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PROCEEDINGS

*Overcoming Challenges, Exploring Possibilities:
New Practices in Languages, Literatures and Cultures*



1st - 3rd August 2023



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Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
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Email: micollacproceedings@gmail.com
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PREFACE

Language, literature, and culture are the intertwining threads that shape the rich tapestry of human expression and understanding. They are the vehicles through which we communicate, explore our imaginations, and connect with one another across time and space. In this compilation of conference proceedings, we embark on a remarkable journey through the realms of language, literature, and culture, delving into the captivating intersections and profound insights they offer in the quest to overcome challenges while exploring possibilities via new practices.

These proceedings encapsulate the spirit of intellectual inquiry, the pursuit of knowledge, and the ceaseless quest to comprehend the mysteries and complexities of language, literature, and culture. The depth and breadth of the topics covered within these pages are a testament to the boundless exploration on these three realms. From the intricate nuances of syntax and semantics to the powerful narratives woven through literary masterpieces, from the exploration of cultural identities to the examination of societal norms, each contribution offers a unique lens through which we can deepen our understanding of the human experience.

Moreover, the diverse range of methodologies, theories, and interdisciplinary perspectives showcased here highlights the dynamism and adaptability required to navigate the complexities of our globalized world and how new practices allow us to explore endless possibilities to overcome on-going challenges. It is a reminder that these fields are not stagnant, but rather, they thrive on curiosity, collaboration, and continuous exploration.

On behalf of the MICOLLAC 2023 proceeding committee, we extend our deepest gratitude to all the contributors and reviewers whose dedication and passion have brought this compilation to fruition. Their tireless efforts to shed light on the intricate web of language, literature, and culture have enriched our understanding and inspired new avenues of thought.

Arbaayah Ali Termizi
Nurul Atiqah Amran

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A STUDY OF THE FREQUENCY OF ENGLISH MODAL VERBS IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF JAPANESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Akemi Matsuya^{1*} and Chikako Takahashi²

¹Takachiho University, Japan

²Tokyo Junshin University, Japan

E-mail: a-matsuya@takachiho.ac.jp

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

In order to clarify why Japanese learners have difficulties using English modal verbs, we attempted to investigate the characteristics of English modal verbs (Palmer, 2013; Leech, 2004) and the frequency of modality used in academic writing which was designed to elicit equal usage of deontic and epistemic modal verbs by intermediate-level Japanese university students, from linguistic perspectives. Our analysis reveals that the deontic ‘must’ and ‘should’ were used almost exclusively. The total frequency of the deontic ‘must’ and ‘have to’ is almost equivalent to that of the deontic ‘should,’ which signifies that the students’ preference is to use the moderate expression ‘should’. The exclusively high ratio of deontic usage is similar to Hinkel’s (2009) corpus research on L2 writing but opposite that of Biber et al. (1999). Unlike the studies on the L2 acquisition order of modal verbs by adult L2 learners such as Kurotaki (2005) and Stephany (1995), we can assume that the students acquire the deontic use first and then the epistemic.

KEYWORDS

Modality; deontic; epistemic; frequency; L2

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INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, deontic modality expresses duty or obligation, while epistemic refers to possibility. Deontic and epistemic modal verbs, such as ‘must,’ ‘should,’ ‘have to,’ and ‘need to’ are significant in expressing the psychological attitude of the writer, and in persuading a reader to accept a particular point of view.

The objective of this paper is to analyse data from a writing task assigned to Japanese EFL university students, examine the frequency of deontic and epistemic modal verb usage, and view the motivation for their sentence production with deontic and epistemic modal verbs from linguistic perspectives.

RELATED LITERATURE

Modal verbs, which represent the speaker’s/writer’s attitude, such as obligation, permission, suggestions, advice, and so on, have been argued in linguistic research as well as pedagogical studies. Palmer (2013) and Leech (2004) have produced seminal studies on English modal verbs, analysing the meaning and usage of modality descriptively. In both studies, the deontic ‘must’ expresses strong obligation, as in the example: “The University is saying, ‘These people must be expelled if they disrupt lectures’ (S.11.2. 59)” (Palmer, 2013, p. 73). “He’s not home yet – he must be working late at the office” is an example of the epistemic ‘must’ and means strong conjecture (Leech, 2004, p. 79). While some of their definitions concur with Sweetser's (1990), the latter's interpretation of epistemic tends to be more expansive.

The deontic ‘should’ is defined as a so-called weaker version of the deontic ‘must,’ as the following illustrates: “Milo should pay for that broken window” (Leech, 2004, p. 101). The epistemic ‘should’ is regarded as a weaker version of conjecture, as seen in Palmer’s (2013, p. 56) sentence, “Well both of them should be on the Modern Board (S.8.10.4).”

The deontic ‘have to’ is said to be interchangeable with the deontic ‘must,’ as in Leech (2004, p. 80): “The Department of Education will have to rethink its policy.” Citing (Palmer's (2013, p. 56) example of the epistemic ‘have to,’ “If you’ve seen all the old Frankensteins you’ve got to know all the jokes (S.2.10.94)”, he points out that use of the epistemic ‘have to’ is rare, as does Leech (2004).

The deontic ‘need to’ implies internal constraint. Palmer (2013) claims that ‘need to’ is more used than ‘need,’ especially in American English, as his example illustrates: “Although she’s obviously highly qualified, her field isn’t one that I think we need to go for (S.2.6.121)” (p. 127). On the other hand, Leech (2004) mentions that it may be ambiguously interpreted as obligation and necessity, as per his (p. 102) example of an epistemic ‘need to’: “You need to get a hair-cut.”

METHODS

We designed the following writing task to motivate first year Japanese university students to produce sentences using modal verbs. We set the prompt (1d), following Hinkel (2009) who discussed the significance of the topic for triggering the usage of modal verbs. Students completed their essays, under a repeated procedure (1f) for each subtopic. We then conducted error analysis of the inappropriate usage of modal verbs. Finally, the linguistic background behind the students' usage of these modal auxiliaries and their order of acquisition was considered.

- (1)
 - a. Subjects: 47
 - b. Term: October 2021 – November 2021
 - c. Proficiency level of English: intermediate, class average TOEIC score: 446.6 and 464.0
 - d. Prompt: ‘Which country takes more effective measures against COVID-19?’ Compare the countermeasures of Japan and New Zealand or Great Britain, concerning three issues: (i) vaccination, (ii) immigration control, and (iii) restrictions on behaviours.
 - e. Writing style: point-by-point Compare and Contrast
 - f. Procedure: research → in-class discussion → completion of mind map → passage writing

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We explored the frequency of the modality production in total and the appropriateness of modality usage. The results showed that the deontic ‘should’ was used more frequently than the deontic ‘must’: the total frequency of the deontic ‘must’ and ‘have to’ is almost equivalent to that of the deontic ‘should’. This higher ratio of deontic modal verbs supports Hinkel’s findings (2009) and contrasts with those of Biber et al. (1999), where the frequency of deontic modals was almost half the epistemic. As Hinkel (2009) claims, the frequency of modal verbs might be due to the influence of the writing topic. In addition, Japanese English learners seem to acquire deontic modal auxiliaries earlier than the epistemic, a finding which differs from those of Kurotaki (2005) and Stephany (1995): their order of modal verbs in the case of adult L2 learners is ‘epistemic modal verbs > deontic modal verbs.’

- (2) The Frequency
 - a. Deontic ‘must’: 11
 - b. Deontic ‘should’: 18
 - c. Deontic ‘have to’: 8
 - d. Deontic ‘need to’: 7
 - e. Epistemic ‘must’: 4
 - f. Epistemic ‘should’: 0
 - g. Epistemic ‘have to’: 1
 - h. Epistemic ‘need to’: 0

It was noted that our subjects correctly used the deontic ‘must,’ meaning a strong irresistible, imperative and subjective force, such as obligation imposed by the government and legal force (see Sweetser, 1990; Tyler et al., 2010), and the deontic ‘should,’ which implies resistible force, request and desirability (Leech, 2004: 100 -101; Sweetser, 1990. Sentences (3a), meaning legal requirement, and (3b), expressing desirability and request with the phrase, ‘I think’ are examples of this usage. On the other hand, there are some mistakes in the usage of the deontic ‘have to’. For example, consider (3c), where ‘have to’ should be replaced with ‘must’ because of obligations directed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, (3d), where ‘need to’ should be replaced with ‘must,’ shows that some students have difficulties with proper usage between the deontic ‘must’ and ‘need to.’ In order to express

the writer's strong feeling, the deontic 'should' is better replaced with the deontic 'must,' as in (3e).

(3) Representative Samples from Student Writing

- a. In addition, after March 19, 2021, all immigrants must submit an inspection certificate within 72 hours before departure.
- b. I think that the third vaccination and individual control measures should continue in the future.
- c. The Ministry of Foreign affairs tells that we have to hand in the evidence of vaccination in order to travel abroad, additionally stay apart from other people for no less than two weeks.
- d. They also need to register an app on their smartphone. In principle, New Zealand prohibits foreigners from entering the country.
- e. Now, in Japan, the number of infected people is decreasing. But, we should stay alert and think of better policies.

CONCLUSION

In short, Japanese English learners overuse the deontic 'should,' which means they hesitate to mention strong, irresistible, and imperative force. Considering the combination of 'I think' and the deontic 'should,' they tend to express their personal opinion, request, and recommendation. In other words, the writer implies expectation and no irresistible force, and does not commit to the fulfilment of the action. In addition, it may be said that the topic of the writing task, which focused on the effective measures against the Coronavirus, promoted less usage of epistemic modal verbs.

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ADAPTING THE SILL FOR A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING SETTING: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Akihiro Saito^{1*}, Junko Maeda², and Mariko Iwasaki²

¹Tokyo University of Science, Japan

²Hachinohe Institute of Technology, Japan

E-mail: aki.saito@rs.tus.ac.jp

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) proficiency has long been institutionalised as a requirement for both university admission and business and government employment worldwide, including in Japan. This trend has made the development of psychometrically sound and contextually valid measures of foreign language learning strategies essential, especially for adult learners about to enter the workforce. The present study adapted the 50-item strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) as an adult foreign language learning strategy inventory for 271 university EFL students. Some inventory items were first adjusted by experts to reflect the actual language use and learning situation of EFL learners in Japan. Then, per the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis results, a 22-item scale was proposed for further validation, named the SILL-EFL. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed a good fit with the sample (CFI = .89, TLI = .86, SRMR = .056, RMSEA = .061). This new instrument has good psychometric properties for assessing EFL students' strategy use in Japanese tertiary contexts per the six strategy categories, with adequate to good internal consistency (from .58 to .81; overall .87). To conclude, this new instrument has viable, practical utility in clarifying the instructional intervention needs of adult EFL learners' strategy use.

KEYWORDS

Language learning strategies; Japanese university students; Factor analysis; Instructional intervention needs

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, learning strategies have occupied a major place in the study of second language (L2) learning. This is due to the fact that the use of language learning strategies is related to L2 learning outcomes. Language learners need to take initiative along the learning pathway, and, therefore, must know and use learning strategies to regulate their learning (Griffiths, 2018). English language proficiency has long been internalised within social practices in many parts of the world, including university admissions and corporate and government recruitment practices. The same applies to EFL settings in Japan. In the current social structure, it has become essential to develop a psychometrically sound and contextually valid measure of foreign language learning strategies, especially for adult learners about to enter the workforce. By adapting the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990), this study aims to develop a valid measure to ascertain strategy-use behaviour that is more contextualised in terms of the learners' developmental stage, regular language use, and learning environment.

RELATED LITERATURE

Although there are multiple ways to classify L2 strategies, Oxford's (1990) six-classification model is prominent (Rose, 2015) and is still used today (e.g., Lee, 2023). This model categorises specific strategies into six groups (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social), which together construct the SILL. Since SILL items measure the frequency of learners' behaviours, they are not cumulative, and aggregating mean scores has been criticised as psychometrically unsound (Tseng et al., 2006). Indeed, Robson and Midorikawa (2001) tested the validity of the original SILL with a sample of Japanese university students with low–intermediate English proficiency and noted methodological problems with SILL's metalanguage and item appropriateness for Japan's EFL environment. However, Ardasheva and Tretter (2013) reported that inspection of the central tendency and variability statistics of the SILL adapted for English as a second language indicated that the newly validated short form of the SILL scale provided an adequate range from which respondents could select the point on the continuum that best approximated their strategy use behaviour. Ardasheva and Tretter argued that the common methodological approach in educational psychology of using behavioural items to measure latent constructs, such as learner characteristics and behaviours, provides valid findings for adults and children alike, further reinforcing the practice. Hence, amending the existing scales, including the SILL, to suit a specific research demand or population is recommended (Amerstorfer, 2018; Rose et al., 2018). Indeed, an adaptation has been attempted in a European context (Saks & Leijen, 2018), but none seems to exist in a Japanese setting.

METHODS

This study adapted the 50-item SILL for use in a Japanese context. The full SILL was translated into Japanese by the first and second authors, who are English language teaching experts, and the Japanese translation was back-translated into English by a professional translation service. Any differences between the original SILL and the back-translation were resolved between the first and second authors to finalise the literal Japanese translation. This translation process was followed by adding specific demonstrative strategy-use behaviours to

reflect the language use and learning situation of EFL learners in Japan. The wording of the items was then tweaked or altered under the guidance of the third author, a Japanese language scholar, and the final version of the adapted SILL was developed. Alterations were made to 30 items. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants from two private science and engineering universities; 271 students responded to the adapted SILL through an online questionnaire. The research policy, including the following points, was explained in the online survey: participants' anonymity and privacy, their fully voluntary participation, an estimate of the time required to complete the online questionnaire, and participants' right to withdraw without any explanation or consequence. Participants' specialisations included mathematics, physics, life sciences, pharmacy, mechanical engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, information science, civil and architectural engineering, and design. The data were first subjected to exploratory factor analysis using the least-squares method with Promax rotation. Several cross-loading items were sequentially omitted, and a reduced 6-strategy model was proposed. This was followed by a confirmatory factor analysis to inspect the fit of the model to the same dataset.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the factor analyses, a 22-item scale was proposed for further validation using another testing sample. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed a good fit of the model to the sample ($CFI = .89$, $TLI = .86$, $SRMR = .056$, $RMSEA = .061$), and the inventory was temporarily named SILL-EFL. The items in the portfolio included the following: three memory ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 0.82$), four cognitive ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.90$), three compensatory ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.83$), six metacognitive ($M = 2.72$, $SD = .81$), three affective ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.84$), and three social strategies ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 0.93$). This new instrument has good psychometric properties for assessing EFL students' strategy use in Japanese tertiary contexts for six categories, with adequate-to-good internal consistency levels (from .58 to .81; overall .87). A resulting portfolio of 22 strategy items was obtained, 16 of which were altered. From research and pedagogical perspectives, this outcome has two major benefits. First, the study reaffirmed that existing L2 inventories could be adapted to suit the characteristics of the target learners and the learning environment in a way that is psychometrically sound. Further, the results are significant in that the new instrument provides a strategy-use assessment tool to enhance instructional efficiency, which was non-existent in the Japanese EFL context.

CONCLUSION

It was shown that the much-critiqued SILL could be turned into a robust measure through context-specific adaptation in a Japanese higher education setting. The measure is expected to be used to provide an empirical basis for educational interventions. This new instrument has viable and practical utility in clarifying the instructional intervention needs of adult EFL learners' strategy use. The validity of this tool needs to be further tested on a different sample to increase its future reliability as an assessment tool.

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GENDER REPRESENTATION IN MALAYSIAN PRIMARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS: WHERE DO WE STAND?

Amira Aqila Hanim*, Maryam Nur Huda Jaafar, Yiming Jing, Muhammad Amir Asyraf Mohd Muzzafa, and Mei Yuit Chan

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia
E-mail: amiraqila02hanim@gmail.com
*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Gender bias is an issue in school textbooks when one gender is mentioned more frequently in the textbooks. Certain roles and activities, especially those that implicate powerful and subservient positions, are represented as closely associated with a particular gender. Particularly in primary school textbooks, the effects of an unbalanced gender representation can have harmful repercussions on pupils' social and psychological development. Scholars especially in the Asian region have examined primary and high school textbooks and found that there is still much room for improvement. In Malaysia, research that has examined gender representation in primary English language textbooks was done more than 10 years ago, and there has been no published study assessing the textbooks that are currently in use in Malaysian primary schools. This study sought to determine the extent to which the male and female genders are represented in the English language textbooks used in Malaysian state-funded primary schools. A corpus-based approach was used to analyse the reading comprehension sections and their related questions in the Primary 5 and 6 textbooks. The findings show a relatively balanced representation of both genders indicating a positive development in the selection of English language textbooks for use in primary schools.

KEYWORDS

Gender bias; gender representation; Malaysian primary English textbooks; corpus-based approach

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INTRODUCTION

Gender bias in language still exists in today's world and there is a strong stereotypical idea that the public sphere is dominated by men, while the private sphere is dominated by women. This type of representation is found in school textbooks and it is a problem that may negatively affect children and their development.

Several studies have shown that gender bias still exists in educational textbooks through both language and visual representation and that the extent of gender bias in textbooks may vary in different countries and at different time periods. For example, a recent study, which analysed the representation of gender stereotypes in English language textbooks used in Indonesia, showed that males are more dominantly represented than females in both written texts and visual usage (Tyarakanita et al., 2021). In contrast, gender representation in Hong Kong primary English textbooks found females are no longer invisible compared to previously conducted research and are represented as people who can handle various types of tasks (Yang, 2011). In Malaysia, a study conducted ten years ago on gender representation in primary school textbooks showed a bias towards the male gender (Hamid et al., 2008). Since then, there has not been a status check on gender representation in Malaysian primary school textbooks to determine whether gender bias awareness has been addressed in the textbooks used by young school children. Hence, the aim of the current study was to examine how gender is represented through language in the Malaysian primary school English language textbook to find out the extent to which gender bias exists in the current set of textbooks in use.

Gender Stereotyping in Educational Materials

Language sexism refers to the gender bias that takes place when language is used (Menegatti & Rubini, 2017) while gender role refers to the expectation of society towards the attitude and actions of an individual based on socially constructed understanding of gender (Laff & Ruiz, 2019). A related concept is gender stereotyping where men are assumed by society to be masculine and females are expected to adopt a feminine role (Kachel et al., 2016). The danger of stereotyping is that it limits a person's chance to express themselves and prove to the world what they are capable of.

Textbooks are the most common reading material used by students and they contribute significantly to students' cognitive development. Gender bias in textbooks and other educational materials such as teaching aids, activities, and language can promote gender stereotyping (Sekhar & Parameswari, 2020). Attention to gender representations in educational resources is important as these resources are susceptible to the influence of gender stereotyping (Curaming & Alkaff, 2021). It is a challenge to achieve gender equality if gender bias in school textbooks is not addressed (Asadullah et al., 2018).

METHODS

This study adopts the research design employed by Hamid et al. (2008) to analyse gender representation in primary textbooks. Primary-level textbooks were chosen because children at the age of 11 and 12 are most susceptible to be influenced by what they see or hear. The corpus-based discourse analysis method was used to extract relevant data for analysis. The concordance tool, *Antconc* (Anthony, 2002), was used to assist in identifying the gender.

Purposive sampling was used to select comprehension texts and sets of questions from the Standard 5 and 6 English primary textbooks. Only texts and sets of questions that indicate at least one male or female character will be used as both are the important components to be analysed in this study. In order to identify and address sources of gender bias, the data were analysed for the number of male and female characters based on characters' names, pronouns and addressed titles, and stereotyping of gender roles for both males and females interpreted in conjunction with the associated social and occupational settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results from analysing the Standard 5 English textbook showed that the females are still stereotypically represented as they have a more restricted and less varied type of occupation while the males are not stereotypically represented as they are given a wider range of occupations and tasks. However, both males and females are not stereotypically represented in the Standard 6 English textbook. Based on the results found, the data that were collected from the 2022 edition of Standard 5 and 6 English textbooks show a slight difference in the use of male and female characters. In terms of occupation and activities, males and females are still stereotypically represented in the standard 5 English textbooks, but not in the standard 6 English textbook.

This result of how males and females are portrayed in the Standard 6 English textbook differs from the results from Hamid et al. (2008) who found that the presence of males is more dominant in the Standard 3 and 6 English primary textbooks 2004 edition. However, the result is quite similar to that of Yang's study in 2011 where he examined gender representation in Hong Kong primary English textbooks and found that females are clearly seen and represented as empowered and capable.

CONCLUSION

Based on the current study, it shows mixed results considering the textbooks of Standard 5 and 6. In terms of influencing the language using habits, the texts did not underestimate the contributions of females and in recent years, females are less regarded as subordinate to males. It appears that textbook writers attach importance to female roles. A remarkable trend shows that gender equality awareness has improved in recent years in Malaysia, which can be inferred due to the developments in social situations that will give females empowerment. There exist limitations of the research in that Standard 5 and 6 English textbooks may not be generalisable to the other textbooks. Hence, further studies need to be done on more current primary English textbooks to identify bias in textbooks at other levels.

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ROLE ALLOCATION OF SOCIAL ACTOR IN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE 2019 HONG KONG PROTESTS

Amirah Athirah Amir Yazid* and Anis Shahira Bazlan

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

E-mail: amirahathirah@uitm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

In Hong Kong, protest is a common phenomena. In June 2019, the world shifted focus towards Hong Kong again as a series of protests took place regarding the amendment of a bill. Online media were used to report news regarding this social unrest. This study aims to find out how the Hong Kong Protestors were represented in the news reports from China and Hong Kong respectively. In order to answer the research questions formulated in this study, role allocation is selected from the framework by Van Leeuwen (2008) to aid in understanding the representation and the framework to depict social actors in Hong Kong protests. The study collected 80 news reports from *China Daily (CD)* and *South China Morning Post (SCMP)* in the duration of six months starting from the first protest in June 2019 to December 2019. The news reports were analysed and categorised according to the conceptual framework. The results of the study found that in general, both news outlets *CD* and *SCMP* depicted the social actors in Hong Kong protests negatively in their news reports. This study also found activation, subjection and beneficialisation were the way the social actors were represented and depicted in the news reports. The findings would provide insight to readers on how role allocation is depicted through Discourse Analysis.

KEYWORDS

Protest; discourse analysis; role allocation; social actors; representation; Hong Kong

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INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses how the Hong Kong protestors were represented in the news reports from China and Hong Kong. It aims to shed light to the understanding of how the social actors are depicted in the Hong Kong protests that occurred within the span of 6 months, starting from June to December 2019. News articles in the form of internet newspaper from two media outlets from *South China Morning Post (SCMP)* in Hong Kong and *China Daily (CD)* from Mainland China were analysed through Discourse Analysis to help answer the research question on how SCMP and CD use role allocation of social actor in discourse analysis in news reporting of the 2019 Hong Kong Protests.

RELATED LITERATURE

The pro-democracy protests which unfolded in Hong Kong in 2019 sparked a multitude of discourses across various media platforms. The literature review for this study focuses on key articles that employ discourse analysis to examine the language, narratives, and power dynamics surrounding the Hong Kong protests in 2019 such as Ping (2022) and Pubrik (2019). The framework by Van Leeuwen (2008) was used to aid in understanding the representation to depict the roles of social actors in the protests.

Application of discourse analysis to international news coverage of the Hong Kong protests investigates the discursive construction of the protests and the representation of different actors, such as protesters, the Chinese government, and international stakeholders. (Ho, Janet & Chiu, Ming, 2021). Whilst Huang, & Li. (2019), examines how media narratives shape public perceptions and influence the global discourse surrounding the protests. As the focus of this study is to reveal the social actors in terms of role allocation depicted by the newspapers *CD* and *SCMP*, this paper discusses the various discursive strategies employed by different media outlets and their implications.

METHODS

This research adopted a qualitative approach to investigate the representation of Hong Kong protestors. The news articles from *CD* and *SCMP* were analysed using Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework of the representation of social actors, which uses the sociological categories of discourse to analyse texts. A thorough analysis of the texts focused on the representation of social actors in the Hong Kong protests that occurred from 13th June to 31st December 2019. A total of 80 related articles were selected through purposive sampling. The articles that were analysed in this study had specific keywords related to the Hong Kong protests and protestors and the text were analysed using the framework. The usage of social actors were then grouped accordingly whether the social actors were activated, subjected or beneficialised through the portrayal of language used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of role allocation in articles from *CD*, showed the social actors are either activated, subjected, or beneficialised in the discourse. In the analysis of material processes of both media, Hong Kong Protestors are predominantly represented in terms of their movement via the use of impersonal verbs as could be seen in the example below. Although this

occurrence happened in the two selected media, *CD* from Mainland China and *SCMP* from Hong Kong, Hong Kong Protestors were depicted as more activated in *CD* when compared to *SCMP*. In conclusion from both news media, the presence of the three elements allowed the news to be more reliable and factual. In terms of material process, *CD* through the selected articles has more instances related to Hong Kong Protestors when compared to *SCMP*.

The example quoted below are from *China Daily*.

“3,000 Hong Kong Protestors **had crossed** the border every day.”

“1,778 Hong Kong Protestors **enter** Hong Kong in the past 24 hours.”

(*China Daily*, 16/06/2019)

The example showed how the material process depicted the movement as it was subdivided to signify Hong Kong Protestors movement into and within Hong Kong. The numbers are also used to signify the amount of Hong Kong Protestors which shows how the social actors are activated.

In the analysis of verbal processes, narration tends to be the most common process with verbs used to report the stories of Hong Kong Protestors. The presence of narration to provide Hong Kong Protestors' voice occurred in the two selected media, *CD* from Mainland China and *SCMP* from Hong Kong. However, the *SCMP* has more instances of verbal process in the selected news articles. Verbal processes are used to provide Hong Kong Protestors a voice and give the news a more personal experience, and this is more effective when approaching the readers regarding the issue as it provides readers an insight into the Hong Kong Protests and how Hong Kong Protestors are feeling during and regarding the whole situation.

While the analysis of mental processes indicating that Hong Kong Protestors are represented predominantly in terms of the challenges they are facing during the Hong Kong Protests only occurred in the news from *CD* and was not present in *SCMP*. This does not mean *SCMP* lacks in reporting the issue regarding the Hong Kong Protestors, but *SCMP* chose a different approach towards reporting the news of Hong Kong Protestors.

The analysis of subjection focused on the manner in which Hong Kong Protestors are represented as objects in the discourse of both online media news reports in terms of role allocation in their articles. In *CD*, Hong Kong Protestors are activated more than they are subjected or beneficialised. The most frequent beneficialised status of Hong Kong Protestors is the word *involved*. Other words like *accept*, *steer*, *help* and *support* are also frequently used to show Hong Kong's government involvement in the Hong Kong Protests.

Role allocation of beneficialised were also analysed, and media news reports of *CD* from Mainland China and *SCMP* from Hong Kong do have more similarities with each other in the way both media depict Hong Kong Protestors. Hong Kong Protestors are beneficialised heavily in more negative notes compared to it being positive in both media. The readers of the news reports would assume Hong Kong Protestors are doing protests in violence and rebelling against the Hong Kong Government's doctrine.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the representation of role allocation in terms of social actors of the Hong Kong Protests through analysis of *CD* and *SCMP* news articles. This study focused on the social actors used in the articles and adapted Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework. Through

analysis of role allocation, social actors were analysed using verbs that figuratively depicted the uncontrollable size of the social actor through activation. On the other hand, Hong Kong Protesters as social actors are represented in news reports of *SCMP* mostly as beneficialised. The usage of the words such as *use*, *appeal*, *begin*, *gather*, *increase* and *make* - beneficialised the Hong Kong Protestors in a more neutral way although they were still being negatively affected by the actions. In addition, the study found that generally, both news outlets *CD* and *SCMP* depicted the social actors in Hong Kong protests negatively in their news reports.

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COMPONENTS OF THE FINAL-YEAR PROJECT TITLES FOR UNDERGRADUATE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION STUDENTS

Anealka Aziz Hussin*, Suzana Hamzah, Nur Huslinda Che Mat, and Nur Ashiquin C. Alih

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

E-mail: anealka@uitm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Research titles are the most read part of research papers. A good research title describes the content and purpose of the study using the fewest words possible. Despite being short, composing a good title is challenging as it requires time and mental effort. Although some guidelines are provided on how to construct a research title, students may find it overwhelming, especially when they are still lacking experience in writing research papers for projects and other publications. The study aimed to analyse the final-year project titles of Intercultural Communication undergraduate students in terms of the structure of the titles, focusing on the title length, beginnings, and construction types. It also intended to determine the kind of research areas and settings the students preferred to do. A mixed-method design and purposive sampling method were adopted for this study. Only research titles from completed final-year projects were used for the study. The findings highlighted the structure of the titles, ideas on the kind of research students preferred to do and possible problems faced by students in writing research titles. This information could assist the class instructors and the students in the teaching and learning of research proposal writing and some ideas on the linguistic aspects that students could focus on.

KEYWORDS

Final year project; research titles; title length; research areas; research settings

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INTRODUCTION

As with other research titles, the title of the final year project is the first read by readers. Therefore, it should sufficiently describe the study's content and purposes. Research titles may be short but constructing them requires a mental challenge and time due to the multiple reconstructions before finally deciding on the final version of the titles. This difficulty is also reported by Swales (222), who said that composing the few words of a title could “take up an inordinate amount of time, discussion and mental effort.”

Based on the concerns highlighted earlier, the present study intends to analyse the final-year project titles in terms of sentence length, title construction, and linguistics focus of the projects. This information can assist students in constructing their FYP titles and offer students, as well as their supervisors, ideas for research that the students could work on.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In article-based publishing, research titles have become important in research papers. Bavdekar (53) viewed titles as the entryway to the contents of an article, and Belcher (220) mentioned, “Your title is the highway billboard of your article”. Being the most ubiquitous part of every research paper, thesis and conference presentation, titles not only name the work they accompany but also act as the catalyst to attract potential readers (Nagano, 134). Moreover, titles usually are viewed as the filter to encourage readership (Hyland & Zou, 4). Lewison and Hartley (341) dictate two primary purposes of titles; i) to evoke readers' attention to read and ii) to inform the readers about the paper's contents.

The matter in which the title is being formed is partly personalised to the style of the writers (Nagano, 136). Through a corpus study on titles across various disciplines, Nagano (136) identified a few components of research titles, namely title length (number of words), title style (single-unit or multiple-unit), title unit structure (syntactic structure), substantive word rate and initial article use. The decision to utilise such components is heavily dependent on the discipline of the written article and the style of writing, which suggests why writers would be advised to ‘investigate targeted journals for their individual title style preferences’ (Nagano, 138)

Title length is the most common feature and often becomes the primary concern among novice writers. Lewinson and Hartley (343) reported that title length has been increasing over time. Letchford, Moat and Preis (2) highlighted that shorter titles allow for broader readership and better citation rates. They also found that longer titles were used in less prestigious journals, as high-impact journals might restrict the length of their paper titles. A large-scale study conducted by Nagano, (136) revealed that the number of words in a title ranged from 9 to 15, depending on the discipline of the written article. Enago Academy (2022) suggested a range from 5 to 15 words. Singh, Chan, and Sidhu (7) suggested the number of words should be limited to 12 to 15, while the Sacred Heart University Library (<https://library.sacredheart.edu/>), which offers research support for its students, suggested the total number of words in the title should be limited between 10 and 15 words.

Another feature of a title is the title construction. Bavdekar (54) suggested three types of title constructions: nominal, compound, and full-sentence construction. According to Bavdekar (54), nominal titles capture the central premise of the study, while compound titles have a sub-title or hanging title, which in his study, showed a higher correlation with a higher number of citations. Lewison and Hartley (341) found that the percentage of titles with colons

or hanging titles has increased over time but varies within different fields. They also found that single authors produced more hanging titles than multiple authors. The full sentence construction, on the other hand, was uncommon and tended to be longer.

The next important aspect of a title is using an article at the beginning of the title. Based on the writing guidelines provided by the Sacred Heart University Library (<https://library.sacredheart.edu/>), words like “study of,” “analysis of,” or similar constructions should not be included. Bavdeker (54) has a similar opinion regarding the title beginning. The title may reveal how the paper is organised and can suggest a relationship between variables which support the hypothesis.

Next is the research area, which refers to a specific field or sub-discipline the research focuses on. It represents a subject matter that is going to be investigated. This research area allows readers to grasp the general theme of the study.

Lastly is the research setting, which refers to the physical, social, and cultural site where the researcher conducts the study. Research settings can vary depending on the nature of the research; some can be in a real-world context such as fieldwork, classroom, corpus-based settings, etc., while others can be on an online platform that includes social media platforms, online forums, chat rooms, etc.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive and content analysis approach was conducted to analyse the general structure of the FYP titles from the aspects of title length, title beginnings and title construction. Besides that, it would also highlight areas of research and research settings that students preferred to work on. A purposive sampling method was adopted, and only research titles from the completed final-year students' projects were used for the study. 173 titles were selected as samples of the study. The titles were taken from three different semesters (Cohorts 1, 2 and 3). Microsoft Excel was used to prepare the data for the analysis. It was used to determine the length and sentence beginning of the titles. A content analysis approach was used to determine the types of title construction adopted by the students and the research areas and settings they preferred.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The recommended title length for an FYP should be between 10-15 words per title. It was found that 31.2% were longer than 15 words, 4.6% of the titles were shorter than 9 words, and 64.1% were within the suggested range. The next aspect is the title beginning. It is suggested not to include constructions like “study of,” “analysis of,” or any similar constructions in the titles (Bavdekar, 2016; Sacred Heart University Library). The result shows that 48.6% of the titles are constructed using words related to the variables, subjects and setting of the studies. The next aspect of FYP titles focuses on the construction types of titles. Out of 173 FYP titles, 156 (90.1%) are nominal titles (e.g. *The Use of Personal Pronouns in Political Speeches by Tun Dr Mahathir and President Trump*), 17 (9.9%) are compound titles (e.g. *The Representation of Gender In Malaysian and Western Children Books: A Comparative Study Between 'Bawang Putih Bawang Merah' and 'Cinderella'*), and none have full sentence construction. The nominal type of construction reflects the main topic of the study, specific variables, population or setting that will be investigated.

The second research question focuses on the research areas preferred by the students. Code-switching/code-mixing had been the favourite linguistic focus of the students. Culture, politeness strategies, and communication followed this. The linguistic focuses selected by five students each are the studies involving figurative language, slang, translation and hedges and boosters. Studies on gender, negotiation approaches, persuasive, and speech acts are selected by four students each. In contrast, studies on conversational maxims, dictions, humour, language styles, lexical-semantic analysis and metaphors are chosen by three students each. The remaining 57 titles had various research areas.

The third research question focuses on the research settings preferred by the students. Research settings refer to the physical, social, and cultural sites where the researcher conducts the study. Despite the various linguistic focuses found in the FYP titles, the research settings only revolved around 20 different settings. It was found that 29.5% (51) of the titles used various movies as the research settings. It was followed by social media (9,8%), people of various professions, songs of different genres (9.2%), various TV series (8.1%), advertisements (6.9%) and others (the remaining 19.8%).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Constructing an effective research title is a demanding task, especially for novice researchers like final-year students. Despite having to attend a class on proposal writing and having a committee to review and provide feedback for title improvement, some students still needed help constructing their FYP titles. Based on the analysis, several conclusions can be made about the FYP titles of students from the Intercultural Communication program. Some FYP titles meet the title length requirement, sentence beginning, and type of title construction, indicating that the students have acquired the skills of constructing compelling FYP titles. Some students required more practice in it. Regarding the research areas and settings, the students prefer to do content analysis and not the other types of research designs. This can be seen that preferences were on code-switching/ code-mixing, culture, politeness strategies, and communication for the research areas. In contrast, in terms of the research setting, movies received the highest preference compared to others. Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that the instructors encourage students to do research other than the content analysis method.

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**REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ACTORS IN COVID-19 SPEECHES BY
SOUTHEAST ASIAN POLITICAL LEADERS FROM BRUNEI, INDONESIA,
MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE**

Anis Shahira Bazlan* and Amirah Athirah Amir Yazid

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

E-mail: anisshahira@uitm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

COVID-19, an infectious disease outbreak originating in Wuhan was declared by the World Health Organization as a pandemic on 11 March 2020 worldwide. To date, there is substantial research that has examined this disease. However, scant attention has been paid to the representation of social actors in the Southeast Asia political discourse, hence this study aimed to examine how social actors in relation to COVID-19 represented in speeches by Southeast Asian political leaders from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. A selection of two categories adopted from van Leeuwen's (2008) Representational of Social Actors was chosen to comprehend the representation of social actors on COVID-19 portrayed in Southeast Asia. 32 transcripts of speeches on COVID-19 were collected from the official government websites in the duration of seven months from 11 March 2020 until 30 September 2020. The speeches were analysed and categorised accordingly into exclusion and role allocation. It was discovered that despite the inclusion of all social actors as playing dynamic and active roles, the government, citizens and COVID-19 were excluded in the discourse in accentuating the actions rather than the doers. The findings of this study can be useful to provide understanding on the ideology and power status in the ways the social actors were viewed and termed by political leaders in their speeches, especially in the context of Southeast Asia.

KEYWORDS

COVID-19; political speeches; social actors; representations; Southeast Asia; political leaders

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 started in early December 2019 and it was first detected among the residents of Wuhan City and had spread rapidly to almost all regions globally in 2020. WHO later declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11th March 2020. Since then, print and electronic media worldwide have been spreading awareness and information of this outbreak to seek mass consideration and persuade public opinion in the coverage of coronavirus (Atasoy, 2020) as it informs the public what to think about, and also affect what the public think of a particular topic (Chaiuk & Dunaievska, 2020).

Given the situation on the impacts of COVID-19, it is crucial for a political leader to have a better comprehension of language uses, varieties, patterns and functions in speeches and interactions as language could be a type of social practice used to control, convince, and shape the views and attitudes of individuals (Olimat, 2020). Consequently, there is a need to ascertain how the political leaders in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore reacted to this pandemic in their respective countries. Thus, the aim of this study was to examine the representation of social actors in COVID-19 speeches by analysing the speeches delivered by Southeast Asia political leaders from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

RELATED LITERATURE

Politicians make use of speeches to communicate with their followers thus acting as an important tool to captivate and maintain their followers, ensure their loyalty, and seek future support (Taiwo, 2009). However, language of political leaders consists of many filters especially when “language can misrepresent and represent realities, it can also weave visions and imaginaries which can be implemented to change realities (Fairclough, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, there is a strong connection between language and politics as “political action itself is carried out through language” (Bello, 2013, p. 86). To do that, critical discourse analysis was applied to study “the way discourse reproduces social domination” (van Dijk, 2009, p. 63) as texts are not only a result of social and political context, but also have constitutive power in shaping cognition and influencing relations among various social groups (van Dijk, 1998).

Regarding COVID-19, studies have been conducted globally on the discourse and rhetorical strategies employed by political leaders, governments and the media by analysing public health responses, newspaper headlines, political speeches and social media posts related to COVID-19. Among the studies, researchers discussed COVID-19 discourse on the use of persuasive strategies (Sun & Wah, 2020), fear-inducing language (Atasoy, 2020), and representation of government actions (Iqbal et al., 2020).

METHODS

A qualitative study of representation of social actors by van Leeuwen (2008) was adopted with its objective in investigating the representation of social actors of political leaders, the government, citizens and COVID-19 portrayed in the speeches of Southeast Asia political leaders from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. A total of 32 transcripts of speeches delivered by the heads of governments with regard to the issue of COVID-19 pandemic were gathered in the span of seven months from 11 March 2020 until 30 September 2020. These

speeches were analysed to evaluate the discursive strategies and linguistic tools used by the political leaders in handling and managing the situation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall findings in the analysis of political speeches on COVID-19 by leaders from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore showed that there was a tendency to exclude citizens as active social actors by using passive agent deletion and nominalizations in the speeches. Citizens were often suppressed or marginalised in the discourse, with the focus placed on government's actions whereby it was crucial for citizens to comply with the government's regulations and guidelines. Evidently, Brunei had emphasised the government's initiatives towards its citizens. In contrast, the governments in Indonesia and Malaysia were portrayed as the main source of initiatives despite being hidden in several instances as to accentuate the assistance in dealing with COVID-19, hence creating an image of a government that concerned deeply with the citizens. Furthermore, it can be seen through the intense usage of passivation rather than active structure in focusing on the efforts without any attention to the social actor '*the government*'. Overall, the government and citizens were excluded in most situations to suit the speaker's political agenda.

Despite the exclusion of social actors, the power dynamics and influence of political leaders in shaping perceptions and behaviours about COVID-19 was found throughout the discourse as it revealed that COVID-19, citizens, and the government with political leaders were predominantly activated in their roles. COVID-19 was framed as having significant impacts on people's lives, creating a sense of fear and urgency. With that, political leaders tend to emphasise on the governments' initiatives and measures through verbs like '*work*', '*make*', and '*take*', highlighting their active roles in managing the situation. Moreover, the portrayal of citizens as passive recipients reinforced the government's image as the main contributor, while political leaders were associated with giving instructions and instilling confidence to citizens by including positivism in their speeches using verbs like '*hope*', '*confident*' and '*believe*' to ensure that citizens would feel slightly at ease with the current issue. In sum, a complex representation of social actors of COVID-19, citizens, and the government with political leaders were predominantly activated over the speeches.

CONCLUSION

The representation of social actors in the COVID-19 speeches delivered by political leaders of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore demonstrated that some social actors were being excluded in highlighting its active roles that were realised linguistically. Accordingly, the speeches showed how language used by political leaders of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore was crafted to influence and manipulate the citizens based on the power given as rulers of the government and country.

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OVERT DIDACTICISM IN FILIPINO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: EXAMINING THE MORAL DIDACTICISM OF *ANG ALAMAT NG AMPALAYA* AND *NEMO, ANG BATANG PAPEL* THROUGH THE LENS OF ETHICAL CRITICISM

Anna Katrina C. Cerafica*

University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines

E-mail: accerafica@up.edu.ph

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Children's literature has always been a means of teaching young readers. Ancient Greek tales, notably Aesop's fables, are known for their moral didacticism or their propensity to teach readers about moral values. This practice of moral didacticism persists, and is particularly popular in the Philippine context, where children's literature is prized for having moral lessons. This, then, raises the question of whether these morally didactic works are adequate in educating children about moral values. This paper aims to explore that question by evaluating two Filipino children's books – *Ang Alamat ng Ampalaya* (“*The Legend of the Bitter Gourd*”) and *Nemo, ang Batang Papel* (“*Nemo, the Paper Child*”) – through the lens of ethical criticism. Specifically, it will analyse the texts' portrayals of envy. Drawing from the textual analysis, the paper will forward conclusions about the texts' moral didacticism and highlight their potential pitfalls. The findings of this study emphasise how overt didacticism can be inadequate in educating young readers about moral values because it tends to oversimplify said values and discourage further inquiry. Meanwhile, implicit didacticism, though it has its own issues, is more suited to educating young readers about moral values, especially when supplemented with paratexts and a learning environment that welcomes inquiry.

KEYWORDS

Filipino children's literature; Philippine literature; ethical criticism; moral didacticism.

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INTRODUCTION

Children's literature has always been a means for young readers to learn different values and is, thus, morally didactic. This tendency for moral didacticism is still present today, especially in Filipino children's literature. In relation to this prevalence of moral didacticism, this paper posits that *overt* moral didacticism in children's literature risks educating young readers inadequately about moral values, while more *implicit* moral didacticism does not face the same issue and is, thus, more suited to the task.

RELATED LITERATURE

Moral didacticism can be traced as far back as the Greek fables. According to Laes (2006), such stories were used not only for language education but also moral education. Similarly, Mills (2014) states that children's literature has always been a medium for transmitting values to its young readers. Such a practice persists in the Philippine context.

Research by Sagun and Luyt (2020) as well as Evasco (2011) point to how parents, teachers, and librarians put particular emphasis on a story's moral lesson, so much so that they become the "gatekeepers" of children's literature. Because of this, many writers and publishers have had to adapt to the desires of these gatekeepers, which then explains why moral didacticism is heavily emphasised in the Philippine context.

Given this, ethical criticism becomes a useful tool in evaluating local children's literature. According to Booth (1989), the stories that one reads, and especially those that one becomes attached to, say something about their ethical character. This is, in part, *because* of a story's ability to transmit values to readers, thus shaping their ethical character. Gregory (1998) builds on this notion as he highlights the inescapability of ethical criticism, underscoring the ubiquity of ethics in everyday life. By simply reading a story, one comes to ethical conclusions about the narrative and its characters. An ethical critic, then, pinpoints, prods, and questions the potential effects a story has on a reader's ethical character. Ultimately, their goal is not to tell people *what* to think, but to *invite* them to think about the stories they consume.

METHODS

The primary texts are *Ang Alamat ng Ampalaya* or *The Legend of the Bitter Gourd* (1995) by Augie Rivera and *Nemo, ang Batang Papel* or *Nemo, the Paper Child* (1994) by Rene Villanueva. Both are Filipino children's books with an age rating of 7+. The focus of the analysis will be on a commonality – notably, that both stories tackle envy. The main characters in each story experience envy stemming from wanting something they did not have. It should also be noted here that neither of these main characters are at fault for lacking what the objects of their envy possessed.

Ampalaya was envious of other vegetables, who were better-tasting, more colourful, and more beautiful. However, this envy is never addressed in the story. In fact, envy is explicitly antagonised in the text – denounced as something that is evil and should be avoided.

Meanwhile, Nemo was envious of human children who could study and play. The difference here is that the story allows him to explore the feeling of envy, but without condemning nor glorifying it. Thus, the story encourages the exploration of one's feeling of envy.

To deepen the analysis, the author will draw from ethical criticism, raising the question: What are the children's book author's responsibilities to their young readers? It will then move forward with the assertion that children's book authors ought to educate young readers about moral values through their stories. The question about the primary texts, then, becomes: *Do the stories portray envy in such a way that can adequately educate children about it?*

This leads to a discussion about overt and implicit moral didacticism, as well as their effectiveness in educating young readers about moral values. To elaborate on these ideas, the author will utilise Booth's conceptions of *potentiality* and *actualisation*. A work's *potential*, in this context, can be thought of as its capacity to lead the reader to a specific takeaway or *actualisation*. Thus, a work that is overtly didactic has a *potential* that heavily leads to a specific *actualisation*. In contrast, a work that is implicitly didactic has a potential that allows for more varied *actualisations*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evaluating *Ang Alamat ng Ampalaya* reveals that the text is overtly didactic in that its *potential* heavily pushes readers to take away (and thus, *actualise*) that envy is categorically evil. Meanwhile, *Nemo, ang Batang Papel* is more implicitly didactic as the text's *potential* is not as deliberately leading. The text does not push its readers to specific moral judgements. It also provides a more nuanced portrayal of envy. As such, its *potential* is more open-ended, allowing for more varied *actualisations*.

Drawing from the analysis of *Ang Alamat ng Ampalaya*, the author emphasises how overt didacticism can prove inadequate in educating young readers about moral values. This is because it tends to oversimplify said values and discourage further critical inquiry about the text. Meanwhile, implicit didacticism is more suited to the task. This stands despite potential pitfalls – namely, the chance that such texts could confuse rather than enlighten readers as well as the chance for problematic takeaways from the text.

CONCLUSION

The author holds that there is a space for implicitly didactic children's literature in the Philippine context. This is because, first, it is more suited to the task of educating young readers about moral values, compared to overtly didactic counterparts. Second, it has practical utility in the education sector, particularly when used for pedagogies that emphasise critical thinking. This is not to say that overt didacticism does not have a place in Filipino children's literature. The author simply argues that in terms of *moral* didacticism, implicitly didactic works are the more viable option as morality is often a complex and open-ended topic.

Finally, it should be noted that this is a presentation of preliminary research into moral didacticism in children's literature through the lens of ethical criticism. In the future, the author hopes to extend this research – to deepen the theoretical conceptions of textual *potential* and reader *actualisation*, to apply the approach to other works of Filipino children's literature, and to, hopefully, justify the practical utility of implicitly didactic children's literature in Philippine education.

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SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF TEXT-ORIENTED BUNDLES IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Chen Dan*, Ramiza Darmi, and Mohamad Ateff Md Yusof

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: gs57568@student.upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Text-oriented bundles are a function of lexical bundles in academic writing from the perspective of text organisation and discourse structure. This study is a systematic literature review of text-oriented bundles in thesis writing using the PRISMA 2020 framework. It involves a literature search of two databases within 2018–2022: SCOPUS and Web of Science. 18 articles were retrieved for further analysis. Most studies involved comparative studies of lexical bundles, including text-oriented bundles, especially four-word bundles. At the same time, research methods tend to use corpus-driven studies and quantitative studies. Regarding research genres, there are 6 articles involving research on PhD theses. The results suggest increasing the text-oriented bundles when studying lexical bundles, particularly different lengths, to meet the needs of academic thesis writing. Furthermore, another suggestion for future research is to combine text-oriented bundles and rhetorical moves to discuss PhD theses' communicative purpose and linguistic features in academic writing.

KEYWORDS

Text-oriented Bundles; Thesis; PRISMA; Systematic Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

An academic research paper is a form of academic communication; it is based on the practice and structure of the social community, conveys the author's performance, and reflects the authenticity of the content of the proposition and the argument (Hyland, 2002). In academic discourse, there are "multi-word sequences that occur most frequently and are widely distributed in different texts," which are called lexical bundles (Biber, 2010). Currently, English for Academic Purposes researchers generally agree that fluent control over general formula sequences and lexical bundles is critical to successful academic writing (Cortes, 2013; Hyland, 2008). As a function of lexical bundles, text-oriented bundles (e.g., except, on the other hand) mark textual organisation and construct discourse, convey logical relations, and promote discourse coherence and cohesion (Hyland, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a systematic and comprehensive review of the text-oriented word bundles in English academic writing. This study aims to address the following two research questions:

RQ1: What are the main research findings on the text-oriented bundles from 18 articles?

RQ2: What are the gaps that require further research?

METHODS

In this study, an SLR was carried out to summarise the research trends and gaps in text-oriented bundles from January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2022. Scopus and Web of Science were chosen as the databases for literature retrieval in this study because they are the comprehensive abstract and citation databases of peer-reviewed literature. This includes scientific journals, conference proceedings, books, and trade publications, meeting the various requirements of this literature search. Pre-set criteria for inclusion and exclusion were used for article selection by screening the titles, keywords, abstracts, and full text using specific key terms: ("lexical bundles" OR "formulaic expressions" OR "formulaic phrases" OR "lexical phrases" OR "recurrent formulas" OR "multi-word expressions" OR "prefabricated chunks") AND ("thesis" OR "dissertation").

Database

The date of retrieval was March 25, 2023. Studies were selected based on the PRISMA (Liberati, 2009) guidelines for this systematic review. Two independent researchers carefully reviewed the inclusion and exclusion criteria regarding text-oriented bundles. The search process consists of four stages: identification, screening, qualification, and inclusion. Finally, 18 articles were retrieved for further analysis.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

An example matrix of research tools for this study was provided by Dr. Gary Burkholder (2010), Walden University Writing Center. As an option to help organise the article, the following elements were selected respectively: 1) authors, 2) corpus size, 3) research objectives, 4) research methods, 5) research findings, 6) recommendations for further research, 7) genre types, and 8) functional types of lexical bundles. It provides an overview of the current state of knowledge, identifies gaps in research, justifies the need for future research, and highlights areas that require further research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analysing 18 articles involving text-oriented bundles according to the Literature Review Matrix, the number of research articles on text-oriented bundles showed a wavy trend in the past five years, steadily increasing to a peak in 2019 and then showing a downward trend, and the number of studies in 2022 was the same as that in 2018. The results also show that most of the studies used corpus-driven studies ($n = 7$), which shows an upward and stable trend because the corpus-driven method combines quantitative analysis and qualitative description. The number of quantitative studies was 6, the number of mixed studies was 3, and the number of qualitative analysis studies was 2. The most popular corpus tools are Antconc, WordSmith Tools, and Sketch Engine, which were used to count and evaluate the frequency of lexical bundles and then analyse their frequency, structure, and function, or their discourse functions in the text.

Moreover, from the results of the research objectives, the main studies focused on the comparative study of the lexical bundle ($n = 8$), such as the comparison of the use of lexical bundles in native-speaking countries and ESL countries, the comparison of the use of lexical bundles in different genres, such as undergraduate students' essays vs. English master's theses, and the comparison of lexical bundles in different disciplines. Followed by the study of the functional, structural, and frequency of the lexical bundle ($n = 6$). Followed by the bundle density and diversity ($n = 2$), the use of the lexical bundle function ($n = 1$), and the rhetorical function of discourse ($n = 1$).

In addition, from the sub-genre and function types. 17 studies (94.4%) compared the three functions of lexical bundles, whereas only one study (6.6%) focused on text-oriented bundles. The number of lexical bundles involving master's theses is 12, accounting for 66.7% of the total number of research articles. The number of PhD theses is 6, accounting for 33.3% of the total number of research articles.

Besides, in terms of the lengths of bundles in the corpus. 14 studies used 4-word bundles as the research content, accounting for 77.8% of all studies, and 2 studies with 3-5 word bundles accounted for all studies, accounting for 11.1% of all studies. There was only one study with 3-word bundles, accounting for 5.5% of the proportion of all studies.

Therefore, according to the results of the SLR analysis, future research can pay more attention to text-oriented bundles to meet the needs of the academic community. This is consistent with Hyland's (2008b) finding that text-oriented bundles are heavily underused in student writing in higher-stakes academic genres, such as master's and PhD theses. Also, future research could be more geared toward the PhD thesis, as this genre can be considered an educational genre that follows its own genre-specific characteristics and conventions (El-Dakhs, 2018). Third, future research can follow the new methodological norms to study text-oriented bundles. This also confirms Hyland's (2015) call that lexical bundles should be combined with move analysis.

CONCLUSION

This study performed an SLR of text-oriented bundles in academic writing from a genre perspective from 2018 to 2022. The results reveal research trends and gaps in research methods, objectives, and contents. For the limitations of SLR, this study only reviewed

articles from the past five years and the scope of EAP. The future study can be from other perspectives, such as phraseology, psycholinguistics, and some interdisciplinary perspectives.

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AFFECTIVE VARIABLES INFLUENCING WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN L2 AMONG MALAYSIAN UNDERGRADUATES

Fatin Nabila Abd Razak^{1*}, Sharifah Sheha Syed Aziz Baftim¹, Vahid Nimehchisalem², and Ain Nadzimah Abdullah³

¹*Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia*

²*Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*

³*Taylor's University, Malaysia*

E-mail: fatinnrazak@uitm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is notably the most important construct that facilitates second language (L2) communication. However, there are few studies on WTC in Malaysia, and the few existing studies have not simultaneously considered the three most important variables that predict willingness to communicate. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the interrelationships among the three affective variables that influence L2 WTC, namely (1) communicative confidence, (2) motivation in learning the L2, (3) international posture as conceptualised in the heuristic model of L2 WTC by MacIntyre et al. (1998) and Yashima (2002). Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used as a data analysis tool in this quantitative study. Data were collected from 540 students at a public university using a nine-construct questionnaire that was structured and adapted to address the constructs of the study. Data analysis revealed that communicative confidence was the strongest predictor of WTC in English among Malaysian students. The relationships between implicit motivation and WTC through communicative confidence were also identified as significant. Notably, direct relationships between motivation in language learning and WTC, as well as international attitudes towards WTC, were also found to be substantial. The study concluded that the affective variable of communicative confidence, among other affective variables, should receive the most attention in English language learning. Therefore, future studies can be conducted to test the validation of these findings in different language-learning contexts.

KEYWORDS

Willingness to Communicate; Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM); International Posture; Communicative Confidence; L2 Motivation

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INTRODUCTION

The high demand for English communication skills has placed huge attention on studies related to developing English language learners' communication practice. However, it is claimed that communication practice can only be developed through the learners' willingness to look for opportunities to be involved in a communication event. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), the language learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) using the target language is the primary goal of language learning. Therefore, it is imperative to study this construct, especially in relation to the factors influencing one's WTC in various authentic communication events and specifying the construct in the context of Malaysian English language learners in the current study.

Hence, the primary goal of this study is to conceptualise the Heuristic Model of L2 WTC by MacIntyre et al. (1998) in Malaysia by identifying the interrelationships between the three affective variables towards WTC in English among Malaysian undergraduates in a public university. The affective variables involved in the study are (1) communicative confidence, (2) motivation in learning L2, and (3) attitudes towards the international community, also known as International Posture.

RELATED LITERATURE

Generally, L2 WTC proposes that language students who are more active with language use have a greater potential to develop language proficiency by having more opportunities to converse with others. Thus, the more willing-to-communicate language students are, the more likely they are to succeed in the achievement of language proficiency (MacIntyre et al., 1998 & 2001; Yashima, 2002). As L2 WTC has become an essential construct in relation to SLA, many studies, such as Yashima (2002) and Peng (2014), have been conducted to investigate WTC in the context of individual countries. The results from these empirical studies complemented the Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC by MacIntyre et al. (1998).

Nevertheless, studies in relation to WTC in Malaysia are very limited and have just started to gain interest in recent years. Among the studies addressing WTC in the Malaysian context are Fatima et al. (2020), Maryam Jahedi and Lilliati Ismail, (2020), Lo (2017), and Kho Yar et al. (2018). However, among these studies, only two studies utilised Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in which the variables are investigated simultaneously. The participants targeted in these past studies also vary and do not specifically represent Malaysian undergraduates in public universities. In addition, Segar (2018) claims that the variables examined in past studies are limited and do not cover all the variables influencing WTC as suggested by MacIntyre et al. (1998). Therefore, the current study is very crucial to shed light on L2 WTC in the context of Malaysian English language learners that involve variables such as Communicative Confidence, Motivation in Learning L2, and International Posture.

METHODS

This study was a quantitative study that utilised questionnaires as the instrument for data collection from the determined sample size of 540 respondents. A model was developed, and PLS-SEM was chosen as the method of analysing the data. The study was designed to

examine the interrelationships between the three affective variables influencing L2 WTC that have been conceptualised in the Heuristic Model of L2 WTC by MacIntyre et al. (1998).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the path coefficient assessment, all the relationships indicated $t\text{-value} \geq 1.960$, thus reflecting significance at level 0.05. Specifically, the study outcomes were indicated as follows: communicative confidence ($\beta = 0.518, p < .05$), L2 learning in motivation ($\beta = 0.175, p < .05$), and international posture ($\beta = 0.142, p < .05$) were positively linked to WTC with the variance explained at 54.4%. The R^2 value of 0.5440 exceeded 0.26, thus indicating a substantial model (Cohen, 1988). In this regard, the relationships were duly supported.

Implicit connections between motivation and WTC (with communicative confidence) and international posture and WTC (with motivation) were proposed in past studies. The bootstrapping analysis revealed that both indirect effects ($\beta = 0.301, \beta = 0.117$) were significant with the t -values of 10.973 and 3.850, respectively. The indirect effects indicated 95% of Boot CI Bias Corrected: [LL = 0.351, UL = 0.358] and [LL = 0.061, UL = 0.178] and did not straddle a 0 in demonstrating the presence of mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Hence, the aforementioned relationships were also supported.

The result revealed that communicative confidence was the strongest WTC predictor with the t -value exceeding 2.580 and significance level at .01. The outcome affirmed that the Heuristic Model by MacIntyre et al. (1998) positioned the state of confidence as an immediate L2 WTC antecedent. As such, the result corresponded to multiple past studies across various settings.

Notably, L2 learning motivation reflected direct and indirect positive relationships with WTC in English as opposed to past research (Peng, 2014 & Yashima, 2002). Additionally, motivation denoted a strong communicative confidence predictor. Other viewpoints that elaborated outcome differences based on the study context involved past research performed in other nations, such as Turkey, Iran, South Korea, Japan, and China.

International posture demonstrated relatively weak significant direct and indirect relationships towards WTC in English in line with Yashima (2002) who claims that internationally-oriented individuals were more willing and motivated to communicate and learn in English.

CONCLUSION

This study affirmed the Heuristic Model of L2 WTC by MacIntyre et al. (1998) and proved that communicative confidence was the strongest predictor of Malaysian undergraduates' WTC in English. Second, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) result in this study corresponded to the applicability of the MacIntyre et al. (1998) model locally. Communicative confidence was the strongest WTC in English predictor. Hence affirmed the position of confidence as the immediate L2 WTC antecedent in the MacIntyre et al. (1998) model.

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A FANONIAN PERSPECTIVE ON A BLACK WOMAN'S PATH OF RESISTANCE IN DOLEN PERKINS-VALDEZ'S *WENCH*

Hu Jing*, Manimangai Mani, and Hardev Kaur

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: hujing.sc@163.com

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Wench (2010) by Dolen Perkins-Valdez, a New York Times best-seller, explores the lives of four black enslaved women who spend summers at Tawawa House with their white masters. The story takes place in the decade just before the Civil War, a period in US history marked by protracted hostilities between the north and the south. As black mistresses, the four female protagonists in the novel are taken as reproduction machines and sexual objects. Mawu is one of them, who has been viciously raped, beaten by her white owner, fathered four children, three of whom later sold by him. However, unlike other women, she fights against her circumstances of being enslaved since she is acutely aware of her state of being objectified. Previous research focused on motherhood and mothering empowerment for all the female protagonists in the black feminist discourse, but this study will examine Mawu's individual path to resistance using Frantz Fanon's postcolonial critical theory because Mawu's resistance is much more fierce and violent than that of other female protagonists. Three objectives are intended to be attained by this research: 1) to identify the manifestations of Mawu's resistance based on Fanon's idea of revolutionary violence; 2) to examine the psychological underpinnings for her resistance using Fanon's psychoanalysis of colonial oppression; 3) to investigate the ways she keeps her African identity on her path of resistance based on Fanon's reflection on Black Identity and Alienation. The article concludes with Mawu attaining her freedom through taking violent action. Findings from this study suggest that a violent resistance is inevitable for a colonised person to fight against racist oppression, and it is a purifying force that can remove the inferiority complex of the colonised.

KEYWORDS

Slavery; Black Woman; Resistance; Frantz Fanon

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INTRODUCTION

Perkins-Valdez is an African American author of three novels, *Wench* (2010), *Balm* (2015) and *Take My Hand* (2022). Her historical novel *Wench* is about four African American slaves named Lizzie, Sweet, Reenie and Muwu, who are transferred to Tawawa House in Ohio during the summer to serve as the mistresses of married White slave owners some years before the Civil War. Slave women in the Confederate South were subjected to severe racial and gender oppression as Blacks, chattel workers, and carnal prey to the White males (Jordan 55). As black mistresses, the four female protagonists in the novel are taken as reproduction machines and sexual objects. With the release of *Wench*, Perkins-Valdez has been praised for attaining feats in fiction that historians had a great deal of difficulty doing in historical research and writing (Green 2022). The majority of prior research on *Wench* has been devoted to studying the experiences of the mother figures and the oppressive pain that black women suffer under the context of black feminist criticism. The author of this study finds that the majority of earlier analyses have ignored Mawu, one of the four heroines and the defining character in this book. Mawu has been viciously raped, beaten by her white owner, fathered four children, three of whom later sold by him. However, unlike other women, she fights against her circumstances of being enslaved since she is acutely aware of her state of being objectified. As Levingston writes, *Wench* “depicts slaves as rebellious and having a desire to escape and, through Mawu, introduces the value of oral culture” (20). Thus, Mawu is considered to have a significant impact on how the rest of the characters evolve and how the entire novel's narrative unfolds by spreading her thoughts of freedom and resistance to other slaves. Therefore, this study will examine Mawu's individual path to resistance using Frantz Fanon's postcolonial critical theory since her resistance is much more fierce and violent than that of other female protagonists.

METHODS

Using the approach of textual analysis, this research is conducted within the framework of Frantz Fanon's postcolonial concepts. Mawu's manifestations of her resistance in Dolen Perkins-Valdez's novel *Wench* will be examined first using Fanon's concept of revolutionary violence; next, the psychological underpinnings for Mawu's resistance will be examined using Fanon's psychoanalysis of colonial oppression; and finally, Fanon's reflection on Black Identity and Alienation will be used to look into the ways Mawu maintains her African identity on her path of resistance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study's examination of Mawu, an intransigent pre-Civil War black woman, makes us more aware of the brutality that black women have endured while emphasising the necessity of resistance. First, this study dispels the historical bias that “the experience of African American men represents the experience of all African Americans” (Forbes vii), and emphasises that the history of African American resistance must not be divided or polarised by gender. Second, this research contends that Mawu is a glaringly understudied heroine among the plethora of black female characters in black women's writing because she gives a typical black female image that is a symbolic challenge to racism and patriarchy. To sum up, in a particular historical and social context, universal ideals mould resistance, but it is also

profoundly individualistic with the capacity for compassion, solidarity, and swift transmission, always along with the value of maintaining one's unique identity.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this study address the significance of a violent resistance, which is inevitable for a colonised person to fight against racist oppression, and it is a purifying force that can remove the inferiority complex of the colonised, "There are struggles, there are defeats, there are truces, and there are victories" (Fanon, 196). Only with pride of one's original culture and identity, can resistance meet hope and success.

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SYLLABLE POSITION AND VOWEL EFFECTS IN AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH LATERALS

Huang Xiuqi* and Ying Jia

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

E-mail: xiuqihuang@link.cuhk.edu.cn

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to analyse the articulatory movements linked with the mid-sagittal plane in Australian English /l/. The study involved monitoring the production of syllable-initial and -final /l/s in four distinct vowel environments (/æ/, /ε/, /ɪ/ and /u/) by six speakers, using three-dimensional electromagnetic articulography (3D EMA). The timing lag difference between the tongue tip (TT) and the tongue middle (TM) was measured, along with the lag between the tongue tip (TT) and the tongue back (TB). The results of our study show that during the production of syllable-initial /l/, the TT movement reached the target before the TM and TB movements, or in near synchrony. Conversely, in the production of syllable-final /l/, the movements of TM and TB reached the target before the TT movement. These findings suggest that there are differences in the timing and coordination of tongue movements between syllable-initial and -final /l/ production. However, the magnitude of the differences is conditioned by the adjacent vowels. The results are in accordance with past work on the production of laterals in American English. Syllable position would affect the relative timing of coronal (TT) and dorsal (TM/TB) gestures. In syllable-initial /l/s, the coronal and dorsal gestures occur almost simultaneously. However, in syllable-final /l/s, the dorsal gesture precedes the coronal gesture.

KEYWORDS

Australian English; lateral approximant; allophonic variation; articulatory phonetics; electromagnetic articulography

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INTRODUCTION

The lateral approximant /l/ is often referred to as a liquid and belongs to the phonological class of sonorants based-upon phonological behaviour. Typically, /l/ has been classified into two canonical allophones, namely the light [l] and the dark [ɫ]. The light variety is usually found in syllable-initial position (as in *lap*), while the dark variety is commonly used in syllable-final position (as in *pal*). The claim that /l/s have uniform articulatory patterns across all English varieties and speakers is not entirely accurate. In fact, the patterns of articulatory variability for /l/s are quite complex and can differ significantly from one speaker to another, as well as across various English dialects. For example, in the English accents of Manchester and North Wales, a dark [ɫ] may occur in all word positions, whereas in Tyneside and South Wales a light [l] may occur in all positions (Horvath & Horvath, 2001; Kirkham et al., 2020; Turton & Baranowski, 2021).

In addition to the light and dark allophonic distinctions, some dialects of English permit vocalisation of syllable-final /l/ (Strycharczuk et al., 2020), and a range of back vocoids may result. According to Horvath and Horvath (2001), New Zealand English is characterised by a significant degree of vocalisation. The finding highlights the significant variations in articulatory features across different English varieties. As such, it is essential to consider these nuances when studying and analysing /l/ production in English. The present study aimed to investigate the temporal aspects of the coordination between the TT, TM, and TB movements during /l/ production in Australian English (AusE).

RELATED LITERATURE

Acquiring a comprehensive knowledge of the articulatory pattern during /l/ production is crucial in comprehending the complex mechanisms involved in speech production. Additionally, it also helps to testify and explain the predictions of some major theories in the field. For example, Sproat and Fujimura's (1993) proposal regarding the phonological representation of /l/ in American English posits that /l/ consists of two specific features, namely [+coronal] and [+lateral]. The feature marked as [+coronal] corresponds to the movement of raising the tongue tip (TT), while the feature marked as [+lateral] refers to the movement of retracting the tongue back (TB). The fundamental difference in articulation lies in the fact that for American English, the syllable-final /l/s have a distinct TB and TT position compared to -initial /l/s. Specifically, the TB position is more retracted and the TT position is lower (Sproat & Fujimura, 1993). One contribution of allophonic variation at an articulatory level of description is the relative timing of these two gestural movements (Sproat & Fujimura, 1993). In syllable-initial /l/s, TT and TB gestural movements tend to be roughly synchronous; while in syllable-final /l/s, the retraction of TB tends to precede the raising of TT. These results are in line with the conclusions drawn by other studies. According to Browman and Goldstein (1995), it was discovered that the phenomenon of TT raising is less pronounced in syllable-final /l/s as compared to -initial /l/s. Moreover, the study also highlighted the relative timing difference between these two types of /l/s. In another study, Krakow (1989, 1999) found that the vocalic gestural movements (i.e., wider configuration) tend to precede the consonantal gestural movements (i.e., tighter constriction) in syllable-final /m/s. In addition, the study (Krakow, 1999) also found that the temporal relation between vocalic and consonantal gestural movements was greater in syllable-final /m/s. The opposite pattern has been observed in syllable-initial /m/s.

METHODS

Six mono-lingual Australian English speakers averaging 22 years old were involved in this study. The participants were born in Sydney and raised in an environment in which standard Australian English was spoken. The /l/s were identified in both syllable-initial (as in *lap*) and syllable-final (as in *pal*) positions. All words were subsequently recited in the carrier phrase "Say *target word* please". The /l/s were observed in varying vowel contexts including /æ/, /ɛ/, /ɪ/, and /u/. Mid-sagittal tongue movements were recorded using a three-dimensional Electromagnetic Articulography (3D EMA) speech system at a rate of 100 Hz. Three sensors were affixed mid-sagittally to the tongue tip (TT), tongue middle (TM) and tongue back (TB).

We measured the timing lag difference between the TT and TM sensors and the lag between the TT and TB sensors. MVIEW (The MathWorks Inc., 2021; Tiede, 2005) was used to display the positional signal of the sensors. The *findgest* algorithm was used to label maximum constriction (MaxC) associated with the /l/ articulation. We extracted the time point of MaxC for TT and TM movements, as well as TT and TB movements involved in the production of /l/ and calculated the TT-to-TM delay as well as TT-to-TB delay.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The TT-to-TM lag in syllable-initial position was near zero or negative. This means that TT movement reached the target prior to TM movement, or nearly synchronous. In syllable-final position, the lag was positive. This suggests that TM movement reached the target prior to the TT movement. Additionally, we found that *head*-/ɛ/ vowel set and *had*-/æ/ vowel set in syllable-final position had longer lag values than *hood*-/u/ vowel set and *hid*-/ɪ/ vowel set.

The TT-to-TB lag in syllable-initial position was near zero or negative. This means that TT movement reached the target prior to TB movement, or nearly synchronous. In *head*-/ɛ/, *hood*-/u/, and *hid*-/ɪ/ vowel sets, the lag values were similar. However, the lag was lower in *had*-/æ/ vowel set. In syllable-final position, the TT-to-TB delay was mostly positive. The *head*, *hood* and *had* vowel sets had greater lag values than *hid* vowel sets.

For the mid-sagittal analysis, our study replicated Sproat and Fujimura's study (1993) in that we observed multiple movements in the mid-sagittal plane for both syllable-initial and -final /l/s. The difference between them was significant in the TT-to-TM analysis. In the TT-to-TB lag analysis, the difference between the two varieties was marginally significant. The syllable position differences were conditioned by the adjacent vowel. When /l/s were adjacent by *head* and *hood* vowel sets, we observed the syllable structure difference; however, when /l/s were near the *had* and *hid* vowel sets, the syllable position differences were minor.

CONCLUSION

The present study has undertaken the task of examining the temporal lag variations between the syllable-initial and -final /l/s. The magnitude of the lag difference was found to be conditioned by the specific vowels that precede or succeed the /l/. These findings have significant implications for our understanding of the phonetic properties of language and the ways in which they are influenced by contextual factors.

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BLENDED LEARNING: A NEW CHALLENGE FOR PAKISTANI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Hui Geng¹ and Zohaib Hassan Sain^{2*}

¹*Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*

²*Superior University, Pakistan*

E-mail: zohaib3746@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Blended learning, which blends online educational materials and engagement with traditional classroom approaches, has proven successful worldwide. This study aims to examine the standpoints of BS 4 years program (BSCS) students in Pakistani universities regarding the issues and challenges they encounter in blended learning. A quantitative method employing a questionnaire with 19 items based on a 3-point Likert scale (agree, undecided, disagree) was used to measure students' perceptions and issues related to blended learning in education. The participants comprised 219 students out of 482 enrolled in the BS 4 years program (BSCS) at three public universities in Pakistan in the 2022 academic year. The findings showed that most students had a positive view of blended learning, but they also encountered various issues, such as lack of time, lack of training, insufficient skills and support for proper use of the blended learning model, and unavailability of Learning Management Software (LMS) for technological learning tools. The findings indicate that certain measures need to be taken to address the issues and challenges encountered by students in the context of blended learning. These measures include the development of institutional policies for the effective use of blended learning in universities, as well as the implementation of training and proficiency enhancement programs for teachers to incorporate technology into their pedagogical practices.

KEYWORDS

Blended learning; challenges; standpoints; teacher education

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INTRODUCTION

Recent years have witnessed remarkable technological advancements that have revolutionised higher education. However, as the COVID-19 pandemic has posed challenges to traditional teaching methods, effective communication and technology integration are key to overcoming these difficulties. Blended learning, which combines online educational materials and engagement with traditional classroom approaches, has emerged as a successful solution worldwide. It ensures continuous learning with critical thinking and knowledge transformation, catering to the digital generation. It also improves teaching practices, providing feedback opportunities and enhancing understanding. Nonetheless, implementing blended learning can be especially challenging for educators teaching BSCS students who require advanced learning approaches. Salam et al. (2007) claimed that due to a lack of technology expertise, educational institutions in Pakistan manage teaching, learning, and other administrative tasks manually. The transition to blended learning was imposed upon the teachers and students, who were not prepared for it on a technical or conceptual level (Anwar et al., 2021; Vlassopoulos et al., 2021).

To cater to the needs of the digital generation, teachers must embrace modern techniques that foster engagement and motivation. In this study, blended learning concerns and obstacles are examined from the perspectives of BS 4 years program (BSCS) students in Pakistani universities. Challenges such as institutional policies, technical support, internet speeds, computer resources, and language comprehension still exist in utilising technology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Blended learning combines FTF classes and online materials, gaining popularity in education. In a study conducted in the Maldives, university students expressed positive perceptions about blended learning, citing increased access and flexibility. Barriers included limited internet infrastructure and technical support. Views on learner engagement varied among participants and across academic disciplines. Blended learning enhances the understanding, but research overlooks student experiences and outcomes. Evaluating the contribution of ICTs in higher education is crucial, and the objective is to analyse the impact of blended learning experiences on learning outcomes (Singh, 2010; Huon et al., 2007; Sharpe & Benfield, 2005; Ginns & Ellis, 2009). Educators incorporate digital learning technologies like LMS Moodle, MOOCs, and M-learning in higher education to gain a competitive edge. Adhering to guidelines, instructors create e-courses using e-learning and distance learning technologies. The introduction information and communication technologies has brought about substantial changes in content, instructional methods, and organisational structures, allowing for intensified and individualised student training (Kapsargina & Olentsova, 2020). This study focuses on investigating students' readiness and challenges in adopting blended learning in teacher education programs in Pakistan. The research questions are as follows:

Research Question 1: What difficulties do students encounter when utilising blended learning at the university level in Pakistan?

Research Question 2: What recommendations can be utilised for blended learning at the university level in Pakistan?

METHODS

The study included a total of 482 students, with a sample size of 219 selected using Yamane's formula at a 95% confidence level. A descriptive survey employing quantitative methods was conducted, focusing on BSCS 4-year program students from three public universities in Pakistan. An online questionnaire collected data using Google Forms, with students provided a conception of blended learning. Data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of 19 items, measured on a 3-point (agree, undecided, disagree) Likert scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our findings indicated that Pakistani university students face various challenges with blended learning. The majority of participants expressed difficulties in areas such as motivation (83%), technical support (91%), institutional policies (93%), and time constraints (67%). Additionally, 72% of students identified a lack of skills as a hindrance to their effective use of blended learning.

Despite these challenges, blended learning remains a popular and cost-effective educational approach among students. Its appeal stems from students' familiarity with modern devices and social media platforms. They find blended learning assignments engaging, utilising platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and blogs, which enhances motivation and academic dedication. Blended learning also improves students' confidence, problem-solving abilities, and access to learning resources. Shy students benefit from digital interaction, engaging with teachers and peers to discuss difficulties. However, addressing challenges related to institutional policies, time constraints, skills training, support, qualified staff, power outages, and resource availability is crucial.

Overall, students perceive blended learning positively, regardless of their academic level. Moreover, several recommendations have been proposed for blended learning at the university level in Pakistan, which include: (i) Pakistani universities should implement a blended learning approach by introducing their Learning Management Software; (ii) Institutional policies need to be established to enforce the usage of blended learning by both teachers and students; (iii) Universities should provide free licensed software, high-speed servers, and high-bandwidth internet for seamless blended learning; (iv) Technical and logistical support is vital for blended learning. Teacher education should provide courses on essential technological skills; (v) Continual training and sequential workshops should be conducted to enhance teachers' digital teaching skills; and (vi) We need to motivate students to utilise blended learning strategies such as conducting online tests, quizzes, or assignments.

CONCLUSION

This research unveiled Pakistani university students' positive stance on blended learning. They perceive it as a means to enhance their learning journey, find assignments more enjoyable, and achieve academic success. Blended learning also boosts efficiency, comprehension of complex topics, self-confidence, and peer discussions. It offers a platform for introverted students to digitally interact with teachers and peers. However, the study identified several barriers that university students encounter when using blended learning, including the lack of institutional policies for technology integration, limited resources, inadequate skills, slow internet, and insufficient technical support. In conclusion, establishing

a strong blended learning system in Pakistani universities, on par with developed nations, remains an ongoing endeavour.

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MOTHER AND CHILD STUDY ABROAD: JAPANESE CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE LEARNING IN MALAYSIA

Janice Nakamura*

Kanagawa University, Japan

E-mail: janice-nakamura@kanagawa-u.ac.jp

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Children's transnational educational migration to attain higher English proficiency is an emerging educational practice. This qualitative case study of *boshi ryugaku* (mother and child study abroad) examines how two Japanese siblings adapted to English-medium education in Malaysia. Analysis of interview transcripts and language portraits revealed their struggles in school due to the lack of English skills, the lack of teacher and peer support, and online learning during COVID-19. They did not understand their lessons and had trouble with peers. The children's challenges in transitioning to English-medium education represented a conflictive form of bilingualism which negatively impacted their well-being. The children only experienced more harmonious bilingualism as their English improved. These findings demonstrate the difficult path to elite bilingualism for monolingual Japanese children, underscoring the need for Japanese parents to deliberate carefully on *boshi ryugaku* and prepare their children adequately for their education abroad.

KEYWORDS

Mother and child study abroad; educational migration; Japanese family; English learning; child perspectives; Malaysia

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INTRODUCTION

With the rise of neoliberalism in language education, it is increasingly common for economically advantaged East Asian parents to use their financial resources to help their children acquire high English skills. A manifestation of linguistic parentocracy is transnational educational migration to English-speaking countries or countries where English exists as an L2. Such migration usually involves split households; the mother accompanies the children while the father remains in the home country to work and pay for the education expenses. Widely known as *jogi yuhak* (early study abroad) in Korea, the educational migration of Korean families has been investigated from several perspectives, including maternal identity transformation (Lee, 2010), language ideology (Kang, 2012; Lee, 2022), mother-child education discourse (Lee & Pang, 2021), and multi-sited family communication where the father is not physically present (Lee, 2022). While Japanese families participate in *boshi ryuugaku* (mother and child study abroad), their transnational education migration is hardly documented. Also lacking in the literature is an examination of children's perspectives on studying abroad and its impact on their well-being. Such research is needed because monolingual Japanese children lack the language skills to transition smoothly into English-medium education, a serious problem that affects their well-being. This qualitative case study focuses on two Japanese children's experiences learning in an international school in Malaysia.

RELATED LITERATURE

According to De Houwer (2020), children experience 'harmonious bilingual development' when they have a positive subjective experience with their two languages. However, 'conflictive bilingualism' may occur when bilingual development negatively affects children's subjective well-being, such as when they have to communicate verbally in a new linguistic environment. Children may engage peers and teachers in 'dilingual discourse' (Saville-Troike, 1987), where each party uses a mutually unintelligible language. They soon discover that their L1 is not understood and struggle to learn the school language, sometimes with minimal support from the teacher (e.g., Dahoun, 1995, as cited in De Houwer, 2020). A lack of competency in the school language affects socialization with peers; it is linked to lower peer acceptance and more frequent victimization (Grünigen et al., 2012).

METHODS

In this case study, two Japanese children, S and T (then aged 9 and 7), relocated to Malaysia with their mother in 2018 to study at an international school. Their father remained in Japan for work. The children used Japanese at home with each other and their mother and English in school. The study commenced in 2022 with a preliminary online interview (45 minutes) with the mother to understand the family's background. This was followed by a visit to the family's home in Tokyo, where in-person interviews were held with each child (35 minutes). A second online interview was also conducted with the mother (60 minutes). The semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to talk freely based on the researcher's opening questions. Fieldwork notes were taken on the same day as the interviews. Further data was collected in March 2023 when the researcher visited the family's Malaysian home. During this visit, the children drew their language portraits, a visualisation of their linguistic repertoire using the

outline of a body silhouette. This creative research method helps us understand how research participants experience and interpret their language practices and repertoires (Busch, 2018). Audio recordings were made when the children explained their language portraits. Interview and audio recording transcripts, fieldwork notes, and language portraits form the data for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parents' and Children's Perspectives on Studying in Malaysia

While on a summer holiday in Kuala Lumpur in 2017, the family visited some international schools. The father was impressed; he wanted the children to study there. The mother supported the decision as she aspired to study abroad when she was young. Like the Korean 'wild geese' parents (Lee, 2022), their decision for migration was motivated by their desire for their children to become elite bilinguals. The parents presented their plan to S and T, who agreed to the move after being persuaded that it was important for their future. However, both children were apprehensive about leaving Japan. Although S thought it would be fun, she was scared she could not meet her friends anymore. T admitted that he did not want to move to Malaysia because he did not know English. Before departure, he already predicted conflictive bilingualism because of his minimal English skills.

Struggles with English-Medium Education

Having almost no knowledge of English, the two children struggled to adapt to their new school. Their teachers did not help much with their transition; they spoke no Japanese and the children understood no English. S was confused because she did not understand anything. Fortunately, a Japanese-speaking classmate helped S to understand her lessons. T had a harder time because he did not have peer support as S did. Not having access to translation tools (e.g., iPad), he reportedly read facial expressions and drew pictures to communicate. He only engaged in dilingual discourse (Saville-Troike, 1987) when he was teased for his poor English and yelled out to his bullies in Japanese. T got involved in many fights with his classmates, confirming Grünigen et al.'s (2012) findings that poor L2 language skills can lead to school bullying. For the first two years, T wanted to return to Japan. His mother sent him for soccer practice with Japanese boys from other schools to create a space for him to belong and speak Japanese.

Adapting to English-Medium Education

After four years in Malaysia, the children are more settled in their schools; both can speak English now. S has become quite fluent, but T's speech is still faltering. In her language portrait, S depicted Japanese in her heart but English in her brain because she constantly thinks hard when using English. S is now almost at the top of her class, an amazing feat considering that she could not even understand her lessons when she first arrived. In T's language portrait, English was also depicted in his head because of the effort needed to 'remember' English. T also drew a growing heart in his portrait, which shows his stronger mind and English language skills. While he previously had trouble in school, he now understands and enjoys his lessons. The children's language portraits show that their conflictive bilingualism has become more harmonious (De Houwer, 2020) as their English

improved and became a part of them. Improvements in their English skills and well-being took time, particularly for T, because of his age and the lack of school and peer support. Adjustment to English-medium education was also slow because of COVID-19. While the family remained in Malaysia during the pandemic, the lack of interaction with teachers and schoolmates during online learning at home lessened their English exposure.

CONCLUSION

Although research on transnational educational migration is growing, studies have not explored children's adjustment to learning in a new language in a foreign country. The current paper addresses the gap by focusing on children's experiences and their well-being. In Korean 'wild geese' families, children perhaps had some English knowledge before migration unlike the children in this study who had none. Japanese parents may initiate *boshi ryuugaku* to put their children on the path to elite bilingualism. However, with almost no English skills, S and T experienced conflictive bilingualism as they adapted to English-medium education with little support from peers and teachers. These findings highlight the challenging process that monolingual children undergo when they study abroad. They also demonstrate how the practice of linguistic parentocracy in what seems to be in the children's best interest can negatively impact their well-being. To mitigate conflictive bilingualism, Japanese parents should deliberate carefully on *boshi ryuugaku* by doing more research on schools and equipping their children with some English before moving abroad.

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A CASE STUDY OF YI MINORITY LANGUAGE IN MENGZI, CHINA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

JianBin Yu, Boon Sim Ng*, and Roslina Mamat

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: ngboon@upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Yi (彝) is one of the largest ethnic minorities, with a population of about 4 million in Yunnan Province. However, Yi ethnic is experiencing language loss and shift among the speech group due to the modernisation and technological advancement in China. This study mainly aims to explore language use and language attitude among the young generation ages 18-30 from Mengzi City in Yunnan and to further analyse the factors that lead to the attitude shift among the speakers. Fieldwork research was used for data collection. There were 104 Yi teenagers participating in a series of interviews and observations. Research findings show that although 60% of participants claimed themselves as fluent speakers and semi-fluent speakers, the speakers' attitude shift is relatively high compared to only 7.6 % showing a low tendency to maintain the ancestral tongue. In addition, the use of the Yi language is limited to a few formal settings and within family members due to its inferior status in modern society. In conclusion, social and economic betterment and government policy are external forces that motivated the young speakers to make the choice to shift from their mother tongue to Chinese (Mandarin). The significance of the study lies in documenting the Yi's ancestral tongue and creating awareness of safeguarding endangered languages in China.

KEYWORDS

Yi minority language, language use, language shift, language loss, speakers' attitude shift

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INTRODUCTION

Yi is an ancient ethnic minority in southwest China. According to the seventh census data (2020), more than 130,000 Yi people live in Mengzi City, Yunnan Province. They are the ethnic minority with the largest population in Mengzi City, and the Yi people living in Mengzi belong to Yi's Nisu and Nasu branches.

The Yi people have their own language - the Yi language. The Yi language belongs to the Yi branch of the Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan language family, which is divided into six major dialects: eastern, northern, southern, western, southeastern, and central. Significant differences exist in the various dialects, and the Yi people who speak different dialects cannot understand each other. The Yi people living in Mengzi mainly speak the southern dialect. However, according to the UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment standard, Yi is classified as a generally endangered language (Wang & He, 2020). This situation was confirmed in Luo's (2015) investigation that the Yi language was in danger of disappearing in some Yi villages. Most of the people who could speak Yi fluently were elderly people in their 70s and 80s, while the young ones were about 50 years old. Hence, it is an urgency to obtain information about the Yi language in other places to assess the way it will develop. In line with this view, the study specifically sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is Yi teenagers' language use in different domains?
2. What are Yi teenagers' attitudes towards the Yi language and Chinese?

RELATED LITERATURE

When people who speak different languages come into long-term contact, the dominant language would have influence on the vulnerable language, causing changes to its pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Some vulnerable languages are threatened and even extinct (Fishman, 2001). In recent years, many scholars have reported the changes of the Yi language in language contact. Liu and Lu (2021) found that the pronunciation of the Hatu Shengzha dialect (the northern dialect of Yi) changed after its contact with the local Chinese dialect. Evident changes were mainly observed in vowels, while consonants showed small alterations. However, there were also some words changed in both vowels and consonants. These changes are caused by language contact and the influence of the dominant Chinese dialect.

Apart from language changes, language ecology also received attention from scholars. With the development of the local economy and society in recent years, people from different ethnic groups live together and intermarry, which leads to the erosion of the Yi's Aza dialect and significantly suppresses its use in Yi communities. Local government and people are neither aware of language inheritance and protection nor take specific measures and actions. As a result, the Aza dialect is severely endangered based on its vitality indicators (Fan & Li, 2012). Though most Yi people hold a positive attitude toward their own language and culture, they learn and use Chinese more actively (Sha, 2019).

METHODS

The present study used fieldwork research to obtain first-hand information. The study mainly adopted interview and questionnaire methods. Information on language use and attitudes was obtained by randomly selecting college students of the Yi minority from Honghe University. The questionnaire was adapted from Shang's (2018) questionnaire about the language vitality of the Tujia language, including four parts: basic information, language ability, language use in different domains, and language attitude. A total of 104 questionnaires were collected online. There were 63 females and 41 males. According to Cronbach's reliability test, the overall reliability of the questionnaire was 0.85, which was greater than 0.7 representing high internal reliability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The language ecology is complex and varies with the overall local ecosystem (Garner, 2017). Currently, youth in Mengzi generally can understand two or more languages. They spoke not only their native Yi language or local dialect but also Mandarin Chinese. Besides, the college students investigated could also speak English or Japanese. About 60% of the participants could understand the Yi language, but only 47% knew how to speak. Moreover, only 20% of the participants knew Yi characters, and a majority of them could only read but did not know how to write this language.

The Yi language was mainly used within the family domain, which was the most stable and common occasion for language use. Besides, the Yi language was also frequently used in traditional festivals, weddings, funerals, and religious activities. Under the increasing influence of social media, Chinese, with its powerful strength, affected all aspects of the Yi language communities (Guo, 2022). On the contrary, the Yi language gradually eroded with each passing day, and its overall use occasions were shrinking and decreasing.

As the traditional and mother tongue of the Yi ethnic group, the Yi language records the knowledge and experience of Yi people over thousands of years, having been playing a role that the Chinese cannot replace in the production and living of Yi people. However, as the Yi ethnic group community becomes more open to the outside world and people move in and out frequently, the lifestyle of the Yi people has changed. The younger generation of Yi people knew little vocabulary of the Yi language and were poor at using the Yi language to express ideas. The lack and ignorance of traditional cultural knowledge deprived them of recognising their own language and culture. According to the questionnaire results, most respondents (87.6%) did not consider the Yi language's importance and had a positive attitude toward using Chinese. The result was consistent with Liu's (2014) findings on the language attitudes of Yi youths in Liangshan, Sichuan province.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the dominance of the Chinese language and the large population of Chinese (Han) in China have greatly influenced the preservation and development of the Yi language in Mengzi. With the continuous development of society and economy, the exchanges between ethnic groups will intensify, increasing the impact of Chinese on the Yi language. Hence, to maintain the Yi language, it is essential to establish a conducive environment, primarily to safeguard the language environment within ethnic communities and families. Then, utilising

available scientific and technological resources to collect, organise, and disseminate linguistic corpus. Besides, reinforcing the cultural identity of the ethnicity will further contribute to language maintenance.

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DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF OF LEAR AND HIS DAUGHTERS IN SHAKESPEARE'S *KING LEAR*

Jianbo Deng, Arbaayah Ali Termizi*, and Manimangai Mani

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: arbaayah@upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

William Shakespeare vividly describes the unique father-daughter image in his tragedy, *King Lear*. In the play, the father, Lear, undergoes a dysfunctional relationship with his three daughters, Cordelia, Goneril and Regan, by consistently seeking affirmation for love, control and comfort. Traditional feminist and psychological methods are mainly used in research on King Lear's familial relationships while current study explores the father-daughter relationship through a new lens, Bowen Family Systems Theory. Employing the concept of differentiation of self in the theory, this article analyses the level of differentiation of self of Lear, Cordelia, Goneril and Regan to examine the father-daughter relationship between them. Drawing from Bowen's scale of differentiation of self, the study reveals that Lear, Goneril, and Regan exhibit low levels of self-differentiation, ranging from 0 to 25, while Cordelia falls between 25 and 50. The findings also suggest that the father-daughter relationship among Lear and his daughters is dysfunctional due to their limited self-differentiation. This interdisciplinary study provides fresh insights into character analysis in literary works and offers a novel approach to the study of family relationships in drama and other literary genres.

KEYWORDS

William Shakespeare; *King Lear*; Father-Daughter Relationship; Bowen Family Systems Theory; Differentiation of Self

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INTRODUCTION

This article examines the degree of self-differentiation of Lear and his daughters in William Shakespeare's tragedy, *King Lear*, and its impact on their father-daughter relationship. By applying Bowen Family Systems Theory, the study investigates the dysfunctional nature of their relationship and the underlying reasons.

While scholars have extensively explored the father-daughter relationship in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, most have relied on traditional feminist and psychological research methods. However, there is a lack of research on this subject using Bowen theory. This tragedy lends itself well to an exploration of the father-daughter relationship through Bowen theory, as certain traits of Lear and his daughters align with the characteristics described in Bowen's scale. Moreover, their level of self-differentiation directly correlates with the father-daughter relationship. Consequently, this article primarily utilizes the concept of differentiation of self in Bowen theory to analyse the self-differentiation levels of Lear, Cordelia, Goneril, and Regan in the tragedy. In addition to analysing their self-differentiation, the article aims to investigate the influence of their self-differentiation on the father-daughter relationship.

RELATED LITERATURE

Although a number of researchers have explored father-daughter relationships in Shakespeare's plays from a psychological standpoint, they often rely on traditional methods. Psychological literary criticism is continually confronted by irresistible "imaginative texts", but the psychological tools of "intrapsychic psychology" at the beginning of the 20th century can no longer address all the problems that people in the 21st century have raised (Knapp, 1997, p. 225). Bump (1991, 1993), Cohen (1991), Knapp (1983, 1996, 1997) and Womack (1996) note that family systems therapy, such as Bowen family systems theory, has emerged as a widespread mode of therapy in real-world settings and offers new insights for literary criticism (Knapp, 1997, p. 224).

While there have been discussions on family relationships in *King Lear* in connection with Bowen family systems theory, the study of this play from this perspective remains limited. In his edited book, *Reading the Family Dance: Family Systems Therapy and Literary Study*, John Knapp (2003) studied Shakespeare's *King Lear* from Bowen family systems theory. The author discussed various family relationships: parent-child relationship, marital relationship, sibling relationship instead of focusing on the father-daughter relationship. Furthermore, Bowen's scale has not been extensively employed to investigate the self-differentiation levels of characters in literary works. While Najah A. F. Alzoubi has applied Bowen's scale in his dissertation on family disintegration in Tennessee Williams's drama, the author did not establish a relationship between the level of self-differentiation of the characters and the father-daughter relationships. Thus, this study utilises Bowen's scale to categorise individuals into the four operational ranges, enabling a more accurate and objective analysis of the self-differentiation levels of the selected characters. It will also highlight the impact of Lear and his daughters' self-differentiation levels on their relationship, using Bowen theory.

METHODS

Shakespeare's *King Lear* serves as the primary reference for this study. Reviews and critiques by researchers provide insights into the current research trends on the play. To explore father-daughter relationships in literary works, critiques on *King Lear* are also examined from the perspective of Bowen family systems theory. Examples from the play are extracted to analyse the father-daughter relationship using Bowen's concept of differentiation of self. The study employs close reading to analyse the selected text, followed by the application of Bowen's scale to assess the self-differentiation levels of the characters in *King Lear*. Through continuous close reading and critical thinking, a comprehensive critique is formulated, providing a thoughtful interpretation of the father-daughter relationship in the play.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The level of self-differentiation between Lear and his daughters influences their father-daughter relationship. Lear, Goneril, and Regan exhibit very low levels of self-differentiation and remain emotionally fused within the system. Cordelia demonstrates a moderate level of self-differentiation, although she is governed more by the emotional system than the intellectual one. Lear is portrayed as foolish, anxious, and desperate for his daughters' love, with a self-differentiation level between 0 and 25. Goneril and Regan reside in an emotional realm, plagued by chronic anxiety, selfishness, and offensiveness, with self-differentiation levels between 0 and 25. Cordelia's self-differentiation level surpasses that of her father and sisters. Despite her anxiety, silliness, and emotional tendencies, Cordelia exhibits a sense of intellectual principles, placing her self-differentiation level in the range of 25-50. Lear and his daughters possess lower levels of self-differentiation. According to Bowen theory, individuals with lower self-differentiation levels are more preoccupied with being loved, accepted, and perceived by others. They are less likely to live according to their own principles, thereby exacerbating relationship issues, as their behaviour is driven by relational considerations. Highly differentiated individuals possess the ability to regulate their emotional states, while those with lower differentiation levels are more susceptible to emotional influences. Highly differentiated individuals can choose their emotional states and leverage them effectively, while individuals with lower levels of differentiation have closely interconnected emotional and thought systems, leading to heightened anxiety. Individuals with lower self-differentiation experience more anxiety, while those with higher self-differentiation experience less (Gilbert, 1992, pp. 23-24). Lear and his daughters, lacking high differentiation, are constantly influenced by their emotions and suffer from chronic anxiety. Individuals with low self-differentiation are more prone to problems and difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Gilbert, 1992, p.188). Drawing on Bowen's family systems theory, as a result, Lear and his daughters' low levels of self-differentiation prevent them from maintaining a harmonious father-daughter relationship.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals a strong correlation between the self-differentiation levels of Lear and his daughters and their father-daughter relationship. The article does not aim to examine the social, economic, or cultural reasons behind the father-daughter relationship in *King Lear* from sociological or historical perspective. Instead, guided by Bowen's family systems theory,

it evaluates the self-differentiation levels of the characters in Shakespeare's tragedy, *King Lear*, shedding light on various family relationships in literary works.

The father-daughter relationship serves as a central theme in *King Lear*, and Bowen theory provides a fresh perspective to analyse this relationship. The concept of self-differentiation in this theory offers a more objective and scientific approach to assessing the self-differentiation levels of the characters. Additionally, the theory introduces a novel method for studying family relationships in literature.

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHORUS IN *ANTIGONE* & *THE BUS STOP*

Li Jinni*

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

E-mail: 1348388319ljn@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the chorus, the unique collective character that originates from Greek dramas, by examining the chorus' functions in the play through its relationship with the audience and discussing how the chorus evolves in modern Chinese dramas. Through a close comparative reading of Sophocles' classic *Antigone* and Gao Xinjian's masterpiece *The Bus Stop*, this paper argues that despite being less dramatic and even faceless onstage, the chorus becomes closer to the audience and owns the flexibility to be both inside and outside the drama at the same time. In modern plays like *The Bus Stop*, this particular ability is further strengthened by the chorus' direct interaction with the audience. By breaking the fourth wall and speaking to the audience directly, the modern chorus in *The Bus Stop* expands the play from the stage to the audience offstage, by including the audience as a vital part of the drama. The comparison between these two masterpieces could bring new insights for the studies of the ancient Greek chorus. In addition, it extends the discussion to the cross-cultural level, demonstrating not only how the chorus is revived in modern times but also how it shines in a work that is from a completely different culture and temporality.

KEYWORDS

Greek tragedy; the chorus; *Antigone*; Modern Chinese Drama; Gao Xinjian; *the Bus Stop*

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INTRODUCTION

The twentieth Century has witnessed an overall cultural revolution from science to literature. Being born in such an era which fails to respect traditions, modern culture does not simply overturn all past achievements but rather takes in the old tradition and bestows it with new life. Greek dramas are such examples. Not only did Greek dramas were revived in the modern theatres but characters from Greek culture were re-adapted to serve a role in modern plays. The chorus is one of the most frequently adapted characters, reappearing in various modern dramas like Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. Such characters own unique charisma that could transcend different temporalities and cultures. In the case of the chorus, its specialty lies in its natural close relationship with the audience.

Previous studies concerning the chorus have already indicated its close relationship with the audience, both onstage and offstage. However, most studies were limited to the original historical background of the chorus and its original target audience, ignoring the chorus' potential modernity. As mentioned above, the chorus has already broken free from cultural and temporal constrictions, which means the chorus was no longer solely meant for the Greek audience. In addition, this special relationship with the audience could be associated with many modern theatrical attempts. In this sense, the chorus could be approached from a more modern perspective.

With a comparative reading of Sophocles' Classic *Antigone* and Gao Xinjian's masterpiece *The Bus Stop*, the paper intends to bridge a cross-cultural communication between the East and the West and the ancient and the modern, hoping to bring in new insights into the research of the chorus by investigating it in the modern context.

RELATED LITERATURE

Though the chorus never conquers the centre of the spotlight on stage, it never fails to catch the attention of scholars. Previous studies had taken an insight into the functions and roles of the chorus as well as its outstanding choral identities, reading the chorus from multiple aspects like sociology, history, politics, and even cognitive sciences. Though many of them did not directly discuss the relationship between the chorus and the audience, most results indicated the chorus took a stance close to the audience, either when it was onstage or offstage. On the stage, the chorus was often identified as the "ideal spectators" (Schlegel 2004). This original idea of Schlegel was further developed by later scholars. For example, Kevin Hawthorne argued that the chorus was the "rhetorical audience" that the protagonists were eager to win for themselves in a political performance (27). Similarly approaching it from the political aspect, Larissa M. Atkison (2016) proposed that the chorus acted as the collective authority who takes a passive listeners' position, constantly ruminating while witnessing the individualist protagonists' moving into destruction. Off the stage, the chorus is also closely related to Athenians' social and political life. Helena Foley (2003) purported that the chorus was not only the performers onstage but also the representatives of different communities who amplified the Athenian social values (21-22). Similarly, Peter. D. Arnott (1991) argued that the audience and the chorus "were different aspects of the Athenian public" (23). In this sense, the chorus was a unique figure that the Greek audience felt connected with both in dramas and in their daily lives. All of these studies either directly or indirectly demonstrated the close relationship between the chorus and the audience.

Though contributing countless invaluable findings, many previous studies ignored the chorus' modernity and solely limited the research to the chorus' original historical context. Nowadays, Greek dramas have already transcended their original temporality and culture and reached out to different populations worldwide, inspiring many modern creations. The chorus has become one of the most frequently adapted characters in modern dramas. The chorus' revival in modern plays and its ability to resonate with modern audiences with completely different cultural backgrounds make it possible for the researchers to approach from a more modern perspective, expanding the target audiences from the ancient Greeks to the modern audience. In addition, the close relationship between the chorus and the audience could be associated with many modern theatrical attempts, like breaking the fourth wall. However, seldom current studies concerning the chorus' modern adaptations have looked into how the chorus'. Thus, this essay not only hopes to analyse the chorus in the modern context but also introduces the experimental attempts that amplify the chorus' modernity into the discussion, further revealing the unique charisma that enables the chorus to transcend different temporalities and cultural boundaries and reach out to modern audiences.

METHODS

This paper employed the close reading technique for analysis. Starting from Sophocles' Classic *Antigone*, the paper explores the close relationship between the chorus and the audience, analysing its dramatic functions and its potential. Then, this paper moves to Gao's *The Bus Stop*. By reading this modern Chinese drama as a play of the chorus, this paper would reveal the similar choral identities shown by the characters of *The Bus Stop*, providing both a new reading of this drama and a new way of introducing the chorus in modern plays. Then, this paper would conclude by comparing the differences in the choral relationships with the audience in *Antigone* and *the Bus Stop* to further demonstrate the chorus' special modernity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sophocles' *Antigone* provides the original paradigm of the chorus. In *Antigone*, the chorus stands out for its facelessness: first, members of the chorus do not own defined individual characteristics but instead share similar collective personalities. Second, the chorus do not have a steadfast stance like heroes, the outstanding individuals, but rather constantly sway their attitudes toward different characters. The chorus' facelessness results in an evaporation of individuality, resembling ordinary people in reality. Though being the Everyman onstage and staying away from the spotlight, the chorus stands closer to the audience. The chorus' neutral stances and mild attitudes provide a more comfortable position for audiences to fit themselves in, which further endows the chorus with the ability to become inside and outside the drama at the same time. On one hand, the chorus is certainly inside the drama as one of the characters in the play and constantly interacts with other characters. On the other hand, when the chorus only observes without interacting with the characters, it recedes from actors to spectators. This makes the chorus move outside the drama and gradually overlap with the audience.

The Bus Stop paves a new way to adapt the ancient chorus in modern play. While most other modern dramas still treat the chorus as a side dish, Gao stages the chorus in the center. All of *The Bus Stop*'s central characters except the silent man are faceless and together they resemble the chorus in *Antigone*. As Gao proposed, he focuses on the "essential likeness"

rather than realistic depictions, which makes his characters more like artistic abstractions instead of unique individuals (Gao 803). Thus, though Gao's characters appear separately, they are indeed plural. Besides, the characters' preference for collective movements and opinions further confirms them as a collective like the chorus. In this sense, *The Bus Stop* could be read as a play of the chorus.

The modern chorus in *The Bus Stop* is also able to be both inside and outside the play but it goes outside the drama by breaking the fourth wall. While the ancient chorus still acts as the intermediary that allows the audience to come closer to the stage, by speaking to the audience directly, the modern chorus expands the play from the stage to the audience offstage, including the audience as a vital part of the drama.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, as a special character in ancient Greek dramas like *Antigone*, the chorus stands out for its collectivity. On one hand, the high collectivity dissolves the members' individuality, making them rather faceless and staying in the back as observers on the stage. On the other hand, lacking individuality shortens the distance between the chorus and the audience, bestowing the chorus with the flexibility to be both inside and outside the drama at the same time. The huge potential of the chorus is further explored and evolved in modern plays like *The Bus Stop*. In *The Bus Stop*, rather than serving as the fictional spectators, the modern chorus shares the centre of the spotlight while still keeping its group-like characteristics. Compared to the ancient chorus, the modern chorus' ability to be inside and outside the drama is strengthened as it could directly engage with the audience. By doing this, the chorus extends the play onstage to offstage, making the audience a part of the drama.

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**DECONSTRUCTION OF NATURE’S IDENTITY:
A MULTIMODAL TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *MOTHER NATURE* IN THE “NATURE
IS SPEAKING” CAMPAIGN**

Jinni Li and Xinyi Sui*

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

E-mail: 120030093@link.cuhk.edu.cn

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Environmental protection is one of the major issues that share the global spotlight. Saving the planet not only requires a change in action but also a change in mind, including a cognitive refreshment of the traditional relationship between humans and nature. This paper examines the identity deconstruction shown in Conservation International’s 2014 “Nature Is Speaking” campaign, analysing how it further contributes to overturning the traditional view that humans and nature are interdependent. Focused on the campaign’s most viewed video *Mother Nature*, this paper mainly applied Althusser’s ideological interpellation for textual analysis. Althusser’s (2008) theory suggests that identity is constructed through the name-calling process and gradually reinforced through concrete actions. In this sense, identity is a passive misrecognition of oneself. In *Mother Nature*, by denying humans’ name-calling as the “mother” and turning down the expected motherly responsibilities, the video deconstructs the traditional motherly figure of nature and re-frames the interdependent human-nature relationship. More than just textual analysis, this paper also applies the multimodal framework to further illustrate the identity deconstruction process. In the video, multiple sensory modes also play vital roles in deconstructing nature’s original mother-like identity. Accompanying the subtitles, the frequent use of long shots and the choices of images further re-present nature as the distanced and powerful Other that does not need humans. By combining the literary theory with the linguistic framework, this paper hopes to not only extend the study of identities into ecological discourse but also provide new insights for producing effective public service advertisements.

KEYWORDS

Identity deconstruction; human-nature relationship; Althusserian ideology; multimodal analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Identity analysis is no new topic in ecolinguistic studies. For conscious beings like humans, the sense of self and others play significant roles that influence one's behaviours. In ecological discourse, humans' attitudes and actions towards nature are heavily dependent on how they recognise themselves and nature. Most previous ecolinguistic research concerning eco-identities centred on how particular identities were constructed and how they reflected an anthropocentric approach. To further overcome anthropocentrism, more studies should be conducted to analyse not only how these identities were constructed but also how they could be deconstructed to refresh the traditional human-nature relationship. In this paper, we would focus on identity deconstruction, using *Mother Nature*, one of the most viewed videos in Conservation International (CI)'s 2014 "Nature is Speaking" Campaign, as example. By examining the content and strategies employed in this particular video, we will delve into how *Mother Nature* deconstructs nature's original mother-like identity and re-presents it as an autonomous and powerful entity that does not depend on human intervention. Through this analysis, we hope to gain insights into the campaign's effectiveness in reshaping attitudes towards the environment and its implications for producing impactful public service advertisements.

RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

Previous scholars have already introduced identity and ideology studies into ecological discourse analysis. For example, Thomashow (1996) defined ecological identity as all the different ways people construe themselves in relationship to the earth as manifested in personality, values, actions, and sense of self. Most ecolinguistic studies concerning identity analysis focused on how identities were constructed and the influences of one particular identity. For instance, Olausson and Ylva (2021) conducted a study on the "Nature is Speaking" campaign centred on how celebrities imposed their identities on natural elements. This personification of nature was a typical identity-constructing process and it further reflected an anthropocentric worldview. Previous studies have already demonstrated the harmfulness of anthropocentrism in building a healthy human-nature relationship. Thus, rather than analysing how anthropocentric identities are constructed, studies should also contribute to how these identities could be deconstructed, which is what this paper would focus on.

To achieve this goal, this study borrowed Althusser's ideology theory. Althusser's theory (2008) creatively proposed that self-identities were not constructed actively by freely-circulated individuals but rather passively constructed through outer forces like ideological apparatuses. Though it still focused on identity construction, the details of the constructing process like interpellation could be used for deconstruction. By introducing literary theories into linguistic studies, this paper hopes to shed new light on identity analysis in ecological discourse.

Methodological Framework

Video advertisements are multimodal texts that utilise various semiotic resources such as language, visuals, sound, music, colour, and dimensions (Pratiwy & Wulan, 2018). Analysing such texts requires equal attention to different modalities. Chan and Chia's Six Semiotic Modes framework (2014) categorises six typical semiotic modes: Linguistics mode, the printed form of letters, words, and sentences; Audio mode, the content that audience receive aurally; Spatial mode, the setting and environment of a particular scene; Oral mode, the monologues or dialogues that characters are involved in; Visual mode, the images of people, places and objects including viewpoints and colours; Gestural mode, physical movement, body position, and facial expressions of characters. Each mode contributes to framing the overall concept. Visual mode, in particular, plays a significant role in conveying messages. Kress and Van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar (1996) identifies three metafunctions of visual elements: representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning. These functions encompass the representation of the experiential world, interactions between participants and viewers, and the arrangement of visual elements. This framework highlights the communicative potential of images and is valuable for multimodal analysis.

METHODS

The data used in the paper is derived from the most viewed video “Mother Nature” from Conservation International’s 2014 “Nature Is Speaking” campaign. Besides applying a close reading technique for textual evidence, this paper also adopts a multimodal framework to further analyse the functions of multimedia in the identity deconstruction process. Based on Chan and Chia’s theory of the six modes (2014) in a multimodal text, the paper will respectively investigate the visual, linguistics, and audio mode used in the video. Moreover, as Kress and van Leeuwen mentions in their work (2006), the meaning potential of individual elements can only be realised when different elements combine as a whole. The study also pays attention to the integration of different modes, focusing on how the combination of modes helps deliver the intended message of promoting environment conservation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The video “Mother Nature” by CI deconstructs the former mother identity of nature in the following steps: first, nature actively denies the interpellating process of humans and therefore overturns the potential misrecognition of itself. Turning down the “mother nature” calling and recognizing itself solely as “nature”, nature in the video expects to transform itself from one of the subjects of human ideology to a purely objective being. Second, nature further deconstructs its motherly figure through a series of unmotherly behaviours. It both denies all the expected maternal characteristics and the related social responsibilities, presenting itself as the untouchable Other. In this way, nature destroys the material foundation for maintaining the mother-like identity. The deconstruction of nature’s human identity not only suggests a more objective view of nature but also further calls for an urgent renewal of the nature-human relationship.

The multimodal analysis focuses on the linguistic, oral, audio, and visual modes in the video. In terms of audio modes, Julia Roberts, an acclaimed actress, provides the voiceover. Her low-pitched voice remains calm and peaceful, delivering undeniable facts about nature

and showing nature's indifference toward the human population. The background music consists of string instruments and soprano singing, creating a grandiose and divine atmosphere, presenting nature as the untouchable Other. Visually, nature is represented by powerful and uncontrollable natural elements like flowing streams and calving glaciers, whereas humans are portrayed through fragile and powerless figures like mushrooms, emphasising the unequal power dynamic between humans and nature. In addition, the video predominantly uses long shots and a bird-eye angle. By creating a distant and impersonal viewpoint, the video invites the audience to experience the magnificence of nature and further inspire their inner respect. Overall, the video deconstructs the identity of Mother Nature, portrays nature as a powerful and independent entity with indifference towards humans, and utilises oral, audio and visual elements to further illustrate the unequal human-nature power dynamics.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has examined the identity deconstruction of nature present in one of the "Nature Is Speaking" campaign's videos "Mother Nature." By applying Althusser's theory of ideological interpellation and utilising a multimodal framework, the paper explored how the video overturns the conventional understanding of the human-nature relationship as interdependent by challenging people's expectation of a motherly nature. "Mother Nature" introduces a nature that breaks free from the rationalised stereotype of a selfless mother and connotes a defensive response to humanity's implicit claim of ownership. In addition to textual messages, the video strategically employs different modes of communication to engage viewers, evoke their empathetic responses, and fosters a deeper sense of environmental conservation. With all these attempts, this video provides new ideas for environmental campaigns and could be the creative exemplar for other public service advertisements.

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**MOTHER AND DAUGHTER ATTACHMENT IN AMY TAN'S *THE JOY LUCK CLUB*
AND PRAMOEDYA ANANTA TOER'S *THIS EARTH OF MANKIND***

Li Meihua^{1*} and Rohimmi Noor²

¹*Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia*

²*Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*

E-mail: limh5757@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Mother-daughter relationship is one of the primary bonds. It is manifested intensively in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* and Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *This Earth of Mankind*. This paper specifically focuses on the daughters' attachment pattern towards their mothers, which essentially is one aspect of the behaviours of the mother-daughter interaction. Mother as the primary attachment figure has a tremendous impact on humans throughout their lives. With Bowlby's attachment theory, the manners of the mothers' reaction to their daughters' propensity of proximity are explored to expound the formation of the daughters' attachment patterns. Further, the personality development in relation to the attachment pattern is examined. It proposes that the mothers' past individual experiences in aspects of personal, cultural and economics critically determine their care-giving styles for their daughters and that impact the daughters' attachment to them. Anmei from *The Joy Luck Club* and Annelies from *This Earth of Mankind*, being treated disparately by their mothers, exhibit diverse attachment patterns, one the secure attachment pattern and the other one the anxious-resistant attachment pattern. As a result, their respective attachment pattern serves as a vehicle to empower or dis-empower the daughters in the process of later personality development, which is demonstrated through Anmei becoming a strong-minded, well-controlled and highly resilient female, and Annelies being of mental vulnerability, immoderate control, and low resilience. Focusing on the experience of the female characters, this study recognizes female subjectivity, and locating them within the Asian background contributes to the scholarship of Asian Literature.

KEYWORDS

Amy Tan; Pramoedya Ananta Toer; Attachment pattern; *The Joy Luck Club*; *This Earth of Mankind*

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INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asian literature establishes and flourishes in the efforts of a great many writers and scholars. Pramoedya Ananta Toer, speaking the voice of Indonesian people in his time, should have his place and fame in the canon, although time elapses. However, the political turbulence throughout his entire life results in very limited exposure and circulation of his works. Amy Tan is a well-known author, whose works spread widely over the world. Her readership and reputation are notably impressive. This study in parallel explores the mother-daughter attachment in the circumstance of Asia around the turn of the twentieth century from Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) and Toer's *This Earth of Mankind* (1980), attempting to share the vested interest and readership on Tan's works with Toer's. John Bowlby for the first time proposed the attachment theory in 1969 and revised it in 1982. The theory is adopted to investigate the experience of mothers and daughters in both books. While acknowledging the Asian female experience in that age, this study adds to the scholarship of Tan and Toer. Further, it hopes to revive more audiences' interest in Toer's works and recognises his contribution to the construction of Southeast Asian literature.

RELATED LITERATURE

Abundant research pertaining to *The Joy Luck Club* has been done during the last three decades. The focus of the previous research varies to a broad degree, which can mainly be grouped into these, firstly ethnicity and identity, such as the research done by Xu (1994); secondly Chinese and American culture, for instance, the works of Hamilton (1999) as well as Li and Huan (2019); and thirdly mother and daughter relationship, as studied by scholars like Shen (2009) and Pattana (2020).

This Earth of Mankind is set in the 1890s, which is an era mounting to modernity juxtaposing the prevalence of colonisation in Indonesia. Niekerk (2011) and Teeuw (1997) have studied the topic of modernity and nationalism respectively. The class conflict out of social stratification is also explored by Hesti (2021). Women's oppression is another manifest issue in the book, which is worked on by such researchers as Kurniawan and Yustisiana (2021), Marwan (2019) and Bahari (2007).

As narrated above, in *This Earth of Mankind* no research about the mother-daughter relationship has been touched while in *The Joy Luck Club*, indeed there are some. But, all the examined subjects rest on the immigrant mothers and native-born daughters, unwittingly overlooking the mother-daughter story in China mainland of the early twentieth century. To fill the gap, this study adopts Bowlby's attachment theory to interrogate the Asian mother-daughter relationship in the two books.

METHODS

The study applies textual analysis. Bowlby's attachment theory is adopted to guide the examination of the mother-daughter relationship in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* and Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *This Earth of Mankind*. Firstly, it will identify the ways in which the concubine mothers react to the daughter's propensity for proximity. It also explores the reason and logic behind their respective parenting styles. Then, the daughters' manifestation of the attachment pattern is studied. Lastly, it reveals that the attachment pattern serves as a

vehicle to empower or disempower the daughters, which is reflected in their later personality development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mothers due to their previously individual experience in terms of the “personal, cultural, and economic” (Bowlby 241) adopt the disparate parenting ways towards their daughters. The mother in *The Joy Luck Club* always gives her daughter Anmei warm maternal care in forms of both body touch and language communication, which encourages Anmei’s proximity to her, and strengthens Anmei’s deep attachment to her mother. However, the mother Nyai Ontosoroh in *This Earth of Mankind* interacts with her daughter Annelies ambivalently. Her good-intention nursing and training Annelies undoubtedly increase their attachment, but concurrently she as the only authority in the household and her inadequately effective communication with her daughter bring Annelies’s anxiety and thus impedes Annelies’s attachment to her.

Anmei, promoted by her mother’s being sensitively and lovingly behaviours, manages to form a secure attachment pattern in interacting with her mother. On the one hand, whenever she is separated from her mother, Anmei fiercely feels upset and depressed, on the other one hand, she could suit herself very well though in a strange environment. Anmei displays a picture of stable balance between her exploration of the world and her close attachment to her mother. In *This Earth of Mankind*, Nyai Ontosoroh’s “being available and helpful on some occasions but not on others” (Bowlby 124) undermines Annelies’s attachment. Annelies’s silence about the rape conveys the doubt for her mother and her choice of always giving way to her mother’s will reflects her fear of being abandoned by her mother. The negative emotions and feelings contribute to her formation of anxious-resistant attachment pattern.

Each attachment pattern as the influential vehicle significantly impacts Anmei and Annelies’s personality development. The secure attachment pattern empowers Anmei in *The Joy Luck Club* to develop a positive personality. She is well controlled and highly resilient, as illustrated in her witness of her mother’s death and her conspiracy of revenge for her mother. On the contrary, Annelies by the anxious resistant attachment pattern falls into a negative personality. She exhibits immoderate control and low resilience. She could not properly process or accept departure from Minke, which soon caused her death due to depression.

CONCLUSION

The study, with the guidance of Bowlby’s attachment theory, compares two pairs of mother-daughter attachment patterns. Upon the textual analysis, it informs that thanks to the past experience in aspects of the personal, cultural and economic, the mothers interact with their daughters in different manners, and it works on the formation of the daughters’ attachment pattern, one positively secure, the other one negatively anxious-resistant. It contends that the attachment pattern exerts its power on the daughters in the process of personality development. This study, looking at the characteristics of mothers and daughters, gives respect to female’s subjectivity. It also acknowledges Tan and Toer’s dedication to Asian literature through their narratives of Asian female life experience.

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HERITAGE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN RELATION TO ATTITUDES, MOTIVATIONS, AND EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT: A CASE STUDY OF MALAYSIAN CHINESE (MAHUA)

Long Qian, Ng Boon Sim*, Wong Ling Yann, and Hazlina Abdul Halim

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: ngboon@upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

In most immigrant societies, emotional attachment (EA) to the language of the community reshapes the speakers' identity and helps sustain their language. Moreover, language has the social function of identifying identity attributes and has an important influence on the construction of social identity. However, research on the identity construction of Chinese Heritage Language Learners (CHLLs) is still limited, especially in studying the correlation between this identity construction and language acquisition (Zou et al., 2016). Therefore, this study is based on Gardner and Lambert's (1972) psychosocial model and Chinese Identity Theory (Wang, 1985) and uses a quantitative method to investigate Malaysian CHLL' Chinese language proficiency (CLP) in relation to EA, as well as the correlations between EA and CHLL' motivation and attitudes. The study found that: (i) participants in both Malaysian public and private secondary schools demonstrated high CLP in listening, speaking, and reading (over 80%), relatively low scores in writing (around 77%), and showed positive attitudes towards learning Chinese, high integrative motivation, and low CHL classroom anxiety; (ii) the difference is that Chinese cultural identity and attitudes towards Malaysian Chinese are considered the best predictors of CLP for the public school group; (iii) the best predictors of CLP for the private school group are traditional Chinese ways of dressing, eating, housing, and transportation, as well as positive attitudes towards CHL learning.

KEYWORDS

Heritage language proficiency; attitudes; motivations; emotional attachment; Malaysian Chinese

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INTRODUCTION

The study of Chinese as a heritage language (CHL) is an emerging field of Applied Linguistics, conventionally focusing on Chinese as a second (L2) or foreign language (FL) (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007). Fishman (1992) defines heritage language (HL) as a personal and family-related language other than English and divides it into three categories: indigenous, colonial, and immigrant heritage languages. In North America, HL refers to 'the language spoken by immigrants and their children' (Montrul, 2012); in Australia, it refers to 'the language of the community' (Clyne & Fernandes, 2008). In Malaysia's multilingual society, where Malay is the only dominant national language with official status, English is an important language. The Chinese language is not only the heritage language of Chinese immigrants and the medium of instruction in Chinese schools but also a community language shared by the Chinese community in Malaysia (as well as a language identified by the new generation of Chinese descent as their mother tongue).

RELATED LITERATURE

In Malaysia, studies on Chinese as a first or heritage language (L1/HL) have concentrated mainly on the overall educational situation (Samuel & Tee, 2013; Samuel & Kin, 2014), followed by teaching materials, schools, curricula, and teachers (Lim & Presmeg, 2010; Sua & Santhiram, 2017; Lee, 2017), with less research on individual differences at the micro level such as native language awareness (EA) and motivation in Chinese language learning. Among them, Wong and Tan (2017) investigated the role of the Chinese language in constructing Chinese identity among Mainland, Malaysian, and Singaporean Chinese. The study found that Malaysian Chinese scored the highest on the importance of the Chinese language as a manifestation of Chinese identity. However, the study only presented a general overview of Chinese identity in the three countries in a comparative manner. It did not provide an in-depth analysis of issues related to the awareness of the mother tongue among the new generation of Chinese in Malaysia. Given this, this study aims to explore the impact of CHL proficiency in relation to the EA, attitudes, and motivations of Chinese learners in both National and Private secondary schools in a multilingual Malaysian context.

METHODS

This study's target group included 232 participants who met the following criteria: (i) were between the ages of 16 - 18; (ii) were Chinese-born locals with Chinese as their mother tongue; and (iii) had finished six years of Chinese primary school. The survey included 87 students from the Chinese National Secondary School (SMJK), 62 from the National Secondary School (SMK), and another 83 from the Chinese Independent Secondary School (STPC) in Penang, Johor, and Sibu.

The quantitative research method is used in this investigation. This study employs three instruments. First is a demographic questionnaire meant to examine the study's group heterogeneity; second is the CHLL Motivations and Attitudes questionnaire, which is adapted from Gardner and Lambert (1985) and contains a total of 10 parts; the last questionnaire is divided into eight parts and mainly adapted from Zhang's (2011) Questionnaire on the Ethnic Identity of Filipino-Chinese Secondary School Students and Von Scheve et al.'s, (2014)

National Identification Scale, and incorporates Malaysian local culture and customs, as well as according to the qualitative themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Subjects in both groups showed high CLP in listening, speaking, and reading skills (over 80%) and relatively low scores in writing (77%). They had positive attitudes towards CHLL, low CHLL classroom anxiety, and a higher tendency towards integration motivation. However, compared to the private-school group (45.8%), the number of participants with integration motivation was higher in the public-school group (53%), and the public-school group was more inclusive in their EA and identification, with more dimensions of EA. In contrast, the private-school group predominantly identified with Chinese culture and attachment to customs and habits, clothing, food, housing, and transport.

Both groups had a significantly positive relationship between EA and most dimensions of CHLL motivation and attitudes ($p < 0.01$). However, there was a negative relationship between EA and CHLL classroom anxiety and negative attitudes towards CHLL in the public-school group, while EA was not related to classroom anxiety and negative attitudes towards CHLL in the private-school group ($p > 0.01$).

Chinese cultural identity, CHLL classroom anxiety, and attitudes towards Malaysian Chinese were considered the best predictors of CLP in the public-school group; while EA to traditional Chinese ways of dressing, eating, housing, and transportation and positive attitudes towards CHLL were the best predictors of CLP in the private-school group.

CONCLUSION

The correlations between the two groups show that the public-school group was more abundant in the dimensions of EA. That was influenced by the more diverse school and family environment of the public-school group, which enhanced their acceptance of different cultures to some extent. In addition, CHLL classroom anxiety was the most significant difference between the two groups, with anxiety in the public-school group having the most significant impact on their EA and CLP, while the private-school group's CHLL was unaffected by anxiety. This is because Chinese classes have fewer hours in public schools, and the content of Chinese teaching and examinations is complex, which increases their anxiety in learning Chinese, in contrast to the "resistant mentality" of the subjects in private secondary schools. Therefore, it is crucial to develop suitable Chinese teaching content and methods and rationalise the time for Chinese language teaching in schools of different backgrounds in Malaysia. More research on comparing and discussing the EA patterns of varying age groups and cross-country and cross-regional comparisons is recommended in the future.

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REQUEST STRATEGY AND MODIFICATION IN MALAYSIAN CHINESE

Ming Pang¹, Hazlina Abdul Halim ^{1*}, Farhana Muslim Mohd Jalis¹, Chuanhao Lu², and Abdullahi Ayuba³

¹*Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*

²*Renmin University of China, China*

³*Bauchi State University, Nigeria*

E-mail: hazlina_ah@upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Making requests is a common occurrence in the daily lives of Malaysian Chinese individuals. While previous research has primarily concentrated on request within mainland Chinese culture, there has been minimal emphasis on understanding request strategy and modification within the Malaysian Chinese context. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the request among Malaysian Chinese. To gather the data, a role play method was employed. A total of 25 Malaysian Chinese participants and one Malaysian Chinese interlocutor were recruited to engage in role plays encompassing 12 different scenarios. The results indicated that the conventional indirect request strategy was the most commonly utilised, followed by the direct request strategy. The variables of social distance and ranking imposition had significant effects on how requests were used in Malaysian Chinese. However, social power did not play a role in the usage of query preparatory and want statements. This research holds significant importance in both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, it aims to enhance and validate the CCSARP theoretical framework using data from Malaysian Chinese individuals. In practical terms, it has the potential to enhance communication abilities during everyday interactions among Malaysian Chinese individuals.

KEYWORDS

Malaysian Chinese; request; social distance; social power; ranking of imposition

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INTRODUCTION

Malaysian Chinese, an integral component of Malaysia's cultural heritage, is widely spoken within the Malaysian Chinese community. In addition, request strategy has garnered extensive research attention, making it the subject of numerous studies across various languages in terms of both literature volume and language coverage. The categorisation of the speech act as a face-threatening act (FTA) (Brown & Levinson, 1987) indicates that the request carries the implication of requiring strategic redress.

In order to build upon existing research, this study seeks to investigate request strategy and modification in Malaysian Chinese. By doing so, the present study can expand the comprehension of how requests are realised in Malaysian Chinese Mandarin.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Pang et al.'s (2023) research findings, majority of previous studies focused on the request speech act in English and European languages such as French and Greek. In recent years, there has been a growing number of studies investigating the speech act of requesting in Chinese. Nevertheless, the research on request behaviour in Chinese remains scarce, and the existing perspectives are quite divergent.

Several studies indicate a preference for the employment of direct strategy in Chinese (Lee-Wong, 1994), while according to certain studies, indirect approach is more commonly favoured in Chinese data (Ren, 2019). According to certain researchers, the utilisation of either a direct or conventionally indirect strategy is contingent upon the context (Su & Ren, 2017).

While there have been a few studies conducted on the topic of requests in Chinese Mandarin, as far as researchers are aware, no study has been carried out to investigate the request strategy and modification in Malaysian Chinese. Moreover, it remains unclear whether these three social variables can impact the way requests are realised in Malaysian Chinese.

METHODS

A group of 25 participants from Malaysia who are identified as Chinese (10 males and 15 females) were voluntarily recruited for the study. Their ages ranged from 21 to 24, with a mean age of 21.96 and a standard deviation of 1.06.

In order to investigate how requests are realised in Malaysian Chinese, this study utilised open role play with 12 different scenarios so as to gather a richer and more authentic dataset.

The foundational theoretical framework for this study was the Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP), which was originally developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). Building upon this framework, a modified version of CCSARP was created specifically for the analysis of the collected data in this study, taking into account relevant findings from previous literature (Ren, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the data, the conventional indirect strategy (64.53%) was the preferred approach for making requests in Malaysian Chinese Mandarin, while the direct strategy (33.07%) followed closely behind. The occurrence of non-conventional indirect strategy was relatively low, accounting for only 2.40% of the requests in the database. These findings align with previous study conducted by Chen et al. (2013).

Regarding the request modifications, Malaysian Chinese participants utilized a total of 596 internal modifiers. Among these, lexical modifiers ($f=355$; $p=59.56\%$) were employed more frequently than syntactic modifiers ($f=241$; $p=40.44\%$), which contradicts the findings of Zhang's (1995) study. Among external modifiers, adjuncts ($f=525$; $p=55.15\%$) were the most commonly used by the participants. Furthermore, the participants utilised a greater number of mitigating modifiers ($f=391$; $p=41.07\%$) compared to aggravating ones ($f=36$; $p=3.78\%$).

The Chi-square test results revealed that the employment of request strategies is influenced by varying D, ranging from [D-] to [D+]. This outcome supports the findings of Li and Jiang (2019). Additionally, the Chi-square test results indicated that the use of query preparatory and want statements in Malaysian Chinese is not affected by varying P variable.

CONCLUSION

This research examines how request strategies and modifications are used in Malaysian Chinese, aiming to broaden the existing knowledge on request speech act realization in Chinese and provide insights into Mandarin Chinese requests. However, the study's limited sample size restricts the generalizability of its findings.

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THE DEVASTATION OF ABUSE IN COLLEEN HOOVER'S *IT ENDS WITH US*

Mohamad Iadid Ashrai Hassannudin* and Anis Shahira Bazlan

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

E-mail: iadid@uitm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Violence against women such as sexual and physical abuse has been addressed widely in contemporary literature such as novels, poems and short stories. Moreover, the portrayal of gender violence has been the theme of modern literature. Although the depiction of abusive experiences is much represented in contemporary literature, domestic violence against women is not clearly being addressed as the consequences of traumatic experiences against women. Therefore, this paper presents the text analysis of Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* in representing the trauma of the main character, Lily Bloom through her personality, attitude and behaviour towards her relationship with her father and personal relationships. Textual analysis of the text has been conducted to study the character's personality traits towards her past trauma with the use of Murphy's Theory of Characterization. Using this theory, it has identified the main character's attitudes through the narration of Colleen Hoover. Caruth's Theory of Trauma is also utilised to categorise the representation of trauma that the character has experienced after the analysis of the character's behaviour patterns. The collection of traumas has been identified as the result of repeated and prolonged domestic violence and abuse. Hence, by understanding the relationship between the characterization and past trauma of the main character, it has been found that the types of traumas are embedded through her attitude and behaviour patterns.

KEYWORDS

Domestic abuse; violence; trauma; women; characterization

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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is very frequent and common and is the product of the patriarchal society (Lestari et al. 2019). Issues regarding women who are seen as submissive and compliant are still never completely debated. This is because the public still has the perception of an “ideal” woman who are only expected to live for their family and only take care of domestic matters. Women are prone to being abused as they are seen as weak because of the patriarchal society. Hence, more women are reluctant to report abuse because they fear that no one would listen. As a result, they suppress their emotions, which eventually causes mental stress and trauma.

The representation of violence is also found in literary studies reflecting the “soul and voice of the voiceless people” (Sheikh et al. 2022, p. 28) in portraying and critiquing real issues and events that occur in society (Nassoba & Samanik 2022). It is also believed that the length and complexity of novels can deal with the imaginative human experience as “novels imitate reality” (Said 2013, p. 42). However, domestic violence against women is not clearly being addressed towards the consequences of traumatic experiences against women regardless of the depiction of abusive experiences that is much represented in contemporary literature.

RELATED LITERATURE

According to Dwiastuti and Yamin (2016), this type of genre is popular in raising the awareness of domestic abuse towards the victims and ways to empower them to fight against the enablers of the violence. However, their study only analysed the novel through the perspectives of the characters’ attitudes and reactions towards the issue of domestic violence. Similarly, a thorough analysis of the novel was done by looking at the characters which had brought light to social patterns on gender domination in the society (Lima & Bruno 2023). By understanding the female and male characters, feminism ideology was clearly embedded towards the oppression of women (Lima & Bruno 2023).

However, limited studies had been done in studying the characterization of the character in the text towards the stages of trauma from domestic abuse. Therefore, this study investigated the representation of trauma that influenced the character’s personality, attitude and behaviours using Murphy’s (1972) theory of character and characterization and Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) in the scope of trauma studies for literary criticism to identify the defence mechanisms on traumas.

METHODS

A qualitative analysis was employed in this study through a close reading of Colleen Hoover’s novel *It Ends with Us* (Hoover 2016) with its objectives of examining the characterization of the main character, Lily Bloom through the form of words, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and discourse. A literary study was conducted by using secondary sources as reference material and obtaining detailed information from multiple sources thus enabling an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in a subjective way. The protagonist’s personal descriptions, speech, past life, reactions, direct comments, thoughts, and mannerisms were studied using Murphy’s Theory of Characters and Characterization (1972) in representing the trauma of domestic abuse. By analysing the characterization of the

protagonist, Caruth's Theory of Trauma (1996) was employed in determining the trauma that the character experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, there were three major themes that depicted the representation of Lily Bloom's trauma through her attitude and behaviours which include feeling of hatred towards her father, seeking stability in her relationship and forcing herself to accept an abusive relationship.

Her resentment towards her father had caused trauma to her mentally and emotionally. As she relived some of the darkest times in her life when reading her childhood diaries, she was reminded of all the terrible things that her father had done to her mother. Not only did she have resentment and hatred for her father while he was alive, but it can even be seen after he passed away as she did not manage to utter a single word for the eulogy, "*I just didn't want to do it because I feel like eulogies should be delivered by those who respected the deceased. And I didn't much respect my father*" (p. 19). Lily attempted to forgive him but found it difficult to do so. This showed that Lily was deeply hurt and traumatised with the violence caused by her father.

Due to her prior trauma, Lily was extremely cautious and idealistic in her search for the right partner. She made every effort to find a stable relationship with a man where she searched for a man who would be the opposite of her father – someone who would love her and not treat her badly – because she did not want to end up like her mother.

Findings also demonstrated that victims of domestic abuse never find it easy to accept the reality whereby the journey to Lily Bloom's acceptance of her abusive relationship was not easy. To be able to do so, the first step she took was to address her emotions and feelings that were related to the trauma.

CONCLUSION

The representation of Lily Bloom's trauma in *It Ends With Us* was observed through her attitude, actions and behaviours towards situations triggering her past traumatic experiences. In the analysis, the main character displayed anger, fury and fear when confronted with challenging situations resulting from the trauma she had endured despite having characteristics of strength, bravery and empathy. The abusive relationship between her parents had shaped her approach to relationships, causing her to be cautious and pursue only serious connections. The main character's past and present experiences have resulted in a chronic trauma, which was evident in her attitudes, actions and behaviours. Hence, the characterization of the main character provided insights into the types of traumas she had experienced which were intricately woven into her attitudes and behaviour patterns thus proving the significance of literary discourses in explaining the repercussions of traumatic experiences of domestic violence against women.

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UTILITARIANISM IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*

Mohd. Ismawi Ibrahim^{1*} and Arbaayah Ali Termizi²

¹*SEGi University, Malaysia*

²*Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*

E-mail: mohdismawi@segi.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

This study explores William Shakespeare's problem play, *Measure for Measure*, within the framework of utilitarian moral theory to unravel its distinctive characteristics. While Shakespearean and Elizabethan dramas have been extensively studied for their ethical and moral themes, the specific examination of utilitarianism in problem plays has been overlooked due to their complex and ambiguous moral inclinations, that defy conventional cathartic endings of comedies or tragedies. This research investigates the moral dilemmas faced by selected characters, their instances of vice and virtue, and the extent to which these actions reflect Shakespeare's conceptualised ideas of utilitarian moral ideals by employing Cohen and Morse's tripartite moral character framework. This exploration of character dynamics prompts reflection on the balance between personal interests and societal welfare. *Measure for Measure* invites a critical examination of the evolving moral landscape, shedding light on shifting perspectives on morality in the Elizabethan era.

KEYWORDS

Shakespeare; utilitarianism; morality; problem plays

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INTRODUCTION

The study analyses William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* within the context of the utilitarianism moral theory. *Measure for Measure* belongs to a category of Shakespeare's plays called problem plays. Unlike a tragedy or a comedy, which both necessitate a cathartic ending, the problem play produces no similar result. In his work, Boas reasoned that Shakespeare's problem plays were written as a reaction to the growing complication in society's understanding of morality (354).

RELATED LITERATURE

Morality plays emerged in the 14th and 15th centuries, serving as educational performances to convey moral values and encourage virtuous behaviour. Over time, they were gradually replaced by Elizabethan tragedies and comedies (Shelley 37). Shakespeare's play, *Richard III* is believed to have been inspired by Holinshed's Chronicles, although there is no direct evidence linking him to morality plays. However, Cane (3), Greenblatt (20), and Shelley (2) suggest that Shakespeare would have been familiar with them due to his involvement in the theatre. Shakespeare was also thought to be apolitical, an idea strongly disputed by Spiekerman who states that other scholars have asserted that Shakespeare was politically engaged and concerned with individuals in their private and public lives (Spiekerman 17). We also learn that the renowned problem plays *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *All's Well That Ends Well* were written between 1601 and 1605, coinciding with the end of the Elizabethan era in 1603 (Chambers 270). This aligns with Tillyard's notion of the Elizabethan World Picture coming to an end, further explaining the stylistic shift in Shakespeare's problem plays (Tillyard 2).

METHODS

In her work, Katherine Blake cites Raymond Williams, highlighting the influence of utilitarianism on radical thinking, with authors like Dickens possibly endorsing pleasure as an "absolute criterion" (Blake, 3). This contextualises utilitarian principles within the 18th-century perspective, where the greater good was a central tenet. To analyse the moral character of the play's selected characters, this study adopts Cohen and Morse's tripartite model of understanding moral character. This framework conceptualises moral character as comprising three elements: motivation, ability, and identity. 'Motivation' refers to the underlying reasons and intentions behind ethical or unethical thoughts, emotions, and actions. 'Ability' pertains to the individual's capacity to translate moral intentions into practical behaviours. 'Identity' encompasses the moral values, beliefs, and self-perception that shape one's moral character. In applying the tripartite framework, the study examines instances of vice and virtue, moral conundrums faced by the characters, and the extent to which their actions align with utilitarian moral ideals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In *Measure for Measure*, Isabella, shows empathy as she pleads for his life to Angelo, the strict deputy ruler: "That I do beg his life, if it be sin / Heaven let me bear it! You granting of my suit" (MFM 2.4.69-73). Her motivation is centred around achieving happiness for others

over her own which is a cornerstone of Mill's idea that people's actions are not always motivated by self-interest but also sympathy, compassion, and a sense of duty. However, once confronted with Angelo's request, Isabella's motivation quickly shifted to preserving her chastity and moral purity, emphasising the importance of moral integrity when she proclaimed that "more than our brother is our chastity" (MFM 2.4.185). Angelo, initially driven by strict adherence to the law and moral order, becomes morally compromised by propositioning Isabella, exposing his hypocrisy by saying "Heaven hath my empty words, / whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue, / Anchors on Isabel" (MM. 2.4.2-4).

Angelo's moral ambiguity and conflicting desires reveal the complexity of his character, balancing personal desires with the responsibilities of authority. In contrast, the Duke in *Measure for Measure* has multifaceted motivations, including testing moral character, restoring justice, and maintaining control. Disguising himself as a friar, he states, "I love the people, but do not like to stage me to their eyes" (MM. 1.3.67-68), emphasising his concern for the people while maintaining a certain detachment. The Duke's intricate motives reveal a calculated demeanour as he confronts corruption and societal norms in Vienna, showcasing Shakespeare's exploration of power, justice, and the motivations of authority. The Duke embodies utilitarian ideals by striving for positive outcomes in Vienna, prioritising the welfare and happiness of the community. His acknowledgment of past failures in enforcing strict laws demonstrates his ability to recognise the need for change and act decisively. He claims that "We have strict statutes and most biting laws, / The needful bits and curbs to headstrong weeds, / which for this fourteen years we have let slip" (MM. 1.3.19-22).

Conversely, Lucio demonstrates his ability to influence others through his sharp wit and verbal dexterity. In Act I, Scene 2, he criticises Angelo by saying, "Thou conclud'st like the sanctimonious pirate, that went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one out of the table." (MM. 1.2.7-9). Lucio's remark showcases his adeptness at using words to challenge authority and draw attention to inconsistencies, underscoring his persuasive abilities.

Claudio's reflection on his internal struggle and moral dilemma is evident in the quote, "To sue to live, I find I seek to die, and, seeking death, find life" (MM. 3.1.43-44) which highlights Claudio's contemplation of the conflicting choices he faces. Isabella, on the other hand, demonstrates a strong moral identity through her unwavering commitment to her religious beliefs and moral principles. She declares, "Better it were a brother died at once than that a sister, by redeeming him, should die forever" (MM. 2.4.107-108). This quote showcases Isabella's moral convictions, as she prioritises her chastity and virtue above saving her brother's life. It exemplifies her adherence to her moral values, even when faced with difficult choices and familial ties. Isabella's moral identity shapes her actions and decisions, guiding her commitment to her beliefs throughout the play.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *Measure for Measure* presents a thought-provoking exploration of moral identities and the utilitarian principles at play. The characters grapple with conflicting motivations, highlighting the delicate balance between personal interests and the greater welfare of society. Through these intricate character dynamics, Shakespeare prompts us to contemplate the ethical complexities and the interplay between personal motivations and the greater good. Through the exploration of utilitarian underpinnings within its characters, *Measure for Measure* prompts us to critically examine the evolving moral landscape,

signalling the changing perspectives on morality that emerged towards the end of the Elizabethan era.

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ESL/EFL UNDERGRADUATES' ONLINE PROJECT-BASED COLLABORATIVE WRITING

Najah Zakirah^{1*} and Yong Mei Fung²

¹Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

²Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: najahzakirah@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

During the Covid-19 pandemic, writing classes were conducted online. This has made it more challenging for ESL/EFL learners to develop good writing skills due to the lack of physical engagement with the instructor and their peers. This study investigates the effect of project-based collaborative writing on ESL/EFL undergraduates' argumentative writing performance in an online setting. An intact group of 34 ESL/EFL undergraduates was recruited. The study employed a quasi-experimental design to collect pre- and post-argumentative writing tests. Semi-structured interviews and students' reflections were also obtained to gather insights into their online writing experiences. This study will demonstrate how online project-based collaborative writing promotes positive writing attitudes, improves argumentative writing skills while developing criticality, digital skills, and other soft skills.

KEYWORDS

Project-Based Learning; Collaborative Writing; Online Learning

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INTRODUCTION

Many ESL/EFL undergraduates have difficulties mastering writing skills in English. Despite years of instruction and practices in writing, it is still challenging for language learners (Zaswita & Ihsan, 2020). During the Covid-19 pandemic, face-to-face classes had shifted to online classes and this situation added more challenges to writing instructors (Flores, 2020). ESL/EFL student writers could not engage physically with their instructor and peers. To promote active involvement among students, instructors should employ effective teaching approaches and various learning activities in online classrooms. Project-based learning (PBL) is a constructivist approach in learning. It involves the application of knowledge and skills in authentic activities to solve issues and to encourage collaborative learning experience (Gustiani et al., 2021). Life-long learning skills such as research, problem-solving and communication skills could also be developed by students through PBL approach (Lam, 2011). The objective of this paper is to investigate the effect of project-based collaborative writing on ESL/EFL undergraduates' argumentative writing performance in an online setting.

RELATED LITERATURE

Online collaborative writing refers to a group of writers coming together to complete a writing assignment on any online platform by sharing their thoughts and having active discussions. Learners need constructive interaction with other writers to share ideas, build expertise, and correct one another's errors while performing a specific writing task. Woodrich and Fan (2017) found that students performed better on writing assignments when they collaborated with peers online. Besides, Damayanti et al., (2021) discovered that peer review activity between learners during the collaborative writing process contributed positively to the quality of their work. Therefore, writing activities that include active engagement and constructive responses among learners could be implemented in an online writing class.

METHODS

Thirty-four ESL/EFL undergraduates from an intact expository writing class were recruited in this quasi-experimental study. Pre- and post-argumentative writing tests were administered at the beginning and at the end of the course. The essays were graded based on Nimehchisalem et al., (2013) Analytical Scale of Argumentative Writing (ASAW) scoring rubric. Toulmin's (1958) model was applied to analyse the structure of the argumentative essays. Semi-structured interviews and students' reflections were also obtained to gather insights into their online writing experiences. The online interview was conducted individually with 21 participants, which took appropriately 20 minutes. Prior to the interview, the participants were informed to share freely about their online project-based writing experience. Probing questions were asked when necessary to elicit in-depth information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative results of pre- and post- argumentative writing test scores showed significant improvement. Language domains, such as content, organisation, vocabulary, language conventions and overall effectiveness were significantly improved.

For qualitative findings, five themes emerged from the interviews and students' reflections on their perceptions of online project-based collaborative writing experience.

Positive Writing Attitudes

The majority of the participants perceived that online project-based collaborative writing could promote positive writing attitudes. Willow mentioned:

I used to only like writing fiction since I can use my imagination without limit. Since this class, I learned that academic writing could be fun too. I think the main reason why I find academic writing so difficult before is because I don't really understand the format. This course has really changed my perspective towards academic writing and at the same time improved my writing.

Before attending this course, the majority of the participants preferred to write narrative essays or fictions due to the unrestricted format and freedom in narrative writing. They perceived that academic writing limits their creativity. However, the writing course taught them the right techniques and important skills in writing a good argumentative essay through various writing activities that helped them to take a stance, refer to sources, and exchange ideas with peers.

Improve Argumentative Writing Skills

Half of the participants noticed that the online project-based collaborative writing activities enhanced their argumentative writing skills. Sera said:

We used the Toulmin's model correctly and each body paragraph consists of opposing views followed by rebuttal arguments. The concept and ideas presented in this essay are well-planned and organised, which make the essay unique and convincing.

The application of Toulmin's model in their argumentative essays contributed positively to their writing skills in terms of the stances and rebuttals, organisation, vocabulary and conciseness in their writing.

Develop Criticality

All of the participants agreed that the peer review sessions developed their criticality. Sophie shared:

Peer review activity is extremely beneficial to me since it allows us to converse and evaluate the progression of our writings from the viewpoints of others. Before the peer review session, we thought our essay was all good not realising that we had a bunch of mistakes that needed to be fixed. We also thought that our stance was clear and strong enough.

As the participants collaborated and wrote online together, they had to discuss their viewpoints and select appropriate ideas. The constant exchange of viewpoints and peer review sessions heightened their critical thinking.

Hone Digital Skills

Digital skills were also developed. The participants learned how to use new platforms and applications to write their essays and produce a documentary video based on their essays. Ava and Lily mentioned:

One of the new things that I just discovered was the usage of CapCut and VN to edit the video to be nicer. Usually, I just use iMovie to edit all the videos but this time around I took a challenge to use other applications to edit the video. [Ava]

I haven't used Google Docs before but have been using Microsoft Word. The use of Google Docs has many features. It is very convenient, such as it can automatically save what we have written in real-time, and it can allow multiplayer online editing at the same time. [Lily]

The online project-based collaborative writing activities had exposed the participants to the use of different online platforms and digital software such as Google Docs, CapCut and VN. Students who were first-time users could cooperate and learn from their peers in completing their writing tasks and video production.

Build Soft Skills

This study revealed that online project-based collaborative writing could enhance soft skills that are useful for 21st century learners. They developed the skills of working in a team and communicating or negotiating with peers as stated by Autumn and Arissa:

The key is teamwork and making sure everyone is moving at the same pace. If one person is left behind, we will make sure to help until she can catch up. Having good teammates really can determine the quality of the work. [Autumn]

If I have problems with my teammates, I will confront them and the problems. [Arissa]

CONCLUSION

Various learning activities were included in the online classroom to compensate for the absence of face-to-face meetings and physical engagement in the writing course. The learners had the chance to enhance their writing through the online project-based collaborative writing process. Language instructors can utilise project-based learning approaches in teaching writing in the online setting to maximise learners' learning outcomes and collaborative experience.

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VOCABULARY BENCHMARKING FOR THE COMPREHENSION OF CERF-ALIGNED ASSESSMENT READING TEXTS

Ng Yu Jin^{1*}, Anealka Aziz Hussin², Norwati Roslim², Dzeelfa Zainal Abidin², and Vahid Nimehchisalem³

¹*Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Malaysia*

²*Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia*

³*Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*

E-mail: yujin@uniten.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, there is a lack of research on the minimum vocabulary size needed for understanding academic texts among pre-university and university students who speak English as a second or foreign language. This study aims to address this gap by developing the Comprehension Corpus, which identifies significant lexical components for improved reading comprehension. The objective is to compare the required vocabulary size for understanding CEFR-aligned comprehension texts based on lexical coverage percentage and identify key vocabulary types for better comprehension. Using the RANGE BNC-COCA list programme and WordSmith Tools, the analysis revealed that passages required a minimum of 8,000-word families to achieve 98 percent coverage. However, this can be overwhelming for learners. As a solution, a customised word list of 100 words was generated, classified by commonly accessed topics, and supplemented with the New General Service List (NGSL) and New Academic Word List (NAWL). The study suggests that teachers preparing language proficiency test courses should focus on personalised vocabulary instruction rather than relying on haphazard or ad hoc vocabulary learning. By addressing students' specific vocabulary needs, teachers can better support their reading comprehension development. In conclusion, this research highlights the importance of vocabulary size and lexical coverage for successful reading comprehension in academic texts. The study's findings provide teachers with a tailored word list and emphasise the need for personalised vocabulary instruction to enhance students' reading comprehension abilities.

KEYWORDS

Vocabulary pedagogy; academic reading corpus; CEFR-aligned comprehension; vocabulary size

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INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary, also known as lexis, refers to a target language's semantics, or the understanding of words and their meanings, which is at the heart of the language acquisition process (Ng et al., 2020). The comprehension of a word's form, including its meaning and context, is referred to as "word knowledge." For learners who speak English as a second or foreign language, learning new terms can be daunting. The size of the learners' vocabulary and the level of lexical coverage of the desired resources in terms of word families are typically directly connected to the achievement of context understanding or text comprehension. The vocabulary threshold is the number of words required to grasp a text at a certain level of comprehension. When a reader retains a large degree of second language comprehension, referred to as the vocabulary threshold, general reading skills can be performed at an optimal level. The minimum vocabulary required for "adequate" reading comprehension is known as the vocabulary threshold (Bi, 2020).

For pre-university or university students who speak English as a second or foreign language, excelling in Common European Framework of Reference aligned (hereafter CEFR-aligned) reading comprehension assessment might be difficult. The size of the learners' vocabulary and the level of lexical coverage of the desired resources in terms of word families are typically linked to the effectiveness of context understanding or text comprehension. The goal of this study is to determine the minimum vocabulary size necessary for an understanding of CEFR-aligned assessment comprehension texts, as indicated by the percentage of lexical coverage. To meet the objective, the CEFR-aligned assessment reading corpus was developed to describe the significant lexical components that might help students excel at reading passage comprehension. The current study's objective is to compare the needed vocabulary size for understanding CEFR-aligned assessment comprehension texts indicated by the percentage of lexical coverage. Understanding specific materials' vocabulary thresholds makes course design and lesson preparation easier, as well as promotes disciplinary literacy (Durbahn, Rodgers & Peters, 2020; Bi, 2020).

RELATED LITERATURE

The initial step was to conduct a keyword analysis to find phrases that were related to CEFR-aligned assessment reading passages and had potential pedagogical value. These were then compared to existing external wordlists such as the New General Service List (Browne, Culligan, & Phillips, 2013a) and the New Academic Word List (Browne, Culligan, & Phillips, 2013b) to categorise keywords into those that are widely found in both general and academic English. Low-frequency or even technical words are those that do not appear in either the NGSL or the NAWL and are closely linked with certain technical or specialist areas or fields (Ng et al., 2020). Different educational levels or specific passages may need certain levels of lexical coverage to achieve the desired reading proficiency and even for writing (see Chen, 2020).

METHODS

The approach used in this study is to look at the coverage of various terms based on the frequency levels assigned to texts in specific or typical corpora. Using the RANGE BNC-COCA, Thiruchelvam's (2018) method was used in this investigation (Nation, 2017).

Only Hsu (2018) conducted a comparative examination of the texts utilised regularly in English-medium traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) textbooks. For this investigation, the text coverage threshold value was chosen at 98 percent text comprehension. The lexical coverage of several textbooks was measured using the RANGE BNC-COCA list programme (Nation, 2017) to assess the number of word families required to grasp texts. The software's BNC-COCA word family lists are divided into 25 lists, each containing 1,000-word families chosen based on frequency and range statistics (Nation, 2017). The programme also has pre-loaded collections of proper nouns, abbreviations, and marginal words (exclamations and hesitating procedure). These words are thought to be relatively easy for students to acquire and excluding them would raise the lexical barrier for understandable reading. These word lists were used to examine the vocabulary demand of CEFR-aligned assessment reading articles, using research methodologies proposed by Thiruchelvam et al. (2018), Hsu (2018), and Kaneko (2015), to mention a few.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Malaysia, there is a lack of research on the minimum vocabulary size needed for understanding academic texts among pre-university and university students who speak English as a second or foreign language. This study aims to address this gap by developing the Comprehension Corpus, which identifies significant lexical components for improved reading comprehension. The objective is to compare the required vocabulary size for understanding CEFR-aligned comprehension texts based on lexical coverage percentage and identify key vocabulary types for better comprehension. According to the findings, all CEFR-aligned assessment reading passages or articles required at least 8,000-word families to achieve 98 percent coverage. The findings demonstrate that the required vocabulary size might be burdensome for students taking the CEFR-aligned assessment reading comprehension exam (see Hendry & Sheepy, 2018). A customised word list of 100 words was generated by comparing the filtered keywords to the NAWL's academic list and classifying field-related terms based on the CEFR-aligned assessment topics of study, which frequently occur in the core test. To attain considerably more effective comprehension and delivery of the ideas, it is assumed that students will need to develop a larger and more varied vocabulary. Thus, teachers who need to teach CEFR-aligned assessment preparation courses should prepare pedagogically to assist students with their personalised vocabulary needs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research highlights the importance of vocabulary size and lexical coverage for successful reading comprehension in academic texts. The study's findings provide teachers with a tailored word list and emphasise the need for personalised vocabulary instruction to enhance students' reading comprehension abilities.

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CORPUS-BASED STUDIES OF THE LEXICOLOGY IN TRAUMA-RELATED TEXTBOOKS

Ng Yu Jin ^{1*}, Chong Seng Tong¹, Norwati Roslim², Yeow Jian Ai³, and Ng Poh Kiat³

¹*Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Malaysia.*

²*Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia*

³*Multimedia University, Malaysia.*

E-mail: yujin@uniten.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Trauma experiences and post-traumatic stress disorders are increasingly prevalent worldwide. This study focuses on the language usage in three textbooks authored by a renowned trauma analysis expert with over 20 years of experience. By examining the language management of trauma studies in these textbooks, the study aims to explore how the analysis of trauma narratives can contribute to self-efficacy beliefs, particularly in communication management. To conduct the analysis, the study employs a corpus-based approach using Concordance Software, WordSmith Tools. The researchers identify essential keywords and create a word list specifically for trauma narratives discourse. The analysis follows a structured content analysis methodology, focusing on keywords and concordance, based on the APPRAISAL framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Grammar and sentential analysis are not included in this research. Through this process, the researchers identify 210 headwords that form the basis of the new word list for trauma narratives discourse. The purpose of developing this word list is to assist disaster risk management researchers and authorities in identifying sensitive traumatic keywords for use in communication with affected individuals and in community-based studies and management. This study offers valuable insights into the creation of a trauma narrative essential word list and its practical application. In conclusion, this study sheds light on the language management of trauma studies in textbooks and presents a comprehensive list of keywords that are closely linked to trauma narratives.

KEYWORDS

Trauma narrative; the corpus of trauma studies; trauma textbook evaluation; the vocabulary of trauma studies

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INTRODUCTION

Communication skills are usually placed among the top priorities or strategies for ensuring effective communication (Khanyile, Musonda, & Agumba, 2019). In managing our communication, especially in a societal setting, where victims of post-traumatic events should narrate their pain, what matters most is ‘what’ communication is being put forward, not solely on ‘how’ it is said (Muszyńska, 2016). Thus, empathy or purposeful listening is crucial in aiding the community to recover from a post-traumatic event such as a flood as it builds trust and relationships with proper communication management among the team members, in this case, the society or community within.

It is believed that only when society is engaged in helping the post-traumatic victims through empathetically good ‘listening’ effort, then and only then these victims could be guided to recovery or self-efficacy. Society engagement involves the participation of various stakeholders conducted through direct and indirect interactions of civil society organisations and communities with government, institutions, and corporations to pursue the common good for the betterment of society (Chan & Chin, 2021).

In this research, the use of trauma narrative analysis and corpus-based studies to look at how the language of trauma might help society deal with the challenges of sustainable development, especially when it comes to communication management. The language of trauma is compared to other words in a corpus-based study of keywords. The research objective is to determine how key lexicology is expressed in the target trauma-related textbooks.

RELATED LITERATURE

In this study, adopting the essence of corpus linguistics could help in expanding the depth of content analysis to ensure that the relevant theories are incorporated into examining the language and communication management parameters (Martínez, 2020). In addition, the keywords, or “keyness” words, could be identified to further understand the nature of the language structures and use in the textbooks. Using the framework of APPRAISAL as an analysis foundation, derived from Systemic Functional Linguistics (see Ross & Caldwell, 2020), the language of narratives gathered can be analysed to determine the dominant trauma narratives and attitudes from the target community. To perform this study, trauma narrative materials from an eminent author should be analysed to identify the dominant thought and attitude (content analysis) put forth by the author (Caruth, 2009). They serve as a reference point for understanding the victims better when certain affinities or keywords are mentioned.

METHODS

Keyword analysis using a corpus-based method will be adapted (see Thiruchelvam et al., 2019) to identify the meaningful keywords found in the feedback of the narrative questions as well as the textbooks which represent the language of trauma by Caruth (2009). It adopts the essence that corpus linguistics serves as the grounded theory of looking at the ‘natural’ language of the studied texts (Ng et al., 2019). In short, the methodological framework used is trauma narrative in corpus-based analysis, adopting the APPRAISAL technique to identify the essence of the language of trauma presented in the textbooks. It engages content analysis as well, where corpus linguistics helps to identify the ‘anatomy’ of the language found.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In using corpus linguistics and corpus-based studies, the keywords found are closely related to that of trauma narrative, especially in-depth trauma studies, as those textbooks selected were from a very renowned expert in the field. Caruth (2009) has more than 30 years of studies and investigation in the field of trauma, and she has been highly cited and regarded as the ‘guru’ in the philosophy and literature of trauma narratives (Mohd Nazri Latiff Azmi, 2018). The words or terms found in the texts are believed to be very trauma-based. Thus, the keywords and word lists created in this study are believed to have the capacity to trigger some ‘unwelcomed’ emotions or even reactions if these words are often used in conversation or communication with the affected or victims of any traumatic events. Communication management plays an important role in talent development to facilitate or even debilitate any personal growth or development. It is believed that affected workers, employees, or any individual could not fulfil their potential due to the ‘internal unforgiving fear’ that keeps haunting these people.

In terms of trauma narrative education, the keywords found could contribute to better curriculum development in determining the vocabulary selection for any program construction (Rolls & Rodgers, 2017). The word list created, on the other hand, is a list of 210 trauma-related words that were created to assist communication ‘managers’ to be more aware of their word usage. These are trauma narrative-related headwords that are intended for use only in the field of trauma communication or language. Additionally, they are classified as headwords with a specific application or as stand-alone headwords. They are not frequently used English terms, nor are they academic terms; rather, they serve the aim of connecting with the community more accurately or with great care when utilising these field-specific terms. It gives an overview of the words that are most likely to be linked to trauma stories, and when these words are well-represented, it may help the community be more towards self-efficacy.

CONCLUSION

In terms of analysing the nature of trauma narratives, language or linguistics aspect of it, engaging corpus linguistics approach, and concordance software, a list of its ‘unusually’ high-frequency keywords is identified to facilitate better communication management. In addition, a customised list of trauma narratives word lists is developed in the process after eliminating the deemed general or common English words which are not as ‘technical’ in nature for trauma studies and more. Affected persons may be sensitive to some of the 210 headwords that have been found by researchers. They are believed to have the potential to aid the community and other stakeholders. Researchers new to the field of trauma narrative should familiarise themselves with the important words associated with the field by familiarising themselves with this word list. Understanding these terms is critical since they are used exclusively in the trauma narrative discourse community.

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DEVELOPMENT OF A MALAYSIAN CORPUS OF ACADEMIC REPORT WRITING (MCARW)

Norwati Roslim^{1*}, Muhammad Hakimi Tew Abdullah¹, Nur Faathinah Mohammad Roshdan¹,
Ng Yu Jin², and Seyed Ali Resvani Kalajahi³

¹*Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia*

²*Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Kajang, Malaysia*

³*Turkish-German University, Turkey*

E-mail: norwati@uitm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Academic report writing is essential and serves as a requirement for degree students at the tertiary level. An exploration of assessing students' academic report writing can be obtained from a corpus of students' work. This is best described as a collection or compilation of texts which contains words, phrases and language written by learners. The emergence of academic report writing corpus provides empirical evidence of the language patterns used by students for academic report writing. In the field of corpus linguistics, a corpus needs to be compiled before any corpus-based analysis is conducted. Hence, this research aimed to firstly, develop a Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW), a learner corpus consisting of research report writing produced by UiTM undergraduates. Secondly, to investigate the lexical properties of the corpus which includes the tokens (running word), types and Standardised Types per Tokens Ratio (STTR) of the corpus. Thirdly, to provide suggestions on the use of the Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW). This research utilised quantitative content analysis approach due to the nature of corpus linguistic studies which deal mostly with numbers and percentages of use. It is expected that this research project will be a valuable source in establishing baseline data of the undergraduates' language use in academic report writing.

KEYWORDS

Research report; learner corpus; academic report writing; undergraduates; language use

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INTRODUCTION

Academic report writing has always been an important aspect of teaching and learning at tertiary level. It presents a range of essential written communication skills using common report writing conventions to produce an effective investigative research report. This report needs to be prepared with great quality, clarity, and impact. An exploration of assessing students' academic report writing can be obtained from a corpus of students' work. This is best described as a collection or compilation of texts which contains words, phrases, and language written by learners. This type of corpus is called "learner corpus".

Corpora (plural for 'corpus') are now being used for a wide range of linguistic studies concerning everything from lexicography to syntax to stylistics. Researchers in first and second language acquisition have begun to assemble and use corpora of learners' texts in order to construct models of the learners' linguistic knowledge and ability. In Malaysia, this is absolutely limited in terms of the availability of learner corpora. As to date, published works on learner corpus have used the EMAS Corpus and McSAW as sources of corpus evidence.

RELATED LITERATURE

The use of a target corpus of academic and professional writing has been a great help in providing the examples and patterns that students need in constructing their sentences and paragraphs. For instance, research utilising the Michigan Corpus of Upper-level Student Papers (MICUSP) as a new resource enables researchers and teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to investigate the written discourse of highly advanced student writers. The study closes with a description of future avenues for MICUSP-based research (Ädel, & Römer, 2012).

The British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE) has frequently been used to investigate the genre of academic writing. It draws on an exploration of assessing student writing in order to support the analysis of texts with an IMRD (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) type structure (Gardner, 2012).

The unique writing conventions for academic writing is said to be a distinct genre in the English-using discourse community. A study which analyses the textual or phrasal aspects of abstracts of research articles has seen to extend the results of abstract analysis to the development of online course content for the explicit teaching of abstract writing in Applied Linguistics. This is evident in Hussein and Haider's (2021) study on a corpus of research abstracts to assist researchers and graduate students embarking on writing their theses to opt for the most relevant terms to be used in various discipline abstracts. This finding also supports Araminta (2020) and Ersanli (2015) that emphasised insights gained from corpus development and corpus research.

Evidently, having a corpus provides significant work on research. Based on the existing literature, this research preliminarily aims to develop a Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW). This corpus is then used to investigate the lexical properties of the Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW). Finally, this study provides practical suggestions on the use of the Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW).

The research objectives of this study were as follows:

1. to develop a Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW);

2. to investigate the lexical properties of the Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW); and
3. to provide suggestions on the use of the Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW).

METHODS

This study involved the development of a corpus. Tognini-Bonelli (2001) asserts that a typical research design in a corpus-based study or in its broader term, corpus linguistics study, requires a methodology which can be applicable to all branches of linguistic studies, including historical linguistics, lexicography, register variation, language acquisition, grammar, and discourse. The methodological platform of this corpus-based research covers the fields of corpus linguistics and content analysis in the process of examining the lexical properties and the relationships between the lexical items in the text. Hence, this corpus-based study uses the quantitative content analysis approach due to the nature of corpus linguistic studies which deal mostly with numbers and percentages of use.

Population and Sampling

For the purpose of this study, the population for the English corpus is defined as the English Report Writing written by a total of 20 students from the Faculty of Information Management in a group of 4 students. These are UiTM EWC661 degree students in Semester March-July 2022.

Instrumentation

This study utilised WordSmith Tools 8.0. WordSmith Tools are integrated programmes that look at how words behave in a text. Oxford University Press uses the tools for the lexicographic work in preparing dictionaries. These tools are also useful for language teachers, students, and researchers in investigating language patterns (Biber and Reppen, 2002).

Data Collection Procedures

The texts were the report writing produced by the respondents. These were collected and saved as raw data at the end of the semester. The process of data collection was then continued with scanning and converting the texts into a Tagged Image File (TIF) format. The texts then were saved and transferred to the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software which converted all the TIF files into text (.txt) files. The text files were then checked for errors before they were saved and renamed according to the research topics. Minimal rectification and correction were made to the scanned pages. This is to ensure that the scanned texts will not lose their originality. The text files were then analysed using the software (WordSmith Tools 8.0). A reference corpus used in this study is the British National Corpus (BNC). According to Leech (2017), a reference corpus is used by scholars and researchers, lexicographers and grammarians. Besides, language materials developers will want to use the reference corpus as an aid to develop teaching materials of various kinds.

Data Analysis Procedures

Using the ‘WordList’ function of WordSmith Tools 8.0, the lexical properties (characteristics) of the target corpus were obtained. From the outcome of the analysis, the tokens (running word), types and Standardised Types per Tokens Ratio (STTR) were retrieved from the MCARW. Manual calculation of the types per token ratio (TTR) were done from the data provided for analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation and discussion in this section will be based on the research objectives stated earlier. The first part deals with the development of a Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW). The second part deals with the lexical properties investigation of the Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW). While the last part provides suggestions on the use of the Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW).

Research objective 1: To develop a Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW).

This section describes the data in the corpus. The data in MCARW are untagged data that can be described in terms of types of files, file name, file organisation and the amount of data.

Types of files

Most of the data in MCARW are text files (i.e. files with the .txt extension). Text files are individual files of students’ work on their academic report writing.

File names

Each file is a written academic report from a group of students. The following format of giving file names helps identify the faculty, group id, topic and number of files. It should be noted that one is able to identify the various topics written by the groups by referring to the group ID in the file name.

File organisation

The text files which make up a large portion of the data can be found in the DataMCARW folder. They are organised under the faculty sub-holder. The faculty sub-holder is further organised into separate folders according to groups and topics.

Amount of data

The amount of data collected can be described in terms of number of files.

Research objective 2: To investigate the lexical properties of the Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW).

The results show the lexical properties in terms of the types, tokens and lexical density and recurring ratio. The process of deriving the tokens and types from the analysis of all the texts was completed using WordSmith Tools 8.0 which listed the total number of tokens and word

types sorted by frequency or alphabetical order. Every single word in the texts is counted as a token, whereas each dissimilar word in the texts is considered as a type.

The general statistics displayed by the concordance software are the number of tokens (also known as running words), the kinds of words (referred to as types), the type/token ratio (TTR), and the standardised TTR. The type/token ratio (TTR) is the number of types per token, giving an overview of the lexical density of words in the target texts. It has also been labelled as density ratio. The average TTR of consecutive 1,000 word chunks of text is computed to obtain the standardised TTR (STTR).

For the presentation of the analysed results of this study, the general statistics of MCARW used include the tokens (26,076), types (3,043), TTR (12.71) and STTR (36.77).

Research objective 3: To provide suggestions on the use of the Malaysian Corpus of Academic Report Writing (MCARW).

MCARW was compiled to establish baseline data of the English language proficiency of Malaysian university students in academic report writing. Researchers may want to use the corpus to research numerous issues related to the language used in academic report writing of Malaysian university students. The corpus data provides a helpful reference point to help lecturers and students to progress based on current level of proficiency.

WordSmith Tools 8.0 provides three analysis tools in the software, which are WordList, Concord and Keyword.

Wordlist

This function provides the word and its frequency as a percentage of the whole corpus of texts.

Keywords

Keywords usually give a reasonably good clue to what the text is about. They give a good indication of the text's "aboutness". Any word which is found to be outstanding in its frequency in the text is considered "key".

Concord

Concord is used to specify a search word in text files. It will then present a concordance display and give access to information about collocates of the search word.

CONCLUSION

The development of a corpus consisting of written texts of academic report writing provides empirical evidence of the language patterns used by students. Although lecturers could have probably always inductively built-up models of typical students' linguistic knowledge as they read and respond to their students' work, the use of the target corpus would allow them to analyse this at a deeper level. Lecturers undoubtedly have some ideas of the language patterns used by students but these intuitions are not very detailed. Just from looking at individual student papers, it can be difficult to see how prevalent language patterns, choice and use, and

which particular groups of students share them. Thus, it is essential to develop and use a corpus of academic report writing to investigate the language patterns used by students.

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ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES AND INTERNET LANGUAGE FEATURES IN MALAYSIAN COMEDIAN'S TWEETS

Nur Athirah Mohamad Hatta*, Nor Ashikin Yusof, and Azman Che Mat

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

E-mail: tierahatta@uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Twitter has become one of the most popular social media platforms for researchers to conduct studies on online communication and politeness strategies. The use of social media as a channel to communicate has changed the way people express their thoughts and opinions. This study aims to seek language patterns in Twitter updates and to discover internet language features used by a Malaysian comedian while maintaining politeness. Online communication involves writing and reading text on screen, with politeness issues influencing interpretation. Celebrities like Malaysian comedians can gain popularity and followers due to their politeness. Twitter can be challenging for comedians since they often tweet short messages which require sensitivity in word choice to avoid misinterpretation. The politeness theory is believed to be closely linked with the notion of sarcasm in which both of them feature the performance of a face-threatening act (FTA) in the interaction. A total of 77 tweets were analysed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of Politeness Strategies. The findings showed that the comedian applied off record strategies in his tweets where using rhetorical questions was most frequently used. The findings also showed the element of sarcasm which possibly contained in the tweets. Several internet language features found in the tweets were capitalisation, excessive use of letters, and also punctuation for certain purposes. In conclusion, this study observed the wide use of politeness strategies on Twitter and how different patterns of language are shown in written communication to convey ideas and thoughts.

KEYWORDS

Social media; Politeness; Internet language; Sarcasm

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INTRODUCTION

Twitter is one of the most popular online social networking sites that has become a platform for people to communicate with each other. It allows people to post short messages called ‘tweets’. To some people, Twitter is a private space for them to express their thoughts and feelings while others may use it as a tool to share current information and even spread jokes. Public figures like celebrities also have their own Twitter account to interact with their fans virtually. Many researchers have extensively studied the behaviour of people when interacting online. One of the issues that have gained their attention is linguistic politeness in social media. Brown and Levinson (1987) described the typology of politeness strategies with the indication of interaction between a speaker and listener. However, online communication is an interaction between people in the virtual world that requires the process of writing and reading the text on the screen. The politeness issues have always been discussed on how the meaning of a text is interpreted by the readers, as it may be interpreted as a polite or rude text. Politeness could make a celebrity famous and has many followers, especially getting Malaysian followers because they respect and are attracted to a polite celebrity. Nevertheless, as far as a Malaysian comedian is concerned, Twitter could be a challenging platform since he tweets jokes in short messages. He needs to be extra cautious in choosing his words for his tweets so that his almost one-million followers will not misinterpret them. Therefore, this study aims to identify the language trends in Twitter updates of a famous Malaysian comedian by observing the internet language characteristics shown in his ‘tweets’ and examining any usage of politeness strategy.

RELATED LITERATURE

Internet language has become a favourite topic for analysis in the study of linguistics and is called ‘written speech’ by some authors (Elmer-Dewitt, 1994). This means that what is supposed to come out of the mouth is conveyed in the form of writing. People’s behaviour and attitude are studied through the way they use language online, “We can see how language is used creatively to meet the technological challenges” (Locher, 2010, p. 1). Since online communication does not involve the use of non-verbal cues, body gestures, and facial expressions which are present in face-to-face interaction (Fahmee & Fung, 2016), people tend to innovate their own way of writing style when interacting online. In consequence, various linguistic styles and conventions have been created and used by them which result in the dynamic change of written language. Hence, the language of the internet exists and is primarily applied by people in online communication. Crystal (2001, p. 34) stated that internet language contains the “exaggerated use of spelling and punctuation, and the use of capitals, spacing, and special symbols for emphasis”. Twitter users have demonstrated a lot of abbreviations, slang language, and omissions to avoid hitting the 140-character limit when posting a ‘tweet’ according to Gebremeskel (2011). These internet language trends have received attention from researchers to study how social media users perform the act of politeness when interacting. A survey conducted by VitalSmarts showed that people act more politely in real life than on social media (Bennett, 2013). People are more attentive in choosing proper words when speaking in person but less considerate in social networks as there is no immediate response and the chance to recognise how the words will give an effect on the hearers (Patterson et al., 2013). Gervasio and Ileri (2019) suggested that positive politeness typically attempts to establish friendly relationships. Maros and Rosli (2017), who

investigated the use of politeness strategies in Twitter updates, revealed that the most frequently used strategy was positive politeness.

METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach which involves the observation and analysis of Twitter posts and updates. A total of 77 tweets were collected from the Twitter account of a Malaysian comedian which consist of his routine updates and personal opinions on current issues. The tweets collected were examined and analysed by referring to Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Strategies framework and the description of the internet language in the works of Crystal (2001).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the tweets collected, several strategies of off record listed in the Brown and Levinson's (1987) work were identified. Rhetorical questions were mostly used by the comedian in his Twitter updates which were 41%, followed by being ironic (26%), presupposing (15%), and overstating (10%). Being vague strategy was rarely used which was only 5%, followed by using tautologies (3%). There were several features of the internet language discovered throughout the data analysis using the description of internet language as described by Crystal (2001). Based on the findings, the most frequently used internet language feature was capitalisation (40%), followed by hashtags (27%), code-switching (17%), and punctuation for particular purposes (12%). Meanwhile, the excessive use of letters in words was the least feature found in the tweets which was only 4%. The results of this study clarified the use of an off record strategy in Twitter updates of the comedian where he wanted to perform an FTA (face-threatening act) but he attempted to avoid the responsibility of doing so by letting his addressees interpret his utterance on their own (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Based on the data analysis, the most frequently used strategy was using rhetorical questions where he intended to address a particular group of people by sarcastically making questions in an attempt to criticise particular issues and let his readers build their own interpretation of the intended meaning. Nonetheless, Maros and Rosli (2017) found that positive politeness was the most frequently used strategy in Twitter updates followed by bald on record, off record, and negative politeness. A study by Gervasio and Ileri (2019), on the other hand, revealed that the most frequently employed strategies in WhatsApp interaction were positive politeness and negative politeness followed by bald on record and off record.

CONCLUSION

This study justified that Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies are still relevant to be used in current online discourse analysis. Other than that, the objectives of this study were also achieved which were to identify the politeness strategies and internet language features used in Twitter updates of a Malaysian comedian. The development of the ideas has led to the hope that this study can contribute knowledge to the issue of politeness in the virtual world.

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TOWARDS DEVELOPING A METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS FRAMEWORK FOR MALAYSIAN LEARNERS: AN ANALYTICAL REFLECTION

Raihana Abu Hasan*, Chong Su Li, and Roselind Wan

Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Malaysia

E-mail: raihana_20001813@utp.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

This paper reflects on a significant analytical shift that had taken place in a study that aims to develop a metalinguistic awareness framework. The ongoing study which explores the patterns in the English metalinguistic awareness manifestations of Malaysian learners at the pre-university level was carried out. Research on metalinguistic awareness has barely caught on in Malaysia despite its pertinence to problems surrounding the mastery of grammatical accuracy among language learners within the academic register. Data was collected using a test consisting of 25 multiple-choice English grammar questions serving as stimuli in order to elicit written responses from 797 students enrolled in 11 pre-university institutions. The written responses that the participants provided to explain the choices they had made in the grammar questions represent their metalinguistic awareness manifestations. The analytical shift occurred during the qualitative analysis of the written responses: Initially the written responses were examined using content analysis anchored by metalinguistic awareness typologies identified from the literature but the deductive exercise had to be shelved in favour of discourse analysis, specifically the identification of the communicative functions of the written responses. This shift resulted in a more systematic data coding process, a more effective acquaintance with the data for the analyst, and a more nuanced interpretation of the written responses through analysis of what the participants are saying alongside what they are doing. By combining the principles of qualitative analysis and linguistic analysis, a more robust method of approaching qualitative data could be achieved, which is what this paper will demonstrate.

KEYWORDS

Metalinguistic awareness; grammar; qualitative analysis; content analysis; discourse analysis

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INTRODUCTION

This study posits that possessing heightened metalinguistic awareness and knowledge of grammar metalanguage enhances language learners' autonomy in making informed decisions about grammar usage (Swain, 2006). This could be achieved when grammar is presented to them as a meaning-making resource, which means that the change in a grammatical structure can result in the alteration of the sentence meaning on par with how lexical words make or change meanings. A language user with high metalinguistic awareness would thus have the ability to detect even a subtle change in meaning caused by a change in structure.

Formal grammar is introduced to learners to make explicit language structures that are already implicit to them. Learners may already have functional proficiency to survive, but the metalinguistic awareness gained through formal grammar would augment their ability to monitor their own language production, followed by the ability to self-diagnose their language, leading to independent decision-making and self-directed learning using the metalanguage they are equipped with. This is especially germane with languages with extra flexible grammar systems such as English which is typically used in the academic register.

Despite these advantages, research into metalinguistic awareness has barely caught on in Malaysia. The few that have been published are on the metalinguistic knowledge of English teacher trainees (Elder et al., 2007), in-service primary school teachers (Shuib, 2009), and Malay students majoring in English (Mohammad Lotfie et al., 2015); as well as on lay learners' metalinguistic awareness through collaborative interaction (Harun et al., 2017). This small number of studies indicate untapped research potential of metalinguistic awareness in a context teeming with languages and where English poses a strong competition to the local languages. Therefore, more empirical data is needed on how the metalinguistic awareness of Malaysian learners of English is realised. This study is conducted to explore the English metalinguistic awareness manifestations patterns of Malaysian pre-university students. The purpose of this paper, however, is not to address the objective of the study directly but rather to demonstrate and reflect on a significant analytical shift that had taken place while carrying out the study.

RELATED LITERATURE

A fundamental deconstruction of the metalinguistic awareness construct is at the cognitive level, between control of attention on a linguistic representation and analysis of representational structures (Bialystok, 1988). The most recognisable typology of metalinguistic awareness, however, is to go by linguistic analysis levels. Gombert (1992) used the subset consisting of metaphonological, metasemantic, metalexical, metasyntactic, and metatextual to explain metalinguistic development in language acquisition, and Angelovska (2018) among others adopted similar permutations to show the spread of knowledge their participants were able to invoke in broad-based tasks. Another common method is examining the functions of speech during languaging activities (Swain, 2006), creating categories such as insecurity about the existence of a lexical item and search for alternatives. Lastly, there are efforts to provide comprehensive metalinguistic awareness representations by mapping the categories into hierarchies. Woll (2019) proposed a framework divided into reflexive and applied dimensions, with the former expanded to metasemantic and metasyntactic analyses and the latter to several meaning-making strategies. Similarly, Watson et al. (2021) developed a comparable framework using labels such as declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge,

comment using terminology, and so on. These various typologies suggest that verbalised metalinguistic awareness data can be examined for their contents and functions.

METHODS

The instrument used to explore the English metalinguistic awareness patterns of Malaysian pre-university students was a test comprising 25 multiple-choice English grammar questions, each followed by a space for writing an explanation for the answer they chose. The explanations the participants provided represent their metalinguistic awareness manifestations. Participants were selected through multistage cluster sampling which narrowed down the pool to students who enrolled in five Ministry-of-Higher-Education-managed foundation centres and six Ministry-of-Education-run matriculation colleges, from which 797 students had returned the test. The research design is that of the mixed-methods in which the explanations gave qualitative data that would later be categorised and their frequencies counted to identify the metalinguistic awareness patterns. Before the systematic coding process of the qualitative data commenced, 55 test responses were selected as “test data” to determine the delimitations of the metalinguistic awareness typologies set out during the proposal stage. While the original plan had been to apply content analysis only, discourse analysis soon had to be interpolated. The remainder of this paper will focus on the analytical shift that occurred during the delimitation activity and discuss its rationale and implications for the coding and sense-making process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the proposal stage, five categorisation schemes were decided on to navigate the content analysis: (1) domains of metalinguistic awareness (i.e., linguistic analysis levels), (2) use of formal metalanguage, (3) attention to linguistic-related cues, (4) cognitive processes, and (5) level of acceptance for multiple grammar choices. However, the first coding attempt by going first with the domains of metalinguistic awareness due to its prevalence in similar past studies was ineffectual. The test responses gave varied explanations and only half of which could be assigned a domain of metalinguistic awareness code, thus leaving the other half devoid of any code. Written responses without any code attached would mean a more chaotic coding process.

This was resolved by reverting to the discourse analysis tradition of identifying the communicative function(s) of every written response. Among the emerged communicative functions are:

- a) referencing a cue and attempting to explain its meaning, (structural) characteristic, or tenor
- b) referencing a cue and presenting a rule
- c) referencing a cue without explaining
- d) referencing a cue and offering fuzzy descriptions
- e) explaining the meaning etc. without specifying a cue
- f) presenting a rule but not specifying its effect
- g) repeating the answer only
- h) offering fuzzy descriptions without additional explanations
- i) offering alternative answers

j) showing uncertainty

This set of communicative functions became the preliminary coding scheme as it enabled exhaustive data coding by which every explanation is assigned at least one code.

The communicative functions were eventually made to overlap the original categorisation schemes. Those schemes acted as the succeeding layers of analysis in which they will only be assigned to written responses that are applicable. For example, only data coded with (a)-(f) will subsequently be coded with the domains of metalinguistic awareness, use of formal metalanguage, and attention to linguistic-related cues. Data from (a)-(f) will also be overlaid with analyses of the depth and accuracy of the written responses.

The multi-layered coding process above ensured that the data of this study are analysed more methodically in attaining a fine-grained categorisation of the learners' metalinguistic awareness manifestations while they are making grammar decisions. More importantly, the shift described above illustrates the iterative process that all qualitative analyses must undergo. While the first level of analysis of looking at communicative functions might appear rudimentary, it was followed with the realisation that the exploration of qualitative data is not to be suppressed from its full potential than if the data had been approached purely deductively. Incorporating discourse analysis not only helped the analyst become effectively acquainted with the data but it also added nuance to the interpretation of the written responses by allowing the analysis to show what the participants are saying (through content analysis) and doing (through discourse analysis) simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

This paper has delineated the preliminary data analysis carried out to explore the English metalinguistic awareness patterns exhibited by Malaysian pre-university students. It was found that allowing the communicative-function codes to emerge not only made the analysis more efficient but it also enabled other coding schemes to be discovered or refined. The need to make sense of the written responses through the use of multiple analytical methods is driven by the prospect of developing a metalinguistic awareness framework for Malaysian learners, and this could be accomplished by allowing new categories to emerge alongside existing categorisation schemes, all the while weaving them with social factors that are unique to Malaysia.

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EFFECTS OF MULTIMEDIA GLOSSES ON ENGLISH INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY LEARNING

Ruohan Chen, Boon Sim Ng*, and Shamala Paramasivam

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: ngboon@upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of three types of multimedia glosses on incidental learning and retention of vocabulary related to L2 proficiency level, as well as compares the effectiveness of three types of multimedia glosses on incidental vocabulary learning. The results showed that for high-level learners, both post-test and delayed test, the group of text+picture+sound had significantly higher scores than the group of text+picture; For low-level learners, the group of text+sound had significantly higher scores than the group of text+picture on blank-filling, but no differences were observed among the three glosses on words recognition in post-test. There are no differences in the delayed test. It is hoped that this study promotes the matching between gloss types and modalities, triggers multisensory processing by linking auditory input and visual input, and optimizes learners' vocabulary learning motivation and self-efficacy, thereby improving vocabulary learning and achieving deep processing.

KEYWORDS

Multimedia glosses; incidental vocabulary learning

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INTRODUCTION

With the development of multimedia technology, numerous multimedia programs have been developed and introduced into foreign language reading activities. Using multimedia to enhance foreign language reading has been proven effective. By incorporating glosses into authentic reading materials, applications can help foreign language learners (FLLs) to understand the original texts more efficiently and aid incidental vocabulary learning in the reading process. Thus, it is considered a promising technology to facilitate foreign language learning and teaching (Kramersch & Andersen, 1999). The multimedia gloss has become a novel way to enhance reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition with increasingly diverse imagery forms. With a view to the characteristics of multimedia, Segler (2001) divided glosses into four categories: texts, graphics, sounds, and a combination of them. Therefore, as a new means of aiding vocabulary acquisition, the multimedia gloss has inspired researchers to shift their focus from traditional single-media glosses to a more dynamic multimedia environment.

In discussing multimedia glosses' effects on vocabulary learning, Plass et al. (1998) and Yoshii and Flaitz (2000) investigated the relative efficacy of text, picture, text+picture, and no gloss at all. The outcome showed that text and pictures were better than single gloss in helping language learners to acquire target words. However, researchers that compared video and pictures produced different results. Taylor (2006) argued that the differences might be attributed to varying proficiency levels of language learners, i.e., the reason why different modes of glosses have other impacts on vocabulary acquisition lies in learners' varying proficiency levels. When the gloss study considers individual variables, such as proficiency, verbal ability, and learning style, the question becomes much more complicated. However, existing researchers have predominantly overlooked the learners' proficiency level.

This study investigates the effects of different types of glosses on incidental vocabulary learning. Moreover, since researchers have exclusively focused on the comparative study of textual and visual annotations, leaving sound out of the discussion, this study treats sound as one mode of multimedia gloss. It explores whether pictures and sounds have different effects on facilitating incidental vocabulary acquisition for learners of varying proficiency levels.

RELATED LITERATURE

Gloss refers to definitions or explanations of unfamiliar words in L2 learning to assist reading comprehension, typically in the side or bottom margins (Lomicka, 1998). Nagata (1999) summarised four ways in which glosses improve vocabulary learning:

- Glosses are easier to use than a dictionary.
- They direct readers' attention to the target words, supporting the ideas of "consciousness-raising" and "input enhancement."
- They help establish an immediate correlation between words and meanings, supporting the "meaning-form connection" theory.
- Learners target words and glosses repeatedly, supporting the "Depth of Processing Hypothesis."

In the discussion of vocabulary acquisition aided by multimedia glosses, studies invariably concluded that text+picture were better at helping learners to acquire target words

than single gloss or no gloss at all. However, results varied in the comparison between video and picture. The vocabulary test and retrieval test conducted by Chun and Plass (1996) indicated that text+picture fared better in helping to recall newly learned words than text and text+video. In comparison, Al-Seghaye's study (2001) proved text+video to be more effective than text and text+picture. With those above, this paper intends to examine the following questions:

1. Which type of multimedia gloss (text+picture, text+sound, and text+picture+sound) shows the most extensive enhancement in English incidental vocabulary learning? Does it have to do with learners' proficiency?
2. Which type of gloss (text+picture, text+sound, and text+picture+sound) can increase the likelihood of vocabulary retention? Does it have to do with learners' proficiency?

METHODS

With these questions in mind, this study used qualitative and qualitative methods. It evaluated two variables among six experimental groups: (a) type of gloss (text+picture, text+sound, text+picture+sound) and (b) level of proficiency (high level, low level). Results were collected from quasi-experiment, questionnaires, and sample interviews to verify the theoretical hypothesis and answer the above questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data showed that in the target words test, the text+picture+sound group had the highest average score both in the immediate ($M= 8.56, SD=4.423$) and delayed ($M= 3.33, SD=2.67$) tests. The text+sound and the text+picture followed this. For low-level subjects, the text+sound group had the highest average score in the immediate test ($M= 5.17, SD=4.423$). In the delayed test, the group of text+picture+sound had the highest average score ($M= 1.53, SD=1.727$). To further investigate the influence of three glosses on incidental vocabulary learning, the *Scheff e* test was used to check. For advanced learners, the results showed a significant difference between the text+picture+sound and the text+picture in the immediate test ($p=.007$). There was no significant difference in multimedia glossing in the delayed test.

This study explores whether different glossing has other effects on the incidental vocabulary learning of learners at different levels. The various experimental results may be due to the different learning styles of diverse learners. Advanced learners who use text+picture+sound are more beneficial to vocabulary incidental learning than those who use text+picture, indicating that they use sounds to process information and thus promote vocabulary learning.

For intermediate learners, the text+sound performed better than the text+picture on the immediate test, possibly because text+sound promotes the connection of a word's meaning and form.

CONCLUSION

Results showed that teachers should take notice of glosses' value in incidental vocabulary acquisition in teaching and learning vocabulary and adopt tutoring approaches tailored to

students' traits to fulfil the needs of varying learning levels. In light of the limitations of this experiment, future researchers are expected to take subject groups, speed of sound glosses, and instruments into the analysis. For instance, future research should add dictation tests to test the ability of sound glossing to the subjects in spelling.

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TRACING THE EMERGENCE OF HOPE DURING PANDEMICS IN *NIGHTS OF PLAGUE* BY ORHAN PAMUK VIS-À-VIS FUTURISM

Sara (M. Omar) Hamzeh* and Halimah Mohamed Ali

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: sarahamzeh@student.usm.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Anxiety, depression, distress, and psychological functioning issues are all emotional reactions that can be described by emerging research as post-trauma symptoms related to mental health problems experienced by people who lived throughout the recent global pandemic COVID-19. This research paper aims to shed light on the role of fictional narratives that handle the theme of pandemics in reconstructing an optimistic vision for future generations. It explores how such narratives offer readers deep simulative models of reality and are not only a source of entertainment. Orhan Pamuk's novel *Nights of Plague* (2021) is selected for this research paper because it explores identity, conflicts between the East and West, modernism with tradition, and the creative arts. This paper will be read using the lens of post-normal times and futurism theories made famous by Ziauddin Sardar. This research will utilise the descriptive analytical approach to analyse the theories and make connections with the plot of the novel. This research aims to uncover key features of post-normal symptoms in the novel's characters and analyse themes that provide readers with a better understanding of pandemics. It also aims to educate humanity to come to terms with the sadness and suffering of pandemics and to pay tribute to those involved in battling them.

KEYWORDS

Post-normal times theory; futurists theory; Orhan Pamuk; pandemics; medical breakthroughs

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INTRODUCTION

The American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2000) states that traumatic events cause physical harm or death, causing emotional powerlessness and terror. Trauma is a human aspect, but pandemics can cause stress, illness, and uncertainty. Additionally, pandemics can intensify pre-existing trauma or provoke new traumatic experiences in those who have already been traumatised. This can lead to a vicious cycle of pain and suffering. This research paper examines how pandemic-themed fictional stories can help create a hopeful picture of the future for younger generations. It investigates how such stories go beyond reading pleasure and give readers rich simulative representations of reality. It focuses on the therapeutic effect of literature and its role as a crisis-relief-aid by selecting *Nights of Plague* novel by Orhan Pamuk, which chronicles the occurrence of an imaginary pandemic on an imaginary island called Mingheria. The text appeals to our COVID-19 situation and proves the lasting power and impact of literature, regardless of time and place. It focuses on the features of post-normal periods and the Futurism theories popularized by Ziauddin Sardar. The descriptive analytical technique will be used to study the ideas and draw links with the novel's storyline and the theme of pandemics.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pandemics

Pandemics are a worldwide outbreak of a specific illness, derived from the Greek word (*pandemos*) where pan means all and demos means people. A pandemic, defined by (WHO), is an infectious disease affecting significant numbers across a region, with current pandemics like COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS (Webster, 1869).

Medical Breakthrough

Medical breakthroughs are significant advancements in research, such as novel therapies or innovative medical gadgets. COVID-19 led to the development of two mRNA vaccines and numerous FDA-approved therapeutic lead compounds in 2020 and 2021 (Hogg, 2021).

Post-normal Times Theory & Futurists Theory

Post-normal times (PNT) is a notion created by Ziauddin Sardar as a post-normal science development (Sardar, 2019). Sardar defines post-normal times as a transitional moment between what is deemed normal for civilisations and what is post-normal, highlighting the contemporary era's unparalleled levels of change, uncertainty, and significant hazards (Sardar, 2010). He developed the 4S Scale Scope to describe the nature of change during post-normal times, which includes the following dimensions. The most important details in this text are that Sardar's (3C's) theory characterises post-normal times as an in-between phase, with old paradigms dissolving and new ones striving to emerge (Sardar, 2003). This paper investigates Sardar's 4Ss and 3Cs, which comprise the period's essential pillars while dealing with the dramatic development of ignorance and uncertainty. It also navigates Sardar's theory about post-normal times alongside the Futurists theory, as well as the Three Tomorrow's Theory as a mechanism while analysing the complexity, contradictions, and chaos of post-normal times and as an attempt to imagine improved and wiser futures. Futures studies, according to Sardar,

have a large activist component since it aims to help individuals examine and clarify their ideas, worries, hopes, and beliefs—and thereby their views on the future. Sardar seeks to empower non-Western countries by enabling citizens to voice their future perspectives and dreams rather than attempting to impose Western ideas, forecasts, and prophecies on other cultures and people.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses Comparative and Analytical Approaches to examine Sardar's theories about futurists and post-normal times. The descriptive analytical technique will be used to draw comparisons to the novel's narrative and examine topics that help modern readers better understand pandemics.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

***Nights of Plague* Summary**

The novel *Nights of Plague* is based on letters sent between 1901 and 1913 by Princess Pakize, the daughter of the Ottoman monarch Murad V. Abdul Hamid II married her off to Nuri Bey, a quarantine doctor, and sent them abroad as part of a special delegation to China. In *Nights of Plague*, a story about the spread of the plague in Mingheria, Princess Pakize, and her husband investigate Bonkowski Pasha's murder while facing quarantine concerns. Political instability leads to Mingheria's independence, causing torture, assassination, jail riots, and numerous deaths.

Post-normal Times & Futurism Theory in *Nights of Plague*

Nights of Plague is a novel about post-normal times and Futurism theories, depicting pandemics and their ramifications as emergent post-normal period events. The protagonists are flesh and blood beings with real problems, and the story's point of view is focused on normal human reactions. The Pandemic in *Nights of Plague* demonstrates how the concept of scale is diminishing and how simultaneity is on the rise. Sardar's framework for seeing the future in three sections illustrates a step in Mingheria's growth from colonial possession to a sovereign nation. Mingherians saw signs of optimism when they realised they needed to develop their own tactics and resources to combat the pandemic, leading to a more just transitional phase.

CONCLUSION

This paper argues that futures studies can be viewed as an erudite vessel that contains and shapes humans' inquiry into various aspects of the future. It also suggests that humans must benefit from the experience, knowledge, and mistakes of individuals who have grappled with the challenges and issues of alternate futures throughout history, rather than repeating their mistakes. Post-normal times experienced during the trauma of the pandemic force people to focus on uncertainties and ignorance that they will constantly encounter in the near and far future.

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METAPHORS OF GRIEF: UNDERSTANDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF GRIEF IN MOTIVATIONAL DISCOURSE

Hui Zanne, Seng^{1*} and Phei Wei, Lee²

¹*Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia*

²*Wei Forward Counselling*

E-mail: huizanne@uitm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Grief, as a universal human response to loss, is often difficult to convey in literal terms. Metaphors play a significant role in shaping individual experiences and societal perceptions of loss. This study focuses on how metaphors contribute to the construction of grief in motivational discourse. Grief expression is usually regarded as a private experience due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the emotions involved. Therefore, expressing and sharing thoughts about death and dying within motivational discourse benefits the public and the community, as it encourages discussion and enhances public awareness of adopting a positive mindset towards end-of-life care. TED talks, renowned for their inspirational and thought-provoking nature, provide a rich source of discourse on this subject. Five TED talk videos related to grief were collected from the YouTube channel. The data analysis was guided by critical metaphor analysis, and the results demonstrate that metaphors evoke emotions, create vivid imagery, and deepen the understanding of grief's complex and transformative nature. By employing metaphors, speakers engage the audience's imagination and facilitate a profound connection with the subject matter. The study reveals the rhetorical effectiveness of metaphors in conveying intricate emotional experiences, inspiring hope, and fostering personal transformation. Understanding the impact of these metaphors on motivation and resilience can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of motivational strategies in supporting individuals through the grieving process.

KEYWORDS

Critical metaphor analysis; Death; Grief; Metaphor; Motivational discourse

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INTRODUCTION

When individuals form relationships with each other, an attachment is formed. When death or loss occurs, one will inevitably experience grief. After the death of a loved one, grief prompts individuals to question various aspects of their lives, such as beliefs, life purpose, and future. Hence, finding meaning becomes a significant aspect of the grieving process. To facilitate and enhance the search for meaning, bereaved individuals must have the opportunity to share and narrate their loss (Neimeyer et al., 2010). The pros of grief expression have been proven by Neimeyer, Klass and Dennis (2014), confirming that this is important for the bereaved to cope with the experience. The benefit can be extended to the public, with the grief expression as an opportunity to raise awareness and promote discussion about life and death.

Grief is challenging for bereaved individuals to convey due to its depth, multifaceted emotional experiences, and individual differences, such as language and emotion regulation ability (Renzi et al., 2020). Grief can evoke intense and overwhelming emotions that may be difficult to articulate. The depth of sadness, pain, and longing that accompany grief often exceed the limits of language. Metaphors provide straightforward and powerful means to express, share and generate meaning in grieving (Neimeyer et al., 2010). Thus, this study focuses on using metaphors to construct grief in motivational discourse in a public setting.

RELATED LITERATURE

Metaphor is initially perceived as a literary device and a means of poetic expression. However, metaphor is extensively studied as a research tool for comprehending individuals' perception and conceptualisation of one concept in relation to another. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose metaphor as a cognitive device to explore how individuals perceive, interpret, and conceptualise specific concepts metaphorically. Additionally, Charteris-Black (2004) asserts that the utilisation of metaphor within a specific discourse context should be considered. Speakers often employ metaphors to accomplish specific communicative objectives within a given context. The selection of metaphors is typically influenced by rhetorical aims and ideological perspectives (Charteris-Black, 2004). Rosenblatt and Bowman (2013) discuss common metaphors employed by those who have experienced loss, such as the "hole" and "journey" metaphors. The "hole" metaphor emphasises the missing parts of the self-resulting from losing a loved one. On the other hand, the "journey" metaphor conveys that the grieving process may be prolonged, with the bereaved navigating their journey in their own unique way.

METHODS

The present study employed the purposive sampling method to select data for analysis. Specifically, five TED talk videos spanning the period from 2018 to 2023 addressing the topic of grief, were deliberately chosen from the official YouTube channel of TED Talks. Videos with less than 20 minutes were included in the sample. The videos were transcribed, and the data were analysed using Charteris-Black's (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis Approach, along with Imani's (2022) comprehensive guidelines for conducting CMA. The CMA approach utilised in this study encompasses four distinct levels of analysis: Pre-Metaphor Analysis, Metaphor Identification, Metaphor Interpretation, and Metaphor Explanation. By

adhering to this analytical framework, the study aims to comprehend how grief is constructed using various metaphors within a specific discourse context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The TED talks were mainly produced by the authors or writers who lost their loved ones and their purpose is to persuade and motivate the bereaved in their grieving process for personal transformation. There are two main areas of metaphor related to the construction of grief. Grief is represented metaphorically as an ocean and waves. They compare the experience of grief to being hit by a tidal wave, being violently pulled into an unforgiving ocean, and struggling to stay afloat. This metaphor highlights the overwhelming and unpredictable nature of grief, emphasising its ability to disrupt and engulf one's life. The metaphor of waves is also used to describe the unpredictable nature of grief. Waves represent the emotional ups and downs, with each wave requiring the individual to feel it. This metaphor implies that grief comes in varying intensities and frequencies, and one must allow themselves to experience and process each wave of emotion. However, one can learn to navigate and ride these waves like a surfer. "*We cannot stop the waves; we can certainly learn to surf mindful. Grieving has become a surfboard for us,*" it implies that while grief cannot be stopped, it can be approached with mindfulness and acceptance.

Grief is also represented metaphorically as a journey, in line with the discussion of Rottenblatt and Bowman (2013). Just like a journey, grief is not a static state but evolves over time. "*Our journeys to acceptance aren't always going to be the same*" indicates that individuals may not experience the stages in a fixed order or timeframe. "*Navigating grief isn't like navigating school*"; it compares the grief process to navigating through a school, implying that it is not a straightforward or linear journey. It also emphasises that grief is a transformative process for personal growth. It involves movement and progression. Grief is seen as a path individuals navigate as they work through their emotions and find a new way of living without the person or thing they have lost. However, it does not mean forgetting or completely letting go of the person or experience that was lost, just like what has been mentioned in this sentence, "*I really struggled with a lot during the early years of my grief journey; the first was this whole idea that we have to move on. Well, we don't move on, we move forward*". It is a gradual process of adjusting to the new reality and finding meaning and purpose in life again. Grief can still be present, but individuals find ways to cope and integrate it into their lives while pursuing their goals and responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the metaphorical representations of grief like 'ocean', 'waves', and 'journey' deepen the complex, unpredictable nature of grief. However, the metaphors also reveal the rhetorical effectiveness of metaphors in encouraging personal transformation and fostering positive values. Understanding the impact of these metaphors on motivation and resilience can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of motivational strategies in supporting individuals through the grieving process.

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METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES AND WRITING PROFICIENCY AMONG EFL LEARNERS: MEDIATING ROLE OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Shen Xiaolei*, Lilliati Ismail, and Joanna Joseph Jeyaraj

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: gs62681@student.upm.edu.my

* Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Metacognitive and critical thinking abilities among EFL learners are still underutilised. It is critical for EFL learners to have a greater grasp of critical thinking skills on metacognitive strategies to improve their writing proficiency. However, some studies prioritise solely on the direct correlations between metacognition and writing proficiency, ignoring how critical thinking skills can mediate metacognitive strategies and writing proficiency. Thus, this study is designed to investigate the mediating role of critical thinking skills in the relationship between metacognitive strategies and writing proficiency among EFL learners. 459 EFL participants took the California Critical Thinking Skills Test and metacognitive strategies questionnaire. Following the completion of them, participants concentrated on an IELTS writing assignment. The data analysis in this study involved the use of Pearson correlation analysis in SPSS 26.0, and AMOS 24.0 was employed for further analysis. The findings indicated significant correlations among critical thinking skills, metacognitive strategies, and writing proficiency in EFL learners. Notably, the mediating role of critical thinking skills was observed in the relationship between metacognitive strategies and EFL learners' writing proficiency. As a result, it can be concluded that critical thinking skills played a positive role in the writing process. These findings also highlight the significance of metacognitive strategies in a specific discipline. Similarly, future studies should consider textual analysis to validate the findings through qualitative and quantitative research.

KEYWORDS

Metacognitive; critical thinking; EFL learners; writing

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is an intricate and fundamental activity that serves as a pivotal means for capturing and disseminating ideas, as well as expressing personal thoughts argumentatively through the appropriate use of English learning strategies (Kim & Schatschneider, 2017). However, English writing poses challenges for students across various countries, such as language proficiency, insufficient learning strategies and critical thinking skills, and lack of motivation. Consequently, metacognitive strategies, as essential language learning strategies, facilitate a multifaceted exploration of writing through metacognitive monitoring and control, encompassing planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Moreover, critical thinking skills are the higher-order thinking strategies that involve deep reflection and comprehensive analysis, which aids in problem-solving, understanding experiences, and generating innovative ideas in writing activities (Lorie et al., 2020). By attentively monitoring and exercising control over their writing processes, learners are more likely to proficiently employ critical thinking skills, consciously making decisions about which skills to emphasise and how to leverage them (Murtadho, 2021). Thus, this study aims to explore the relationship between metacognitive strategies and English writing proficiency among EFL learners mediated by critical thinking skills.

RELATED LITERATURE

Writing Proficiency among EFL Learners

Writing proficiency encompasses language proficiency as it applies to writing activities, including a range of language skills, and the ability to effectively utilise these skills within specific writing contexts (Pui et al. 2020; Lee, 2006). An essential aspect of writing proficiency in relation to English language proficiency involves the logical expression of the writer's viewpoints.

Metacognitive Strategies and Writing

As argued by Teng (2019), planning, monitoring, and evaluation are the three main categories of metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive planning, which involves managing and reflecting on one's writing processes. Learners' skills and metacognitive knowledge enable them to become aware of themselves, direct their own learning, and track their writing progress by monitoring and evaluating writing outcomes (Teng & Huang, 2021). However, metacognitive strategies are not solely concerned with an individual's ability to monitor and regulate cognitive processes but also reflect the thinking process in English learning.

Critical Thinking Skills and Writing

Critical thinking skills are highly regarded as problem-solving skills and find widespread use in the context of English language learning including analysis, inference and evaluation (Li & Liu, 2021). It requires the ability to engage in logical analysis, transitioning from general to specific expressions, and effectively organising ideas within the composition (Dalha, 2018). By clarifying ideas, expressing perspectives, and exchanging thoughts, learners are able to construct their own coherent thoughts during the writing process.

Interplay Between Metacognitive Strategies, Critical Thinking Skills and Writing Proficiency

Critical thinking skills and metacognitive strategies play a crucial role in predicting writing proficiency. These abilities enable learners to identify problems, generate multiple perspectives, and develop well-supported arguments through the effective utilisation of planning, monitoring, and self-control during the writing process (Murtadho, 2021; Teng, 2019).

Gap and Conceptual Framework

Existing research has predominantly examined the direct relationship between either metacognitive strategies and writing or critical thinking skills and writing. However, the indirect effects of metacognitive strategies and critical thinking skills on writing have not been clearly established. Majority of studies have utilised SPSS such as Pearson correlation, or Sobel with bootstrapping to examine the relationships between metacognition and writing. SEM with AMOS is rarely used to investigate the relationships between these factors. Consequently, this analysis aims to examine how critical thinking skills are related to the utilisation of metacognitive strategies, reflecting EFL learners' writing proficiency.

METHODS

The participants consisted of 459 sophomore EFL learners who were selected randomly from a Chinese University. The age range of the participants was between 18 and 22 years old who have accumulated more than ten years of English learning experience and had a writing course in first and second semester. The *Metacognitive strategies questionnaire* is developed by Teng (2019), using a five-level Likert scale. The *California Critical Thinking Skills Test*, developed by Facione (1990), assesses learners' critical thinking ability through 34 multiple-choice items. Writing task is selected from IELTS argumentative writing. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS 24.0 will be employed to analyse the mediating effect of critical thinking skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Firstly, the findings revealed a positive relationship between metacognitive strategies and critical thinking skills, which is consistent with previous research (Li & Liu, 2021; Murtadho, 2021). Critical thinking skills facilitate learners use metacognitive strategies in writing performance. Secondly, this study also discovered a significant relationship between critical thinking skills and writing proficiency. In accordance with the finding of this study, learners with strong critical thinking skills have a proclivity to their writing capabilities which is in line with prior studies (Pui et al., 2020; Dalha, 2018). Thirdly, the results indicated a connection between metacognitive strategies and writing proficiency. The findings of this study align with previous research, in that increasing metacognitive awareness strengthens writing proficiency. Fourthly, the association between metacognitive strategies and writing proficiency is mediated by critical thinking skills. Previous research in line with this study has shown that learners identify suitable metacognitive strategies to organise writing by critical thinking skills (Murtadho, 2021; Astuti et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

In short, there are significant relationships between metacognitive strategies, critical thinking skills and writing proficiency. Learners with critical thinking skills will be more successful in using metacognitive strategies to grow into organising learning. Therefore, critical thinking skills act as a mediator of metacognition and writing proficiency.

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CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES WHEN TRAVELING IN THAILAND

Sirikwan Chaiyarukthaworn* and Michael A. Garrett

Mae Fah Luang University, Thailand

E-mail: 6231006192@lamduan.mfu.ac.th

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Flexibility is a strong social norm in Thai culture, so most Thai people are familiar with flexible environments. Given the rapid increase in international travellers in Thailand, foreign travellers might feel the excitement of different cultures. Nonetheless, cultural differences can also cause barriers when travelling. This research is motivated by the curiosity to discover how foreigners who are travelling in Thailand struggle with cultural differences. The paper focuses on two areas: the cross-cultural differences encountered by foreigners travelling in Thailand and the way in which these foreigners use English as a lingua franca when travelling in Thailand. For this research, we interviewed and observed a random sample of 13 backpackers travelling in Thailand, using grounded theory and thematic analysis. The findings suggest that Thailand has a positive destination image from the perspective of foreign travellers, which is related to the slogan “Thailand, the Land of Smiles.” In addition, foreigners use English as a lingua franca when travelling in Thailand in various ways, depending on the purpose of communication. This research aims to improve the quality of tourist business in Thailand, especially the local tourist business. The study also aims to contribute to sociological research on different cultural backgrounds and on how English is used as a lingua franca in Thailand, in particular by tourists.

KEYWORDS

Cross-cultural differences; English; Lingua franca; Backpackers; Travelling

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INTRODUCTION

Last year, I met a backpacker from Liverpool, England. Two hours into our conversation made me aware of the cross-cultural differences between foreign countries and Thailand that happened during her trip. The delay of the bus schedule in Thailand, for example, caused her to spend more time waiting for it. According to the backpacker, this situation is unheard of in her country. However, bus delays in Thailand are not a surprising circumstance. Since flexibility is a strong social norm of Thai culture, most Thai people are familiar with flexible environments such as time and rules. When foreigners come from different cultures, these two cultural differences could lead to barriers when travelling.

At this point, it awakened my curiosity to discover the common struggles that foreigners have when travelling in Thailand. This paper focuses on the cross-cultural differences happening when travelling in Thailand from the foreign backpackers' perspectives. The study also contributes to sociology research on different cultural backgrounds in Thailand affecting the tourism business.

RELATED LITERATURE

The term culture is broad, and it is a challenge to define it in one word because culture encompasses the fundamental aspect of society sharing values, beliefs, customs, and each particular group's behaviours. Smith (2002) stated culture is the mutual interaction of people, and it can be passed from individual actions creating cultural change through time. Moreover, he added cross-cultural studies usually focus on a huge area such as ethnicity. Culture is not static, but a dynamic concept, since it constantly evolves and adapts to new circumstances and changing social, economic, and political contexts. Relating to the privacy of two different cultures, Eastern culture and Western culture, Huang (2008) obviously showed that different demographics can lead to barriers of cultural differences when groups of people communicate with more than one culture. Not giving attention to cross-cultural differences can prevent tourism and hospitality from being a success; for example, the case of Disneyland Paris and the Mardan Palace Hotel (Koc, 2021). The case of Disneyland Paris or Euro Disney failed to comprehend French cultures as customers, employees, and the systems, so the consequences were disastrous for the businesses and caused a negative impact on the tourism industry. In detail, Disneyland Paris aimed to bring the truly American experience to Disneyland Paris, but it was rejected by local people in France because they felt like the establishment of Disneyland Paris with American culture would damage their French culture. The previous case study shows ignorance of cross-cultural differences led to the failure in tourism and hospitality. In addition, this research highlights the importance of the need to understand the differences in cultural backgrounds and how it influences people in each society. Thus, realizing significant cultural diversity can help the growth of the tourism industry.

METHODS

A qualitative research approach is employed to answer the two research questions of this study, and the collecting data processes: a semi-structured interview and ethnographic observation. To start with the semi-structured interview, I randomly interviewed 13 participants who were backpackers through face-to-face interviews. The average interview duration lasted approximately 25 minutes long by using open-ended questions to let the

participants share their opinions and experiences about travelling in Thailand. I used the grounded theory as the methodological framework because this theory is suitable for a qualitative study that could derive new discoveries from the collected data. Another data collection process is ethnography observation by observing participants' behaviour by hanging out with them. This process took approximately an hour to complete the observation. For analysing data, both types of data, I used thematic analysis. During the interview audio records were used after which I transcribed the participants' interview by using the AI tool on Google Docs, and I rechecked the correctness of the transcribed texts twice. These steps, accompanied by thematic analysis, would help me find the relevant information on the study, and lead me to meet the objectives of the research.

RESULTS

According to the interview data from the 13 participants, they had an optimistic view when travelling in Thailand and perceive the differences as new things to explore rather than struggling experiences. In addition, most participants mentioned the friendliness of Thai people is the most engaging impression they have during their travelling experiences in Thailand. According to the famous quote "Thailand, the Land of Smiles" from the perspective of foreign backpackers, all participants agreed that Thai people were friendly and kind. The evidence below shows how travellers gained their experiences towards travelling in Thailand. Most participants mentioned in the same way that the English ability of Thai people who were in tourist places was understandable to communicate with tourists. On the other hand, Mason, one of the participants, explained that his experience of using English as a lingua franca among international backpackers has improved his English. He also mentioned the less opportunity to use English when he was in his hometown. Moreover, travelling and making new friends along his journey is his main motivation for practising English. Kylie, another participant, also suggested that travelling is one of the best ways of learning English, especially in real conversation.

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of the Backpackers

All participants identified cross-cultural differences as new things to explore. The participants' responses indicate that they did not encounter any significant challenges related to cross-cultural differences while exploring Thailand. According to Toxward (1994) backpackers not only make contact with travellers around the world but also exchange cultural differences with the locals along their journey. At this point, the characteristics of the backpackers related to the answer of participants that they did not face cross-cultural struggles while travelling in Thailand.

Thailand, the Land of Smiles

According to Buriyameathagul (2013), the structure of Thai society is a collectivist culture where Thai people stay with their kinship group. Thus, Thai society encourages most Thai people to obtain friendly and kind characteristics. Soypetch (2017) stated when tourists perceive the destination by acquiring direct experiences, it can lead tourists to a positive

impression of the destination's image. Moreover, destination image can create a huge impact on the tourism industry. For example, Bangkok was recognised as the first most-visited city in the world for the fourth consecutive year as reported by Mastercard's Global Destination Cities Index (2019). Supported by the findings in the interviews, most participants were impressed with Thailand as the Land of Smiles. Thus, it promotes a positive view of Thailand to foreign travellers.

English as a Lingua Franca with Thai People

The English ability of Thai people is enough to communicate in the way of tourist purposes. The purpose of using English between foreign backpackers and Thai people is mainly relevant to the specific aspects of tourism; for example, ordering food and offering service. In the case the interactional conversation between foreign tourists and Thai people is not successful, it still can be resolved by using technology such as Google translate.

English as a Lingua Franca among International Backpackers

According to some participants, Mason, Tyler, and Kylie, using English as a lingua franca among foreign backpackers can improve their English skills. The motivation for improving their English was the motivation by personal demands like Mason wanting to improve his English in order to tell jokes and make new friends while traveling.

CONCLUSION

The first research question is, what are the common struggles that foreigners have when travelling in Thailand? There were no cross-cultural struggles that foreigners face when travelling in Thailand. This could be because backpackers tend to be flexible and open to the circumstances along their journey, and they look at the differences as interesting occasions. For the second research question, how do foreign travellers use English as a lingua franca when travelling in Thailand? The answer is if English was used as a lingua franca by foreigners and Thai people for service purposes, basic English could meet the achievement. On the other hand, using English as a lingua franca among foreign backpackers requires a high level of English ability because the purpose of communication focuses on making new friends and sharing experiences.

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POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS IN BRIT BENNETT'S NOVELS

Song Huiyan*, Hasyimah Mohd Amin, and Noritah Omar

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: gs61238@student.upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

The Black mother-daughter relationship could be synergistic and parasitic. Though the portrayal of Black mothers in African American literature has evolved from stereotypical depiction to multifaceted representation, a myriad of research indicates that many Black mothers still struggle to socialise their daughters to be independent. However, there is a lack of attention given to the connection between the Black mother-daughter relationship and political transformation. The research intends to investigate why some Black mothers are trapped in inner conflicts while their daughters could reorient themselves in the changing political environment facing the identity crisis and cultural assimilation. It argues that the Black mother-daughter relationship is likely to be influenced by the political transformation which is revealed in the process of cultural identity construction. The selected novels are Brit Bennett's *The Mothers* and *The Vanishing Half*. Collective memory from Eyerman's cultural trauma will be adopted to analyse black mothers' inner conflicts facing cultural assimilation. Then, the research will employ attachment theory to examine the Black mother-daughter relationship to explore why daughters are indulged in spiritual disorientation. Finally, Stuart Hall's cultural identity will be used to highlight these daughters' struggle to keep independent racial identities. The research aims to illustrate that facing cultural assimilation, Bennett realises that African Americans must maintain cultural identity to establish cultural confidence. To sum up, the significance of this research is to expose that cultural trauma could also promote the young to reformulate what to do to meet the challenges of political transformation in modern society.

KEYWORDS

Black Mother-daughter Relationships; Inner Conflict; Cultural Trauma; Attachment Theory; Cultural Identity

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INTRODUCTION

African Americans always confront the issue of identity crisis in American society. During the slavery period, white slave owners strived to dominate their lives and control their thoughts. Even after emancipation African Americans still suffer injustice, for example, the murder of fourteen-year-old African American Emmett Till in the summer of 1955, which triggered the coming of the Civil Rights movement. Therefore, African Americans face intense pressure to assimilate into white American culture as a means of survival and upward mobility, gaining acceptance within mainstream society. Since African American mothers and daughters share a common bond that prepares them for womanhood, Black mother-daughter relationships hold a special place in contemporary African American women's literature compared with mother-son relationships and father-daughter relationships. Scholars rarely link Black mother-daughter relationships with political transformation. Some of the most current approaches to analysing the relationship include postcolonialism (Wike, 2017), Black feminist theory (Collins, 2009; Joseph, 1981; Etienne, 2013; Miller, 2009; Hinton, 2004), slavery (Wicaksono, 2014), and psychoanalysis (Wong, 1991; Lawrence, 1995). Therefore, the aim of my research is to emphasise the possibility Black mother-daughter relationships in Brit Bennett's novels could be influenced by the political transformation in the light of Eyerman's cultural trauma theory and Stuart Hall's cultural identity theory.

RELATED LITERATURE

The legacy of Black mothers passed down to daughters is underlined in literary works. In the landmark collection of essays *In Search of Our Mothers' Garden* (1983), Alice Walker explored the lives and struggles of black women throughout history, reminding us of the gifts Black mothers bestowed on their daughters. Daughters are supposed to learn "what mothers planted there, what they thought as they sowed, and how they survived the blighting of so many fruits" (Williams pp. vii-viii). Similarly, Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* also emphasised the legacy of being an independent woman, that is, a room of her own and enough money to support herself. Besides, Gloria Joseph (1981) in *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives* pointed out that daughters showed undeniable respect and admiration for their Black mothers' achievements in struggling against injustice in society. In another article, Hinton-Johnson (2004) explored socialization, distance, and conflict between African American mothers and daughters, declaring that mothers "are determined to socialise their daughters, impacting their overall development into womanhood" (49) through black feminist theory.

The above studies all emphasise Black mothers have a great influence on daughters. However, my research will stress that Black mothers also confront inner conflicts facing cultural assimilation though they strive to set a good example for their daughters. Instead, their daughters transcend them to realise what African Americans should do to maintain their racial identity.

"Race and Motherhood in Brit Bennett's *The Mothers*" by Maryam Ghiasi Zarj (2021) examines three types of motherhood in the novel, underlining Black motherhood remains a site of conflict and oppression despite some changes in the 21st century. Similarly, another article by Rajshree Roselean Kapoor (2023) also analyses motherhood in *The Mothers*. It investigates the concept of motherhood, including biological, surrogate, and communal mothers.

“Race and Identity in Brit Bennett’s *The Vanishing Half*” examines race and identity in the novel. The article addresses how the young generation searches for their roots and identity as the first generation, overcoming whatever transformation forces them to forget their race and identity (Al Areqi 41). Another study by Hafsa Akbar also discusses identity and race in *The Vanishing Half* under the theoretical framework of Frantz Fanon’s “Black Skin, White Masks”. The difference lies in that the article emphasises how Stella reshapes her new identity as a “White Passing”, exploring what are the issues behind racism.

What seems to have been lacking in the previous research on *The Mothers* and *The Vanishing Half* is that the study of race and identity is seldom connected with history and culture, which offers me the opportunity to bridge the gap. My research will analyse the transformation of cultural identity construction in Black mother-daughter relationships in the two novels, especially from the view of daughters, namely, Ness and Jude, whose power and discourse are determined by the historical background and political situation.

METHODS

The research first employs cultural trauma to interpret why Black mothers are indulged in inner conflicts facing cultural assimilation in the white-supremacy society. Then, the research adopts attachment theory to analyse the Black mother-daughter relationship in contemporary African American women’s fiction. Black daughters could not develop an attachment relationship with their mothers for the political environment as well as their mothers’ inner conflicts about the future. Finally, the research focuses on cultural identity. Black daughters realise the significance of constructing cultural identity to resist the injustice in the white-supremacy society which is linked to political transformation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The selected novels used in this research focus on intergenerational relationships, emphasising the enduring impact of servitude on every generation’s understanding of their racial identity. This research has provided insight into Black mother-daughter relationships, inspiring readers to pay attention to their connection with political transformation in the process of cultural identity construction. Despite many kinds of mothers in the selected literary texts, the research will be limited to blood mothers and their relationship with daughters because the position of the biological mother in daughters’ growth is irreplaceable.

CONCLUSION

Brit Bennett’s novels reveal that the Black mother-daughter relationship is no longer a personal affair, but a political journey. To some degree, understanding the bond is to understand the political transformation of cultural identity. The study offers a new potential for interpreting Black mother-daughter relationships in contemporary African American literature, aiming to highlight the possible healing of cultural trauma.

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EFFECTS OF EFL VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION ON ARAB LEARNERS' USAGE OF LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS IN SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

Taghreed I.G. Abu Sneida*, Muhammad Yasir Yahya, and Salina Husain

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: tagismail2008@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

For many decades, the role of the learner's mother tongue in foreign and second language classrooms has been a topic of debate. EFL teachers may present and explain vocabulary in either students' native language, or the target language, or they keep switching between the two. Therefore, the aim of the current study is to investigate how EFL vocabulary instruction affects Arab learners' use of English lexical collocations in their speaking performance through using different working memory strategies. A quasi-experimental, mixed method design was adopted comparing teacher code-switching and second language explanations in teaching lexical collocations. Within twenty-six sessions of teaching intervention to teach lexical collocations to EFL learners, the study measured learners' responses to vocabulary instruction in the two experimental groups. The study also explored how working memory strategies used by learners in response to vocabulary instruction may enhance learning lexical collocations by EFL learners. 45 Arab elementary EFL learners in the English language centre in Kuala Lumpur were divided into three groups (code-switching, L2 explanation group, and control group), and completed three speaking tests, pre, and post-test. and delay posttest. The results indicated that both the code-switching and L2 explanation groups improved their vocabulary; however, the study showed an important role of L1 in learning lexical collocation. The findings revealed that working memory strategies assisted learners to retain collocations effectively. The study included several pedagogical suggestions and implications for future research to improve the standard for teaching, learning, and retention of lexical collocations in speaking performance.

KEYWORDS

Lexical collocations; speaking performance; teacher code-switching; working memory strategies; vocabulary learning

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INTRODUCTION

Collocations are an important component of second language (L2) competence in both writing and speaking, and it is part of multi-word units for their frequency of occurrence in everyday language and their importance in handling language fluently under actual situation (Dokchandra, 2019). However, collocations are considered a unique challenge for L2 learners. Therefore, how to teach collocations to EFL learners and what vocabulary instruction might be utilised to teach them and which strategies may be implemented are continuous questions.

Although there is growing evidence of benefits from the use of teacher code-switching (CS) in EFL vocabulary (Tian & Macaro, 2012) current educational regulations encourage English language teachers to use as much of a target language in the classroom as possible. However, it is still uncertain whether this is the most successful method, as investigations have not come to a consensus on the effect of teacher CS in the EFL classroom. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to compare the effects of two vocabulary instructions (L2 and CS) on Arab Learners' usage of English lexical collocations in their speaking performance.

RELATED LITERATURE

There has been much debate about whether the use of CS in EFL classes influences how foreign language instruction and the teaching of vocabulary in particles are carried out. Some teachers, however, believe that switching between the target language and the L1 is required in some contexts. CS has attracted more recognition as an innovative approach to teaching a foreign language. Stern, & Allen, (1992) claimed that students need more opportunities to use their L1 in EFL classes. Alzahrani, (2023), and Adriosh & Razi, (2019), asserted that a rich CS environment, employing mixed CS in particular, enhances learning in the EFL classroom.

Based on theoretical advancements in cognitive psychology, there has been an increased interest in examining how working memory (WM) relates to language aptitude. Incorporating WM strategies into EFL class activities should help EFL learners learn vocabulary more effectively, which would ultimately improve their language skills. Santacruz & Ortega (2018) attempted to find out how working memory training could help students retain vocabulary they had learned using a number of strategies.

Several studies state that Arab learners find it difficult to speak freely in the English language (Almutairi, & Aljumah, 2023). Collocations are one of the speaking challenges that EFL learners experience in their speaking performance. Thus, it is crucial to investigate how language teachers assist learners to improve their collocational knowledge. Several studies have investigated L2 collocations and track the growth of the students' collocational knowledge (Lu, & Dang, 2023). Furthermore, researchers attempted to examine and explain collocation errors (Shitu, 2015; Habtoor & Al-Swaidan, 2019).

This present study had two aims. The first one was to investigate the effects of vocabulary instruction (teacher CS and L2) on teaching lexical collocations to EFL Arab learners. The second one was to investigate how working memory strategies affect learning lexical collocations.

METHODS

Two research questions were used to investigate the issues:

- 1) What are the effects of vocabulary instruction (teacher code-switching and English language explanations L2) on teaching English lexical Collocations ELC to EFL Arab learners?
- 2) How does implementing working memory strategies affect learners' usage of lexical collocations in their speaking performance?

A quasi-experimental involving 45 EFL Arab students was conducted to answer these two research questions.

Participants were EFL Arab learners from different Arab countries, studying English in a private English language centre in Malaysia. Three groups were randomly assigned to two treatment groups, a second language (L2) group, a teacher code-switching (CS) group, and a controlling group (CG). Implementation of working memory strategies WMS in learning English lexical collocations was only with the two treatment groups. Pre, post and delay speaking tests were conducted to evaluate learners progress in learning lexical collocations. Interviews with seven learners were conducted to get their responses on how these strategies assist in their learning and their speaking performance. The language centre administration and students provided signed informed consent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study compared the effect of two types of vocabulary instruction on learning lexical collocations by Arab EFL learners and how these vocabulary instructions affect their usage of lexical collocations in their speaking performance. Learners in these two groups significantly improved in their speaking performance, according to the statistical analysis of the L2 and CS. Short-term lexical collocation retention was significantly enhanced for the CS group than the L2 group in their speaking performance. However, there were no statistically significant differences in long-term vocabulary acquisition between the L2 and CS groups. The results also demonstrated that the set of WM strategies can be effective for students in their learning lexical collocations.

CONCLUSION

The findings generally imply that learners in the L2, CS, and the Control group all significantly improved in terms of their speaking performance after the experimental sessions. Furthermore, working memory training can significantly improve learners' capacity for retaining lexical collocations in the L2, which could eventually lead to better speaking performance. Therefore, it may be concluded that lexical collocation practice should be promoted to improve learning vocabulary. The results also encourage other language teachers to evaluate their own teaching methods and make an effort to provide learners with the strategies and resources they need to be successful in learning English. It is hoped that the findings of the current study would suggest to teachers and researchers to provide more consideration to learning vocabulary through speaking.

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**RECONSTRUCTING IDENTITY, SUBVERTING ABLEISM:
CRITICAL DISABILITY STUDY ON GIROUX’S POEM “I AM ODD, I AM NEW”**

Tatang Iskarna* and Catharina Brameswari

Universitas Sanata Dharma, Indonesia

E-mail: tatang.iskarna@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

This article examines how Benjamin Giroux, a poet with autism, reconstructs his identity and subverts ableism in his poem "I am Odd, I am New". Using critical disability studies, this article demonstrates how Giroux challenges traditional narratives about disability and creates a more authentic representation of himself. The poet embraces their disabilities as integral components of his identity rather than perceiving them as a source of pathos and pity. It also subverts ableism's stereotyping and stigmatisation of the disabled and provides alternative perspectives on disability that centre on the experiences and perspectives of disabled individuals themselves.

KEYWORDS

Disability studies; ableism; stereotyping; stigma; disabled

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INTRODUCTION

The representation of the disabled in literature faces challenges. It contains stereotypes which can impair identity and self-worth. They are depicted negatively and exaggeratedly pitied due to their limited ability. Ableism which means prejudice and discrimination towards people with disabilities, make it difficult for the disabled to define themselves. Vijayan states that such representation fosters disability stigma, ignoring their true identity and voice. This depiction shapes how people regard disabled individuals (15-16).

Disabled characters are often stereotyped or exaggerated in literature. Captain Ahab from Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* is hindered by his prosthetic leg. Ahab's infirmity as a metaphor for his obsessive and destructive attitude perpetuates negative notions of disabled people as defenceless and resentful. In Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, 15-year-old autistic Christopher Boone investigates a neighbourhood dog's death. Christopher's distinct worldview shows his intelligence and problem-solving talents.

Despite their sensitivity, non-disabled writers still dominate disability writing even though Mitchell and Snyder declare that "The normal" does not fully represent the impaired (224-27). This article's objectives are to examine how a disabled is depicted by a disabled poet and how this description subverts ableism in the poem "I am Odd, I am New" written by an autistic poet, Benjamin Giroux. As a speaker as well as a writer, he rewrites his own identity and subverts ableism. The following research questions are addressed in this study. The first is how the disabled are represented by the disabled poet, and the second is how this poem subverts ableism.

RELATED LITERATURE

With the emergence of disability literary criticism, the portrayal of persons with disabilities in literary texts has been questioned. The content of ableism in the presentation of disabled characters was criticised because it reinforced a stigmatised and prejudiced view of the disabled. Similarly, works of literature portray the disabled in an exaggeratedly positive light. From time to time, disabled characters in literary works, such as Frankenstein in *Frankenstein*, Colin in *The Secret Garden*, and Benjy in *The Sound and Fury*, are portrayed negatively or are overly privileged, as in Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and Hazel Grace Lancaster in *The Fault in Our Stars*.

Disability literary criticism arose to critique the aforementioned phenomenon of representation of the disabled. This criticism derives from critical disability studies, which are the study of the numerous representations of individuals with disabilities. Disability studies, a relatively new academic discipline that gained prominence in the late 20th century, has made important contributions to the literary criticism of people with disabilities. Scholars in the field of disability studies have claimed that negative preconceptions and prejudices about people with disabilities are often reinforced through fictional depictions. They have, however, brought attention to the power of literature in combating such stereotypes and advancing the cause of equal rights for people with disabilities. Some scholars on disability studies have proposed their ideas.

Disability is a cultural construct shaped by social and political variables. Disability is integral to human diversity, which Western civilization has ignored. It should be seen as identity politics that challenges cultural norms and values (Tiebers 15). Disability stereotypes shape people's physiques and identities. A disability is a societal construct that enforces

physical and mental capacity. Since "disability" implies an inability to execute specific tasks, and "ableist" terminology is so pervasive, he argues that it should be rethought (Davis 28).

American literature and culture, according to Garland-Thomson, represent people with physical limitations. Disability is a social construct shaped by societal norms and expectations. Deformed bodies in American culture through sentimental novels, African-American literature, and cultural rites like the freak show is the example of how the disabled depicted. The "normate" is "the figure who, by way of the bodily configurations and cultural capital they assume, can step into a position of authority." The normate body, unlike the "stigmatised" body, is considered "normal." The normate and stigmatised binary organises American culture and shapes disability representation and understanding (37).

METHODS

Critical disability study methodology is used to examine this poem. Close reading and analysing disability depictions are the initial steps. This involves studying how handicapped characters are portrayed and how disability is defined as well as the underlying themes and messages about disability (Edward-Mangione 34).

The second phase is confronting negative perceptions and prejudices, and advocating for more diverse disability representations. This paper examines disability representation power dynamics. This also examines how a disabled character is compared to a non-disabled character, how disability is utilised to reinforce stereotypes or prejudices, and how a handicapped character is denied agency or voice in the narrative (Krentz 28).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the poem "I am Odd, I am New" the speaker, also the author, describes his feelings as a unique person. Giroux struggles with identity and ableism. In line one "I am odd, I am new, I wonder if you are too," Giroux begins by making the reader feel different. He claims a unique perspective by having comparable experiences to others who feel different. This flashback prepares the reader for the poem's theme of diversity.

In line two "I hear voices in the air, but I see you don't, and that's not fair," Giroux uses sound to show the author's distinctiveness. He hears "voices in the air" that most people cannot, demonstrating his unique intuition. This graphic criticises the assumption that society should conform, which denies the validity of different experiences.

Giroux wants to "not feel blue" (4) and be accepted in the next portion of the poem. By expressing "I pretend that you are too," (6) he wants others to comprehend his perspective and accept their uniqueness. "I feel like a boy in outer space, I touch the stars and feel out of place" (7-8) shows the poet uses his thoughts to solve his issues. Giroux's figurative journey is to escape society's expectations and find a place.

In lines "I worry about what others might think, I cry when people laugh, it makes me shrink." (9-10), the poet's sensitivity reveals how ableist beliefs can damage disabled persons emotionally. Giroux disputes the assumption that discussing a disability should be sad or funny. Instead of pitying or mocking others, he seeks compassion.

In the line "I understand now that so are you, I say I 'feel like a castaway,'" (12-13) the poet recognizes everyone has strengths and weaknesses, regardless of disability. This admission disproves the concept that disability is special. The poet's hope of a day where being an outsider is okay emphasises how crucial it is to include everyone and end ableism.

Giroux accepts his strangeness and rebuilds his identity in this impassioned and contemplative poetry. He fights ableism by putting himself in a vulnerable position and helping people accept disabled people. The poem encourages people to shift their worldviews and love the variety of human situations. It also helps people appreciate others' differences. It reminds people that disabled people have the right and demand their position in society.

CONCLUSION

Giroux's poem explores how disabled people define themselves. The poet uses a vulnerable perspective to help abled people understand and appreciate human diversity. Giroux presents himself as distinct and worldly. This perspective challenges social norms. He believes that people with disabilities have the right to show the world who they are and seek their proper place in society. The poem concludes by emphasising the value of human variation. Sensory imagery conveys the poet's uniqueness, struggle, and desire to break out of society. The poem underlines the need to challenge ableist views and encourage the identity creation of individuals with disabilities.

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ACADEMIC RESILIENCE AND WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE: AN IGNORED CORRELATION--FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENJOYMENT AS A MEDIATOR

Tingting Huang¹, Hazlina Abdul Halim^{1*}, Ilyana Jalaluddin¹, and Songtao Liu²

¹*Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*

²*Huanggang Normal University, China*

E-mail: 275791615@qq.com

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Academic resilience (AR), foreign language enjoyment (FLE), and willingness to communicate (WTC) are key components in the process of second language acquisition (SLA); however, the associations among these variables have been given little attention in the academic community. This study, accordingly, aspires to investigate whether, and to what extent, AR and FLE are associated with WTC in a second language (L2 WTC), and how FLE mediates the relationship between the other two aforementioned variables. To this end, a questionnaire was administered to 311 Chinese undergraduate English majors from a local university in central China, selected using convenience sampling. The results of the correlation and mediation analysis showed that both AR and FLE were significantly correlated with L2 WTC, with the mediating effect of FLE being stronger than that of AR. In addition, a multiple mediation analysis was performed, indicating that FLE played a partial mediating role in the relationship between AR and L2 WTC. The results suggest that targeted interventions and support can be provided to enhance participants' AR, which in turn predicts FLE and subsequently promotes students' L2 WTC. Theoretically, these findings support an emerging view of the application of positive psychology (PosPsy) to L2 learning and teaching, while also offering practical implications for educators.

KEYWORDS

AR; FLE; L2 WTC; PosPsy; L2 learning and teaching

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INTRODUCTION

For learners to effectively communicate with others in L2, they need to pull the trigger of L2 WTC, a final psychological step before actual communication (Lee, 2020), and a necessity to predict the flow and frequency of communicative communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Researches thus have attempted to explore factors which boost or impede the construct of L2 WTC. Among these factors, AR and FLE, are the possible influential variables that can enhance L2 WTC. To elaborate, AR refers to successful adaptation, despite challenges and threats (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013) while FLE is a positive learning facilitative achievement emotion, linked to heightened motivation and engagement, as well as better actual and self-perceived L2 performance and a higher WTC (Botes et al., 2021; Li, 2018). Nevertheless, research on these two factors with L2 WTC still remains largely under-explored, and, in particular, the interaction between these variables and the mediating role of FLE in the relationship between AR and L2 WTC have not been thoroughly investigated. This study, therefore, attempted to scrutinise the relationship between AR and L2 WTC, as well as the mediating role of FLE in the association between AR and L2 WTC.

RELATED LITERATURE

L2 WTC, refers to “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2” (MacIntyre et al., 1998), while AR is defined as “students’ ability to effectively deal with setback, challenge, adversity, and pressure in the academic setting” (Martin & Marsh, 2006). Noteworthy, previous studies on the relationship between AR and L2 WTC in schooling context has been limited to a few studies only (e.g., Oveisi & Nosratina, 2019), which reported that (academic) resilience was a significant predictor of WTC. Furthermore, due to the ever-increasing significance of PosPsy in SLA, FLE, as an individual and situational variable of learners, has been the target of much exploration (Dewaele et al., 2021; Dewaele et al., 2022; Li, C., 2022; etc.), which is also recognised as an indirect influential factor on WTC. These aforementioned studies make critical headway into exploring relationships between a variety of emotional variables and L2 WTC in SLA. However, despite the impact of their findings, the relationship among AR, emotions, and L2 WTC have been under-investigated. This ignored association in academic communities suggests the value of conducting more quantitative researches by exploring the influential factors of L2 WTC among students while also considering their emotions in-situ in the L2 classroom.

METHODS

Participants

A total of 311 Chinese undergraduate English majors (91.64% females), within the age range of 17 to 23 ($M_{age}=19.032$, $SD=1.487$), participated in the project at a normal university, central China.

Instruments

AR scale

A 6-item AR scale developed by Martin and Marsh (2006) was used. In the present study, the internal consistency of AR scale was 0.766.

L2 WTC Scale

Four items of WTC inside the classroom and three items of WTC outside of the classroom by Lee et al. (2020) were employed. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha of L2 WTC subscale was 0.768.

FLE Scale

The 11-item modified FLE scale (Li, 2020) was employed. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.748.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings showed a significant positive correlation among AR, L2 WTC, and FLE. Students with a higher level of AR tend to improve their L2 WTC in a success-oriented manner to develop communication skills, although they are hindered or affected by setbacks, difficulties or stress in learning pronunciation and intonation. Neglecting students' AR and FLE could hinder the activation of L2 WTC and impede communication skill development.

FLE emerged as a stronger predictor of L2 WTC compared to AR, which is consistent with the findings of Khajavy et al. (2018), who concluded enjoyment is an important factor in increasing WTC at both student and class levels. Students with higher levels of enjoyment displayed lower anxiety, exhibited a preference for English, and demonstrated increased English language use in and outside of the classroom. These results align with the findings of Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) and Dewaele (2019), who also found a positive relationship between FLE and L2 WTC.

Furthermore, FLE played a significant and partial mediating role in the relationship between AR and L2 WTC. Higher FLE levels were associated with greater academic resilience and enhanced communicative L2 skills, reinforcing the point of view in the literature that positive emotions may stimulate resilience, which could enhance students' ability in boosting their obtained communicative L2 skills (Oveisi & Nosratina, 2019). This tripartite relationship model empirically supports the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions framework. More specifically, "positive emotions broaden the scopes of attention and cognition, enabling flexible and creative thinking, they should also augment peoples' enduring coping resources (Isen, 1990; Aspinwall, 1998, 2001; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; cited from Fredrickson, 2004). Such coping resources, in the context of language learning, may fuel academic resilience and enable students to approach speaking tasks (or WTC) more readily, work harder, and persist longer when facing setbacks.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study revealed a significant positive correlation among AR, FLE, and L2 WTC. FLE emerged as a stronger predictor of L2 WTC compared to AR. Additionally, FLE played a partial mediating role in the relationship between AR and L2 WTC. These findings address the gap in research regarding the impact of FLE on WTC in Chinese EFL contexts (Yin Kun et al., 2020) and contribute to the growing field of emotion studies in SLA (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; Saito et al., 2018; Sato & Csizer, 2021). Furthermore, these findings demonstrate the replicability of the connections among the three variables in different SLA contexts, aligning with Khajavy et al.'s (2018) findings. Lastly, enhancing learners' AR levels

was found to increase their communicativeness and interaction in L2 speaking situations, aligning with the communicative nature of contemporary L2/FL classes (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017; MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre, 2007).

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AMNESIA AS METAPHOR: A POSTMODERNIST READING OF *THE MAN WITHOUT A SHADOW*

Lingling Xu^{1,2*} and Manimangai Mani²

¹*Huaiyin Institute of Technology, China*

²*Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*

E-mail: gs61550@student.upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

This research aims at exploring the metaphorical implications of amnesia in Joyce Carol Oates' *The Man Without a Shadow* (2016) within the context of postmodernism. This novel depicts the complicated relationship between the neuroscientist Margot Sharper and her experiment subject Elihu Hoopes, who is unable to retain memories that happened 70 seconds before after a brain fever. A previous study has shown that Oates employs amnesia-related scientific concepts and language in her writing to explore themes related to gender and identity in new and innovative ways, which expands the diversity of the neuronovel. However, my argument posits that amnesia can function as a metaphorical tool to caution against the unreliability of official historical narratives and the perils of historical forgetfulness. The analysis will be situated within the postmodernist framework, with particular attention paid to Hutcheon's notion of parody, which problematises the very discourses it parodies. The research findings reveal that Oates' novel disrupts the conventional notions of historical veracity and objectivity and urges readers to interrogate their understanding of past events and personages by alluding to the manifestations of amnesia in contemporary American society. This study offers an alternative interpretation of *The Man Without a Shadow* and unveils the political intentions of the author.

KEYWORDS

Oates; postmodern; amnesia; parody; metaphor

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INTRODUCTION

The Man Without A Shadow (2016) by Joyce Carol Oates depicts the complicated relationship between the neuroscientist Margot Sharper and her experiment subject Elihu Hoopes, who is unable to retain memories that happened 70 seconds before after a brain fever, but he retains his wit and artistic abilities which attracts Margot Sharpe, a neuroscientist studying his amnesia. The inspiration for this novel stemmed from a prominent figure in the neuroscience community, namely Henry Molaison, a well-known amnesiac with whom her second husband Charlie Gross had collaborated. Oates demonstrated her incredible professional knowledge of amnesia, which to some extent affirms her position as a serious writer. However, amnesia writing does more than that, it also encompasses the author's nostalgia for the past and serves as a reminder to readers about the consequences of forgetting history. Through a close reading, this study finds that *The Man Without A Shadow* can be read as a parodied text of *A Rose for Emily* in terms of their settings, characters and the themes. While highlighting the similarities between these two texts, this study also seeks to unpack the metaphorical figurations of amnesia in *The Man Without A Shadow*.

RELATED LITERATURE

Previous studies on *The Man Without A Shadow* mainly focus on the connection between medical science and human's existence. Anderson (2016) believes that the success of *The Man Without a Shadow* lies in that it "makes original connections between science's mission to comprehend the elusive mechanics of the mind and the humanities' exploration of the manifestations of love (3)." He also observes that Elihu's involvement in civil rights marches and demonstrations expresses the author's anti-racist ideology. Kilian (2017) argues that Elihu serves as a representation of the silenced voices within public discourse. She believes although Oates is not explicitly making an argument about the medical ethics, her work underscores the significance of a literary perspective towards public science discourse. Burn (2021) deems this novel as Oates's best candidate for a conventional neuronovel, and argues that reading *The Man Without a Shadow* in dialogue with other works and within the context of her own oeuvre can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the various narrative techniques used in neuro fiction since the 1970s.

Linda Hutcheon believes parody is "an inscription of the past in the present", which can "embody and bring to life actual historical tensions" (7), and contains an implicit political critique as it is an "imitation with critical ironic distance" (36). It can help reveal the author's intention to disclose some social and political problems, and can even "lend voice to the most harrowing fear plaguing the haunted postmodern subject" (Jafari et al. 2023:8) by establishing a relationship between the Gothic and postmodern. Furthermore, Moosavinia and Ahmadzadeh (2023) uphold that postmodern parody reflects contemporaneity and elevates mimicry to an artistic creation.

METHODS

Textual analysis and close reading are adopted as the main methods to analyse the selected novels. This study will resort to Linda Hutcheon's concept of parody to analyse how Oates parodies the characters, the settings and theme of *A Rose for Emily* in her own creation, and

then draw on Sontag's *Illness as metaphor* to reveal Oates' political agenda through the writing of amnesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Hutcheon, parody involves imitating or mimicking the original work, but with a self-conscious awareness and a critical stance. It is not a straightforward homage or tribute; rather, it employs irony and satire to comment on, critique, or subvert the original work or the conventions it represents. This study reveals how Oates parodies Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* in *The Man Without A Shadow* through the characters, settings and themes.

Elihu is a modern version of Emily in that both the two characters live in a timeless vacuum. Elihu's house reminds readers of Emily's house in *A Rose for Emily*. It is a striking English Tudor set back in "a deep, wide lot of elm trees, plane trees, oaks and evergreens ... Straggle overgrown shrubs block much of the first-floor windows, casting the downstairs rooms in a perpetual twilight" (124). Margot realises "Nothing can be altered in this house" (124). The family background of Elihu is parodying that of Emily, they are both born in a prestigious family. Elihu's ancestors' portraits are hanging on the wall, the oldest being a prominent Quaker Abolitionist in the years preceding the Civil War, and one of them being a martyr in a scuffle with antiwar demonstrators hostile to Negroes in 1864.

According to Dieguez and Annon, literary amnesia is a fruitful device and metaphor to explore topics as varied as the sense of identity, social relatedness, the possibility of rebirth, the need for an authentic self, or the capability to look forwards (2013: 139-140). In this novel, Elihu sticks to the past because of amnesia, just like Emily who refused to accept the societal changes of her era and the upheavals in her family and love life. While Emily's paranoid schizophrenia can be attributed to both societal changes and patriarchal oppression, Elihu's amnesia is a result of his own machismo and arrogance. Furthermore, the interference with Elihu's brain memory by scientists in the experiment aligns with the postmodernist scepticism towards official history.

Mostly, parodied texts exhibit the author's political stance or disposition towards the source material. In terms of the themes, *A Rose for Emily* serves as an elegy to Southern tradition, with Emily's death symbolising the culmination of an era, while Elihu's amnesia signifies society's collective forgetfulness towards the civil rights movements. Margot thinks that "one can't anticipate a future if one can't recall a past, for much in the routine of life is cyclical, repetitive" (232). A man without memory is like a man without shadow. A nation without a history means it will not have a future. Through the voice of Margot, the author issues a warning to the American government, emphasising the importance of not forgetting the past, as it is crucial for building a future.

CONCLUSION

By drawing a metaphorical parallel between amnesia and the erasure of history, Oates renders the amnesia writing with both social and political significance. As Sontag states: "Illnesses have always been used as metaphors to enliven charges that a society was corrupt and unjust" (72). Obviously, amnesia in this novel is used for a broader political goal. The ploy of amnesia helped Oates encapsulates her warnings in a powerful and persuasive format. Amnesia writing in this novel serves not only as a narrative device that creates suspense

regarding the lost segments of a patient's memory, but it also stimulates reflections on historical matters and cautions us about the ramifications of neglecting the past.

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INVESTIGATING CHALLENGES FACED BY MYANMAR EMPLOYEES IN BELF COMMUNICATION

Yin Min Hla* and Atima Kaewsard
Mae Fah Luang University, Thailand
E-mail: 6471006009@lamduan.mfu.ac.th
*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges faced by employees in Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) communication within the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) office in Yangon, Myanmar. The objectives are: 1) to identify the challenges faced by Myanmar employees, 2) to assess their English language proficiency, and 3) to propose strategies to enhance BELF communication skills. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, including the analysis of emails and conducting interviews with six officials from different investment divisions. The findings highlight several key challenges in BELF communication. Language proficiency emerged as a significant barrier, with participants struggling to express ideas accurately and comprehend complex English language features. Intercultural competence challenges were also identified, as cultural differences and misunderstandings hindered effective communication with international counterparts. Participants further faced difficulties in employing effective communicative strategies to bridge language and cultural gaps. The implementation of these strategies can empower employees to overcome language and cultural barriers, enhance their BELF communication skills, and engage successfully in international business interactions.

KEYWORDS

Business English as a Lingua Franca; BELF communication; language proficiency; intercultural competence; communicative strategies

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INTRODUCTION

Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) Communication facilitates effective interaction and understanding in the international business context, where English serves as a shared language among individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Seidlhofer, 2011).

Recently, Myanmar's economy is growing and becoming more integrated into the global economy, leading to a greater demand for Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) Communication skills in the country. However, using BELF communication in trade and investment in Myanmar faces challenges. One major challenge is the lack of English language proficiency among Myanmar's workforce. Another challenge is the lack of standardisation in language use due to Myanmar's linguistic diversity, with over 100 languages spoken in the country. This diversity creates communication difficulties and poses challenges for education and training in BELF communication (Khin Khin Htay, 2018) which can create confusion and misunderstandings in business communication, leading to missed opportunities and a lack of success in the global marketplace.

Given the importance of BELF communication competence for successful engagement in the global marketplace, the examination of BELF Communication Practices in Myanmar Economic Organisations is a timely and crucial undertaking. This study, therefore, seeks to identify the challenges faced by Myanmar employees, assess their English language proficiency, and propose strategies to enhance BELF communication skills.

RELATED LITERATURE

BELF communication plays a crucial role in facilitating successful international business operations. Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005) point out that BELF communication helps people overcome language barriers, allowing effective communication between individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds, enhancing clear and accurate communication, and leading to better coordination, collaboration, and decision-making in international business contributing to successful interactions and the development of positive and sustainable partnerships.

Key Components and Factors that Contribute to Effective BELF Communication

When exploring theoretical frameworks and models related to BELF communication skills and competencies, several key components and factors contribute to effective BELF communication. These include language proficiency, intercultural competence, and communicative strategies.

Language Proficiency

Language proficiency is a crucial element in BELF communication, encompassing the ability to understand, speak, read, and write in English. Studies have established a positive correlation between higher English language proficiency and successful communication in international business (Chen, 2018; Yan, 2020). Proficiency allows individuals to express themselves accurately and comprehend others' messages, minimising misunderstandings.

Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is another vital component of BELF communication. It encompasses the ability to navigate and communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. It involves understanding cultural differences, adapting communication styles, and demonstrating respect for diverse perspectives (Deardorff, 2006). Intercultural competence enables individuals to interpret and respond appropriately to cultural nuances, thus promoting successful intercultural communication.

Communicative Strategies

Communicative strategies play a vital role in bridging language and cultural differences in BELF communication. These strategies enable effective message conveyance, overcoming language barriers, and enhancing message clarity. They encompass techniques such as simplifying language, using gestures, paraphrasing, and employing context-specific communication tactics (Gudykunst, 2004). By employing appropriate communicative strategies, individuals can enhance comprehension, convey their messages effectively, and foster successful BELF communication.

In conclusion, by recognising the importance of these components and incorporating them into language training and intercultural communication programs, individuals and organisations can foster effective BELF communication. This, in turn, enables successful engagement in the global marketplace, ensuring meaningful and mutually beneficial interactions.

METHODS

Sampling

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) office in Yangon, Myanmar. The selection criteria focused on officials from different investment divisions who were actively involved in international business interactions. The sample size consisted of six officials from different divisions, chosen to represent a diverse range of perspectives and experiences.

Data Collection

Emails and interviews were used as primary data collection tools. The analysis of emails provided insights into written communication skills, language proficiency, and challenges in BELF interactions. Interviews explored participants' experiences, perspectives, and strategies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data.

Data Analysis

Emails were analysed using a coding framework to examine language proficiency, clarity, strategies, cultural sensitivity, and challenges. Interviews were analysed thematically to identify recurring themes, challenges, proficiency levels, and strategies. Findings from both sources were integrated, employing triangulation for enhanced validity and reliability.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation and the confidentiality of their information. Participants were also made to understand their right to withdraw from the research at any moment without restrictions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges Faced in BELF Communication

Language Proficiency Challenges

The analysis of emails revealed challenges in language proficiency for BELF communication, including difficulties in accurate expression and comprehension. Participants faced issues with grammar, vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and collocations. These language barriers hindered effective communication in international business. Interviews further highlighted participants' struggles with finding the right words, complex sentence structures, and understanding native English speakers due to accents and fast-paced speech. These challenges impacted their ability to express themselves and comprehend others' messages.

Intercultural Competence Challenges

Participants faced challenges related to intercultural competence in BELF communication. Cultural differences led to misunderstandings and potential conflicts, as participants struggled to adapt their communication styles to cultural norms. These challenges reflected a lack of awareness and understanding of cultural nuances, resulting in breakdowns and ineffective collaboration. Instances of cultural misunderstandings highlighted the need for cultural sensitivity and awareness to navigate diverse contexts successfully.

Communicative Strategies Challenges

The analysis of emails revealed challenges in using communicative strategies for BELF communication. Participants struggled to employ appropriate strategies to overcome language and cultural differences, impacting message clarity. Their limited repertoire hindered effective communication in the global business environment. Interviews further highlighted difficulties in adapting communication style to international counterparts' preferences. Participants stressed the importance of effective strategies, such as visual aids, clarification, and feedback, to bridge language and cultural gaps. Learning and practising these strategies were deemed essential for enhancing overall communicative competence.

Based on the challenges identified in BELF communication within the DICA office in Myanmar, strategies to enhance employees' BELF communication skills include language training programs focusing on grammar, vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and comprehension (Yan, 2020). Intercultural sensitivity training should be provided to develop cultural awareness and empathy toward different perspectives (Deardorff, 2006). Technology-mediated communication training covering video conferencing, online collaboration, and email etiquette specific to BELF communication is essential (Li & Zhang, 2022). Encouraging cross-cultural experiences broadens employees' understanding of communication styles and cultural values (Deardorff, 2006). Establishing a feedback

mechanism and promoting self-reflection contribute to continuous improvement (Deardorff, 2006). By implementing these strategies, organisations can empower employees to overcome language and cultural barriers, enhance their BELF communication skills, and successfully engage in international business interactions.

CONCLUSION

It is important to recognise that BELF communication is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires continuous learning and adaptation. The proposed strategies should be implemented systematically and supported by organisational resources and commitment to create a culture that values effective BELF communication.

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THE SPATIAL TRANSGRESSION IN EMILY BRONTE'S *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

Zhixing Nie*, Hardev Kaur, and Manimangai Mani

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: gs65852@student.upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

While there has been significant scholarship on *Wuthering Heights* (1847), previous studies have predominantly focused on the application of feminist, trauma, narratology and psychoanalytic approaches, analysing the distinct and vividly portrayed characters of Heathcliff and Joseph. Additionally, critics have examined the unreliable and fictional narrative techniques employed in the novel. However, the exploration of space transgression as a critical component of the narration received insufficient attention. This essay investigates Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* in light of her spatial transgression. Employing concepts of the striated space and smooth space from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, it reveals that the imprisonment of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, the dominance of patriarchal power, and the repression of religion are the causes of Catherine and Heathcliff's self-confinement in striated space. By juxtaposing both spaces, Bronte creates a binary opposition that emphasises the contrast between detention and freedom, confinement and mobility, and finally, oppression and liberation. This essay finds that the striated space and smooth space in *Wuthering Heights* closely interplay with the self-construction of Catherine and Heathcliff, and the smooth space is the very place where the concepts of "the flight", "nomadism", and "becoming" can be employed to help Catherine and Heathcliff to surmount identity crises and to achieve self-construction.

KEYWORDS

Emily Bronte; *Wuthering Heights*; striated space; smooth space; transgression

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INTRODUCTION

Emily Bronte (1818-1848), one of the most distinguished writers of 19th-century British literature, penned *Wuthering Heights*, a novel that explores love, vengeance, and the destructive power of passion. The novel is notable for its vivid and eerie characters, its richly atmospheric setting, and its examination of the human psyche. *Wuthering Heights* is a captivating work that takes place on the Yorkshire moors and tells the tale of two families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons, among whom Catherine and Heathcliff suffer from self-restraint, self-expression, and artistic self-construction. Bloom (2007) stated that “*Wuthering Heights* was unique in its narrative devices, comparable to Melville’s masterwork *Moby Dick* in that it defied the genre’s limitations” (3). Emily Bronte’s literary prowess was on full display in her novel, which featured exquisite narrative techniques and intricate plots. Its allure captivated readers and scholars worldwide, firmly establishing its position as irreplaceable in the domain of world literature.

RELATED LITERATURE

In recent years, there has been a rise in scholarly interest in *Wuthering Heights* studies. Graeme Tyler (2013, 2016) examined the significance of fire and weather in *Wuthering Heights*, highlighting that fire represents happiness and has a significant impact on the character development, as well as the role of weather and tear descriptions in the realism of novels and revealing character information. Nevertheless, Mutsuko Takahashi (2023) focused on the theme of identity and feminism, examining the conflict between insiders and outsiders and the significance of social endeavours in forming identity. Josh Poklad (2017) analysed *Wuthering Heights*’ geographical structure using concepts from the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and David Harvey. According to him, the novel’s geography juxtaposes two distinct environments with distinct temporal and spatial characteristics. Morse (2021) suggested that Frederick Douglass may have influenced Emily Bronte’s depiction of Heathcliff as a symbol of trauma in *Wuthering Heights*, connecting Heathcliff’s experience to the historical context of slavery and its effect on individuals. Although there has been considerable scholarship on *Wuthering Heights*, the concepts proposed by Deleuze and Guattari can provide a new perspective and a more nuanced understanding of how the striated and smooth spaces interact closely with Catherine and Heathcliff’s self-construction.

METHODS

In the book *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari discussed the categories of lines: the striated line, the smooth line, and the flight line. According to Deleuze and Guattari, space is a complex interplay of smoothness and striations, encompassing diverse realms such as politics, history, culture, and art. The characteristics of smoothness and striations can serve as measures to gauge the dynamics within these fields. Smooth space is related to force, which “arrives from outside to break constraints and open new vistas” (Deleuze and Guattari 371). It is an intensive rather than an extensive space, with a focus on distances rather than measurements and attributes. On the other hand, striated space is “canopied by the sky as measure and by the measurable visible qualities deriving from it” (Deleuze and Guattari 479). In accordance with Deleuze and Guattari’s notions of smooth space and striated space, *Wuthering Heights* and Thrushcross Grange incorporate not only physical environments but also any system with

hierarchical organisation, homogeneity, and closed structures. The concepts of “the Flight,” “Nomadism,” and “Becoming” can be employed to facilitate Catherine and Heathcliff’s escape from the confines of striated space and embrace the liberating potential of smooth space for their own self-construction in the novel *Wuthering Heights*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

“Our house is our corner of the world. As is often said, our house is our first universe”
(Gaston Bachelard 4).

In Bachelard’s view, a house holds significant importance as a comforting and fundamental spatial symbol for individuals. However, both *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange* are “not a domestic space marked by invitation, safety or sanctuary” (Sim 34). Catherine and Heathcliff’s predicament is initially caused by the confinement of *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*. Consequently, Catherine and Heathcliff’s selves become entangled within these two cold, harsh, and inhospitable estates: “*Wuthering* being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather” (Bronte 4). These cyclones and tempests accurately depict not only the physical setting of *Wuthering Heights* but also the characters’ raging passions and turbulent emotions in the novel.

Religion not only exerts spiritual control over them but physically disciplines their bodies via punitive measures. Heathcliff is frequently compared to the devil, emphasising his lack of Christian virtues such as compassion, charity, and humanism just as Joseph claims Heathcliff was “the wearisomest self-righteous Pharisee that ever ransacked a Bible to rake the promises to himself and fling the curses to his neighbors” (Bronte 44). “To flight is to produce reality, to create life to find weapons” (Deleuze and Guattari 49). Hence, the concept of the line of flight can be understood as a trajectory of both creative and deterritorialising processes. The primary focus lies in the opposition to inflexible forms of authority, with the intention of fostering opportunities, liberty, and novel existence. The utilisation of flight as a metaphor serves to symbolise the inherent challenges and conflicts encountered during the process of constructing one’s identity. The pursuit of understanding one’s personal identity and societal position can be seen as an expression of a challenging process, in which individuals confront obstacles and wrestle with conflicting emotions. Emily Bronte’s literary work, *Wuthering Heights*, portrays the characters of Catherine and Heathcliff as encountering a multitude of conflicts, both internal and external, as they grapple with the intricate nature of their personal identities and the societal expectations placed upon them. Another notion posits that the creation of life can be understood as a dynamic process of self-discovery and transformation. Spatial transgressions frequently occur within the novel, wherein Catherine and Heathcliff embark upon journeys into unfamiliar realms, encompassing both physical and emotional dimensions. These experiences can be compared to the process of individuals constructing a new existence for themselves, which exposes them to diverse viewpoints and facilitates personal development and metamorphosis. Furthermore, the exploration of weapons as symbols of empowerment through the act of spatial transgression is of interest. Within the framework of identity reconstruction, the act of “finding weapons” may serve as a symbolic representation of the process of unearthing inherent resilience and personal agency by means of transgressing physical boundaries. The utilisation of metaphorical “weapons” by Catherine and Heathcliff serves to confront established social norms, liberate themselves from societal limitations, and assert their authentic identities. Spatial

transgression serves as a mechanism for empowerment, allowing Catherine and Heathcliff to liberate themselves from the limitations imposed by their upbringing and societal norms. Consequently, they can reconstruct their identities according to their own terms. The spatial configurations, exemplified by Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, function as arenas for the characters' conflicts, wherein they engage in a quest for self-discovery and endeavour to forge alternative trajectories in their lives, employing metaphorical "weapons" acquired during their respective journeys. In her final moments, Catherine orders Nelly to open the window, symbolising her flight to break free. Heathcliff is also drawn to Catherine's ghost and escapes through the bedroom window to smooth space.

"Nomadic thought" arises from the domain of smooth space, which lacks external constraints. Catherine and Heathcliff's lifestyles represent the essence of "nomadism" as a survival strategy. Catherine and Heathcliff's spectral apparitions exemplify "becoming" because they transcend the limitations of the striated space. Catherine and Heathcliff are "alternate selves, and only by merging together can they construct a complete self" (Gilbert and Gubar 264). In order to resist the oppressive patriarchal system represented by Hindley's tyranny, as well as the rigid wealth and social conventions embodied by the Lintons, Catherine and Heathcliff follow the process of double becoming, that is Catherine becomes woman Heathcliff: "Nelly, I am Heathcliff. He's always, always in my mind" (Bronte 86). Becoming a woman Heathcliff is the mingle of the selves, which represents Catherine's self-construction.

CONCLUSION

The striated and smooth spaces in *Wuthering Heights* interact closely with the self-construction of Catherine and Heathcliff. Emily Bronte represents their love as a catalyst for the emergence of a liberated and independent whole. As they overcome the obstacles separating them from their authentic selves, their eternal reunion signifies their liberation from the constraints imposed by patriarchal power and religion in the structured sphere. Catherine and Heathcliff achieve absolute freedom and eternal love within the expanse of smooth space, thereby gratifying their spiritual needs and contributing to their self-development. In the domain of smooth space, they cease to be outsiders and assume control over their own beings.

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EFFECTS OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING ON EFL COLLEGE STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING CLASS

Zhong Jian'er^{1,2}, Liliati Ismail^{2*}, and Norhakimah Khaiessa Ahmad²

¹Yangjiang Polytechnic College, China

²Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: liliati@upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Student engagement is a critical factor in predicting academic achievement and performance. Previous studies revealed that Project-Based Learning (PBL) had a positive impact on student engagement. However, there is limited research that examines the influence of PBL on student engagement from a multi-dimensional perspective. To address this, a mixed-methods study with a quasi-experimental design was conducted to determine the effects of PBL on student engagement from behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and agentic aspects in an English Speaking course and explore the influencing factors. In this study, 93 first-year students from a public college in China were divided into an experimental group (n=47) and a control group (n=46). The experimental group was taught by PBL, while the control group followed the conventional method. Questionnaire was utilised to measure the changes of the four dimensions of engagement before and after using the PBL method. Semi-structured interviews were employed to elicit students' opinions about how PBL influenced engagement. Quantitative data analysis revealed significant differences between behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement, but not agentic engagement. The qualitative data analysis identified four influencing factors, which are project-driven motivation, collaborative learning, authentic activities, and teacher-student interaction. This study found that PBL could improve student engagement, especially behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Additionally, some suggestions were made to increase student engagement in English speaking through PBL.

KEYWORDS

Project-Based Learning, behavioural engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, agentic engagement

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INTRODUCTION

Student engagement is regarded as an essential element for active learning, academic performance and achievement (Lei et al, 2018). It is a multi-dimensional concept constructed by behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Students who engage in learning activities can achieve greater academic success. However, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) college students are unmotivated to perform activities in English-speaking classes. In China, EFL college students passively participate in the activities and are reluctant to speak English. Those who disengage in oral English activities can hardly enhance their English-speaking skills.

One student-centred method that is suggested to promote students' engagement is Project-Based Learning (PBL). The idea behind PBL is to engage students in their learning by encouraging them to investigate their interests and create projects for meaningful learning experiences. Past studies revealed that PBL had a positive influence on student engagement (Aubrey, 2022). However, there is still a lack of empirical research on the effects of PBL on EFL college students' engagement, by adopting a multi-dimensional perspective of behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and agentic engagement. Therefore, this study sheds light on whether PBL can enhance EFL college students' engagement in the Chinese context, especially behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement, and explores the influencing factors.

RELATED LITERATURE

Student Engagement is defined as students' active and productive involvement in learning activities (Fredricks et al., 2019). Student engagement consists of four aspects, including behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement. Behavioural engagement refers to students' attention, effort, and persistence when participating in learning activities (León et al., 2015). Emotional engagement is associated with positive reactions to the learning environment, peers and teachers, as well as their sense of belonging and interest (Bond & Bedenlier, 2019). Cognitive engagement refers to the degree of students' attempts to learn strategically, which means students employ sophisticated rather than superficial learning strategies (Reeve, 2013). Agentic engagement refers to students' intentional, proactive, and constructive contribution into the flow of the instruction they receive (Reeve, 2012).

PBL is a method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects (Buck Institute for Education, 2022). PBL can provide students with authentic opportunities to develop their active learning. Students actively participate in projects, analyse problems, think creatively about solutions, and communicate their ideas to others. Engaging in PBL within authentic learning environments has been shown to enhance language skills, content learning and cognitive abilities among students.

There is ample evidence supporting the use of PBL to increase students' engagement (Turcotte et al., 2022). However, available research is still limited when it comes to demonstrating the positive impact of PBL on student engagement in the EFL or ESL context. Furthermore, the early studies have barely examined this concept in the EFL context from multiple perspectives, especially of behaviour, cognition, emotion, and agent. This study aims to adopt a student engagement scale to determine the effects of PBL on EFL students' engagement from four dimensions and explore the factors contributing to student engagement in English speaking.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed method with a quasi-experimental design. The participants were purposefully chosen from two intact classes at a public college in China. The homogeneous group was 93 first-year English Education majors, including 89 females and 4 males. They were categorised into an experimental group (N=47) taught using the PBL method and a control group (N=46) that followed the conventional method. The two groups were taught by two different Chinese instructors, both of whom held Master's degrees in English Teaching and had more than ten years of English teaching experience. Four mini projects were implemented in the PBL group, with each project following the six stages: (i) discuss a project theme; (ii) report a project plan; (iii) gather information; (iv) create a video product; (v) present the product; and (vi) evaluate the product. The experiment lasted for one semester of 14 weeks.

The questionnaire was administered before and after the implementation of PBL. The Student Classroom Engagement (SCE) scale (Reeve, 2013) was adopted to measure emotional, behavioural, cognitive, and agentic engagement. A semi-structured interview was conducted after the post-questionnaire. Eight participants who would contribute to the responses in the interview were purposefully selected from the experimental group.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results from the questionnaire revealed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in behavioural ($t=2.121, p=.037<.05$), emotional ($t=2.063, p=.042<.05$) and cognitive engagement ($t=2.029, p=.046<.05$), but no significant difference in agentic engagement ($t=1.967, p=.052>.05$). Four themes emerged from the interview data: (i) collaborative learning; (ii) project-driven motivation; (iii) authentic activities; and (iv) teacher-student interaction.

This study confirmed that PBL could enhance student engagement, particularly behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement. In PBL, students exhibited higher levels of emotional engagement in activities due to their learning motivation being stimulated and sustained by the goal of completing the projects. This was followed by increased behavioural engagement when students participated in collaborative learning activities. Students also demonstrated cognitive engagement through meaningful communication for the purpose of completing authentic activities, as they were encouraged to use language in real-life contexts. However, agentic engagement did not experience the same enhancement. Students in PBL still faced limitations in actively interacting with their teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that PBL could significantly improve behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement in English speaking. Student engagement in PBL is suggested to increase through project-driven motivation, collaborative learning, authentic activities, and teacher-student interaction. This study contributes to a new pedagogical approach to English speaking that promotes student engagement.

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AUTHOR'S BIODATA

Ain Nadzimah Abdullah joined Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) (when it was Universiti Pertanian Malaysia) in 1991 as a Language Instructor and was later promoted to Lecturer (1995), Senior Lecturer (2004), Associate Professor (2009) and finally to Professor (2017). Currently she serves Taylor's University Malaysia as a Senior Research Fellow.

Akemi Matsuya is a Professor of Linguistics and English at Takachiho University. She received her Ph.D. in formal linguistics in May 2000 from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Akihiro Saito is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Arts and Sciences, Tokyo University of Science. He has recently been researching language learning strategies as well as discourses related to foreign language education in Japan.

Amira Aqila Hanim is a final-year student in the Bachelor of English Language and Linguistics (Hons) programme at Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Amirah Athirah Amir Yazid is a Lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak. She is keen on research related to linguistics, discourse studies, and global learning.

Anealka Aziz Hussin is a Professor at Akademi Pengajian Bahasa at Universiti Teknologi MARA. She is an accomplished academician and researcher in the field of Education, with a focus on e-learning, corpus-based studies, readability studies, and ELT materials development.

Anis Shahira Bazlan is a Lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Negeri Sembilan. She holds a master's degree from Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her research interests include political and critical discourse studies.

Anna Katrina C. Cerafica is a Teaching Associate at the University of the Philippines Diliman. She is currently taking up an MA in Comparative Literature. Her research interests include ethical criticism, children's literature, and the Philosophy for Children pedagogy.

Anushika Kariyawasam is a lecturer in English at the University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka. She is also a trained psychological counsellor and psychotherapist. Currently, she is a final year PhD candidate at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Her research interests are in Psycholinguistics and English Language Teaching.

Aphiwit Liang-Itsara (formerly, Natthapong Chanyoo) is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mahidol University, Thailand. He received his PhD in applied linguistics from the University of Pittsburgh. His primary research interests include writing, academic discourse, foreign language teaching, and psychological aspects of language teaching and learning.

Arbaayah Ali Termizi is an Associate Professor at the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, UPM and graduated from the University of Manchester, U.K. with a doctoral degree in Shakespearean Studies. Her research pursuits are in Theatre Adaptation Studies, Applied Theatre and Interdisciplinary research on any literary genres.

Atima Kaewsard, Ph.D., is a lecturer at Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand, teaching in the School of Liberal Arts. Her research focuses on second language acquisition, intercultural

competence, and using innovation and technology to enhance language learning for second language learners.

Azman Che Mat is an Professor at Universiti Teknologi MARA. He has been lecturing for 17 years. His research interests are translation, syntax and TASL. Currently, he is involved in research grants and is the chairman for Association of Malaysian Researchers and Social Services.

Catharina Brameswari is a Lecturer at Universitas Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She teaches literature subjects and focuses on several fields: Digital Literature and Technology, Postcolonialism, and Culture and Identity. Currently, she is working on collaborative research that unveils the problems faced by migrant workers in selected Digital Poems.

Chan Mei Yuit is an Associate Professor, affiliated to the Department of English, UPM. She has authored and co-authored multiple peer-reviewed scientific papers and presented works at many national and International conferences. Her research interests include Applied linguistics, discourse and communication studies, second language acquisition, and Language for specific purposes.

Chen Dan is a PhD candidate in English language from the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her areas of research interests include Second Language Learning, English Language Studies, and Corpus Linguistics.

Chikako Takahashi is a lecturer at Tokyo Junshin University. She earned a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics in 1998 from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

Chong Seng Tong is a Lecturer at Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Kajang, Malaysia. He has been actively involved in interdisciplinary areas research including communication, literature and community engagement as well as trauma-related studies.

Chong Su Li is a Senior Lecturer at the Management and Humanities Department, Institute of Self Sustainable Building, Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP). She is also Head of UTP's University Social Responsibility (Education Pillar). She obtained a PhD in Education from University of Cambridge where she was the recipient of St. Edmund's College Dean's Award (2014). Her research interests are in literacy and language education.

Deng Jianbo is an Associate Professor at Dianchi College of Yunnan University. She is a PhD candidate at the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, majoring in English Literature. Her main research areas include New Historicism and Shakespeare Studies.

Dzeelfa Zainal Abidin is a secondary school teacher for 21 years. In 2003, she joined UPM to train TESL teacher trainees at the Faculty of Educational Studies. She joined UiTM as a permanent staff in 2016. Her field of expertise is in the Teaching of Literature in the Language Classroom and TESL pedagogy.

Farhana Muslim Mohd Jalis is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include German as foreign language, comparative linguistics, morphology and pragmatics, and cross-cultural study.

Fatin Nabila Abd Razak is an English Language lecturer at Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Negeri Sembilan Branch, since 2020. She completed her PhD in English Language at the Faculty of

Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in 2021. Research in the area of Applied Linguistics utilising the Quantitative Approach is her forte.

Halimah Mohamed Ali (PhD) is a Literature lecturer at the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia. She joined the university in 1997 and has produced 2 books and 100 essays. She has also presented papers at national and international conferences. She reviews articles for national and international journals, is a member of literary bodies, and is a board member of several international journals. She lectures on English and Malay languages.

Hardev Kaur is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interest includes African and Caribbean Literature, Postcolonial and Trauma Literature.

Hasyimah Mohd. Amin is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia and a PhD degree holder from the University of Sydney, Australia. She is interested in research on English Literature and Contemporary African-American Women Writers.

Hazlina Abdul Halim is an Associate Professor in the Department of Foreign Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include French applied linguistics and translation studies.

Huang Xiuqi is a student at CUHK-SZ School of Medicine, Life and Health Sciences, has research interests in clinical phonetics and pharmaceutical science.

Hu Jing is a PhD student at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, who does research in African-American Literature and Postcolonial Criticism.

Hui Geng is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests are in the areas of corpus linguistics, academic writing, EAP, ESP, second language acquisition, literature, and translation.

Hui Zanne Seng obtained her Master's in Discourse Studies, and she is now a lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Pulau Pinang Branch Permatang Pauh Campus. Her research interests are discourse studies, intercultural communication and language acquisition.

Ilyana Jalaluddin is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include English language studies, literacy studies, ESL writing, TESL and second language learning.

Janice Nakamura is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, Kanagawa University, Japan. She investigates child bilingualism and family language policy within the Japanese context. Her research articles have appeared in the International Journal of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education, International Multilingual Research Journal, Multilingual and English Today.

JianBin Yu is currently a PhD candidate for Comparative Applied Linguistics Studies at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Yu is a teaching staff at Kunming Medical University Haiyuan college and is currently focusing on the Yi minority language loss and maintenance research while documenting Yi's intangible cultural heritage in Mengzi and Shilin in China.

Jinni Li is a postgraduate student in the MA in English (literary studies) programme at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She is particularly interested in early modern literature and drama.

Joanna Joseph Jeyaraj is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include critical pedagogies in teaching and learning, the teaching of thinking skills, and other topics related to the teaching of English as a second language.

Junko Maeda is an Adjunct Lecturer in English language teaching and intercultural communication studies at the Center for Liberal Arts and Sciences, Hachinohe Institute of Technology, Japan. Her current research focuses on Content and Language Integrated Learning, let alone learning a foreign language.

Lilliati Ismail is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include grammar instruction and task-based language teaching.

Li Meihua completed her Master of World Literature at Universiti Putra Malaysia in March 2023 and is currently pursuing her PhD in Postcolonial Literature at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Lingling Xu is a PhD candidate in English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her main research interests include American literature and feminism. Currently, she is studying the representation of academic women in contemporary American literature. Prior to joining Universiti Putra Malaysia, she taught at Huaiyin Institute of Technology.

Long Qian is a PhD candidate majoring in Applied Comparative Language at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, University Putra Malaysia, Malaysia. Her research areas include Sociolinguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Teaching Chinese as a Second Language.

Manimangai Mani is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, UPM. Her research interests include literature from the Indian Sub-Continent literature and Southeast Asia.

Mariko Iwasaki is an Associate Professor of Japanese linguistics at the Center for Liberal Arts and Sciences, Hachinohe Institute of Technology, Japan. She has recently been involved in a descriptive survey of the Nambu dialects of northern Japan as well as the flux of adjectival affixes of Japanese and the development of teaching materials on Nambu dialects.

Maryam Nur Huda Jaafar is a final-year student in the Bachelor of English Language and Linguistics (Hons) programme at Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Mohamad Ateff Md Yusof (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. His expertise lies in Applied Linguistics, with a particular focus on language anxiety and speaking in the ESL context.

Mohamad Iadid Ashrai Hassannudin is an English lecturer in Academy of Language Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Negeri Sembilan Branch. He holds a master's degree in English Language Studies from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. He has been involved with research related to aesthetic literature reading, corpus linguistics, discourse analysis and gender language.

Mohd Ismawi Ibrahim is a senior lecturer at the Centre for Languages, Faculty of Education, Languages, Psychology and Music, SEGi University. Currently pursuing PhD in English Literature, his interests include cognitive science in religion, moral literary criticism and British literature.

Muhammad Amir Asyraf Mohd Muzzafa is a final-year student in the Bachelor of English Language and Linguistics (Hons) programme at Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Muhammad Hakimi Tew Abdullah is a lecturer at the College of Computing, Informatics and Media, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Negeri Sembilan Branch, Kampus Rembau, Malaysia.

Muhammad Yasir Yahya (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. He specializes in TESOL, English Applied Linguistics, task-based language teaching, and speaking.

Najah Zakirah is a lecturer in the Arts and Education Department, Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IU KL). She obtained her Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics from Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests are in collaborative writing and learning styles.

Ng Boon Sim is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include Chinese dialectology, Chinese lexicology, sociolinguistics and comparative linguistics.

Ng Poh Kiat is an Associate Professor Dr. at the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Multimedia University. He is an International TRIZ Level 3 Professional. His research interests include design, TRIZ (Theory of Inventive Problem Solving), human factors and ergonomics, usability testing, biomechanics, and teaching and learning.

Ng Yu Jin is a Lecturer at Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Kajang, Malaysia. He has been actively involved in research activities, especially in corpus-based studies, vocabulary pedagogy and textbook evaluation, as well as some interdisciplinary areas.

Nor Ashikin Yusof is a Senior Lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). She received her Postgraduate Diploma in TESL from UiTM and Master of Education (TESL) from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her areas of interest include Gamification, Online Learning, and Second Language Acquisition.

Norhakimah Khaieessa Ahmad is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research mainly focuses on language teacher identity and Teaching English to the Young Learners.

Noritah Omar is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research field includes gender studies, literary and cultural studies.

Norwati Roslim is a lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Negeri Sembilan Branch, Kampus Rembau, Malaysia. Her area of interest includes corpus-based studies including corpus linguistics studies (preposition use) and textbook evaluation.

Nur Ashiquin C. Alih, PhD, is a graduate from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia who specialises in the area of change readiness in education. She is currently serving at Akademi Pengajian Bahasa,

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia as a lecturer. Her research interests are ESL, TESL, English in the workplace communication and readiness for change.

Nur Athirah Mohamad Hatta obtained her first degree in TESL from Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia and master's degree from University of Sussex in Applied Linguistics. Currently, she is a lecturer at Universiti Teknologi MARA. Her areas of interest are Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, and Online Learning.

Nur Faathinah Mohammad Roshdan is a Lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Negeri Sembilan Branch, Kampus Rembau, Malaysia.

Nur Huslinda Che Mat, PhD is a Senior Lecturer at Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia. Her doctoral degree in Education Research was conferred by the University of East Anglia, Norwich in 2020, where she specialized in the field of Academic Literacies. She has a keen interest in research areas such as ESL, TESL, education technology, university writing, and internationalization at the university.

Pang Ming has been involved with research related to request in Malaysian Chinese Mandarin and mainland Chinese Mandarin since joining Universiti Putra Malaysia in 2022. She worked as a senior researcher at Shandong Vocational University of Foreign Affairs in China back then.

Phei Wei Lee obtained her Master's in Counselling Psychology, and currently, she is KB, PA (Registered & Licensed Counselor), and Founder at Wei Forward Counselling, Malaysia. Her interests are in the field of grief and loss, death education, and family communication.

Raihana Abu Hasan has a bachelor's degree in TESL and a master's degree in English language studies, and is completing her PhD in Social Science and Humanities at Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS. She has participated as a research assistant in projects related to language education and linguistics. Her current research focuses on the metalinguistic awareness and academic literacy practice of multilingual, multiliterate learners.

Ramiza Darmi is a Senior Lecturer in the English Language Department, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Her research interests lie in the areas of English language learning and the use of technology for language learning.

Rohimmi Noor is a lecturer in the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, UPM. His research interests include Malaysian literature in English, contemporary English literature and literary criticism.

Roselind Wan is a Kayan scholar and researcher. Her research explores notions of language, culture, and identity and is particularly interested in understanding the intersection between language, culture, and identity of the Indigenous communities. Her current projects are in language documentation and maintenance of the Kayan language in Sarawak.

Roslina Mamat is an Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her primary research interest is in Japanese language and Japanese popular culture.

Ruohan Chen is a Ph.D. candidate in applied comparative linguistics at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). She obtained a master of TESOL

at the University of Sydney, Australia in October 2016. Her research interests lie in applied linguistics, second language learning, computer-assisted language learning and TESOL.

Salina Husain is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include comparative study, Spanish language and applied linguistics.

Sara Hamzeh is a second-year Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature (Asian, African, Indian, and European Literature). She received a bachelor's degree in English Language & Literature from Mu'tah University and a master's degree in English Language & Literature from The Middle East University in Jordan.

Seyed Ali Resvani Kalajahi is a Lecturer at School of Foreign Languages, Turkish-German University, Istanbul, Turkey.

Shamala Paramasivam is an Associate Professor with the Dept of English, UPM. Her specialisation lies in Discourse Analysis, English for Specific Purposes, Language and Culture, and TESOL. She actively researches and publishes in international journals on issues in educational and professional domains. She serves as a member on the UPM Ethics board.

Sharifah Sheha Syed Aziz Baftim is a lecturer in ESL, attached to UiTM Negeri Sembilan Branch. She has experience in teaching for more than 25 years. She completed her PhD in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) in 2013. Her areas of interest include thinking skills, students' motivation, learning styles and teaching pedagogy.

Shen Xiaolei is a PhD student in TESL at the Universiti Putra Malaysia. She was as a teacher at Anyang University, China for nearly two years, which inspired her to research various learning approaches in English writing. Therefore, she was fascinated by learning strategies such as metacognitive strategies and critical thinking skills.

Sirikwan Chaiyarukthaworn is a fourth-year student at Mae Fah Luang University in Thailand. She has recently conducted a Senior Project about cross-cultural differences while traveling in Thailand as a way to promote local tourism in Thailand.

Song Huiyan has been involved with research related to African American literature studies. Before joining the university, Song worked as a senior lecturer at Heze University in China. Song is currently working on the Ph.D dissertation.

Suzana Hamzah has been affiliated with the Akademi Pengajian Bahasa at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) since 2001. Her research interests are ESL, TESL, and English in Workplace Communication.

Taghreed I.G. Abu Sneida has been involved with research related to applied comparative linguistics and English language. Taghreed was an EFL/ ESL instructor, teaching English to EFL adult learners.

Tatang Iskarna is a lecturer at the Graduate Program in Literature, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He teaches literary works which focus on discrimination of gender, class, race, religion, ability, and age. These themes also become his research interest.

Tingting Huang has been involved with research related to willingness to communicate. She worked as a senior lecturer at Huanggang Normal University, China and currently pursuing her PhD degree in Applied Comparative Linguistics.

Vahid Nimehchisalem started teaching English in 1996. He is currently an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, chief editor of the International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies and managing editor of the Journal of Language and Communication.

Wong Ling Yann is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include Chinese phonology and phonetics, Chinese dialectology, Chinese historical linguistics.

Xinyi Sui is a Translation major at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen. Her research interests include pragmatics and language acquisition.

Yeow Jian Ai is currently a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Business (FOB), Multimedia University. Her research areas include Human Error, Ergonomics, Safety and Health, Strategic Management, Operations Management, Business Management and International Business. She is now the Chairperson for the Centre of E-services, Entrepreneurship and Marketing in Multimedia University.

Yiming Jing is a final-year student in the Bachelor of English Language and Linguistics (Hons) programme at Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Ying Jia is a lecturer at CUHK-SZ School of Humanities and Social Science, specialises in phonetics.

Yin Min Hla is a PhD student English for Professional Development Program, School of Liberal Arts at Mae Fah Luang University, Chaing Rai, Thailand. Her interest area of study is Business English and Lingua franca and workplace Intercultural communication.

Yong Mei Fung is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. She holds a PhD in Linguistics and Second Language Teaching from Massey University, New Zealand. Her research interests include collaborative writing, learner autonomy, project-based learning and assessment.

Zhong Jian'er is a PhD student at Universiti Putra Malaysia and focuses on the research related to oral English teaching and project-based learning. Zhong Jian'er previously worked as a lecturer at Yangjiang Polytechnic College in China and has published several articles and books.

Zohaib Hassan Sain is a student of Quality Management from Superior University. His research interests include higher education and quality management. In addition, he is currently undergoing training and workshops to increase his knowledge and polish skills that will be useful in his future career.

Zhixing Nie is a doctoral student in English literature at the English Department of the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication of the Universiti Putra Malaysia. His broad research interests are in Victorian women's literature, trauma studies, American Ethnic Literature, postcolonial studies, and Anglophone-Caribbean literature.

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The MICOLLAC 2023 Organising Committee would like to extend their appreciation to the following reviewers:

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Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and
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Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor.

Email: micollacproceedings@gmail.com

Contact No.: 03-97698778

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