject agreement in the relative clauses
4.1.1. Person

In some languages, person markers are clitics, affixes, or coverts (Siewierska, 2004). In Yemsa, the imperfective and progressive relative verbs have a person and gender agreement, but the perfective verb does not. The 3MS and 3FS are coverts in the perfective verb, as shown in (1).

(1) a. màkìnàa-s-sī   ʔàfàtèddìi   nèggàdèe-s   kèjàa-s-ōn   wàagè

         car-DEF-in   sleep.PFV.3MS   merchant-DEF   house-DEF-ACC   buy.PFV.3MS

'The merchant who slept in the car bought the house'.

     b. màkìnàa-s-ōn   wàagè   ʔàsùu-s   wòssàmà   dànì

         car-DEF-ACC   buy.PFV.3FS   woman-DEF   prize   find.PFV.3FS

'The woman who bought the car won a prize'.

The absence of phonological form is interpreted as a marker of a grammatical person in many languages (Siewierska, 2004). The phonological absence of 3MS and 3FS in (1) is considered a grammatical person marker. The HN of a perfective relative verb agrees with the unmarked person in 3MS and 3FS through perfective reading.

Languages in which only some realisations of the third person singular are zero while other realisations are not (Siewierska, 2005a). For instance, 3MS and 3FS are zero in the perfective relative verb, as shown in (1), but not the others, as shown in (2). There is no phonological form for 3MS and 3FS, as in (1). They are zero. The source of differences in person markers is variation in morphophonological form (Siewierska, 2004). The person's marker difference between the perfective relative verb and the imperfective relative verb is morpho-

phonological form. Hence, the perfective verb person marker is zero or covert, as shown in (1), whereas the imperfective verb person marker is overt, as shown in (2).

Subject-verb agreement in inflected languages is demonstrated by verb affixes expressing person, gender, and number (Pawlak, 2012). Person is one of the most elusive grammatical categories and occurs with other elements (Heath, 2004). As illustrated in (2), *-ē* '3MS' and *-ā* '3FS' person markers occur in an imperfective relative verb, respectively. The person marker inventories are suffixes, which are *stem + affix*. Hence, grammatical markers indicate the nominal feature of the HN in RC, as shown in (2).

Languages that indicate subject-verb agreement tend to code for the person and number of the subject, whereas languages that signal object-verb agreement tend to code for the

(2) a. kèjàa-s-sī   fèe-f-ē   ʔàsùu-s   kèenì   krà   kàsànàk   fòlsàwà

         house-DEF-IN   live-IPFV-3MS   man-DEF   house.POSS   rent   pay.PFV.3MS   must

'The man who lives in a room should be paid rent'.

     b. fòfà-kī   hàm-f-ā   ʔàsūu-s   mʔ

         fofa-ALL   go-IPFV-3FS   woman-DEF   laugh.PFV.3FS

'The woman who is to go to Fofa laugh'.

object's definiteness and animacy (Hopper & Thompson, 1984). As shown in (2), Yemsa tends to use subject-verb agreement to indicate person and number. As a result, the person markers -*ē* '*3MS*' and -*ā* '3FS' appear with an imperfective marker -*f*.

In many African languages, the subject or object of a sentence is followed by a subject or object marker, which attaches to a verb and contains grammatical qualities such as person, gender, number, and humanness represented by the subject (Kari, 2017). A verb is a form that is 'conjugated' according to person, tense, and mood (Hopper & Thompson, 1984, p. 703). As shown in (2), the verb form appears with the person and aspect marker. In Amharic, person is obligatory and is followed by either gender or number (Baye, 2007). In Yemsa, the person marker occurs with an imperfective aspect marker. The relative verb agrees with the HN in number, gender, and person (Heck & Cuartero, 2013). -*ē* '3MS' and -*ā* '3FS' person markers occur in a relative verb, as shown in (2). The HNs *ʔàsùu-s* 'the man'

and *ʔàsūu-s* 'the woman' agree with the relative verbs *fèe-f-ē* 'lives' and *hàm-f-ā* 'to go' in the RC. Therefore, the HNs of RC agree with the relative verb in terms of gender, number (singular), and person.

The imperfective relative verbs have person and gender agreement, but not the perfective. The controller (HN) and target are overtly in the headed relative clause. However, the controller is covert in headless RC. The controller and target are phonologically realised in the heading relative clause. As illustrated in (2), the subject *ʔàsùu-s* 'the man' and *ʔàsūu-s* 'the woman' are controllers of the relative clause, and the verbs *fèe-f-ē* 'lives' and *hàmì-f-ā* 'to go' are the target in the RC. The controller agrees with the target.

The argument prominence hierarchy outlines the distribution of dependent person markers among languages based on four syntactic functions (Siewierska, 2004).

(3)   subject > object 1 > object 2 > oblique

As illustrated in (4), the dependent person marker *-à* indicates the subject of the relative verb. The dependent-person markers indicate more subject features than others. According to

the argument prominence hierarchy shown above, subjects are more prominent than others. Therefore, Yemsa goes with the prominence hierarchy.

(4)	kèjàa-s-ōn	wàagè-dɪf-à	ʔàsūu-s	mʔ-dɪf-à
	house-DEF-ACC	buy-PROG-3FS	woman-DEF	laugh-PROG-3FS

'*The woman who is buying the house is laughing*'.

As illustrated in (4), the person/number marker constitutes an agreement in which NPs are arguments of the verb, and the agreement markers index these arguments.

Based on their decreasing morphological independence and phonological substance, dependent person markers are classified into four categories presented below (Siewierska, 2004).

(5)   weak > clitic > bound > zero

Yemsa has a bound-person marker, as illustrated in (4). The person marker *-ā* '3FS' indicates the HN in the relative verb. It is a bound-person marker. It appears in *stem + affix* order. The location of the agreement is in the verb.

The assumptions about the order of affixes are *modifier > head or head > modifier* (Siewisrska, 2004). Here, person agreement affixes are treated as heads and the targets to which they are attached as modifiers. Accordingly, the person agreement affixes should be suffixes in *modifier > head* languages (OV) and prefixes in *head > modifier* languages (VO). Yemsa is an SOV language in which the person's agreement is a suffix. Hence, the suffixesorder in Yemsa is *modifier > head*, as shown in (4).

Cross-linguistically, person agreement in predicates is considerably more common than in possessed nouns, and possessed nouns are more common than in adpositions (Siewierska, 2004). This concept is demonstrated in the predicate hierarchy as presented below:

(6)   The predicate hierarchy
       predicates > possessed nouns > adpositions

As shown in (4), the person agreement marker suffixes in a predicate, which means the first target is the predicate to take person agreement markers over other elements. Therefore, the predicate hierarchy mentioned above works in Yemsa.

The distribution of person agreement with the four semantic classes of predicates may be illustrated in the semantic predicate hierarchy below (Siewisrska, 2004).

(7)   The semantic predicate hierarchy
       event > property > class, locational

As shown in (8), the person's agreement in the intransitive clause is suffixed to the event predicate. Therefore, it goes with the semantic predicate hierarchy.

(8)	fòfà-kī	hàm-f-ē	ʔàsùu-s	ʔàkàmà	wà
	fofa-ALL	go-IPFV-3MS	man-DEF	big	COP.PRES

'*The woman who is buying the house is laughing*'.

As previously outlined, this study addresses a key research question of how subject agreement is manifested in the relative clauses of Yemsa. The findings reveal that subject agreement in Yemsa's relative clauses is primarily marked through suffixation, with the structure of the relative verb adhering to a *stem + affix* configuration. This method of person marking within the relative verb serves not only to delineate common linguistic features among the Ometo languages but also provides valuable observations for Afroasiatic typological studies. Similarly, another research question posed at the outset concerns the morphological markers responsible for both subject and non-subject agreements within relative clauses. The analyses conducted offer clear answers, suggesting that morphological markers such as *-ē* '*3MS*' and *-ā* '*3FS*' play a key role in the construction of person markers within the relative verb. These findings point to the importance of specific morphological markers in the grammatical structure of Yemsa, contributing significantly to our understanding of its complex system of agreement.

4.1.2. Gender

Gender features refer to non-quantificational, non-referential, deictic, and case-related properties of nominals or noun phrases, lexicalized separately from other nominal properties, and include distinctions related to animacy, humanness, sex, or other qualitative properties (Moravcsik, 1978). As shown in the following examples, gender is a nominal feature that appears within the person marker.

Gender is present in language through the lexical properties of nominals, either as an affix adjacent to the stem or as an agreement marker associated with another constituent (Moravcsik, 1978). Person markers differentiate gender based on sex, with male markers being masculine and female markers being feminine (Siewierska, 2004). As illustrated in (9), the person markers *-ē* '3MS' and *-nī* '3FS' indicate male (masculine) and female (feminine) referents, which are *ʔàsùu-s* 'the man' and *ʔàsūu-s* 'the woman'. The language distinguishes between male and female genders through person markers.

(9)	a.	kèjàa-s-ōn	wàagè-f-ē	ʔàsùu-s	fòfà-kī	hàmà-ní-r
		house-DEF-ACC	buy-IPFV-3MS	man-DEF	fofa-ALL	go-3MS-FUT

'The man who buys the house will go to Fofa'.

	b.	fòfà-kī	hàmà-nì-r	ʔàsūu-s	màajà-s	wàagè-dif-ā
		fofa-ALL	go-3FS-FUT	woman-DEF	cloth-DEF	buy-PROG-3FS

'The woman who will go to Fofa is buying the cloth'.

A person marker can show gender and number (singular) through morphemes, as illustrated in (9). As a result, -ē '3MS' and -nī '3FS' person markers indicate the gender of the HN in the relative verb. As a result, the genders of the HNs are masculine and feminine, respectively. Therefore, the HNs agree with the verb in terms of gender.

As in (9), the masculine or feminine gender appears in the RC. The relative verb suffixes -ē '3MS' and -nī '3FS' indicate masculine or feminine gender. They are inflectional suffixes that appear after the verb stem. These morphological morphemes simultaneously indicate gender. The HNs agree with the relative verb in terms of gender. As a result, the mechanism for the gender marking is a morphological device rather than an alliterative concord. The third person can show gender in Yemsa.

Yemsa speakers can assign masculine or feminine gender biologically, as shown in the above examples. Furthermore, speakers assign nouns to gender through the meaning and the phonology or morphology of a noun (Corbett, 2005). A noun's gender is assigned through semantic factors or according to a combination of semantic and formal (morphological and phonological) factors (Corbett, 1991). As a result, the masculine or feminine gender appears in the RC. It is done through semantics and form.

The typical Afroasiatic grammatical gender system Is masculine and feminine (Appleyard, 2012). As shown in the above examples, gender is either masculine or feminine. Gender is manifested through agreement, for instance, between the verb and its noun subject or between determiners and head nouns (Appleyard, 2012). The gender is indicated through the agreement marker in the verb.

4.1.3. Number

The singular number is not marked on the nominal, aligning with the widely accepted belief that the singular is the unmarked number compared to the plural (Corbett, 2000a). As shown in (9), the HNs are not marked for singular. As a result, the HNs are not marking for sigulative.

Number is a complex and logical structure in any language (Corbett, 2001a). As mentioned above, the person marker in the relative verb can show the number (singular) and gender. Therefore, in Yemsa, number, person, and gender are indicated through person markers attached to the verb stem. The morphemes -ē '3MS' and -nī '3FS' can show number (singular), person, and gender, as in (9). Yemsa has two number values singular and plural.

Person and number rarely occur together, and when they do, morphological segmentation separating the person markers from the number markers is not easy (Bybee, 2000). The person and number markers appear together, which is suffixed on the verb stem, as shown in (10). It is difficult to distinguish the person marker from the number marker. As a result, the person marker indicates the number (singular).

(10)	kèjàa-s-ōn	wàagò-ní-r	nèggàdèe-s	sàfàr-dif-ē
	house-DEF-ACC	buy-3MS-FUT	merchant-DEF	worry-PROG-3MS

'The merchant who will buy the house is worrying'.

Number agreement is most visible in sentences with clearly specified single or plural nominals and agreeing elements like nominal modifiers, verbs, or pronouns (Moravcsik, 1978). As shown in (10), singularity appears through the person marker. nèggàdèe-s 'the merchant' is a singular HN. As a result, the relative verb agrees with the number agreement. Meanwhile, the HN nèggàdèe-s 'the merchant' agrees with the relative verb wàagò-ní-r 'will buy' in terms of number. Therefore, the HN agrees with the verb in number (singular). As a result, verb inflection is used to show the number marking in the language.

Agreement is one of the morphological means of marking a number in a verb, where the number marked on the verb is nominal. Cross-linguistically, demonstratives and verbs are relatively frequent agreement targets, displaying agreement in number either uniquely or in combination with other categories, most notably gender (Corbett, 2001a). In the above examples, the number agreement on the verb indicates singularity. This number marking is a nominal feature. Verbs are marked for number in Amharic (Mulugeta, 2017), whereas in Yemsa, a number is indicated through the person marker.

Most intransitive and transitive verbs in Yemsa agree with their subjects. These clauses' verbs agree with their subjects in terms of person, number, and gender. The transitive relative verb shows verbal and subject agreement (nominal agreement). The verbal agreement appears in the verb, where -*f* is an imperfective aspect marker, as illustrated in (11). On the other hand, a subject agreement appears in a relative verb, as shown in 11, -*ē* as a '3MS' marker. All languages have agreement on intransitive and transitive predicates (Siewisrska, 2004). As a result, as illustrated in (11) and (12), person agreement in intransitive verbs occurs in a transitive verb. The intransitive and transitive relative verbs have a person suffix: -*ē* '3MS'.

(11)	dàabbòo-s-ōn	mée-f-ē	ʔàsùu-s	ʔàkàmà	wà
	bread-DEF-ACC	eat-IPFV-3MS	man-DEF	big	COP.PRES

'*The man who eats the bread is big*'.

(12)	fòfà-kì	hàm-f-ē	ʔàsùu-s	jèetè-dìf-ē
	fofa-ALL	go-IPFV-3MS	man-DEF	talk-PROG-3MS

'*The man who goes to Fofa is talking*'.

The case may be overtly marked on either the A or the P or both; the overt marking of both is less common than the overt marking of just the A or P (Siewierska & Bakker, 2009). The nominative case is unmarked, but the accusative case is marked, as illustrated in (11). The patient *ʔéetóo-s-ōn* 'the lion' is marked as an accusative case in (11). The marking of the patient is supported to discriminate between the agent and the patient in the argument structure. *ʔàsùu-s* 'the man' is an agent, whereas *dàab-bòo-s-ōn* 'the bread' is a patient. As a result, it marks the P rather than the A. Yemsa is not overtly marked in both cases. The ac-cusative case is marked more than the nominative case. The NPs are identified through case marking. As a result, the argument is indexed through case-marking. Every language also has extended transitive (or ditransitive) clauses (typically involving *give* and often some other verbs such as *show* and *tell*) that require a third obligatory argument. The syntactic status of the two non-A core arguments of these verbs varies from language to language (Onishi, 2001). As shown in (13), Yemsa has a ditransitive clause. The syntactic status of the three obligatory arguments is subject, direct object, and indirect object.

(13)	nàa-s-k	màsʼáfāa-s-ōn	tèʃʃè	ʔàsūu-s	kàssè-dìf-à
	boy-DEF-DAT	book-DEF-ACC	bring.PFV.3FS	woman-DEF	play-PROG-3FS

'*The woman who brought the book to the boy is playing*'.

In ditransitive clauses, the secondary object has the semantic role of an addressee, recipient, or beneficiary, while the primary object has the semantic role of a theme. As shown in (13), the relative verb *tèʃʃè* 'bring' is a known ditransitive verb. It is a three-argument ditransitive verb. *ʔàsūu-s* 'the man', *màsʼáfāa-s-ōn* 'the book', and *náa-s-ík* 'to the boy' are three arguments of a main and a RC. The non-relativised ditransitive verb word order is S (O2) (O1) V, while the relativised ditransitive verb word order is O2 (O1) V S (PP) V. The semantic role of indirect object *náa-s-ík* 'to the boy' is that of a recipient, while the semantic role of direct object *màsʼáfāa-s-ōn* 'the book is that of a theme, as shown in (13). The indirect object is marked through -*k*, as shown in (14).

In ditransitive clauses, case marking favours the R over the T; the overt case marking of both the R and the T occurs more frequently than in the two arguments of transitive clauses (Siewierska & Bakker, 2009). Accordingly, Yemsa overtly marks the R and T, as shown in (15).

(14)	a.	nàwàa-s-k	dèebdàabèe-s-ōn	títʃí	ʔàsùu-s	tèggìrè	wòllè
		girl-DEF-DAT	letter-DEF-ACC	write.PFV.3MS	man-DEF	loudly	speak.PFV.3MS

'*The man who wrote the letter to the girl spoke loudly*'.

	b.	nàa-s-k	màajàa-s-ōn	wàagè	ʔíntōo-s	ʔòtùm	wà
		boy-DEF-DAT	cloth-DEF-ACC	buy.PFV.3FS	mother-DEF	rich	COP.PRES

'*The mother who bought the cloth to the boy is rich*'.

(15)

nàa-s-k	kèjàa-s-ōn	ʔìm	ʔàsūu-s	fòfà-sì	fàa-f-à
boy-DEF-DAT	house-DEF-ACC	give.PFV.3FS	woman-DEF	fofa-IN	live-IPFV-3FS

'The woman who gave the house to the boy lives in Fofa'.

The overt marking of R and T is suffixes. The recipient or addressee is indicated by -k, whereas the theme is marked by -ōn for the accusative case, as shown in (15).

Building on the preceding analysis, it is evident that the person marker in Yemsa not only indicates gender and number but also significantly enriches our comprehension of Yemsa's linguistic framework. Furthermore, this aspect of Yemsa's grammar exposes the broader typological features of Afroasiatic languages, emphasising its relevance for comparative linguistic studies within this language family.

4.2. Non-subject agreement in the relative clauses

We discussed the agreement elements of the subject in the RC, which is a nominal suffix. The person, gender, and number should agree with the HN of the RC. Agreement with both agent and object marking is not a common feature in languages around the world (Paudyal, 2008). Subject or object markers functioning as pure agreement morphemes are not easy to find in African languages (Creissels, 2005). The following discussion shows the non-subject agreement of Yemsa.

Object agreement criteria are often considered language-specific and unrelated to universal linguistic principles (Woolford, 1999). In the following examples, the HNs kèjàa-s 'the house' and ʔéetóo-s 'the lion' are DO inside the RC. As we see in the relative verb morphology, the suffix element -nà appears on the relative verbs. Therefore, -nà is an object agreement attached to the verbs in an object relativisation. The following examples illustrate this fact:

(16) a.

ʔàsūu-s	wàagè-nà	kèjàa-s	ttʃ	wá
woman-DEF	buy.PFV.3FS.Sj-3FS.Oj	house-DEF	expensive	COP.PRES

'The house which the woman bought is expensive'.

b.

ʔàsúu-s	wòr-nà	ʔéetóo-s	ʔàkàmà	wà
man-DEF	kill.PFV-3MS.Oj	lion-DEF	big	COP.PRES

'The lion that the man killed is big'.

In (16), the HN kèjàa-s 'the house' and mèwùu-s 'the tiger' functioned as DOs of an RC, which is empty in the RCs. However, it is recoverable from the agreement marker in the relative verb. As a result, the object agreement marker appears in a verb to indicate DO relativisation. The object agreement marker does not exist in subject relativisation, but only exists in object relativisation.

On the one hand, Ezha verbs can also optionally contain object agreement suffixes (Endalew, 2016). None of the Omotic languages marks the object (Azeb, 2017). Yemsa is one of them. It does not mark objects in a transitive verb in a simple main clause. As a result, there is no overt object marker in the main clause in the above examples. An object agreement marker occurs in the object relativisation, as shown in (16).

The intransitive and transitive verbs appear with one or two core arguments (Dixon, 2010). Intransitive verbs have one core argument. Only one NP participated in an intransitive clause, as shown in (17).

(17)

fòfà-kī	hàm	ʔàsūu-s	gàràm	wà
fofa-ALL	go.PFV.3FS	woman-DEF	kind	COP.PRES

'The woman who went to Fofa is kind'.

The exploration of person, gender, and number within Yemsa's grammatical delineates shared linguistic features through specific mechanisms and morphological markers. Notably, the employment of person markers as suffixes in relative verbs in Yemsa may delineate a characteristic feature among the Ometo languages, facilitating comparative typological analyses, especially in relation to Bench, through the lens of morphological markers. This granular focus on gender and number representation through person markers advances our understanding of Yemsa's linguistic architecture. Moreover, these findings have

practical implications, contributing to the development of grammatical resources for Yemsa. They enhance both the creation of pedagogical materials tailored for students at various educational levels and the preparation of comprehensive grammar texts. Beyond educational applications, this research provides foundational data for language development initiatives within applied linguistics. Furthermore, it establishes a methodological framework for conducting comparative typological studies on subject and non-subject agreements across related languages, thereby broadening the scope of linguistic inquiry in both theoretical and practical terms and facilitating better comprehension of language structure and function.

4.3. Syntactic feature

The three-way typology of DCs is the (partial) (non-) expression of TAM operators and person marking; the nominal category determiner and case/adposition; and argument(s) coding in DCs (van Lier, 2009). Yemsa belongs to the latter type.

(18)	Ɂàrùu-s-ōn	Ɂàss-f-ē	Ɂássìnjàa-s	jèetè-dɪf-ē
	lesson-DEF-ACC	teach-IPFV-3MS	teacher-DEF	talk-PROG-3MS

'*The teacher who teaches the lesson is talking*'.

The argument coding is as follows: (a) an argument is expressed in the same way as it shows in an independent clause; (b) an argument is expressed differently than it occurred in an independent clause; (c) an argument is not expressed (van Lier, 2009). Yemsa belongs to type (a). As shown in (18), a subject argument expresses itself in the same way as an independent clause.

In some languages, the basic word order is subject-verb-object (SVO) (Comrie, 1988). A language can be verb-final (Dimmendal, 2008). The clause arguments (NPs) show variation in the main clause and RC orders. The main clause and a relative clause show argument-order differences. The transitive main clause order is SOV, whereas a transitive relative clause is OVSV, as shown in (19).

(19)	Ɂéetóo-s-ōn	wórí	Ɂàsùu-s	tàptà	wà
	lion-DEF-ACC	kill.PFV.3MS	man-DEF	fast	COP.PRES

'*The man who killed the lion is fast*'.

The RC is head-final. The syntactic function of NPs is to be the subject of RC. The semantic role of a subject is that of an agent of RC, whereas the semantic role of a direct object is that of the patient. The simple sentence word order of Yemsa is SV in intransitive verbs, whereas the RC word order becomes (PP)VS. The simple main clause differs from the relativised clause. The intransitive verb takes the PP as a complement. It is a motion verb. The relativised intransitive verbs, which have an event predicate that indicates motion, take a PP as a complement, as illustrated in (19).

The alignment of the core arguments in (19) is determined based on morphological marking (zero marker or unmarked) and syntactic position. Accordingly, Yemsa belongs where A comes before P. The subject is positioned initially (head initial) (SV). It is placed finally (head-final) (VS) in an RC, as demonstrated in (19).

As demonstrated in (20) below, the syntactic role of *Ɂàsūu-s* 'the woman' is that of the subject, whereas *fòfà-n* 'from Fofa' is a prepositional phrase. However, the semantic role of the NPs is that of an experiencer and source, as shown in (20).

(20)	fòfà-n	jà	Ɂàsùu-s	dàabbòo-s-ōn	màa
	fofa-ABL	come.PFV.3FS	woman-DEF	bread-DEF-ACC	eat.PFV.3FS

'*The woman who came from Fofa ate the bread.*'

The investigation of subject and non-subject agreements within Yemsa relative clauses not only advances our knowledge of the syntactic characteristics specific to Yemsa and the broader Ometo language group but also addresses a previously identified lacuna in the detailed description of these grammatical agreements in Yemsa. These data hold considerable value for typological studies within the Afroasiatic language family in terms of both specific linguistic inquiries and general linguistic theoretical frameworks, potentially setting new precedents for future research in comparative linguistics.

6. CONCLUSION

The core objective of this research was to dissect the subject and non-subject agreement processes in Yemsa's relative clauses, focusing on the identification and analysis of morphological markers and syntactic arrangements that underpin these agreements. The investigation aimed to bridge a notable gap in linguistic literature by providing a detailed account of Yemsa's agreement patterns and, thereby, enriching our comprehension of its grammar. This contribution should facilitate comparative analyses with other Afroasiatic languages and create a more comprehensive dialogue within the field of linguistic typology.

The findings reveal that in Yemsa, the manifestation of person agreement varies across verb aspects, with imperfective and progressive forms displaying overt person markers, whereas perfective verbs employ a covert marking strategy. This distinction emphasises a morphophonological differentiation in person marking, integral to Yemsa's grammatical coherence. Furthermore, the study specifies the language's adherence to a modifier-head syntax, an SOV order, and a predicate hierarchy that prioritises person agreement markers, delineating a sophisticated interconnection between syntax and morphology.

The research also investigated the gender distinction within person markers, showcasing how Yemsa differentiates masculine and feminine referents, thus emphasising gender as a crucial nominal feature. Moreover, the analysis extended to subject agreement across verb types and illustrated a consistent alignment of verbs with their subjects in terms of person, number, and gender. This alignment positions Yemsa within Type A languages, characterised by a consistent expression of subject arguments akin to independent clauses.

This study should contribute to the development of grammatical resources and educational materials for Yemsa, facilitate language teaching and learning at various educational levels, and offer foundational data for computational linguistics applications and further comparative studies within the Omotic languages and beyond.

In light of these contributions, this research emphasises the importance of further inquiry into unexplored aspects of Yemsa's grammar, such as information structure and expressive language forms like blessings and curses. The observations gained from this study on subject and non-subject agreements pave the way for future comparative research across Omotic languages and encourage a deeper investigation into the interaction between agreement mechanisms and other grammatical categories.

Appendix. List of symbols and abbreviations

1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person	IPFV	Imperfective
-	Morpheme boundary	M	Masculine
[ ]	Phonetic representation	NP	Noun phrase
A	Agent	Oj	Object
ABL	Ablative	PFV	Perfective
ACC	Accusative	P	Patient
ALL	Alative	POSS	Possessive
COP	Copula	PRES	Present
DAT	Dative	PROG	Progressive
DC	Dependent clause	R	Recipient
DEF	Definite marker	RC	Relative clause
DO	Direct object	SOV	Subject-Object-Verb
F	Feminine	Sj	Subject
FUT	Future	SVO	Subject-Verb-Object
HN	Head noun	T	Ditransitive object theme
IN	Inessive case	TAM	Tense-Aspect-Mood

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Book Reviews

Sounding out semantics: The limits of philosophy (book review)

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In semantics, we examine the literal meaning of words and the meaning that emerges from the way they are combined, which together form the core of meaning, or the starting point from which a particular statement derives its meaning. Many theories presume or assert that words are signs or symbols with literal meanings that can be determined without any consideration for where the word appears in larger grammatical constructions, the context in which it is used upon any specific occasion, or the speaker's machinations. Despite this, this view of meaning poses problems and puzzles. In *Sounding out Semantics: The Limits of Philosophy*, the author presents original theories concerning the philosophy of language, mind, mathematics, and epistemology as a culmination of years of research. In seven chapters, this book synthesises contemporary philosophy in all these fields into a cohesive whole.

The historical context for semantics, puzzles in modern semantics, and truth conditional semantics are discussed in the first chapter, and the author believes that despite the numerous efforts that have been made in attempts to explain the way language works, or how semantics works, no clear conclusion can be drawn. There is a pressing need for a convincing explanation of what happens when people engage in verbal communication, and how humans came to have this ability, both phylogenetically and ontogenetically. This book attempts to provide both the theoretical support and a broad outline for a revived non-semantic explanation of how language is acquired and used in the following chapters.

Chapter 2 addresses semantic fallacies regarding semantic symbols. Literal or lexical meanings are said to be carried by both the written and vocal symbols as they are transmitted from person to person. Chapter 3 discusses dualism and consciousness by addressing the question of why humans are left with the duality of physical entities and processes juxtaposed with mental entities and processes: because it gives them a monumental dollop of survival value. The third-party perspective allows humans to explain their subjective experience by recognising that word sounds enable them to tact and infer knowledge, beliefs, ideas, concepts, intentions, thoughts, and all the assorted flora and fauna of the self, whether conscious or unconscious, happy, or sad. They could not think or talk about consciousness or mental entities without these sounds produced by their bodies.

Chapter 4 offers a comparison between conventional philosophical thinking about word use as symbolic representational activity and an alternative view of word use as non-semantic functional behaviour with acoustic devices, action with consequences. It is hoped that the contrast will persuade people that the orthodox semantic theories do not adequately explain the human behaviour with regard to sounds and their derivative

symbols. Chapter 5 provides the way people speak and think about mathematics is fundamentally misguided. It is misguided by the same assumptions that theorists make about what we humans do with word sounds and symbols. The author hopes to persuade the readers that all of mathematics, from counting to calculus, is conditioned behaviour with acoustic devices. Because of the natural selection process, individual humans and whole societies have been conditioned to utilise number sounds and symbols for those sounds in very productive ways. Humans have survived and prospered because of our conditioned ability to do mathematics. The last two chapters explore the epistemological cognation of mind and language regarding the nature of knowledge and universe. When people use natural language in a declarative knowledge claim, the inherent imprecision of word use creates the indeterminacy that frustrates the attempts of logicians and linguists to find their absolute truth, certainty, and logical necessity. Furthermore, pragmatic scientists focus on results, however, the philosophical issues will not go away unless they recognise the functional value of their speech behaviour and the concomitant common-sense intuitions it produces.

The author believes that words provide us with a sense of mystery. Our common-sense beliefs about words have been shaped by thousands of years of misguided philosophical speculation about human languages. In turn, that speculation has been incorporated into the way we think about speech. Under the microscope of empirical investigation, the most pernicious of these speculations about words and language lack any explanatory power whatsoever. The belief is based on wildly speculative metaphysical speculation that has been accepted without question.

Three characteristics make this book stand out. First, it begins the discussion of language and semantics by acknowledging the inherent difficulties in talking about language, explores philosophical limits in light of humans' knowledge, cognition of language and consciousness of the self. Second, the author believes that the puzzles and enigmas persist as a result of the misguided philosophy of language. They remain not only in the philosophy of language, but also in the philosophy of mathematics, epistemology, and science. There is a great need to abandon that misguided semantic premise and to eliminate the mind/body dualism underlying its success. Finally, the author also provides some insight into the human use of word sounds from a new non-semantic perspective that eliminates the age-old conundrums about language. Even though abandoning the semantic paradigm may prove difficult, there are many reasons to pursue this course of action. Upon proper analysis from a non-semantic perspective, humankind can obtain an accurate framework from which to successfully analyse the human use of sounds and resolve the puzzles and enigmas resulting from our mistaken beliefs about ourselves and our verbal behaviour in all areas of intellectual inquiry. Despite these aspects, this book offers some new insights that could assist us in understanding how language works and what we do with words. Although sufficient information is presented about how this knowledge can be

utilised to explore other areas of analytical philosophy, it is important for readers to recognise that language presents inherent difficulties. The difficulty arises from the fact that we must speak a language to discuss a language. The nature of language is not limited to individual existence; it always takes the form of discourse. Overall, since this book presents a comprehensive and in-depth study that crosses disciplines to challenge common perceptions and linguistic descriptions, it is particularly recommended for scholars and students of linguistics, philosophy, and epistemology. Those interested in language and speech origins will find this book to be a valuable resource.

'Much of what is considered philosophy these days consists of advice, practical philosophies that do not explain, but offer platitudes meant to guide everyday living. These philosophies, while offering solace to those who need it, offer no understanding. The preachers and their followers are in full scale retreat from any attempt to explain or understand this world. Coping is the message they preach. Peace of mind, solace and hope are the ultimate objectives. So, the traditional philosophical conundrums and puzzles remain'. This book presents a truly unique approach to the study of language and knowledge that sets it apart from mainstream philosophical thought. Whereas conventional semantics views words as fixed symbols with determinable literal meanings independent of context, this book develops original theoretical frameworks arguing that word meaning emerges from practical usage rather than representation. It advocates a 'non-semantic' perspective of language as conditioned behaviour employing acoustic symbols, seeking to resolve long-debated puzzles in philosophy of language, mathematics, and epistemology. Through its comprehensive synthesis spanning seven in-depth chapters, the book offers the first integrated treatment of these fields informed by its alternative behaviourist paradigm. In challenging foundational assumptions around dualism, semantics, and literalism, it provides new conceptual tools that could transform understanding across disciplines if validated. Most significantly, the book comprehensively addresses the inherent difficulties of discussing language that have hindered philosophy, hypothesising revised explanatory models to overcome these limitations. By comprehensively critiquing prior approaches and developing an ambitious new research program grounded in empirical investigation, this publication offers a truly unique contribution with potential for paradigm change.

This book aims to make contributions across multiple fields by challenging conventional semantic philosophy of language and knowledge with original, integrated theoretical frameworks. It proposes that prevailing theories do not adequately explain language acquisition and use, and that word meanings are not fixed symbols but emerge from contextual use. By advocating an alternative 'non-semantic' perspective of language as conditioned behaviour with acoustic symbols rather than representational tools, it seeks to resolve longstanding puzzles in philosophy of language, mathematics, and epistemology. If successful, its unified frameworks could provide more accurate analyses of human symbol use with profound implications for various fields

like linguistics, cognitive science, and education. Specifically, understanding language as a functionally conditioned behaviour deeply influenced by social and cultural contexts may yield insights into second-language acquisition and intercultural communication challenges. Apprehending the fluid, relational nature of word meanings could inform best practices for language pedagogy and translation. Additionally, its emphasis on usage over semantics suggests an opportunity to re-evaluate cultural biases and assumptions embedded in linguistic symbols. However, the work also acknowledges the inherent difficulties of discussing language using language itself, and that fully realising its ambitious integrations may prove challenging. Nonetheless, by disputing semantic and dualistic foundations underpinning mainstream views, rejecting literalism about word meanings, and emphasising linguistic use over abstract representation, the book aims to offer valuable new insights into the nature of human symbolic thought and communication with potential to transform perspectives across disciplines and societies.

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News & Events

RUDN University News

RUDN University Rector Receives Prestigious Themis Legal Award

On October 14, the esteemed Themis Legal Award ceremony unfolded, presenting the oldest legal accolade to distinguished individuals. Among the honoured recipients was Oleg Yastrebov, the rector of RUDN University, acknowledged as a laureate in the Traditions and Education category. The selection of nominees is conducted by the award's expert council, considering their eminence in the field of law and notable contributions to society and the state. This year, individuals whose endeavours align closely with the international agenda were recognised in the Traditions and Education category. Heartfelt congratulations to Rector Oleg Yastrebov on this well-deserved recognition!

RUDN University Rector Extends Heartfelt Gratitude to Educators on Teacher's Day

In a heartfelt message, RUDN University Rector, Oleg Yastrebov, expressed gratitude to educators on the occasion of Teacher's Day. He conveyed appreciation for every teacher he has encountered throughout his journey, including his own teachers, his son's mentors, and colleagues at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba. Dr Yastrebov acknowledged the demanding nature of the teaching profession, emphasising the daily commitment of giving knowledge, strength, and time. He extended his wishes for tranquil changes, restful holidays, and a supportive environment for teachers.

The rector hoped for grateful students, wise parents, interesting colleagues, and understanding administrators. Wrapping up his statement, Dr Yastrebov conveyed his hope for favourable circumstances, allowing teachers to fully savour the depth and significance of their multifaceted work.

RUDN International Scholarship

The outcomes of the RUDN International Scholarship at RUDN University have been announced, revealing 13 successful candidates who will each be awarded 55,000 rubles. This scholarship, a one-time cash grant, is bestowed upon RUDN University students selected through a competitive process. It specifically supports undergraduate, specialist, and graduate students planning to pursue studies at partner universities during the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. Noteworthy is the diverse representation among the winners, spanning the Law Institute, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty of Philology, and the Academy of Engineering.

Education in Russia: Your Key to Success

Belarusian students aspire to pursue diverse career paths, with ambitions ranging from becoming doctors, linguists, economists, to international specialists. On November 22, a delegation from RUDN University actively participated in the initiative *Education in Russia: Your Key to Success*, which brought together 47 leading universities in Russia. This collaborative project was orchestrated by the Representative Office of Rossotrudnichestvo in the Republic of Belarus.

The online presentation witnessed the engagement of over 100 schoolchildren, displaying a keen interest in the programmes offered by RUDN University, notably in the Medical Institute, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as the Philological and Economic faculties. The students exhibited a pronounced curiosity about fields such as General Medicine, International Relations, Linguistics, and Economics. During the event, RUDN University representatives shared insights into the admission procedures for foreign students, highlighted opportunities such as the RUDN University Open Olympiad, and provided information on international competitions.

At present, RUDN University hosts 173 Belarusian students, with 40% benefiting from budgetary allocations. The academic preferences of Belarusian students at RUDN University include General Medicine, Advertising and Public Relations, Law, Dentistry, and International Relations. Notably, the influx of Belarusian students to RUDN University has nearly tripled since 2019.

Africa's Path to 17 SDGs: An Integrated Approach

RUDN University has convened a gathering of 1,500 experts from 70 countries, uniting them in a collective effort to devise solutions for the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) that shape the future of our world.

The conference, titled For the *Sustainable Development of Civilisation: Cooperation, Science, Education, Technology (Africa's Path to 17 SDGs: An Integrated Approach)*, was inaugurated at RUDN University. Among its distinguished attendees are ministers from Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, alongside eminent scientists hailing from Algeria, Brazil, Germany, Zambia, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Namibia, South Africa, and other nations.

This monumental assembly of 1,500 experts spans across 13 sections, each dedicated to one of the 17 SDGs. Within these sections, scientists, ministers, business leaders, and heads of public organisations will share research findings and best practices, addressing contemporary challenges in ecology, agriculture, urban planning, and healthcare.

The focal point of the conference revolves around the seventeen United Nations SDGs, with a specific emphasis on how African countries are progressing towards achieving them.

RUDN University's scholars in fields such as ecology, agriculture, medicine, law, engineering, and economics will collaborate to propose innovative ideas to benefit African nations and contribute to global betterment. The event, attended by representatives from 70 countries, serves as an exceptional platform for participants to identify optimal development directions and establish partnerships across borders.

Minister Ramatoulaye Vuri of Sierra Leone emphasised the importance of developing both professional skills and communication competencies, citing RUDN University's interdisciplinary approach and ongoing intercultural communication as key contributors to students' holistic development.

Addressing the influence of universities on sustainable development goals, Riri Fitri Sari, President of the UI GreenMetric WUR international university ranking, highlighted the active participation of 29 African universities out of 1,050 worldwide in the GreenMetric ranking. This engagement allows tracking the progress of these universities towards achieving sustainable development goals.

Professor Mengistu Kifle Gelan, Advisor to the Ministry of Health of Ethiopia, underscored the impact of the pandemic on accelerating digitalisation and the need for professionals in telemedicine technologies. This development, he noted, would extend essential medical services to remote areas, encompassing tele-dermatology, telecardiology, tele-oncology, and telepsychiatry. He pointed to the imperative to train technical support staff to manage and advance these digital resources.

The conference's comprehensive exploration of the challenges facing the African continent unfolded through strategic and framework sessions, categorised under 'Biosphere', 'Society', and 'Economy, Politics, Law, and Partnerships' on November 22, 23, and 24. The experiences of Morocco and Jordan illuminated the potential of drinking water purification systems, while Brazil shared observations concerning sustainable fishing practices. Additionally, Tunisia addressed the issue of microparticle pollution in rubber. Throughout these sessions, experts proffered solutions to critical challenges, including soil desertification, antibiotic resistance in viruses, suburban sprawl in megacities, soaring vegetable prices, and the pervasive illiteracy epidemic.

Biosphere. Distinguished experts from countries such as Algeria, Brazil, Burundi, Gambia, Egypt, Zambia, Morocco, Indonesia, Jordan, Tunisia, Uganda, South Africa, and others engaged in discussions centred around wastewater treatment, strategies to prevent famine in Africa, combating global warming, and identifying barriers impeding the adoption of green energy in the region. An alarming 10% of the African population still relies on untreated land-based water for consumption, with women and children covering a daily distance of 3.7 kilometres to access springs. Drought and desertification pose significant challenges to agricultural development, affecting 52% of global areas deemed unsuitable for crop cultivation.

Society. Renowned scientists from Algeria, Angola, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Zambia, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and other

nations shared insights on preventing discrimination, achieving a balance of interests, attracting investment to meet key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and addressing the healthcare needs of countries grappling with challenging climatic conditions. The issue of 'multidimensional poverty' adversely impacts education levels, with sub-Saharan Africa bearing the highest concentrations of poverty. Over the past two decades, the number of illiterate adult women in low-income countries has surged by 20 million. Sub-Saharan Africa faces 35% of early marriages, contributing to a gender inequality rate of 48.6% on the continent.

Economics, Politics, Law, Partnerships. Researchers hailing from Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, India, Iran, Yemen, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Namibia, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and other countries deliberated on the potential niches African nations can occupy in global production, the role of collaboration with Asia in addressing sustainable development challenges, and the integration of alternative energy into the continent's infrastructure. A stark reality emerges, as most individuals without access to electricity reside in Africa and Asia, with 2.8 billion people relying on wood, coal, and manure for heating and cooking. This reliance results in 4 million deaths annually due to air pollution. Furthermore, by 2050, the African continent is projected to house 20 to 25% of the world's population, solidifying the region's status as one of the primary global markets.

Enlightening Presentations on Ibero-American Culture and Internet Communications at Two Prominent Conferences in St. Petersburg

In October, Saint Petersburg hosted the forum *Russia and Iberoamerica in a Turbulent World: History and Modernity*, attracting a diverse array of participants, including scientists, politicians, diplomats, and writers from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Chile, as well as representatives from Asian and European countries.

Elena Kargovskaya, a senior lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at RUDN University, shared her conclusive and thought-provoking research titled *Preservation of the Material and Spiritual Heritage of the Guna Indians*.

'The Guna Indians stand out as one of the few indigenous peoples in the Americas who, through persistent and at times arduous resistance, have maintained the integrity of their territory along with their authenticity, traditions, culture, and beliefs. The Guna people's enduring struggle for independence on various fronts has resulted in the existence of a society where every member actively participates in political life and decision-making crucial to the entire community. Here, ancient chants echo, narrating both distant and recent events. Mothers weave the greatness of their people into lullabies, and children take pride in their roots. The Huns can be considered a fortunate people who, unlike many disappeared indigenous cultures, have safeguarded their language, traditions, and territorial resources,' emphasised Elena Kargovskaya.

At the conference *Synergy of Languages and Cultures: Interdisciplinary Research*, Olga Maksimova, an Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages in the Federal State University of Social Sciences at RUDN University, presented her report titled *The Functioning of English and Russian Languages in Internet Communications: General Trends and National-Cultural Specifics*.

'Language transformations are intricately linked to the emergence of new global communication means, reflecting social, cultural, and technological shifts. The impact of the Internet as a communication medium extends across all levels of the language system, influencing vocabulary, word-formation models, punctuation and spelling norms, syntactic structures, and communicative strategies. The findings of this study hold practical significance for foreign language teaching,' noted Olga Maksimova.

Unlocking Success: RUDN University Translator Programme Graduates Discover a Competitive Edge with Chinese Proficiency

In a recent master class attended by RUDN University environmental students enrolled in the 'Translator' programme, the importance of learning the Chinese language was emphasised. The session shed light on the growing demand for professionals with Chinese language skills, spanning various fields such as management, logistics, marketing, and analytics. Proficiency in Chinese has become a valuable asset in practical application, providing individuals with a distinct edge in employment opportunities. On average, industry specialists with Chinese language proficiency enjoy salaries that are 50–60% higher than their counterparts without this linguistic skill.

Maxim Fedotov, senior lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages and Intercultural Communication at the Financial University under the Government of Russia, highlighted the reasons behind the surge in demand. China stands as the world's largest consumer market and a pivotal region for e-commerce development. In 2021, China contributed to approximately 18% of Russia's foreign trade turnover, with a 28.7% increase in trade turnover between the two countries in the first quarter of 2022. As this trend continues, the demand for specialists proficient in Chinese is expected to rise. Additionally, the prevalence of Chinese in engineering documentation is projected to reach 46% within the next decade.

Large Russian companies are specifically seeking professionals with Chinese language expertise in various roles, including technological engineers capable of interpreting drawings and explaining technical details to Chinese partners, purchasing managers and project managers experienced in acquiring technologically complex goods, analysts and product managers adept at conducting marketing analysis of the Chinese market, and marketers skilled in navigating Chinese marketplaces and social networks.

Anastasia Kim, a first-year student, shared her motivation for studying Chinese, expressing an interest in China's culture, traditions, architecture, and people. While acknowledging the language's complexity, she emphasised its importance in accessing, clarifying, and verifying information from diverse sources. Language proficiency, according to Anastasia, broadens the scope of available literature – an invaluable asset in any professional endeavour.

RUDN University to Keep on Strengthening Ties with Cuban Universities

In September, the V Forum of University Rectors of Russia and Cuba provided the backdrop for an enriched collaboration between RUDN University and Cuban institutions. A delegation from Cuba, comprising leaders from 13 Cuban universities, visited Russia, culminating in their visit to RUDN University on September 22.

During discussions, representatives from RUDN University and the Cuban delegation reached agreements to establish a Russian Language and Pre-University Training Centre, along with a specialised class at the Technological University of Havana (CUJAE). Plans were also set in motion to develop collaborative educational programmes in engineering and implement joint master's programmes. Furthermore, a formal cooperation agreement was signed between RUDN University and the Medical University of Havana.

Presently, RUDN University hosts 23 students from the Republic of Cuba, with five newcomers joining this academic year. The collaborative efforts date back to 2009 when a community of RUDN University students from Cuba was established, with Vitarte Anton serving as its inaugural president in the field of Law.

The university's connection with Cuba has historical roots, including a 1970 internship of students from RUDN University's Faculty of Agriculture in Cuba, where they delved into agrochemistry, soil science, and animal science in tropical conditions. Moreover, students from the Faculty of History and Philology participated in mobility projects related to translator programmes. The inception of Soviet-Cuban interstate cooperation dates back to 1960, leading to joint research endeavours between scientists from RUDN University and the Central University of Las Villas (Santa Clara) on the characteristics of mineral nutrition and the effectiveness of different densities of rice sowing in Cuba.

Earlier interactions included a RUDN University delegation's visit to Cuba for the XX Meeting of the intergovernmental Russian-Cuban commission on trade, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation. During this visit, university representatives actively engaged in meetings of the Russian-Cuban working group on education and science, resulting in the signing of several cooperation agreements.

Unlocking UN Opportunities: Career Consultant Guides RUDN University Students in a Master Class

Navigating the intricacies of securing a job at the United Nations was the focus of a master class led by Yanturina Darles, a career consultant specialising in internships and employment

within the UN system. Aisylu hosted the session, where 100 students from 29 countries explored the selection process for international internships, crafting effective applications, and discovering avenues for involvement in large-scale projects.

Darles emphasised the importance of understanding the branched and multi-level management structure of large international organisations, including the UN, before embarking on a career path. Exploring internship opportunities is a crucial initial step, with both offline and online programmes available. Darles cautioned against relying solely on job aggregator sites, pointing out the potential for outdated or unverified job offers. She underscored that the UN does not require payment for application consideration, emphasising the need to remain vigilant against scammers.

Opportunities for employment or internships within the UN system include avenues such as the Young Professionals Programme, Junior Professional Officers, volunteer programmes, consultant roles (international consultants and contractors), and full-time positions.

Darles shared key advice on preparing for an internship in an international organisation: thoroughly research the organisation or project to understand its mission and activities; tailor your application, placing emphasis on volunteer work and involvement in student organisations if lacking professional experience; craft a compelling motivation letter, highlighting skills gained through volunteering or student activism; prepare for the interview, typically an informal conversation with the team overseeing the internship; express gratitude to the team for their time during the interview; maintain enthusiasm, recognising that youth brings energy and a positive contribution to global social, environmental, and economic issues.

Students reflected on what they had learned during the master class. Nadezhda Slivko, a student of the Faculty of Economics, found inspiration in a collaboration between fashion houses and African tribes, underscoring the importance of learning about the organisational process, logistics, and communication specifics in international projects. Yasmina Mamadrizakhonova, another student of the Faculty of Economics, expressed gratitude for learning about the stages of UN employment and effective resume presentation, enhancing her understanding of how to pursue a career in her dream company.

Building Bridges: RUDN University and Samarkand State University Strengthen Educational Collaboration

Experts from the RUDN Institute of Foreign Languages embarked on a collaboration journey with Samarkand State University named after Sharof Rashidov. During their visit, they delivered lectures and conducted master classes for colleagues, undergraduates, and graduate students. The representatives from the Institute of Foreign Languages immersed themselves in understanding the intricacies of organising the educational process and explored the methods employed in teaching foreign languages within master's and postgraduate courses. The discussions paved the way for outlining future productive plans for

collaboration, focusing primarily on intercultural communication, linguistics, education, and modern languages as key areas of cooperation.

Akmal Akhatov, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation at Samarkand State University, expressed enthusiasm about modernising educational programmes in the theory and practice of foreign languages for master's and postgraduate studies. He emphasised the importance of continuing professional and creative contacts with RUDN University.

Natalya Sokolova, Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages at RUDN University, echoed the sentiment, highlighting the extremely promising nature of their cooperation in science and education. She outlined plans to elevate academic interaction to new heights, including the implementation of inclusive learning programmes, double diplomas, double scientific supervision in master's and postgraduate studies, and the organisation of joint international congress events. Sokolova conveyed RUDN University's readiness to share innovative developments and forward-looking ideas with their esteemed partner, Samarkand State University named after Sharof Rashidov.

Deputy Minister Andrei Omelchuk Visits RUDN University: Inspiring Initiations, Engaging Student Fair, and Unveiling of Modern Student Spaces

On September 1, RUDN University welcomed Andrei Omelchuk, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. The day's agenda featured the initiation of medical school students, the student activity fair 'Open the World of RUDN!', and the inauguration of a new student space. The deputy minister's schedule for the day was packed with meetings. In just over an hour, he engaged with first-year medical students, interacted with young scientists at the student activity fair, and inaugurated a new co-working space and canteen, accomplishing each task seamlessly.

The initiation of first-year medical students drew a full audience, with 885 individuals embarking on their journeys to become doctors, dentists, pharmacists, biologists, and nurses. The programmes in General Medicine and Dentistry ranked among the top five most popular choices, with General Medicine and Pharmacy being particularly favoured by Olympiad winners.

Andrey Omelchuk commended RUDN University for its rich history, traditions, and the presence of a diverse international student body. He expressed confidence in the students receiving a quality education and developing invaluable international communication skills, emphasising the multinational nature of the medical field.

The fair, spanning two days, showcased the vibrant student activity landscape. Mr Omelchuk engaged with the Connect community leaders assisting students with disabilities, explored the offerings of the career centre, attended a 'Digital Philologist in Action' master class, participated in Science talk with young scientists, and connected with students from Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. Various activities, including a

crime investigation quiz, Formula 1-style driving lessons, and a meeting with environmental journalists, awaited the deputy minister for the following day. The programme also included a visit to the recently renovated dining room and co-working space on Miklouho-Maklaya Street. Spanning 1,700 square meters, the space offers comfort, with seating for 214 people and a diverse menu. The focus of the reconstruction is the co-working area, featuring 157 comfortable seats, strategically designed for both project discussions and individual work. The overall concept incorporates a meeting room and an amphitheatre for public speaking.

Before concluding the day, Mr Omelchuk surpassed the programme's expectations by visiting the clinical diagnostic centre of RUDN University. Despite ongoing construction until August, doctors continued to see patients, with essential repairs completed on the entrance lobby and medical offices on two floors before the new academic year.

TLC News

The Fate of Book Reviews

In the era of digitalisation, the once-thriving genre of book reviews appears to be on the decline. Despite its potential benefits, such as providing valuable feedback to authors and enhancing the visibility of reviewed works, book reviewing often receives scant attention as an independent practice. Compounding the issue, book reviews currently lack a distinct category in major databases like Scopus and OpenAlex. While Web of Science stands out in this regard, the absence of book reviews in these databases, or their challenging identification among journal articles, raises concerns about their visibility and significance.

A recent post from The Scholarly Kitchen looks into the unfair devaluation of book reviews, prompted by an article titled 'In Defense of the Beleaguered Academic Book Review'. The article expresses concerns about the inadequate recognition of the time and effort invested in writing reviews, with some universities even discouraging faculty from engaging in this practice due to its limited impact on formal indicators. The plea urges university administrations to reconsider their stance and acknowledge the value of book reviews in academia. Jill O'Neill, the author of The Scholarly Kitchen post, argues that book reviewing should not be dismissed as a mere by-product of academia. Instead, it serves a crucial role in shaping public opinion and evaluating market trends. Beyond supporting dialogue among scholars, book reviews are a crucial part of publishing and library science, aiding in the dissemination of new products. The absence of timely and insightful commentary on new books creates challenges for authors, publishers, and platforms alike.

The future of book reviews faces a potential threat from generative neural networks. While some may view this as a looming danger, the note's author maintains a level of optimism, emphasising that AI has yet to fully master the complex task of crafting nuanced book reviews. Nonetheless, the author acknowledges the possibility that AI may soon catch up, particularly among aspiring young scientists for whom writing book reviews serves as an entry point into the realm of academic publishing.

Amidst the evolving landscape of book reviews, it is imperative to underscore TLC's commitment to this invaluable genre. Recognising the enduring significance of book reviews in promoting scholarly discourse, shaping public opinion, and contributing to the evaluation of academic works, we remain dedicated to providing a platform for this critical form of academic engagement. Book reviews, with their ability to offer critical evaluations, serve as essential guides for readers, scholars, and institutions navigating the vast realm of literature. As a journal committed to the dissemination of knowledge and the facilitation of meaningful academic discussions, we understand the role that book reviews play in this endeavour. By continuing to publish book reviews, we aim to contribute to the vitality of academic dialogue, promote informed decision-making in literature acquisition, and support the growth of both seasoned and emerging authors.

2022 Science Index Ranking

The RISC website has recently disclosed the Science Index (SI) ranking for Russian journals in 2022. This revised ranking adheres to the principles announced in March of this year, with a focus on normalising citations at the individual article level and omitting the use of thematic rubricators. This unveiling describes the positioning and performance of journals within the Russian academic sphere.

TLC has been ranked at 750 in the Science Index for 2022, determined through a specialised methodology. The percentile ranking places it at the 19th position, indicating its relative standing within the ranked list of journals. Percentiles are determined by dividing the ranked list of journals into 100 equally sized groups. A lower percentile indicates a closer proximity to the top of the Science Index ranking.

In specific subject areas, TLC secured the 13th position in the Science Index for 2022 under Public Education and Pedagogy. Additionally, the journal attained the 26th position in the broader subject of Linguistics. These rankings reflect the journal's standing within its academic domains, as assessed by the specialised methodology applied in the ranking process.

These results underscore TLC's place in the SI framework, reflecting its position and impact across diverse subject areas.