Russian Students' Perception of Online Foreign Language Learning during COVID-19

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Abstract

The article discusses the results of the quantitative and qualitative survey on the online foreign language (FL) learning in Russian tertiary education during the pandemic that consisted of three parts: personal information, Likert scale and open questions. This anonymous survey includes the responses of 328 undergraduate and graduate students. It highlights main challenges students had to face studying FL online and their general thoughts and concerns connected with the issue. In general, the responses of the students of the Russian universities showed that the transition to online FL classes was a positive experience to them, since they confirmed that the quality of education and assessment seemed to be the same as well as the diversity, interaction and interest. Furthermore, they received more personalized feedback which means that their professors of FL adapted to the new situation quickly and managed to maintain the teaching process. Students seemed to appreciate the use of different platforms in class and for self-study. They mostly complained about the workload of written materials and insufficiency of speaking tasks. This study can contribute to similar research dedicated to experiences and opinions on online FL learning during the pandemic.

Keywords: foreign language learning, online learning, covid-19, tertiary education, Russia

1.   Introduction

Teachers and students around the world had to urgently switch to distance learning due to the global coronavirus pandemic of 2020. According to UNESCO, in May 2020 more than 70% of students worldwide did not attend their higher educational institutions. Both teachers and students have been forced to adapt to a changing environment and face the unfamiliar

environment of distance learning on different platforms. This research investigates students' perceptions of this transition including general thoughts and concerns connected with the issue as well as the outcome of such unplanned arrangements. Students from several Russian universities totalling 328 in number took part in the survey in the spring of 2021.

According to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated May 7, 2018 No. 204, a target has been set to create a modern and safe digital educational environment by 2024 providing high quality and availability of education of all types and levels (NRO Center, 2019). What we observe now is that distance learning meets modern trends in education, allowing universities to include information and communication technology (ICT) within the teaching and learning community in order to create an amenable environment both for those who study and those who teach, and establish an atmosphere of active involvement in the educational process.

Before Covid-19 forced a universal move to online classes, e-learning was arguably the fastest-growing educational trend. It was driven by the growth of ICT and an increasing need for more flexibility in study opportunities, as students often combine work, classes, and their personal life. This has propelled online classes to the foreground in secondary and tertiary education. The expansion accelerated when the coronavirus pandemic hit in early 2020, prompting educational institutions all over the world to move classes online. This radical disruption to traditional face-to-face classes calls for further research not only on the effectiveness of e-learning, its best practices and limitations, but also on students' experiences.

The objectives of the research are to conduct a survey on online FL learning in Russian universities during the pandemic (spring 2021) and analyze its results to understand students' general perception of this shift to online classes and the challenges they faced. A corollary to this was the presentation of their thoughts on differences between online and offline studies as well as some practicalities: new skills acquired while studying online and the things that could be borrowed from online language classes to the offline mode.

2.   Literature Review

There is an extensive body of research investigating the benefits and limitations of e-learning, including its effectiveness, implications for assessment, and teacher and student satisfaction. Kemp & Grieve (2014) compared preferences for class material and assessment presented online and face-to-face among Australian undergraduate students and reported no significant difference in academic performance but a general preference for traditional face-to-face instruction. Students reported to be happier when asked to participate in discussions in traditional face-to-face classes. The positive effects of e-learning, as reported in student experience surveys, fall into the following categories: (1) convenience and inclusivity; (2) flexibility; (3) learner autonomy development; and (4) financial considerations.

Student surveys often place convenience at the top of reason for choosing e-learning over traditional face-to-face classes, as learners do not have to commute to university, pay for accommodation etc. An unexpected positive side-effect has been increased inclusivity as attested in Požgaj and Kneževiü (2014), as low mobility students acquire access to classes on a par with their mobile peers. Flexibility may refer not only to a greater freedom in choosing one's study schedule (which is important for mature students) but also in a possibility to allocate time to different tasks based on the needs of a particular learner and not the entire class. While face-to-face classes tend to move at a faster pace, whereas online learning is said to offer extra time to process the course material, fostering critical thinking and reflection (Ramsden, 1992; Robinson & Hullinger,

2008).The possibility to work through the class material multiple times has also been cited as an advantage as it results in deeper learning and better retention (Požgaj & Kneževiü 2014).

In terms of interaction, online classes are often characterised by a more impersonal and thus less confrontational nature, so introverted students feel more encouraged and less intimidated than in face-to-face classes (Warschauer, 1997; Hobbs, 2002; Kemp & Grieve, 2014).The expansion of e-learning opportunities offered in universities all over the world (including the popularity of flipped classrooms / blended learning) goes hand in hand with a paradigmatic shift where the teacher assumes the role of facilitator who manages the learning process, provides support and scaffolding but is no longer the main transmitter of knowledge (Balluerka et al., 2008; Strayer, 2012). This inevitably leads to increased student autonomy with students shouldering more responsibility for, firstly, their own knowledge acquisition (Ituma, 2011) and, secondly, self-regulation and motivation (Littlejohn et al. 2016) as opposed to face-to-face classes which promote a traditional teacher-centered model (Harden & Crosby, 2000; Prosser et al., 2005).

Finally, the rise in cost-effectiveness of education is shown to be another factor which prompted a number of universities to move at least some classes online (Smith & Hardaker, 2000; Alexander, 2001; Kemp & Grieve, 2014).

Despite the obvious benefits of e-learning, a large proportion of students feel certain negativity towards it. It has been explained by the difference between traditional face-to-face instruction that students are accustomed to, and the new online modality which relies on other patterns of engagement (Robinson & Hullinger, 2008). This negative student response to e-learning appears to revolve around (1) technological constraints; (2) a feeling of disconnection; (3) a lack of motivation or inability to self-regulate or self-motivate; and (4) a lack of concentration during online classes. Technological issues can be daunting as students have reported a lack of the necessary skills for successful online study (Zhang & Perris, 2004; Holley & Oliver, 2010). While students tend to have no formal obstacles to participating in online classes because the majority owns a personal computer or a similar device (Požgaj & Kneževiü 2014), it remains a stress factor. One of the underlying reasons seems to be lack of stable Internet access.

Studies report that e-learning contributes to students' feeling disconnected both from peers and instructors (Otter et al. 2013), and no sense of community (Conole et al., 2008). It is substituted instead by what Garrison (2012) calls the community of inquiry, which does not equal the collaborative and constructivist environment that promotes deep learning. Furthermore, e-learning is characterized by a weaker feeling of engagement in the subject matter (Kemp & Grieve, 2014). The immediacy of teacher feedback available in face-to-face classes is opposed to delayed feedback typically employed in online classes (Kemp & Grieve, 2014).

While some studies cite inappropriate methods of instruction adopted by the teachers as reasons for students' dissatisfaction (Imel, 2002; Anderson & Dron, 2011), the changing role of teachers may be a factor. As teachers no longer perform the function of motivators, students find themselves forced to explore their inner resources and self-motivate, which most find challenging (Upton, 2006).

During the pandemic, both asynchronous and synchronous types (video conferencing) of learning have been applied. The latter has intrinsic interactive features of offline face-to-face learning and is considered to be more dynamic since students can interact with the instructor, in pairs or in groups in breakout rooms or in chat. This personal online interaction here-and-now is crucial in establishing a good rapport with students,

understanding and adopting a proper pace of the lesson and managing the class.

There are a lot of studies dedicated to online learning during the COVID 19 disruption in different countries. Mishra, Gubta, Shree (2020) conducted research at Mizorum University in India where they enumerated the platforms the teachers of their university used and dwelled upon the experiences, perceptions and reflections regarding the ongoing online teaching-learning process of both teachers and students during the COVID 19. According to their findings, students appreciated the readiness of the teachers for an online mode and technical support provided by the university. Students experienced difficulties with understanding conceptual knowledge and discourse activities. They would prefer online studies be more personalized. "It was found that teachers were unable to read the face and mood of students, and thus difficult to change the teaching pattern" (p. 6). The most frequent challenge was unstable network connection and other technical issues occurring during online classes.

It is evident that technological integration in online learning has played a critical role in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on educational activities, however, there are several challenges of online learning during the COVID pandemic in Fiji outlined by Chand et al. (2021) which are divided into four categories: (1) internet accessibility, cost of internet service, and computer literacy to join in digital learning; (2) socio-economic factor; (3) human and pet intrusions, and (4) assessment and supervision.

Mukhtar et al. (2020), Snoussi (2019), Almaiah et al. (2020), Alqahtani and Rajkhan (2020) and Dhawan (2020) put forward the following challenges of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: insufficient resources, problems in maintaining academic integrity, issues in policy, lack of students' self-discipline, technical issues and lack of confidence.

Surveys indicate that there were many challenges delivering online lectures in Afghanistan higher education (Salih and Taniwall, 2020; Khaliq et al., 2020; Noori and Orfan, 2021). Mohammadi et al. (2021) and Khlaif et al. (2020) argued that lack of guidelines, policies, and linguistic skills were the key challenges of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic in Afghanistan. Furthermore, Hashemi (2021) added that lack of infrastructure and resources was the challenge of online teaching and learning in Afghanistan. Noori (2021) claim that students at Takhar University (Afganistan) have not experienced constant online teaching and learning due to a number of challenges and in general, the pandemic has negatively affected their learning.

Klimova (2021) was interested in the discussion of students' perception of and attitudes to online foreign language learning in the COVID-19 pandemic at the Faculty of Informatics and Management of the University of Hradec Kralove, the Czech Republic. Her findings suggest that students do not feel that they have improved their language skills by studying purely online. The results demonstrate students' preference for printed materials being more suitable for taking notes and retaining new words and phrases, especially when students can highlight them. Both teachers and students are well prepared for performing their online teaching-learning process which resulted in quite effective classes; however, offline FL classes are considered to be of a higher value than online classes and could not be replaced by the latter.

The current research might bring some valuable contribution to the overall picture of Russian students' perception of online FL studies during the pandemic and challenges they faced during this transition.

3.   Methodology

To identify how Russian students studying FL adapted to online education during the pandemic in 2021 and what their concerns were, an anonymous survey was conducted

involving 328 respondents. This number of respondents guaranteed the ability of the survey to accurately represent the target population. The selected online method of data collection could reach the individuals from different geographical parts of Russia. This random character of the respondents' search made the collected data representative in character.

Taking into consideration the gender, nationality, place of living, age, university level of the respondents it is truly representative as it includes all types of the total population in fair proportions. 56% of them are female and 44% are male, which is relatively equal and excludes restrictions due to any gender imbalance. The sample size of 94% being Russian was sufficiently large to provide statistical stability and actual information required for this survey and also provided an adequate basis for the measurement of its own reliability (see more details below).

The Google form platform was chosen for the survey because it is reliable and free and allows for the collection of responses in an Excel table that facilitated the analysis of the data.

The survey comprised 3 parts oriented to the research objectives that fitted the survey's conditions: part 1 – personal data questions to draw an average respondent portrait (age, gender, institution, origin). Part 2 – questions on a Likert scale that measure the opinion or attitude to learning a FL in the distance learning format. The scale indicates the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement. The response parameters ranged from minimum to maximum on a 5-point scale: from strongly agree to strongly disagree (1 - strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 - agree, 5 - strongly agree). Part 3 – open questions. The respondents could express their opinion in a free form answering the following research questions: What are Russian university students' opinions on FL learning during the pandemic COVID-19? What new skills have the students acquired? What can be borrowed from online language classes to offline? What makes online language classes different from offline ones? The latter was aimed at the learning skills acquired during the quarantine, the difference between online and offline classes identified by the respondents and what they want teachers to implement in offline classes as opposed to the online format when they are back to class.

The synergy of this mixed method allowed us to monitor the respondents' background (Part 1), measure their answers and receive corollary information on their thoughts, concerns and ideas (Part 2) and analyze the open questions about the experience of online FL classes during the COVID-19 (Part 3) in order to understand better students' challenges and furthermore to improve both online and offline classes.

4.   Findings
4.1. The first part of the questionnaire

It took about 15 minutes for a respondent to complete all 3 parts of the survey. 94% of respondents are Russians, while among the remaining 6% are students from Azerbaijan, Colombia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and other countries whose native language is not Russian but they are studying in Russia. The majority of the respondents are young people: 89% are aged 17-22 (89%), 9% aged 23-28 and just 2% are older than 28. The majority of students surveyed are undergraduates, only 10% are Master's degree students, and 2% of those surveyed are postgraduates. 59 respondents (18%) are studying in small local universities who faced more challenges due to the low teachers' adaptability to the new requirements and the lack of equipment needed for sufficient work including stable Internet connectivity.

Students who participated were studying at the National Research University Higher

School of Economics (HSE University), the Pushkin Russian Language Institute, People's Friendship University of Russia (RUDN) and the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), Nosov Magnitogorsk State University (NMSTU), Moscow State Pedagogical University (MPGU), Kuban State University (Kubsu), Sechenov University, Russian New University (ROSNOW) and the Linguistic University of Nizhniy Novgorod (LUNN) (Fig. 1). Overall it covers Russian regions from south to east, including the Urals.

Figure 1

Educational institutions in which the respondents are studying
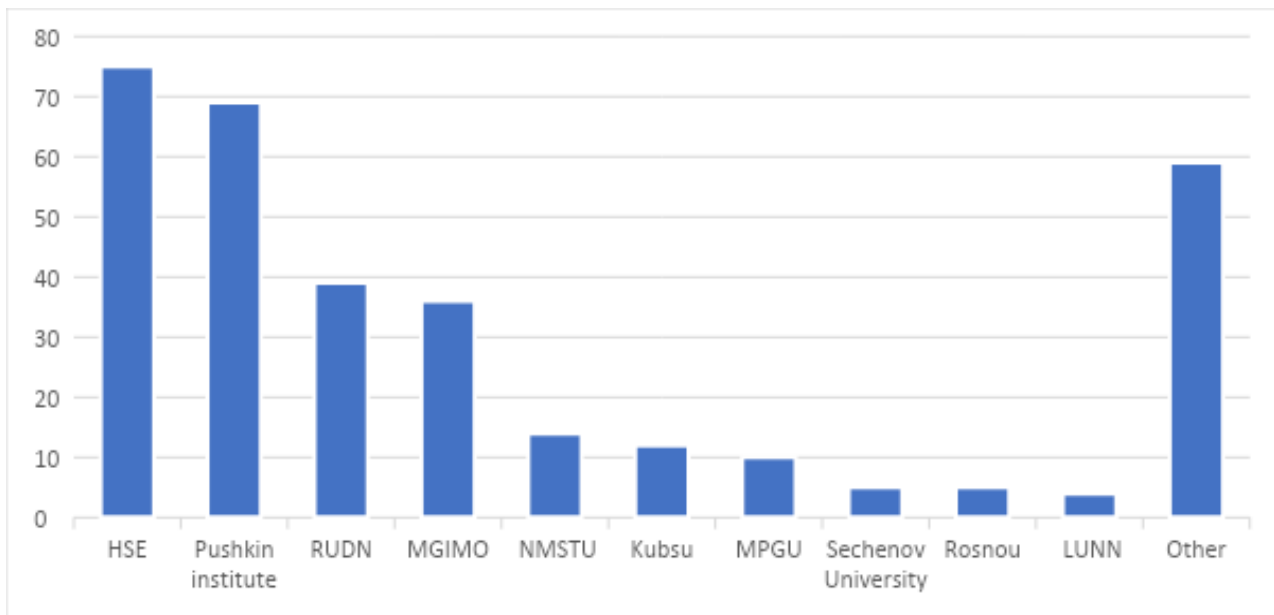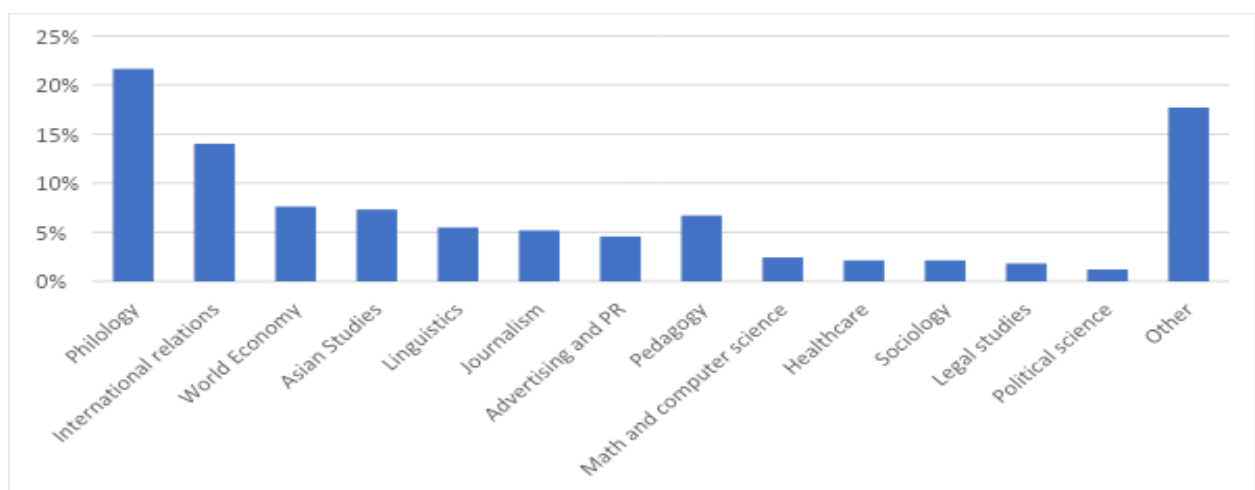

Figure 2

The majors of the respondents

Philology, international relations and the global economy are the most common majors among the respondents of the survey (Fig. 2). This factor might have influenced the outweighing proportion of male participants versus female ones because philology and international relations are highly likely to be studied by female students in Russia.

4.1. The second part of the questionnaire

The second part of the questionnaire comprised 15 statements rated by the respondents on the basis of the Likert scale from 1 to 5. Agreement with a statement is denoted with a plus (+) in the table, disagreement with a minus (-) whereas the mid-position with the equal sign (=) (see Table 1).

The data were analyzed together with the mean (MD) and standard deviations (SD). In our context "deviation" means a random fluctuation away from the mean of the distribution of a random variable, where "distribution" refers to intrinsic behavior of the random variable. SD of the participants' answers indicates the difference between measured values and true values. See the calculation, results, and analysis below.

Table 1

Description of the statements and representation of the mean and standard deviations

№	Description	Disagree (-) or Agree (+)	MD	SD
		Neither (=)		
1	My studies of foreign languages during the Coronavirus have become more interesting and diverse	=	2,954	0,826
2	My studies of foreign languages during the Coronavirus have become more interactive	=	3,055	0,992
3	My academic workload in foreign languages, such as homework and material for self-study, has increased during the Coronavirus	+	3,689	1,090
4	I cheat and plagiarize more studying online during the Coronavirus	=	2,512	1,071
5	I enjoy distance learning and do not want to go back to campus learning	-	2,424	1,287

6	I experience difficulties with time management, focus and self-Discipline	+	3,216	1,262
7	During online classes I become more distracted due to chatting windows, websites and other digital distractions compared to during the traditional classes at the university	=	3,082	1,210
8	My online classes are disrupted due to bad Internet access or outdated electronic devices	+	2,845	1,126
9	I have my space to study and family members do not interfere in it	+	3,872	1,077
10	I have found the transition to online studying easy	+	3,412	1,056
11	I find online classes more stressful than on campus classes	-	2,662	1,233
12	I feel that online classes in foreign languages offer fewer opportunities for peer or in-class discussions than face-to-face classes	+	3,381	1,120
13	The quality of my language classes has improved during the Coronavirus	=	2,756	0,890

14	I receive more feedback, for example, emails, comments in chats, etc. from my teachers of foreign languages during the Coronavirus. It has become more personalized	+	3,213	1,098
15	The evaluation of my skills in foreign languages by teachers has improved	=	2,976	0,682

The descriptive data revealed the overall agreement on certain effects of online learning being witnessed by the respondents (see table 2). The MD total was 46,049. The average number - the sum total divided by 15 criteria gave 3,069. The expected deviation (ED) was calculated according to the formula $\sqrt{(MD - average\ number) \ast (MD - average\ number)}$. The ED of the survey was $\sqrt{2.788} = 0.02\sqrt{6970} \approx 1.669$. The standard deviation points total were 16.02 divided by 15 criteria accounted for 1.068. The latter proved the validity and accuracy of the survey as the expected deviation 1.669 was higher than the actually received result of 1.068 points.

Table 2

The calculation of the expected deviation

Criteria #	MD	ED
1	2,954	0,013
2	3,055	0,0002
3	3,689	0,383
4	2,512	0,311
5	2,424	0,417

6	3,216	0,021
7	3,082	0,0001
8	2,845	0,050
9	3,872	0,643
10	3,412	0,117
11	2,662	0,166
12	3,381	0,096
13	2,756	0,098
14	3,213	0,459
15	2,976	0,008
Total	46,049	2,788

The data of the Likert scale illustrate that the respondents found the transition to online learning in the sphere of FL to be easy and not stressful. The classes have not changed much in terms of their quality, diversity, interactivity and interest. Moreover, the respondents did not admit to any rise of cheating or plagiarizing having online classes, and the evaluation of their knowledge, according to the majority of the respondents, is the same. Only some students feel more distracted due to chatting windows, websites and other digital distractions than during the traditional classes at the university. They agreed on receiving more feedback, for example, emails, comments in chats, etc. from their teachers of FL during the Covid-19 lockdown. Among other positive things is an easy and not stressful transference to an online learning environment. The majority has their personal working space with no family member interference. Among negative things can be the following changes: an increase of academic workload including homework and material for self-study, some problems with time management, self-study and focus, some disruptions with Internet connectivity and fewer opportunities for peer-interaction. Probably these negative aspects of online FL learning did not allow them to enjoy online classes and influenced their desire to return to an traditional educational environment.

The data analysis also revealed fluctuation throughout the levels of study. The perception of the online learning experience was found dependent on the level of study. Specifically, Bachelor degree students tended to agree with the statements more frequently, the MD is 3.08 for 1-2nd year-students and 3.12 for senior ones, while Master-degree

students (2.88) and postgraduates (2.86) did not detect many changes and were likely to disagree with them. The latter could be interpreted as Bachelor students' higher sensitivity to changes and less experience compared to the more senior levels of tertiary education.

The SD points gradually decreased from a Bachelor degree level to a postgraduate degree from 1.12 points for 1-2 year students, 1.08 points for senior Bachelors and Masters to 0.82 points for postgraduates. The deviation level reflected the accordance of opinion within the level of education from the lowest for tertiary starters to the highest level for its graduates.

4.3. The third part of the questionnaire

The analysis of the final part of the study and its three open questions on a) the learning/teaching technologies that the students would like teachers to bring back into offline classrooms; b) new skills acquired by them during the Coronavirus; c) differences of online communication from offline classes they are used to.

The answers offer a glimpse of how students felt about the abrupt switch to online study. While some students gave short yes/no answers, others offered lengthy paragraphs, mentioning more than one detail.

4.3.1. Question 1

When asked about the advantages of online classes, 15% of respondents answer, *nothing*. The remaining student body cites the interactive online tools (8%), increased personalisation of the teachers' response and feedback (8,5%), a rise in listening and watching activities (7,6%), online testing (5%), online homework submission and grading (4%), better communication with teachers and peers via messenger chats and use of online platforms for dealing with organisational issues such as posting homework or keeping track of assignment due dates (4%), and the teachers' efforts to keep up the positive environment during online classes (3,6%).

Contrary to previous research findings, having experienced online language classes in times of Corona, students do not seem to put convenience and flexibility on top of their lists of advantages (2,4%). Among the student-generated answers, there is "more time for independent work", the chance to juggle studies and work due to greater schedule flexibility, the comfort of one's own home, the possibility to attend classes in case of emergency (e.g. being sick does not prevent you from joining an online class), and, on a more humorous note, the ability to "drink tea in class".

This list of the best things about the Corona-times online classes is instead topped by a significant rise in the use of listening and watching activities (with YouTube apparently being everyone's go-to resource). FL teachers appear to have introduced a previously unseen number of online videos into their lesson plans, to the delight of 7,6% of the respondents, who would very much like to see this tendency continued once face-to-face classes are back.

Online homework submissions and grading are eco-friendlier (students do not have to look for ways to print out a hard copy) and save time, according to 4,2%. 8,5% of students feel that online essays receive more personalised feedback from teachers.

Apart from a more personalised approach and feedback, the overall emotional connection between teachers and students seems to have increased during Corona, with 3,6% citing better communication due to the teachers' "understanding", "warmth" or "sense of humour".

Testing seems to be more popular online rather than in a face-to-face classroom, as it is faster. As a result, 5% of the respondents would rather continue taking tests online even

when face-to-face classes are resumed, with only a handful of students (0,9%) concerned with the greater cheating possibilities and questioning the academic integrity of both themselves and their peers.

Regarding the disadvantages of the online classes, students report a decrease in speaking activities and oral practice, with 7% wishing for more speaking practice as soon as offline classes are resumed. These should include debates, round tables, student presentations, and discussions on a wider range of topics than they normally get a chance to discuss in class. Besides, 2% of the respondents would appreciate more pair or group work.

Another reason for concern among 3% is a lack of real life communication in online classes. Students share a longing for "energy exchange which is possible only on offline lessons" which creates an emotional void even though "the quality of education remains in the same level during online lessons".

The results demonstrate that during the Corona-enforced move to online classes, FL teachers increased the written work load of their students and relied heavily on online interactive tools and study apps, such as Flipgrid or interactive boards. While the use of the online study tools was welcomed by the students (who would like to preserve this in offline classrooms), it may have led to a reduction of oral interaction during classes. This claim is supported by a large proportion of students asking for more pair and group work, more interactive oral activities such as debates or round tables etc. as opposed to so much written homework.

However, on the bright side, the increase in written work has led to more personalized feedback that students now receive from teachers, and they like it (on the other hand, the teachers are likely to report a dramatic rise in time spent on grading written homework). To deal with the decreased speaking practice in an online class, some students resorted to seeking speaking partners online among native speakers.

4.3.2. Question 2

To answer the second question, students consider what new skills, if any, they have acquired during their online studies during the pandemic. With 24,6% of responses, the top answer appears to be directly related to overall time management and self-discipline skills (the two seem to go hand in hand for most students).

Students list "time-management, planning, independence" and report having learned to "do something high quality at the last moment", although not everyone is quite happy with their achievement yet (e.g. "Discipline, but I'm still not good enough").

Some answers, like "faster doing bigger amounts of homework", "now teachers don't give us as much time for various tests as before, so students need to think quickly" or "Learning more information and materials in a short period of time", indicate an increase in the workload. To quote one student's answer, "concentration, time- management were needed more than usually". Apparently, during the pandemic students were expected to complete more assignments, and teachers tended to set more homework than before. This might have prompted 3% of students to add multitasking to their 'new skills' list.

As many as 17% of students, however, claim to have acquired no new skills at all, making this the second most popular answer. The question itself seems to strike a chord and elicit sarcastic responses, such as "How to eat quietly during classes", "I've acquired nothing, only new ways to cheat", "No new skills, I've cheated more than learned", and even "I have only lost skills".

Another 17,6% focus on an overall confidence students have acquired when using online platforms, such as "Skills of using different platforms like MS Teams, Zoom, Webinar", "programming". Some report they have lost the fear of "using new technology

for communicating with people".

Some answers (8%) indicate a positive impact that online studies have had on the development of learner autonomy, study skills and self-motivation, e.g. "I began to study more myself" and "became more enthusiastic about my study and much more responsible". For some students, the pandemic proved an incentive to explore online learning opportunities, including "Using some apps that help me to study" and platforms such as Coursera (e.g. "Coursera's how to learn"). Just over 2% of responses refer to improved cognitive abilities, concentration, and memory.

Regarding language studies, this has manifested itself in some students resorting to online tools where they sought tutoring from native speakers. Others found conversation partners, e.g. "I found a language partner on HelloTalk. I thought about doing this a long time ago but the lockdown made me finally do it. I find these classes with my language partner very effective and interesting" or "Using messengers for studying and now I like to talk with native speakers online". These activities were not arranged or even prompted by the university. Rather, this is the case of students assuming responsibility for their own FL progress.

Up to 20% of students report a marked improvement in their FL skills, with 8% singling out listening comprehension. This may be down to the increased time spent online which has allowed students to watch more videos and interact with native speakers more. In some cases, poor Internet connectivity has impeded the use of video during classes, so students have grown less reliant on video materials and have improved their listening comprehension instead (e.g. "Listening. Even if the connection, sound and image is bad, I still can talk about the main idea of the video or audio", "perceive information by ear without a photo").

Improvements in other language skills are reported by marginal numbers of students, among them overall online communication skills (2.4%), vocabulary (2.4%), speaking (2%), and reading (1.8%).

Whereas it may sometimes be hard to differentiate between improvements in speaking overall, i.e. oral production, and online communication, an important comment must be made here. The latter refer to adjustments students claim to have learnt to make based on the communication needs required by the online mode. These include "being understood, while internet connection is really bad. It improves the skill of speaking fast and legible", "compassion to others and listening to them (not really a learning skill but an interaction skill)", "how to be patient and listen to others first", and even how one "can ask the teacher and not to interrupt them (chat)".

4.3.3.Question 3

When asked to sum up their online learning experience in times of Corona by answering the question (what exactly makes online classes different from face to face classes?) students overwhelmingly (39%) pointed to the lack of physical contact between participants of the learning process, both between the students and the teacher, as well as between peers. For a minority of 4.5% of students, the increased distance has had a positive impact, as they now have "a chance to have a word with [instructors] in private in usual Corona-free life", "during online classes the teacher manages to work with all students", and there has emerged a feeling of equality (as one student puts it, "we're all in the same boat", referring to the teachers and students). Built-in chats in platforms such as Zoom have facilitated student-to-student interaction without bothering the teacher and disrupting the class (e.g. "We can also chat via messengers, it's getting easier if you stay in touch"). For some students, the proximity of the screen as opposed to classroom blackboards has

become a boon (e.g. "Everybody can see the screen").

For the majority (34.4%), however, the physical distance has proven to be the biggest challenge of online classes during Corona. Online classes are predominantly framed as "unreal" or "artificial", devoid of "soul", "uncomfortable", and not having "the same vibe". Conversely, face to face classes are described as "real" and "alive". Students consider lack of video (many teachers and classmates have their cameras off) critical, as they "do not see faces and reactions of our group mates" and feel a "lack of personal reactions". They miss "nonverbal forms of communication" and suffer from the inability to check "understanding of what I'm saying" when addressing an online audience.

Technical issues are mentioned by 8.8% of students (e.g. "Poor Internet connection becomes a barrier to effective communication", "It is not possible to build normal communication during online training, because very often there are problems with the Internet" etc.). The immediate consequence of poor connection is the disruption to communication caused by interruptions, mentioned by 7% of students (e.g. "It's hard to understand when it's your turn to answer", "You don't know when someone wants to answer and it's awkward", "It is hard not to speak simultaneously with someone because you don't see the others" etc.).

Presumably, teachers lack proper online classroom management skills to allow for an unhindered discussion ("teacher should organize the process more carefully to avoid it").

Switching from face to face to online classes has resulted in a difference in the stress levels (7.6%). For 3.9%, online classes tend to be less stressful, due to increased privacy (these are the students who avoid using cameras during classes). However, 3.6% report an increased level of stress arising from "alienation", "loneliness", lack of intimacy because of cameras, online tests, and a general "irritation [be]cause of online". Considering the above mentioned issue of interruptions, participating in an online discussion, presumably choosing the right moment to join in, might be another reason (e.g. "In a class I always participate in discussion, but online it's quite difficult for me to turn on a microphone and start talking as the whole world can hear only me. I think it's a psychological problem, but it exists").

Teachers overall seem to have become less emotionally available for students, which has also contributed to increased stress levels (3%). This has manifested itself in a sadness due to lack of emotional involvement on the part of the teachers (e.g. "I can't see my teacher's face, his emotions and smile and it makes me sad"), increased homework (1.2%) and teachers becoming "less responsive and less understanding and willing to compromise". Some students interpret this as a sign of the teachers shirking off responsibility, e.g. "Teacher doesn't take responsibility to make his/her student understand the essence of the task or studying issue during online classes, shifting everything on students".

Moreover, trust between teachers and students has been undermined, "During online classes teachers are very angry and don't believe us, give insanely much homework that there is even no time to eat normally".

This may be at least partially a result of the compromised academic integrity, Indeed, 3% openly admit to cheating more (e.g. "you can actually hide yourself if you don't want to talk or to be watched, it is really easy to cheat, to be honest, I also did this", "you know you can switch off your mic or just log out of chat and you won't answer the hardest question", "you can easily cheat on everything and no one would notice").

On a more positive note, many respondents tend to favour the physical comfort and convenience that comes with studying online from home (15%). They are happy to dispense with commute time, formal dress code, early mornings, and sick leaves (e.g. "You

don't need to come to university, dress classical uniform, but ability to attend a class regardless of the circumstances"). However, for 3.9%, the flip side is lack of concentration and the challenges that come with the blurred lines between home and work (e.g. "it seems to me that it is extremely important to separate the work space and the leisure space").

5.   Discussion

Russia was among the countries where Corona-induced lockdown measures influenced many spheres of life, tertiary education included. This survey is relevant and important since students' feedback is crucial in the improvement of the learning and teaching process. The research shed light on the attitude of Russian students towards online learning a FL during the COVID-2019 pandemic.

In general, the responses of the students of the Russian universities showed that the transition to online FL classes was a positive experience to them, since they confirmed that the quality of education and assessment seemed to be the same as well as the diversity, interaction and interest. Furthermore, they received more personalized feedback which means that their professors of FL adapted to the new situation quickly and managed to maintain the teaching process. These results of the survey inspire optimism as to the future potential of online learning. However, students confessed that they would like to go back to offline FL classes. Some students complained about technical problems and digital distractors, an increase in the amount of work and materials for self-study, some difficulties with time management, focus and self-discipline.

The students responded that they would like to introduce to their offline classes the use of online platforms because the material is structured and one can always get access to it. Moreover, they would like to get their homework tasks via emails, text messengers or other electronic forms, be tested online and have interactive e-games. Many students highlighted that they had learnt self-discipline, time-management, the skill of using online resources and other learning platforms and even were encouraged to find new apps for online learning. The students also appreciated a significant rise in the use of listening and watching activities, eco-friendliness, more personalized feedback and an overall emotional connection between teachers and students (better communication due to the teachers' "understanding", "warmth" or "sense of humour"). Among pluses are also comfortable home conditions, saving time for commuting and equality of all students and teachers.

The negative aspects of online FL classes are disrupted Internet connection, distraction that students might experience during the lesson, the lack of live contact with touch, emotions, eye-contact and other things which comprise physical interaction. Students also outlined a decrease in speaking activities and oral practice and an increase of written work load. They claimed that online classes are "unreal" or "artificial", devoid of "soul", "uncomfortable", and not having "the same vibe". According to some students, the stress level is high and there is a feeling of "alienation", "loneliness" and lack of intimacy. Academic integrity was also compromised: most of the students answered that they learnt new tricks of cheating.

The survey has a number of limitations: firstly, the students might not have answered the questions honestly either intentionally or unintentionally. It seems to be impossible to verify the degree of honesty. However, the students were not forced to do the survey and it did not influence their grades, so we presuppose that most answers were true and reflected their way of thinking. Secondly, some questions on the Likert scale were not answered in a clearly agreeing or disagreeing way. The students chose "neither agree nor disagree" which might be interpreted as they were not sure or hesitated to answer the question. Thirdly, the interpretations of the results are of a qualitative character and might depend on the

interpreters since this process itself is subjective. Finally, the survey was conducted immediately after the first wave of the pandemic when the Covid-enforced change for online classes was hectic, which might have influenced the results of the study and which might differ when the online process is smoother and well implemented.

However, we were not aimed at having some particular results to meet the hypothesis and tried to be unbiased tracking the main tendencies of answers. Finally, since the research took place mostly among students majoring in philology, international relations and world economy who are females, there can be some gender or professional bias.

6.   Conclusions

The study reveals the attitude of Russian students toward a shift to online FL classes during 2021. It reveals plusses and minuses of teaching FL online and helps to understand the students' needs better to adjust further teaching FL online to meet their expectations and make the process more effective.

In conclusion many things require further technical, methodological and organizational development. It is important to find a balance between traditional classes and online learning, and develop new technologies that will allow us to maintain full-fledged communication between participants in education. No modern technical developments can at the moment replace live communication in the classroom, however, if studying online it is recommended to alternate teaching on LMS platforms with the practice via various video applications that simulate live communication and not to forget about entertaining platforms. Speaking and interactive part should be enhanced so students do not feel they are deprived of communication and personalized approach.

The results of the survey can be used by FL teachers to improve both online and offline classes, understanding the needs of their students better, educational experts to evaluate the current level of online FL classes at universities in Russia and other people interested in education and FL. This research can contribute to the overall understanding of the online shift in education in the pandemic time.

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The Impact of using Translation Strategies for Effective Essay Writings by EFL International Students during English Intensive Course

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Abstract

Students across the globe attend universities in Malaysia, especially from Africa and Asia. Therefore, in the attempt to harness their performances in language skills, English Intensive Course (EIC) is emphasised and made compulsory to the newly admitted international students, especially those from the countries that use English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Nonetheless, majority of the EFL students encounter challenges in English Writing Tasks (EWT). To understand the extents of using translation strategies before writing English Essays during EIC program, this paper purposively sampled 50 EFL students of various nations in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). The selected participants were administered Writing Strategy Questionnaires (WSQ) and analysed using SPSS. The paper indicates negative results as most of the EFL students were not writing bits of the text in their native languages before translating into English during Essay Writing, having 38% validation of "never true" as the most frequent feedback. On the other hand, the paper indicates positive results on EFL students writing a difficult word on their native languages and subsequent search for appropriate English equivalent, with 32% validation of "usually true" as the most frequent response and 88% cumulative. The results suggest that, although the EFL students are aware of the significance of translation strategies, but lack engagement in the writing bits of the text in their native languages before translating into English. The results also implied that the UUM EFL International students are normally confident of using their initial knowledge and what they have been taught during the EIC program in the attempt to maintain their writing standard.

Keywords: Translation Strategies, Writing Strategy, English as Foreign Language, Language Skills

1.   Introduction

Translation is viewed as change that occurs in language (Larsson, 1998). Therefore, translation deals with the conveyance of meaning from the source language text to the target language readers. Translation as a strategy is a complicated task that requires the encoding of meaning in the target language via meaning decoding of the source

language. In fact, translation strategies are significant in transacting information between languages. Translators in turn, required translation strategies as professional continuum to convey meaning across the source and the target languages (Bergen, n. d.). Hence, translator is responsible for seeking the words equivalents from the source texts to the target text (Nababan, 1997).

The use of translation strategies in writing received much attention, as many studies have shown the influence of translation in improving the writing standard (Baker, 1992). However, there is a paucity of empirical studies on the use of Translation Strategies for effective writing by EFL students during English Intensive Course in order to understand the impact and extent of their Effective Essay Writings. Since, many scholars shared a common believe that translation strategies are mostly employed when language users faced difficulty on the use of words or texts in writing.

Learning to write refers to the process of enhancing ones efficacy in the use of writing strategies for effective writing (Ou, 2013). The modern trend on writing pedagogy revealed that emphases are now shifted from the outcome of written product to the writing process (Ou, 2013) being a recursive and overlapping process (Susser, 1994; Mekheimer & Aldosari, 2013).

Meanwhile, current trend in research suggests that writing processes and writing strategies are used interchangeably to denote composition process. This is because they both conveyed the conscious management of techniques and various mental activities to achieve a particular writing objective (Ou, 2013). Hence, as a matter of convenience and specification, this paper adopts strategy as operational terminology. Strategy is a process of conscious selection that enhance the learning or the use of Second/Foreign Language, through the storage, retention, recall or application of information about a language (Cohen, 1998).

2.   Literature Review

2.1 Writing Strategies and Learning Efficiency

Most of the strained issues involved in quality writings are the challenges writers normally faced in selecting task specific strategies to resolve their writing issues (Ou, 2013). Chamot, Kupper, Impink-Hernandez (1988) and Chamot (2001) discovered that learners write effectively while combining various strategies along with different tasks. Similar findings also showed students are often malleable to the extreme when it comes to the use of strategies as they always hasty the effective changes on the kind of strategies that could produce befitting results (Leki, 1995). In contrast, Spack (1984) reflected that the diction of strategy could be miscarried and lead the learners into a multitude of other workable strategies. Zamel (1983) further established that expert writers' choice of strategy is normally based on self-developed manner compared to the novice writers whose production is based on writing instruction as demonstrated in the following words:

> "*Another very skilled writer, interestingly enough, began composing his paper only after writing down what he thought would make a fine conclusion. (This same writer, incidentally, wrote his introduction only*

after completing his paper.) It seems then that these writers have developed their own individual strategies for "getting into" a topic, strategies that may not necessarily involve pre-writing at all." (Zamel, 1983:172)

To resolve the contending arguments, this paper classified good writing strategies into their variant levels for its extensive achievement following Mu (2005) explicit synthesised *Taxonomy of ESL Writing Strategies*. The Mu (2005) five major categories includes rhetorical, meta-cognitive, cognitive, communicative and social or effective. Mu (2005) further identified 21 sub-categories of taxonomy of ESL writing strategies out of which Rhetorical is relevant to this paper. In **Rhetorical strategies,** the researcher generated *Organisation* as the sub-strategy and speculated that *Beginning*, *development* and *ending* as the speculation. On the other hand, using *L1 during Writing* as sub-strategy Mu (2005) speculated that it involved *Translate generated idea into ESL*, while *Formatting/Modelling* as sub-strategy, it involved *Genre consideration* and *Comparing* involved the *Different rhetorical conventions*. In terms of **Meta-cognitive strategies,** Mu (2005) unwrapped *Planning* as a sub-strategy and the speculation is *Finding focus*, while *Monitoring* has speculation of *Checking and identifying problems* and *Evaluating* has *Reconsidering written text*, *goals* as speculation.

Again, Mu (2005) had also categorised Cognitive strategies as major strategy where writers employed for *Generating ideas* as sub-strategy and *lead-in, inference* among others as speculation, while with *Revising* as sub-strategy with *making changes in plan, written text* as speculation. Cognitive strategies also involved *Elaborating* as sub-strategy with *extending the contexts of writing* as speculation and *Clarification* with *Disposing of confusions* as speculation. In addition, *Retrieval* sub-strategy has *Getting information from memory* a as speculation, while *Rehearsing* with *Trying out ideas or language* as speculation as well as *Summarizing* sub-strategy with *Synthesizing what has been read* as a speculation. Communicative strategies equally has *Avoidance* as a sub-strategy *obtaining Avoiding some problem* a speculation, *Reduction* sub-strategy with *Giving up on some difficulties* as speculation along with *Sense of readers* sub-strategy with *Anticipating readers' response* as speculation. Social/affective strategies has *Resourcing* a sub-strategy with *Referring to libraries* and *dictionaries* as speculation, while *Getting feedback* being a sub-strategy has *Getting support from professor* and *peers* as speculation (Mu, 2005).

Ou (2013) maintained that this kind of categorisation is obviously accepted and utilised by many as evidently seen in Oxford's (1990) strategy system which distinctively clarified the direct strategies in relation to the use of language, along with memory, compensation strategies as cognitive being the sub-categories, and the indirect strategies that wherewithal language learning, along subcategories of metacognitive, affective as well as social strategies. It was reported that the strategy system by O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) had equally shows the distinction between cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies. The aforementioned writing strategies' classification been discussed may be of significant benefit to scholars dealing with studies related to writing strategies since it is well understood that one can classify strategies based on his cognitive standard. Hence, every researcher is ought to realise that the variance in the sub-strategies, the categorisation as well as the multiple extends of categories are tend to be confused, specifically if not properly defined in their studies.

In fact, attention on writing strategies and students' performances is not much. However, Chen (2011) was among the few that attempted to bridge such gap. Chen (2011) explored the relationship between the Chinese non-English students writing strategies and the student's writing achievements. The findings have established a correlation among the 27 independent variables used in the study, having only 4 items with statistical significance. Chien (2010) on their parts have studied metacognitive strategies based writing instruction for vocational college students so as to understand whether the strategies could enhance the students' positive writing experience, or have significant role in the students' actual writing performance. It was also part of the hypothesis of Chien (2010) to determine which of the two aspects has the highest impact on the students' real writing performance. Hence, their findings revealed that significance difference between the control group and the experimental group in the post-test one writing performance. Similarly the findings revealed significant difference in the pre-test two and the post-test one in the writing scores.

Murat and Maarof (2013) studied the EFL upper secondary school students' use of writing strategies while writing English Essays in Selangor, Malaysia. With the aid of 50 administered questionnaires, the findings revealed pre-writing stage as the most frequent used compared with the two other writing stages. Equally, the findings reflect that the total mean of writing strategies used by students from the high-intermediate are little bit higher than those of the low proficiency. However, both the two group of students were found to employ while-writing strategies more frequently than the other two strategies.

Meanwhile, recently, studies (e.g., Feng Teng, 2021) started convincing this paper that self-regulatory effort in the use of writing strategies permits the students to write effectively. To this effect, the current paper came across the efforts of certain scholars (e.g., Teng & Zhang, 2016; Teng, Qin, & Wang, 2021) who attempted to explore the correlation between students' writing performance and self-regulatory writing strategies. Through the use of multiple regression analysis, Teng and Zhang (2016) recommended the text processing, planning, monitoring, evaluating, feedback handling, emotional control, and motivation as the possible strategies that could ensure the writing proficiency of EFL students. It was also identified that self-regulation of cognition, motivation and behaviour of the EFL students are the mediating factors of their communities, personalities and writing performances (Teng, Qin, & Wang, 2021). Therefore, in the study of metacognitive academic writing strategies, Teng, Qin, and Wang (2021) revealed the procedural knowledge, conditional knowledge, declarative knowledge, planning, information management, monitoring, evaluating, and debugging strategies' impact on EFL academic writing. In a similar, dimension, Zhang and Qin (2018) confirmed that in the university context, EFL students could nurture writing performance willingly through the use of planning, monitoring, and evaluation strategies. Following a similar trend, Teng and Huang (2019) used 682 secondary school participants, revealed significant results on students' writing proficiency. This suggests that EFL students could utilise these writing strategies, improve their writing quality and reflect on their performances independently. Another study by Graham and

Harris (2000) suggested that EFL students employ self-regulatory strategies and achieve tremendous performance on their writing behaviours. Focusing on the primary school context, revealed that EFL learners could also employ considerable number of writing strategies, especially the planning, translating, resourcing, text-generating, revising or monitoring and evaluating and achieve significant proficiency in the English language writings (Bai, Hu, & Gu, 2014). To this end, the current paper employed **translation strategies** in understanding its impact on effective writing by the EFL international students during English Essay writing in Intensive English course at UUM

2.2 English Writing Strategies in EFL Context

Rivers and Temperley (1978) were among the pioneer scholars who published against teachers penalising ESL/EFL students' surface errors and emphasised on contextual and misleading expressions. Due to the progress of this approach, studies proved that EFL students started gaining skill on drafting, revising, and editing of writing process which gave them opportunity of discovering ideas and expressing meanings.

Several studies explored the questions of whether there were common strategies utilised by EFL students (e.g., Teng, Wang, & Zhang, 2022), whether there were differences between strategies used by EFL students of different proficiency levels (e.g., Ahmed, 2020; Coleman & Tuck, 2021) and whether task specification would affect the strategies used by students (e.g., Feng Teng, 2021; Suastra & Menggo, 2020). However, the Flower and Hayes (1981) classified strategies remained the consistent writing process mostly used by ESL and EFL writers. The paper also found the existence of variation among writers' approach to the writing task (Ardnt, 1987). Similar study on classification of strategies was also conducted by Haukås, Bjørke and Dypedahl (2018) where they categorized writer strategies into metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Following Wenden (1991) trend, Leki (1995) employed 10 broad categories for coping strategies that were usually utilised in writing tasks across the curriculum, while Riazi (1997) arranged strategies in his study into cognitive, metacognitive, social as well as search strategies. On the other hand, Bosher (1998) focused on the comparison of Students that has different educational qualifications and discovered the existence of differences in the degree of metacognitive awareness and the quantity and variety of problem-solving strategies.

Findings also showed the choice of writing strategies between the expert and the novice writers differs (Sasaki, 2000). It is found that experts utilise quite a longer time in planning general organisation and hold less frequently, while the novice writers consumed much lesser period of time on producing a less global plan by stopping more frequently (Sasaki, 2000). On the contrary, Wong (2005) discovered that writers mostly employ a broad range of cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies, and utilised a largely related variety of writing strategies in a diverse way. However, recent studies (e.g., Mu & Carrington, 2007) discovered that writers used rhetorical, metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies, and that almost all with the exception of rhetorical strategies do transferred across languages positively. Similarly, Hyland (2008) explored four different typologies of writing strategies which include: artefact-mediated, rule-mediated, community-mediated, and role-mediated strategies from a sociocultural perspective.

This paper adapted Flower and Hayes (1980 & 1981) Translation strategies (i.e., cognitive model of writing process) as underpinning theoretical framework. Flower and Hayes (1980a & 1981) proposed and highlighted four constructs, where three consisting of planning strategies, translation and reviewing strategies were served as Independent Variables (IV) while one which is the students writing performance served as the Dependent Variable (DV). The emergence of these three writing strategies (i.e., plan, translation, review) as part of the cognitive writing process was due to the dissatisfaction with the achievement made so far in the field of writing and the influence of the growth in the field of cognitive psychology, cultural environment, psychology, social contexts as well as linguists and research works within the 70s and 80s which questioned the product-oriented approach and considered writing as a practice of quite a number of processes (Britton, 1970; Halliday 1978, 1982a).

2.3 Translation Strategies

With the aid of translation strategies, writers use the ideas generated in the planning phase and interpret them into language or written pieces during the translation process. According to Flower and Hayes (1981:373), translation process is "*putting ideas into visible language.*" This is why they contended that the function of this translation strategy in writing process is to take material from memory under the guidance of the writing plan and then change it into acceptable written English sentences. In cognitive writing process, it is presumed that the text in memory is stored as propositions, even though it might not necessarily be stored as language (Hayes and Flower, 1980b).

Therefore, translation strategy could be rightfully referred to as "*the act of expressing the content of planning in written English.*" Although, one can clearly notice when writers shift from planning to translation stage in the process of producing text materials, nevertheless, it does not mean they had simply represented a comprehensive meaning of what they expressed in words. However, instead they developed a representation being encoded in certain particular form. This is why; Flower and Hayes (1981) maintained that the act of translation is an encoded representation of another form. Basically, written English is able to include huge new constraints and which usually forces the writer to produce, certify and sometimes revise that implication. For this instance, Flower and Hayes (1981) contended that translation strategy as an act mostly referred the writers back to planning process. To this end, it is safe to claim that both planning and translating strategies processes are interwoven and strengthen each other.

Moreover, Flower and Hayes (1981a) preferred to use the term "translate" over "transcribe" or "write" since it is established that information normally been generated at the level of planning process could certainly be represented in assorted symbol systems such as imagery instead of the use of language. In fact, the planning process represents the writers' thought depicted in words; such representation is not likely to be in the elaborate syntax of written English. Therefore, the writer's task is to translate a meaning (Flower and Hayes, 1981a). Accordingly, the study also shows that when writers move from planning to translate in the attempt to produce write-up, does not surely signifies that they are generating meaning that can be expressed in words. Instead they are attempting to create a representation being encoded in a single form. Meanwhile the translation of this mentioned encoding representation to form written English may add huge constraints, which sometimes compel the writer to write

appropriate English sentences. It is assumed that materials in memory such as grammar and propositions are stored, but possibly not as language (Hayes and Flower, 1981a).

3.   Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative descriptive research design is used in the attempt to describe the impact of using translation strategies for effective essay writings. Descriptive study refers to a process where researcher described the characteristics of certain variables (Bhatti & Sundram, 2015). It is also part of the purpose of descriptive research to describe the relevant aspects of the variables of interest from an individual, organizational, industry to other perspectives. In this paper, the researcher focused on EFL International students English Essay Writings during English Intensive Course. In many situations, descriptive research plays important role in considering certain corrective steps (Bhatti & Sundram, 2015).

It is also part of the features of quantitative research to isolate analytical categories as accurately as possible (Cohen *& Upton, 2007). This means that every data collected for quantitative research tend to provide the researcher with solid and most reliable information needed. Davies (2007, p. 11) attested this claimed, thus: the results derived from the quantitative research "*have certain 'definiteness' ... which make it possible for conclusions to be drawn to a specifiable level of probability*." Hence, one can easily benefits from the current advance of computer software in analysing quantitative data and derive authentic results with mindfulness of time and ease.

The paper used Translation Strategies as Independent Variable (IV) affecting the students writing performance as Dependent Variables (DV). Meanwhile, the paper is not positivism as a methodology since it does not focus on the students' behaviour while writing being the primary objective of positivism methods. Basically, the paper focused on interpretation, descriptions and suggestions based on its findings over the students' writing problems. The study used writing strategy questionnaire (WSQ) for the data collection.

3.2 Participants

Purposive sampling (convenient) strategy was used in the selection of participants from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Purposive sampling is a non-probability sample strategy which conforms to certain criteria that involved two major types: judgement sampling and quota sampling (Bhatti & Sundram, 2015). In this paper, the students were conveniently sampled in accordance with their relevancy to the subject matter.

Thus, the paper aimed at understanding the impact of EFL students' use of translation strategies for effective essay writings in English language. These students are non-native speakers and their countries use English as a foreign language. This means they are admitted in UUM as foreigners (i.e., university in a country other than theirs). UUM as one of the most prestigious Malaysian Higher Institutions offers various programs both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Moreover, every EFL international student been admitted into UUM to undergo either undergraduate or postgraduate programs must sat for English Intensive Course and pass.

The rationale is that ESL/ EFL international students are normally expose to writing assignments in English with lesser consideration in their respective countries, while the Malaysian Ministry for Higher Education made it compulsory for these students to produce and pass quite a large number of rigorous writing activities. Until then they could not allow to obtain placement into the mainstream of the academic system. Hence, this paper selected 50 EFL international students (both male & female) from the UUM English Intensive Course program during 2019/2020 academic session and administered WSQ.

3.3 Research Instrument

This paper adapted Petric and Czarl's (2003) Writing Strategy Questionnaire (WSQ) as instrument for data collection. Petric and Czarl's (2003) originally designed WSQ with 38-items 5 point Likert scale questionnaire for measuring the writing strategies and published as *Validating a Writing Strategy Questionnaire*. However, in the attempt to achieve the objective of this paper the WSQ is modified. The questionnaire has two parts. The first part consists of 6 general questions about the demographic information about the participants. The first part of the WSQ contain questions regarding the participants' sex, English language status and the number of years spent in learning the English language. The part also sought information regarding the participants' prior knowledge of writing English or whether he/she had attended a course in writing in English before coming to his/her current institution (UUM) as well as the types of texts the participant generally write in English (to be selected from any of email letters, notes, essays, articles, reports, creative writings among others). first part of the questionnaire also contain question as to whether the participant enjoy writing in English (at this point 5 options are given for the participant to tick one that he/she seem most suitable.

The second part of the WSQ focused on writing process related to the different stages of writing in English before writing commences. The nature of the questionnaire in this part consist of multiple choice based on 5-point Likert scale questions about participants' sincere experiences and perceptions over their activities before writing English Essay during English Intensive Courses at UUM. The 5-point Likert scale contained how true the statement is about the participant's English writing activities' behaviour or perception. Hence, requires him/her to read very well and circle the number most suitable to what he/she does before writing the English Essay in the Intensive course. Although this paper focuses more on the first stage of the writing process employed by the participants, however, the 5-point Linkert scale is designed to ask participants to rate their own knowledge awareness, proficiency and ability of EFL writing process. To this effect, the WSQ 5-point Likert scale is arranged into 8 different questions under "before I start writing an Essay in English" stage. It is also part of the WSQ contents to rate whether the participants actually practice or do attempt to practice their EFL pre-writing activities.

The rationale of using Petric and Czarl (2003) WSQ toenailed with the strong view of several scholars (e.g., Ellis, 1994; Schmidt, 1994; Cohen & Upton, 2007; Chen, 2011) who stressed that WSQ provides self-report, techniques and perceptive behaviour of both novice and expert writers. It also provides the learners with conscious knowledge of how best to apply the writing strategies efficiently. This is another good reason the

paper has explored the impact of utilising translation strategies on effective English essay writings by the EFL international students. Part of the contents of this WSQ required the participants to recall the processes they normally use during writing English Essays as academic activities in school.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Before the commencement of data collection, permission was sought from the UUM relevant authority. The researcher arranged with the program facilitators and discussed the modality of the collection convenient for the participants involved. Afterwards the selected participants were briefed by both the facilitators and researcher. Then the Likert-scale WSQ was distributed to the students who volunteered to participate. Time spent to fill in each of the WSQ was roughly 20 minutes.

Age was not part of the criteria for the selection of the participants as all the students were adults. Although, convenient sampling technique was used, the selection of the participants was guided by the class facilitator (lecturer) as he has better idea of those suitable for the research. The researcher availed himself during the filling of the questionnaire in case his attention might be required, although no serious issue was experienced. The participants were controlled group and no sitting arrangement was required during the data collection. The only concern was on the nature of filling the WSQ.

There were 70 students who participated in the data collection, however due to some outliers found, 50 WSQ were successfully administered and analysed. This has become viable due to the absentees of some students during the data collection exercise. The researcher also handled the eventualities arose in the process by making adjustment where necessary.

3.5 *Data analysis*

In line with Creswell (2012) and others, the researcher imported the study data been derived from research WSQ into the Microsoft excel 2010 software and formatted the background information. Afterwards, the researcher had calculated the descriptive statistics of the demographics and the writing experiences as well as the WSQ in the attempt to view the responses of the questions therein. Subsequently the main part of the data was also imported into the SPSS software.

SPSS is a kind of program one employ if in need to compute statistical procedures easy and accurate to interpret. With the SPSS software, the researcher was able to calculate and analyse the frequency, percentages as well as the means for the students' demographics and their level of knowledge awareness and experiences of translation strategies during writing.

The researcher also employed the descriptive statistic in the calculation for the mean of the translation strategies, in writing English Essays. The paper then reports the highest means which is ranked in the attempt to secure the most frequent item used in the English Essay during intensive course at UUM. In sum, in the attempt to arrive at the average and the most frequent use of translation strategies used by EFL

international students while writing English Essay, the researcher also calculated the means and the standard deviation for the 14 questions designed in WSQ relating to the students' awareness and use of translation strategies while writing an Essay in English as supported in Petric and Czarl (2003).

4. Results

4.1 Results of the Analysis of the Students' Responses on Translation Strategies

In the attempt to investigate the most frequent writing strategies being used by EFL International students when writing English Essay in UUM English Intensive Course, quantitative data generated through WSQ was analysed using descriptive statistics. The WSQ been analysed contained fourteen sub-questions regarding the translation strategies while the student is writing essay in English, namely: **1**. I start with introduction, **2**. I stop after each sentence to read it again, **3**. I stop after a few sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea, **4**. I reread what I have written to get ideas how to continue, **5**. I go back to my outline and make changes in it, **6**. I write bits of the text in my native language and then translate them into English, **7**. I go for sure in grammar and vocabulary, **8**. I simplify what I want to write if I don't know how to express my thoughts in English, **9**. If I don't know a word in English, I write it in my native and later try to find an appropriate English word, **10**. If I don't know a word in English, I find a similar English word that I know, **11**. If I don't know a word in English, I stop writing and look up the word in the dictionary, **12**. I use a bilingual dictionary, 13. I use a monolingual dictionary as well as **14**. I ask somebody to help out when I have problems while writing.

4.1.1 Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on Starting Writing process with the Introduction for Writing an Essay in English

Analysis of the WSQ data of this paper shows that EFL international students had responded positively. The findings revealed that majority of the students have the highest frequency and percentage of *starting writing process with the Introduction* for Writing an Essay in English. This can be seen in Table 1 below where 27 participants responded with "always true" with 54% validation and 100% cumulative.

This is followed by "usually true" with 14 respondents as having 28% validation and 46% cumulative which is equally a positive response, while there are as few as 6 responses over "somewhat true" partial view with 12% validation and 18% cumulative percentage of starting writing with introduction.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on Starting Writing process with the Introduction for Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	2	4.0	4.0	4.0

Usually not true	1	2.0	2.0	6.0
Somewhat true	6	12.0	12.0	18.0
Usually true	14	28.0	28.0	46.0
Always true	27	54.0	54.0	100.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

On the contrary, the result presents only few respondents with negative responses of *starting writing process with the Introduction* for writing an Essay in English as only 1 respondent had responded with "usually not true" response and this is the least of all the responses with 2% at 6% cumulative. However, 2 respondents were found with total denial of ever *starting writing process with the Introduction* for writing in English at 4% each for both validation and cumulative.

4.1.2   Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on Stopping after each Sentence to read it again while writing in English

Analysis of the WSQ data of this study shows that EFL international students also had positive responses. The study findings revealed that majority of the respondents has the highest frequency and percentage of *stopping after each Sentence to read it again while* writing an Essay in English. This can be seen in Table 2 below where 18 participants responded with "usually true" with 36% validation and 86% cumulative.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on Stopping after each Sentence to read it again while Writing in English

	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Never true	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
Usually not true	8	16.0	16.0	20.0
Somewhat true	15	30.0	30.0	50.0
Usually true	18	36.0	36.0	86.0
Always true	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

This is followed with "somewhat true" by 15 respondents as having 30% validation and 50% cumulative which is equally a positive response, even though it could be view as partial assurance while there are 7 responses with 14% of certainty of agreement and assurance of *stopping after each Sentence to read it again while* writing an Essay in English at 100% cumulative. On the contrary, up to 8 respondents were found as responding with partial disagreement (usually not true) at 16% validation and 20% cumulative respectively. The least percentage of *stopping after each Sentence to read it again while* writing an Essay in English is found to be negative as only 2 respondents were able to claim of "never true" at 4% for each of the validation and cumulative.

4.1.3   Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on Stopping after few Sentences
or a whole paragraph, covering one idea while writing in English

Based on the WSQ data result of this study as shown in Table 3 below, the findings
revealed that the responses of EFL international students has positive result. This is
because "usually true" is the most frequently used response as 19 students from the
total 50 respondents has partial agreement and opinion over *stopping after few
Sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea while* writing an Essay in English
by having 38% validation and 92 cumulative average.

Table 3

*Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on Stopping after few Sentences or a
whole paragraph, covering one idea while Writing in English*

	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Never true	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
Usually not true	8	16.0	16.0	22.0
Somewhat true	16	32.0	32.0	54.0
Usually true	19	38.0	38.0	92.0
Always true	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

In comparison with the four other scales, "somewhat true" was scaled second in terms
of most frequent used response for having 16 respondents with 32% validation at 54%
cumulative. Another response equally used by the students which is also positive is
"always true" by having 4 respondents who responded with assurance that they *stop
after few Sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea while* writing in English,
although their percentage was low as 8%, yet their cumulative percentage was found
to be complete for having 100%. This could infer why most EFL international
students are slow in writing an essay in English.

On the other hand, the result presents 8 students with "usually not true" responses at
16% validation and 22% cumulative, while the least number of percentage of
respondents were 3 who used "never true" response as their answers at 6%
cumulative. This may implies that there is insignificant percentage of negative
responses as regard to this item: "*stopping after few Sentences or a whole paragraph,
covering one idea" while* writing an Essay in English. In other word, the percentage
of the students who use this strategy is high.

4.1.4   Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on rereading what is written to get
ideas to continue while writing in English

Table 4 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses toward
rereading what is written to get ideas to continue while writing an Essay in English.

Table 4

*Frequency Distribution of Students' responses toward rereading what is written to get
ideas to continue while Writing in English*

	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Usually not true	6	12.0	12.0	14.0
Somewhat true	8	16.0	16.0	30.0
Usually true	23	46.0	46.0	76.0
Always true	12	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 4 indicates that frequency of the students who claim that they *rereading what they have written to get ideas to continue* while writing an Essay in English are higher than those who denied doing. This is evidently shows 23 respondents who used 46% "usually true" with 76% and those 12 that responded with "always true" at 24% validation and 100% cumulative. Similarly, there are as few as 8 respondents who equally have "somewhat true" answers which amount to 16% validation and 30% cumulative. In this sense, the total of 86% validation of positive responses are true about *rereading what is written to get ideas to continue* while writing an Essay in English.

4.1.5   Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on going back to their outline and make changes in it while writing in English

Table 5 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses *on going back to their outline and make changes in it* while writing an Essay in English.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on going back to their outline and make changes in it while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	16.0
Somewhat true	10	20.0	20.0	36.0
Usually true	22	44.0	44.0	80.0
Always true	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

As indicated in Table 5, the frequency of the students who claim that they *go back to their outline and make changes in it* while writing an Essay in English are higher than those who denied doing so. This is clearly presented by the responses of 22 students who used 44% "usually true" with 80% and those 10 that responded with "always true" as assurance at 20% validation and 100% cumulative. In addition, there are also 10 students who equally have "somewhat true" answers which amount to 20% validation and 36% cumulative. In this sense, the total of 84% validation of students with positive responses were found to be true about *going back to their outline and make changes in it* while writing an Essay in English.

4.1.6   Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on writing bits of the text in their native languages and then translates them into English while writing in English

Table 6 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses *on writing bits of the text in their native languages and then translates them into English* while writing an Essay in English. From the table 6, it is shown that the "never true" response was the most frequent feedback *on the writing bits of the text in their native languages and then translates them into English* while writing an Essay in English by having 19 respondents from the total 50 students who participated. This indicates that the students' lack of engagement in the writing bits of the text in their language before translating them into English is high, with 38% each for validation and an average cumulative.

Table 6

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on writing bits of the text in their language and then translates them into English while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
Usually not true	13	26.0	26.0	64.0
Somewhat true	7	14.0	14.0	78.0
Usually true	8	16.0	16.0	94.0
Always true	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The frequency distribution of the statement under this cluster as shown in Table 6 above revealed that the response "usually not true" was the second most feedback, with 13 respondents and 26% at 64% cumulative average. This may suggest that the EFL students are aware of the significance attached with the translation strategies, and that they are confident of using their initial knowledge and what they have been taught to maintain their writing standard.

4.1.7   Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses towards going for sure in grammar and vocabulary while writing in English

Table 7 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses on *going for sure in grammar and vocabulary* while writing in English.

Table 7

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses towards going for sure in grammar and vocabulary while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	20.0
Somewhat true	14	28.0	28.0	48.0
Usually true	17	34.0	34.0	82.0
Always true	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

From the Table 7, it is shown that the "usually true" response was the most frequent feedback on *going for sure in grammar and vocabulary* while writing an Essay in English by having 17 respondents with 34% validation and 82% average cumulative

from the total 50 students who participated. This is followed by "somewhat true" responses from 14 students with 28% at 48% cumulative. This may also implies that the EFL students are quite aware of the importance attached with the use of good grammar and vocabulary as part of translation strategies, and that they are confident of using their initial knowledge and what they have been taught about the grammar and vocabulary to maintain their writing standard.

4.1.8   Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on simplification of what is intended to write when they do not know how to express their thoughts in English while writing in English

Table 8 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses on *simplification of what is intended to write when they do not know how to express their thoughts in English* while writing an essay in English.

Table 8

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on simplification of what is intended to write when they do not know how to express their thoughts in English while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	18.0
Somewhat true	14	28.0	28.0	46.0
Usually true	23	46.0	46.0	92.0
Always true	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The statistical analysis presented in the Table 8 above has shown that "usually true" response was the most frequent feedback given by 23 of 50 EFL students over *simplification of what is intended to write when they do not know how to express their thoughts in English* while writing an essay in English. The most frequent percentage of their partial agreement was 46% at 92% cumulative. In comparison to the other scales under this strategy, "somewhat true" responses were ranked second with 14 students by having 28% at 46% cumulative. This means that the EFL students use their imagination and language backup in order to help them write. This also indicates that a fair number of EFL students are aware of the role of their initiation and confidence as part of translation strategies in successful writing.

4.1.9   Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses toward writing on a native language and later attempt to find an appropriate English word while writing in English

Table 9 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses toward *writing on a native language and later attempt to find an appropriate English word* while writing an essay in English in the instance where the students lack knowledge of the English word.

Based on the Table 9, the statistical analysis presents "usually true" response as the most frequent feedback toward *writing on a native language and later attempt to find*

an appropriate English word while writing an essay in English, especially if they lack knowledge of the English word.

Table 9

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses toward writing on a native language and later attempt to find an appropriate English word while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	32.0
Somewhat true	12	24.0	24.0	56.0
Usually true	16	32.0	32.0	88.0
Always true	6	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The evidence of this result is clear when 16 EFL students have the highest valid percentage (32%) and 88% cumulative compared to the rest responses. This is followed by "somewhat true" responses from 12 students with 24% at 56% cumulative. This means first language play a significant role for quite a number of students when writing in English.

4.1.10 Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses toward finding a similar English word they know while writing in English

Table 10 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses toward *finding a similar English word they know* while writing an essay in English in the instance where the students lack knowledge of the English word.

Table 10

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses toward finding a similar English word they know while Writing in English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never true	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Usually not true	5	10.0	10.0	14.0
	Somewhat true	12	24.0	24.0	38.0
	Usually true	17	34.0	34.0	72.0
	Always true	14	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

In accordance with the statistical frequency distribution shown in Table 10 above, "usually true" response was found to be the most frequent feedback been used by EFL students toward *finding a similar English word they know* while writing an essay in English in the instance where the students lack knowledge of the English word. This is confirmed with the statistical results where 17 EFL students had used 34% partial agreement as the highest valid percentage and 72% cumulative average when compared with the rest percentage of responses. Similarly, additional 14 EFL students had used

"always true" as their responses which is also positive with 28% valid assurance of their opinion at 100% cumulative. This suggest that quite a number of EFL students put to use their knowledge of vocabulary and they equally realise its importance when writing in English in order to maintain their writing standard.

4.1.11 Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on stop writing and looking up the word in the dictionary while writing in English

Table 11 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses *on stop writing and looking up the word in the dictionary* while writing an essay in English in the situation where the students lack knowledge of the English word.

Table 11

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on stop writing and looking up the word in the dictionary while Writing in English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never true	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Usually not true	8	16.0	16.0	18.0
	Somewhat true	15	30.0	30.0	48.0
	Usually true	22	44.0	44.0	92.0
	Always true	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

the statistical representation of the frequency distribution in the Table 11 above, have shown that "usually true" as response was found to be the most frequent feedback been used by 22 EFL students toward *finding a similar English word they know* while writing an essay in English in the situation where they lack knowledge of the English word (with a valid percentage of 44% and 92% cumulative). On the other hand, uncertainty sort of agreement (i.e., somewhat true) responses of 15 EFL students was also found as second most frequent use towards *finding a similar English word they know* while writing an essay in English with 30% validation and 48% cumulative. This suggest that most EFL students usually resolve to the use of dictionary as a source of vocabulary building during writing and it plays important role when writing in English.

4.1.12 Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on using a bilingual dictionary while writing in English

Table 12 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses *on using a bilingual dictionary* while writing an essay in English. From the Table 12, it is shown that the "usually true" response by 20 EFL students (valid 40%, cumulative 82%) as the most frequent feedback used on *using a bilingual dictionary* while writing an Essay in English. 10 EFL students were as the second most frequent users of bilingual dictionary while writing in English with 20% and 40% cumulative average.

Table 12

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses using a bilingual dictionary while Writing in English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never true	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	22.0
	Somewhat true	10	20.0	20.0	42.0
	Usually true	20	40.0	40.0	82.0
	Always true	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

This suggests students' partial engagement in the use of bilingual dictionary as a feedback and support being part of the translation strategies when writing in English.

4.1.13 Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on using a monolingual dictionary while writing in English

Table 13 provides in detail, the frequency distribution of students' responses *on using a monolingual dictionary* while writing an essay in English.

Table 13

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses using a monolingual dictionary while Writing in English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never true	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Usually not true	9	18.0	18.0	26.0
	Somewhat true	19	38.0	38.0	64.0
	Usually true	14	28.0	28.0	92.0
	Always true	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Based on the statistical presentation as shown in Table 13, most EFL students are in the habit of using monolingual dictionary while writing in English since 19 of them had used "somewhat true" as the most frequent feedback (valid 38%, cumulative 64%). In addition, 14 additional EFL students were also found as the second most frequent users of monolingual dictionary while writing in English with 28% and 92% cumulative average.

4.1.14 Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on asking help from someone when they have problems while writing in English

Table 14 provides in detail, the frequency distribution of students' responses *on asking help from someone when they have problems* while writing an essay in English. This suggest that most EFL students lack complete self-reliance while writing in English and as a result required the assistance of their more competent colleagues or instructors at the time they were expected to employ their knowledge of the writing skill to write.

Table 14

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on asking help from someone when they have problems while Writing in English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never true	6	12.0	12.0	12.0

Usually not true	4	8.0	8.0	20.0
Somewhat true	14	28.0	28.0	48.0
Usually true	15	30.0	30.0	78.0
Always true	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

This may equally suggest that most students are aware of the significance of translation strategies; however some of them prefer not to use them.

4.1.15   Summary

To arrive at the overall detailed means, medians and modes of responses of EFL international students' Translation writing strategy while writing an essay in English during English intensive course, 14 different items of translation strategy WE was used. The response "I start with the introduction" was the most frequent one (WE1 mean = 4.2600, sum = 213). This may imply that majority of students chose to *"Start with introduction"* during English intensive course in UUM as their initial strategy. The second most frequent used was "*I reread what I have written to get ideas how to continue*" (WE4 mean = 3.7800, Sum = 189) and the subsequent "*If I don't know a word in English, I find a similar English word that I know*" (WE10 Mean= 3.7200, Sum = 186). Hence, the means and standard deviations of responses to translation strategies statements are measured in accordance with Oxford (1990). Specifically, the findings suggest the students' positive attitude towards writing in English and they require little motivation by their instructors to make productive and considerable progress.

5.   Discussion

The central goal of this study was to understand the impact of using translation strategies for effective writings in English by EFL International Students in Universiti Utara Malaysia during Intensive English Course. In this attempt, the paper had limited its focus on the translation strategies being employed by the students when writing in English. The rationale was 1) to investigate the most frequent strategy being used of the writing strategies when writing English Essay in UUM Intensive English Course. To this effect, this section provides discussion based on the main question: To what extents are the EFL International Students employ the translation strategies when writing English Essays during UUM English Intensive Course?

With the aid of the responses generated from the WSQ, this study revealed outstanding results, thus: Although, the paper indicates negative results as most of the EFL students were not writing bits of the text in their native languages before translating them into English during English Essay Writing, however, the overall statistical analysis revealed that there is a positive used of translation strategies when writing an essay in English by EFL international students in UUM English intensive course as recommended by Flower and Hayes (1980 & 1981). Consistent to Maarof and Murat (2013), the findings of this study revealed that start *writing process with the Introduction* in writing an essay in English during English intensive course has the highest frequency and percentage compared with the other translation writing strategies. This may imply that majority of EFL students chose to *"Start with introduction"* during English intensive course in UUM as their initial strategy when they commence their essay writing in English. Similarly, the paper had also found that the second most frequent use of writing

strategy by EFL students during writing essay in English was "*rereading what they have written in the attempt to acquire the ideas on how to continue*". This also corresponds with the findings of Maarof and Murat (2013), who argued that, in the attempt to avoid the ineffectiveness of thinking and having mental plan prewriting strategy in developing ideas, most students normally stopped while writing to reread either after each sentence or a few sentences covering one idea to help them continue writing. In addition, the study found that there are certain EFL students that "*if they do not know a particular word in English, they frequently find a similar one they know*", although not much often compared with the above strategies. Hence, this suggests that the students' positive attitude towards writing in English, they only require little push-up by their instructors to make productive and considerable progress. This is consistent with the opinion of Chien (2010), who maintained that there is a need for students to engage in more reviewing actions for it can enhance and improve the quality of writings.

6.   Conclusions

This paper highlights the writing strategies that can be employed for assessment based research. The findings of this paper have also presents the potential of advance research investigations within the scope of EFL writing strategies. The findings of this research have also provided much insight in the terrain of teaching and learning writings. The position of the most frequently used translation strategies when writing English Essays in UUM during intensive English course were investigated, found and discussed in the paper. The findings of the paper also concluded that there are certain aspects of the writing strategies that seem to be neglected due to insufficient attention by EFL students, hence required teachers to pay more attention on them in order to improve the students' awareness and use of all the necessary translation strategies during writings. In addition, the paper recommends future studies to cover other aspects of writing strategies. Therefore, the findings of this paper are not generalised. In fact, the paper used questionnaire, hence need to also conduct a qualitative research on the same topic to enable the use of open ended interviews for additional opinions over the impact of translation strategies as supplementary findings of this paper. This could confirm the efficiency of the process approach. It may also improve the knowledge of the writing strategies for the teaching English writing in schools of higher learning. The findings of this paper is intended to add value to the existing knowledge of EFL strategy research and may also assist both researchers and instructors in gaining much more understanding of the interface between   EFL   international students and writing strategies.

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Objective Correlative in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: Winston's Varicose Ulcer

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Abstract

On the cusp of the mid-twentieth century, specifically in 1949, the world witnessed an unparalleled literary novel, Nineteen Eighty-Four, embodying the scourge of totalitarian dictatorships and anticipating postmodernism despite its distance from postmodern narrative techniques. Orwell's literary gem imbued with the hallmarks of modernism is distinguished by that it is infused with a pattern of characters, chains of events, actions, images, and objects that articulate the emotions of characters by presenting rather than describing the convoluted association and intricate interaction of emotions, or by what T. S. Eliot proposes in his essay "Hamlet and His Problems," namely, the objective correlative. One of the most notable objects embodying the objective correlative in Orwell's novel Nineteen Eighty-Four is Winston's varicose ulcer, not to mention the accompanying degrees of pain and the ulcer's shape. This article aims to investigate the objective correlative from a theoretical point of view. Moreover, it addresses how Winston's varicose ulcer, its accompanying pain, and its shape systematically represent Winston's rebellious emotions. George Orwell's embodiment of the varicose ulcer in his novel significantly contributes to the portrayal of Winston's rebellious emotions and motives by providing a remarkable composite of emotional and sensory stimuli, which are congruous with the objective correlative involving the expression of emotions through definite objects to portray them vividly, precisely, and complexly. The findings suggest that there is a close relationship between Winston's rebellious emotions and motives and the objective correlative in a way that would provide a unified experience of the novel.

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1.   Introduction

George Orwell's eminent literary novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which embodies the scourge of totalitarian dictatorships and anticipates postmodernism despite its distance from postmodern narrative techniques, is considered one of the most prominent literary works depicting the essence of totalitarianism and its dangers. It also features a pattern of characters, chains of events, actions, images, and objects that articulate the emotions of characters by presenting and demonstrating rather than describing the convoluted association and intricate interaction of emotions, or by what T. S. Eliot proposes in his essay "Hamlet and His Problems," namely, the objective correlative. In Orwell's novel, one of the most notable objects embodying the objective correlative is Winston's varicose ulcer, its degrees of pain, and its changing shapes.

In order to understand the complex relationship between Winston's varicose ulcer, its degrees of pain and its changing shapes, this article highlights the complex relationship between Winston's varicose ulcer above his ankle and his rebellious tendencies. It also sheds light on the link between past memories, pursuit of truth, as well as the emergence of pain associated with the varicose ulcer. Moreover, this article emphasizes on how Winston's varicose ulcer serves as a perpetual harbinger to the Party's attempts to distort the truth and falsify it. Furthermore, the article points out that there is a close correlation between the degree of pain caused by Winston's varicose veins and the degree of rebellion that Winston achieves. The more rebellious Winston and his thoughts are, the more pain Winston feels.

The article also traces the stages of evolution that occurred in Winston's varicose ulcer during his life, starting with a general description of varicose ulcer and the pain resulting from them, passing through the stages of itching, throbbing, then flaming, and ending with the disappearance of varicose ulcer and pain and every single detail related to them with the disappearance of the rebellious spirit that Winston has owned. The article also demonstrates that the degrees of rebellion and pain that Winston reaches have crossed the boundaries of consciousness in a way that shows that the rebellion has reached the level of the subconscious. Studying the close relationship between Winston's varicose ulcer and his rebellious mentality is significant, since it alerts the reader to the need to reconsider Winston's varicose ulcer not as a feature of his body, but as an embodiment of a mental state whose reactions are reflected in a physical form.

Forms of rebellion associated with the pain of varicose ulcer include the process of invoking ideas in favour of a coup against the Internal Party politics such as the potentiality of a revolution by the Proles against Big Brother, writing in the diary, meeting Julia, refraining from attending party activities, trying to explore oneself and truth, clinging to principles while being tortured, diving in the shadows of the subconscious in an attempt to search for something related to the past, and joining the new Brotherhood.

2.   Literature Review

Occupying a prominent place in the history of modern poetry and criticism, T. S. Eliot's objective correlative theory, similar to other controversial theories, has been, typically, a subject of debate and controversy than comprehension. The term "objective correlative" first appeared in Eliot's essay (1919) "Hamlet and His Problems," in which he critically examines *Hamlet*. Thus, the term is quintessentially modernist. Puzzled and disquieted by the "artistic failure" (as perceived by Eliot) of the play *Hamlet*, Eliot maintains that Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* has failed in objectifying Hamlet's emotions and ascertains

that it lacks the objective correlative, which is, according to Eliot, essential to articulating feelings by virtue of "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked" (1967, p. 100). Eliot also attributes that failure to that Hamlet is burdened with "bafflement at the absence of objective equivalent to his feelings" and repressed emotions (1967, p. 101). In other words, the lack of the objective correlative demonstrates that Hamlet's intense emotions "exceeded the facts" of the play, including his mother and uncle (Eliot, 1967, p. 100). Notably, the term "objective correlative" was originally coined by Washington Allston (1779-1843) and used by other poets and critics.

The objective correlative follows in the footsteps of the Imagist movement, which, in contrast to the traditions of Romantic and Victorian poetry, which relies heavily on the use of language full of embellishment and necessary and extraneous, superfluous details, and which also necessitates the employment of discursive language to express feelings, embraces free verse, emphasizes direct and economical language, and is distinguished by its conciseness. The objective correlative and the imagist pattern of thought are recapitulated and expounded by the Austrian-British philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein remarking, "Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly" and "everything that can be said can be said clearly" (Wittgenstein, 1961, as cited in Bennett & Royle, 2015).

Like Ezra Pound and William Carlos, Eliot was an Imagist who comported with the Symbolist movement in terms of the employment of discursive language, since the convoluted association of emotions and their intricate interaction, according to the Imagists, could hardly be expressed and even dramatized by employing discursiveness in writing literary works. Instead, the Imagists adhered to their modernist traditions, emphasizing that the deliverance of emotional content and the transmission of feelings and experiences are best achieved when they are, rather than described or represented, exquisitely presented and embodied by authors. Similarly, such presentation and embodiment of emotions and experiences are particularly relevant for the objective correlative. Thus, the Imagists, such as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, tended to convey feelings through concrete objects rather than abstract ideas.

Joshi claims that the objective correlative and symbols can be perceived as different sides of the same coin, since their objective is "to evoke or connote an idea or emotion," and that the objective correlative is an "extension of symbols — an extension of the idea contained or inherent in symbolism" (2016, p. 52). However, there is a significant correlation between both the objective correlative and symbol. Whereas the latter is utilized as a conventional representation of a thought, relationship, or feeling, the former, objective correlative, is depicted as a presentation of thoughts, feelings, and relationships using concrete methods. Moreover, the function of symbols relies on the representation of "different things at different times," while the use of correlative relies on "their having the same common denominator" (Brown, 1973, p. 9). That is, the feeling, thought, or meaning that an author represents or embodies in each correlative should be as consistent as any other

correlative employed by authors and poets. Since the objective correlative deals with concrete objects as a means of expressing characters' emotions and conveying their feelings that lie within the psyche, Winston's varicose ulcer, which is employed as an external fact or object, expresses the psyche of and presents the inner rebellious emotions of Winston in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Throughout the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston Smith, the Oceanian anti-hero who works in the Ministry of Truth, suffers primarily from his varicose ulcer, which significantly presents his inner rebellious thoughts. It is remarkable that the expression 'varicose ulcer' is mentioned eight times in the entire novel from its beginning to its end in various situations expressing an interesting situation, whereas 'varicose veins' is mentioned only twice. The mention of 'varicose veins' throughout the novel and associating it with Winston's state of mind as it accompanied the reader in the three chapters of the novel is not a mere coincidence, but rather cultivates a significance to the mind of every reader who commiserate with Winston on his suffering and internal struggle since the very beginning of the first chapter of the novel.

3.   The Varicose Ulcer and Rebellion

Winston's "varicose ulcer above his right ankle" evokes emotions of rebellion and suffering in the reader (Orwell, 2021, p. 3). Such emotions are attached to both the reader and Winston in equal measure. Interestingly, Winston feels the pain of varicose ulcer whenever the thought of rebelling against the laws and constitution of the Big Brother's Inner Party crosses his mind, or whenever he does something that would undermine the internal security of the Party. Before his varicose ulcer began "itching unbearably," Winston had been preparing to translate and transfer the monologue that has haunted his life for many years on paper for a few weeks. However, he is faint-hearted when it comes to writing even a single letter, just as he "dared not scratch it [his ankle]," since "if he did so it always became inflamed" (Orwell, 2021, p. 11).

It is clear that Winston's attempts to express his rebellious ideas, his endless struggle with the interminable monologue, and his repeated courageous attempts to write even a single letter on paper are all closely correlated with the onset of pain caused by varicose ulcer and his need to scratch the source of pain. In any case, his not daring to scratch the varicose ulcer seems no less important than his not daring to write even a single letter of the subversive, forbidden practices that have been constantly on his mind in recent years. Such practices include questioning the existence of the Party, rebelling against the Big Brother, and pondering the idea of overthrowing the throne of Big Brother and Ingsoc by attempting to join a secret organization or what is called the new Brotherhood.

Moreover, it is noticeable that in the turbulent atmosphere in which Winston tries to write on a piece of paper, he is primarily cognizant of nothing but "the blankness of the page in front of him, the itching of the skin above his ankle, the blaring of the music, and a slight booziness caused by the gin" (Orwell, 2021, p. 11). Whereas the blaring of the music mirrors the blaring noise of the telescreen that resembles nothing but the Big Brother's media

apparatus and his Inner Party, one of the major side effects of the gin, which is a product offered by the Big Brother's Party to those working for the Inner Party, is a slight booziness.

Most significantly, while the blankness of the page is a result of Winston's nauseating fear and severe anxiety at the potentiality of being exposed by the telescreen, the unbearable itching of Winston's skin is interestingly correlated with the blankness of the page. Whenever his mind conjures up rebellious thoughts, the pain caused by the varicose ulcer appears as if it were a harbinger calling attention to the need to retreat from any thought tainted with treacherous intentions that would lead off into doom. This results in a feeling of fear and excessive anxiety that are inherent in Winston's state of mind. In other words, Winston panics when he picks up his pen and thinks of writing a single letter that embodies his thoughts, translating the monologue fraught with vivid calamities and dangers into a written discourse bearing permanency. Thus, Winston's constant panic contributes substantially to curbing his ability to write, leaving him speechless and incapable of writing to the point that the papers before him are left blank. Simply put, the blankness, booziness, blaring of music and the itching skin are an infusion of senses that are evoked and demonstrated to readers rather than stated to them.

4.   The Varicose Ulcer and Past Memories

Similarly, the itching of the varicose ulcer reappears when Winston, while sleeping, dreams of the past memories of his mother and of nostalgia, invasively diving into the buried memories of his childhood. Moreover, he dreams of a dark-haired girl whose defiant gesture, with its grace and carelessness seems to "annihilate a whole culture, a whole system of thought, as though Big Brother and the Party and the Thought Police could all be swept into nothingness by a single splendid movement of the arm" (Orwell, 2021, p. 39). The feeling that Winston has for that dark-haired girl suggests things that cannot be achieved in the reality imposed by the Party. Among these are libido and the desire to spend time with the opposite sex. The pursuit of libido is a violation of Party regulations. Thus, the appearance of pain as soon as Winston wakes up from the dream is a supportive sign of his rebellion, whose momentum reaches the stage of the subconscious. As sexual desires in Oceania are repressed and recalling the past and writing about it in a diary are forbidden, Winston finds that such a dream reflects his gathered courage and fervent desire to prove that his conformity to the Party is torn asunder. Thus, such dreams about childhood, the past and sexual desires are considered rebellious thoughts that Winston is incapable of achieving in his real life. It was not just about Winston's dream, but rather that Winston is mired in rebellious thoughts that he is unable to implement as a result of their ominous consequences.

Interestingly, one of the factors threatening the Inner Party's structure is the people's discovery of truth or their attempts to reach it by various means, including memories, historical and literary books. Therefore, the Party strives to control everything, including the past, present and even future. Achieving this goal requires the elimination of any historical books and literary books reminding people of their past days, especially the new generations of people. Another attempt to achieve this objective is to control the citizens' memories and past. The absence of memory leads to the absence of past. Thus, the Party becomes able to

manipulate the history as deemed necessary. By doing so, the Party continues to consolidate its hold on the present, since the past is in its grasp and citizens believe in whatever the Party dictates to them. The elimination of historical and literary books is acquainted with the "memory holes" that are used to destroy any documents or photographs related to the past. Memory is the most significant constituent in Oceania. Controlling memory by creating a blurry link between reality and the past means an eternal continuity of the Party's entity and its strict beliefs.

The internalization of feelings of rebellion blatantly reflects the nature of Winston's rebellious mind-set, which transcends the stage of consciousness and reaches the subconscious. That Winston wakes up after those earlier dreams "with the word 'Shakespeare' on his lips" indicates a profound state he has reached in his life (Orwell, 2021, p. 39). That the word 'Shakespeare' stuck on his lips may, in one way or another, signify a translation of the rebellious ideas and monologues that haunt his mind throughout his miserable life. It is interesting that the word 'Shakespeare' may describe both the greatness and immortality of the character 'Shakespeare' and his close connection with the profound poetic language that embodies the suffering of a man at all social, political, and cultural levels. Shakespeare addressed issues in his poems and plays that are immortal, to say the least, in contrast to *Newspeak*, a language proposed by the Party and aims to diminish thinking, stifle linguistic creativity, and strip language from every notion or idea that might arouse suspicion, and whose ideal is "to embody orthodoxy in such a way that it would be impossible to think otherwise, to create a kind of angelic holy will not even capable of transgression" (Yeo, 2010, p. 60). Apparently, the itching of the varicose ulcer is preceded by dreams about the past, depiction of sexual desire, and the word 'Shakespeare' on the lips (alluding to Shakespeare's poetic and profound language), all of which violate the laws of Oceania and are prohibited by the Inner Party and Big Brother.

5.   The Varicose Ulcer as a Harbinger

As the varicose ulcer correlates with the rebellious mind-set of Winston, the itching of the varicose ulcer does not only reflect Winston's rebellion, but also plays an essential role in warning Winston against the falsification of truth imposed by the Inner Party. One day, Winston was pondering deeply the possibility of the Proles revolting against the Inner Party, which regards them as animals, pinning his hopes on the Proles and writing in his diary, "*If there is hope*," "*it lies in the proles*" (Orwell, 2021, p. 89). However, his expectations and hopes were presently unfulfilled, when he remembered that he heard "a tremendous shout of hundreds of women's voices," "accusing the stall keeper of favouritism and of having more saucepans somewhere in reserve" (Orwell, 2021, p. 89). Meanwhile, Winston was thinking that such a tremendous shout stemmed from rebels against the Party, he, however, discovered that it stemmed from nothing but a trivia. Apparently, the activity of writing such rebellious thoughts in the diary, which is outlawed, mirrors a rebel against the system, namely Winston Smith. Shortly thereafter, the itching of the varicose ulcer was followed by the activity of copying a passage from "a copy of a children's history textbook" borrowed from Mrs. Parsons. Interestingly, the passage copied by Winston describes the old days before the "glorious Revolution" (Orwell, 2021, pp. 92–93). It appears that the itching of the varicose

ulcer serves as a regular warning for the implausible details of the children book elaborating on the pre-revolutionary times. Obviously, the activity of expressing rebellious thoughts in the diary and writing down dubious details about the past harmonizes with the fact that the varicose ulcer of Winston itches.

6.   The Changing Shape of Varicose Ulcer and Rebellion

With the rapid pace of events in the novel and the development of the stages of rebellion in which Winston lives in aloof from everyone, his varicose ulcer deviates and transcends the stage of itching to reach the stage of throbbing. It is clearly noticeable that the escalation of pain caused by the varicose ulcer coincides with the rising degree of rebellion of Winston, who walks "several kilometres over pavements" and who wilfully abstains from attending the Community Centre sessions, which involve tedious activities, lectures, fatiguing games, and "the creaking camaraderie oiled by gin," for the second time in 3 weeks (Orwell, 2021, p. 104). Refraining from attending Party-organized meetings and instead wandering over the pavements for a long period of time is nothing short of an attempt to find an outlet and emphasize one's eccentricity and individuality, or of an organized rebellion against the Party. The Party strives to organize such activities in frequent stages every week and harnesses all the necessary possibilities to drain the energies of the external Party members and direct them towards such seemingly social activities.

Winston's refusal to attend the activities organized by the Inner Party and his use of his energies to roam the roads demonstrates his reactions based on premeditated intentions and a feeling of permanent and prolonged resentment. Thus, the pain of the varicose ulcer increases and pulsates steadily. It serves as a constant warning, embodying the magnitude of the seriousness of what Winston is doing. Notably, the presentation of the varicose ulcer's pain by the employment of the word 'throbbing' suggests an unceasingly beating sensation and that the pain is comparable to heart palpitations or heartbeats. Accordingly, the throbbing pain could present Winston's rebellious sense and also reflect the extent of his boldness, contrary to his nature at the beginning of the novel when he did not dare to write a single letter in his diary. Obviously, attentive readers are able to discern the degree of pain, its correlation with Winston's rebellious sense, and the timing of the pain's onset.

Remarkably, in the middle of the novel, the varicose ulcer from which Winston had long suffered is no longer a source of pain to him, and the coughing habit that accompanied him no longer occurs at all. In addition, Winston abandons the habit of drinking gin and many other habits. All this is attributed to his acquaintance with Julia and his meeting her in the attic above Mr. Charrington's shop, where he hides and evades the Thought Police. Despite the fact that Mr. Charrington turns out to be affiliated with Thought Police, the attic above his shop is the only refuge and sanctuary from the Thought Police for Winston, the only ample space where he finds his solace and freedom, and an intimate place where telescreens, baring of music, mass morning exercises (Physical Jerks), exhaustion, and boredom have no room. Thus, Winston's feeling safe and not anticipating any physical or emotional hurt while being with his beloved Julia and meeting her in a place that, despite its narrowness, is close to his heart like home improves Winston's quality of life and positively affects his decisions.

Accordingly, his coughing stops during his time with Julia, and he makes a decision to abandon drinking gin.

It is clear that when Winston's varicose ulcer is mentioned while Winston is in the attic, there is no mention of rebellious thoughts or negative feelings that might disturb Winston's peace. Instead, euphoria, warmth, and security permeate the entire atmosphere of the room. Some critics, however, would refute the claim that the pain of varicose ulcer is associated with rebellious ideas by claiming that the idea of Winston and Julia meeting in a forbidden place is itself rebellious. It is evident that the plan to meet Julia in the attic six or seven times in a month is not a coincidence, but a pre-planned rebellious idea. However, the reason for the absence of pain and the subduing of the pain caused by the varicose ulcer can be attributed to Winston's abandonment of drinking gin for a period of time sufficient to reorganize the blood circulation. As is commonly known, varicose ulcer is a disease caused by weak blood circulation in the limbs, and drinking gin or alcohol increases the heart rate. The incensement of heart rate, thus, causes the blood to be pumped through the veins much faster than usual. Accordingly, when one quits drinking alcohol, the heart rate regulates, the rapid blood flow to the extremities decreases, and thus the pain subsides.

It is noticeable that Winston has gained more weight during the same period in which the pain caused by varicose ulcer subsided than before. This, if anything, suggests a contradiction. Gaining extra weight places extra pressure on the veins, and thus the pain increases exponentially. This explains that the pain caused by the varicose ulcer is only an indication of something far cry from the problems and ailments of the body, but rather an embodiment of the permanent suffering that represents poor services and scarcity experienced by all the inhabitants of Oceania. As a result, the varicose ulcer above Winston's ankle suggests to the reader that the illness afflicting Winston is nothing more than an embodiment of an emotional, intellectual, perceptual, and subconscious state of mind that passes through several stages, and whose pain presents either a warning of danger or an indication of an inevitable rebellious idea.

Perhaps what distinguishes the varicose ulcer is that the pain not only progresses through a series of stages a result of Winston's rebellious mind-set, but also changes according to the degree of danger surrounding him. The pain caused by the varicose ulcer begins with an itch at the beginning of the novel, then turns into a throbbing pain, and later the pain in his ankle becomes "an inflamed mass with flakes of skin peeling off it" due to the excruciating physical torture to which Winston is subjected (Orwell, 2021, p. 342). Regardless of the fact that the brutal torture methods to which Winston was subjected in the prison cells of the Inner Party are the main reason for the transformation of the varicose ulcer into an inflamed mass, the inflamed mass above the ankle illustrates the severity of the torture and the eruption of the pertinent situation.

The inflamed mass reflects the climax of events in the novel as Winston is tortured in an attempt to call him to confess all his thought crimes for the sake of purifying and brainwashing him to become blindly obedient to the Party. The transformation of the ulcer

into an inflamed mass during the culmination of events indicates, if anything, the intensification of the conflict between the Party's decision to purge Winston and the latter's adherence to his rebellious positions. There is no doubt that the emaciation of Winston's body caused by the struggle between the Party's attempts to purify Winston and the latter's resistance to all attempts plays a major role in the détente of the crisis, since Winston's cognizance of the emaciation of his body and the pain stemming from his physical torture lead him indirectly to psychological torture, which represents his most terrifying fears. Winston's acquiescence to the Party's demands is reflected in the change in the shape of the inflamed mass, as demonstrated in the following paragraph.

Winston's varicose ulcer is mentioned for the last time in the novel and is a remarkable reflection of détente. It marks the end of the chain of rebellious ideas that have always accompanied Winston throughout the novel from the very beginning of the first page to the scene of his acquiescence at the end of the novel. After the success of O'Brien, who is distinguished by having the "air of a doctor, a teacher, even a priest, anxious to explain and persuade rather than to punish," in subjugating and brainwashing Winston, it is evident that the Party embarks upon nourishing Winston's health and body by offering him special food with the aim of restoring him to his full physical and mental strength (Orwell, 2021, p. 310). Before the final stage of psychological torture is prepared and Winston is led to Room 101, Winston receives proper treatment, which includes replacing his teeth, providing him with food for three meals every 24 hours, and most importantly, providing a "soothing ointment" as a treatment for his varicose ulcer (Orwell, 2021, p. 346). Perhaps this soothing ointment is a source of soothing the spark of rebellion that has long haunted O'Brien and the Inner Party's apparatus. If there is a connection between the varicose ulcer, its accompanying pain, and rebellious thoughts, the soothing ointment offered by the Party could also be a cure or an aesthetic for the rebellion. This is supported by O'Brien's statement that Winston is "a difficult case," that "everyone is cured sooner or later" (Orwell, 2021, p. 345), and that his illness will also be cured (referring to Winston's rebellious ideology and acts of sabotage, as the Party claims).

It is noteworthy that despite illness and the precarious life in Oceania, the words 'cure,' 'cured,' and 'uncured' are mentioned only four times in the entire novel, and they, notably, are all mentioned during Winston's torture scene and brainwashing sessions. In light of this, it is obvious that the treatment of the varicose ulcer coincides with Winston's treatment of his rebellious ideas, and this leads the reader to wonder about the uncanny connection between varicose ulcer and each rebellious thought that accompanies Winston throughout the novel. Accordingly, every rebellious thought espoused by Winston throughout the novel is bound up with the agonizing pain of the varicose ulcer. Moreover, every change in a crime, according to the Party, Winston commits corresponds to a change in either the form or degree of pain caused by the varicose ulcer.

O'Brien and the Ministry employ agonizing torture techniques while torturing Winston both physically and psychologically. The physical torture methods are not aimed at obtaining confessions regarding his secret meetings with Julia or other minor crimes. Rather,

they are aimed at completely controlling his body and preventing him from thinking secretly or openly. As for the psychological torture methods, their goal is to instil fear in Winston and isolate him from his rebellious ideas that are inimical to the Party ideology. What distinguishes both the psychological and physical methods of torture is that they are aimed at achieving one goal, denying Winston the ability to write or think, as they are closely related; writing comes as a process resulting from thinking, awareness and perception. The impact of the torture to which Winston is subjected at the Ministry is clearly expressed when O'Brien declares that he has succeeded in eradicating Winston's pride, subduing his existence, humiliating him, stripping him of all human qualities, if any, leading him to the utmost levels of decadence, and making him believe that he has betrayed everyone.

The pre-torture phase in Room 101 consisted of providing Winston's body with proper food, clean clothes, and soothing ointment. The soothing ointment could be interpreted here as the secret behind the Party's control over Winston's body. The varicose ulcer soothed with the ointment is an integral part of Winston's rebellious nature, which is epidemic to O'Brien and the Ministry, and the process of healing it begins by controlling first the body and later the mind. After being exposed to his greatest fear, rats, Winston is found to be completely incapable of thinking or even writing what his rebellious mind has dictated to him. When Winston is physically and psychologically defeated, it is announced that a new man succumbing to the dictates of Party leaders like O'Brien has been born. Moreover, the end of the pain of varicose ulcer perfectly coincides with the end of Winston, both physically and intellectually. Thus, later, after his release from prison, there is no mention of pain or even any details about the varicose ulcer.

Significantly, 'varicose veins' is mentioned twice in the novel. However, their appearance does not portray any subversive thoughts and does not bear any relevance to rebellious plans or even pain. Rather, the details surrounding the 'varicose veins' are mentioned only for the purpose of description. They may evoke nothing but the feeling of sheer incredulity. When Winston meets Julia in a secluded spot in the countryside, he introduces himself and tells Julia about his age, his wife whom he can hardly get rid of, his false teeth, and the varicose veins. Perhaps the justification for Winston's mentioning his faults in such an intimate encounter lies in his feelings of sheer incredulity, his suspicion that a beautiful young girl has a desire for someone who is many years older than her, that "her youth and prettiness had frightened him," and that "he was too much used to living without women" (Orwell, 2021, p. 151). In contrast, when someone describes themselves as having personal flaws, including varicose veins, this may indicate feelings of shame, self-reproach, and even discomfiture. Similarly, 'varicose veins' is mentioned again while Winston and Julia are in Mr. Charrington's attic. The description of varicose veins is associated with Winston's feeling ashamed of his body when he undresses. The false teeth, varicose ulcer, Winston's wife, and his age (thirty-nine) that Winston mentions obviously constitute a smorgasbord of emotions that are presented to readers rather than explicitly stated, namely feelings of shame and scepticism.

As the Inner Party aims to annihilate the signs of rebellion by controlling the body, it can be inferred that the emaciation of Winston's body, rebellion, and the varicose ulcer are associated to each other throughout Winston's life: before meeting Julia, after meeting Julia, during the interrogation at the Ministry, and after being released from prison. Before meeting Julia, Winston's body was rather emaciated due to the Party's policy of deliberately not providing the necessities of life and intent on sustaining the scarcity of resources in order to control people's minds by dominating their bodies and offering them "a metal pannikin of pinkish−grey stew, a hunk of bread, a cube of cheese, a mug of milkless Victory Coffee, and one saccharine tablet" (Orwell, 2021, p. 64). Meanwhile, Winston's rebellious mind-set is primitive, devoid of sufficient courage, and lacks self-confidence. In addition to that, his varicose ulcer is itchy. After getting acquainted with Julia, Winston is nourished physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Meanwhile, Winston excels at being at the peak of rebellion, owning himself and his individuality, and maintaining his identity. Furthermore, his varicose ulcer has subsided. During the interrogation at the Ministry, the emaciation of Winston's body has become clearly visible. Simultaneously, as the absence of pain occurs after stopping the interrogation for a few days, Winston seems "to have lost the power of intellectual effort" and starts having joyful dreams (Orwell, 2021, p. 347). Likewise, after being nourished due to his physical emaciation, Winston eradicates the idea of struggling against O'Brien and the Party, declaring his submission to all what the Party dictates to him, including "FREEDOM IS SLAVERY," "IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH" (Orwell, 2021, p. 131), and "TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE" (Orwell, 2021, p. 349). However, he "had hoped to keep the inner heart inviolate" (Orwell, 2021, p. 353). Significantly, Winston, here, is considerably drained both physically and mentally. Concurrently, the varicose ulcer is almost non-existent. In the period after Winston's release from prison, Winston proves to be selfless, and the varicose ulcer has been terminated. This is attributed to that Winston and his individualistic features are anaesthetized by love for Big Brother and the Party. Thus, his body and mind have been fully controlled and eradicated.

The absence of pain resulting from the varicose ulcer is considered a controversial issue. It is necessitated that pain is "considered an immediately conscious sensation" (Gligorov, 2008, p. 27). That is, one knows pain in an incorrigible way, and "these features qualify pain as a paradigmatic mental phenomenon" (Gligorov, 2008, p. 27). The perception of pain is attributed to the "coordinated activation of multiple brain areas" called "pain matrix" (Garcia-Larrea & Bastuji, 2018). A nociceptive matrix features "regions receiving input from ascending nociceptive systems, and ensures the bodily characteristics of physical pain" (Garcia-Larrea & Bastuji, 2018). In view of the foregoing, considering what Syme, a scholar working on the *Eleventh Edition of the Dictionary of Newspeak*, elaborates on Orthodoxy seems reasonable. Syme explains that orthodoxy is the absence of thinking, "not needing to think," and "unconsciousness" (Orwell, 2021, p. 68). Had Syme's words are taken into account, this means that Winston's inability to think of rebelling against the Inner Party again after his release from prison is closely related to his state of unconsciousness, and thus the absence of his pain indicates the absence of his rebellious consciousness.

7.   Conclusions

In conclusion, Winston's personality, his rebellious mind-set, his political and social orientations, his choices, his preferences, his views, and his attitudes, which cultivate Winston's mind-set, are clearly reflected in his body, his varicose ulcer, and the changes surrounding them, including the pain and the shape of the varicose ulcer. Sometimes the varicose ulcer constitutes a warning before and during Winston's rebellious activities, such as writing in the diary, meeting Julia, and contemplating a coup against the Party through the proles, and other times the degree of pain caused by the varicose ulcer and its fluctuating shape as a mirror reflecting the degree of hazard of the rebellious thoughts or actions. Thus, there is a significant correlation between Winston's body and varicose ulcer on the one hand, and Winston's mentality and rebellious thoughts on the other. This relationship is further reinforced by T. S. Eliot's Objective Correlative. What is remarkable is that the varicose ulcer, which is part of Winston's physical entity, manages to elicit significant feelings in the reader. Exploring such a correlation opens the door wide to discovering the relationships between chains of events or objects and further emotions aroused in readers.

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Criteria for Children's Literature: Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child* as a Study Case

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Abstract

Children's Literature comes to be one of the most famous kinds of literature in the recent period. It gives a chance to be in touch with the children's needs directly and affecting them properly by manipulating some constructive moral lessons which are the main pedagogical goals of this type. For example, the idea that the goodness will be rewarded and the bad deed will be punished runs deep in this kind of stories. Unquestionably, this type of literature has definite rules and criteria that are shaped to meet the goals behind writing such type of stories. In fact, there are three criteria that have been proposed by Nathenson and Escamilla in 2003 and there are also some additional criteria developed by Rebecca C. Obi, Ayanniyi Alhassan, and U. S. Osuji in 2010. This study is attempting to tackle these criteria by analyzing the structural framework and digging the pedagogical goals in Julia Donaldson's dramas: *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child* which are good examples of this kind of literature. The study starts firstly by giving an outlook to the definitions of this term (Children's Literature) then, explaining the criteria and finally examining the linguistic features and the structural framework of Donaldson's dramas to land on the most powerful points of usefulness to this kind of literature and how these dramas match the criteria.

Key Words: Children's Literature, Criteria, Julia Donaldson, *The Gruffalo*, *The Gruffalo's Child*.

1. **Introduction**

Children's literature is a term that refers to that kind of literature which is totally directed to children. It refers to any story whether it is short stories, poetry, rhymes, folk tales, or drama that is completely made for children (Obi et al, 2010, 4). Generally, the word 'children' was specified and has been defined by the 'United Nations Organization' as any person under the age of 18 years (Obi et al, 2010, 13). Since the children's literature is a unique division of literature in which the target readers/listeners are children, therefore it stands on the next shore to the adult's literature in terms of criteria. Barbara Stoodt states that children's literature is "thought, experience, and imagination shaped into oral or written language that may include visual images" (Stoodt, 1996, 4). One of most fundamental missions of this kind of literature is to educate. Children's literature appeals to the mind of the child and for that reason it can communicate and delivered the targeted values easily to the child who is about to discover the world throughout the stories. Besides, children's literature may add more experience to the children in using the kind of language that is appropriate for their age (Stoodt, 1996, 4).

The children's literature can either be read or acted or may simply listened to. In fact, "they are books written from the heart and from some memory … and contact with childhood" (Davis, 1973, 17). Children's literature or children's books are made for special needs that should be fulfilled at the end. The examples for these needs are like "children's mental health, security, to love and be loved, to achieve, the need to know, and the need for aesthetic satisfaction" (Davis, 1973, 17). Although there are numerous types of children's literature, but there is also real life situations to talk about. A story about a real life situation may be more useful and touching. Nevertheless, a fairy story may come close to the child's mind (Obi et al, 2010, 7). As for the short story, it is a good type for children's literature. A story may include a description of past events or a description of imaginary events. In fact, short stories are more manageable and this is the great useful advantage.

In fact, when the child reads the story, it means that he/she is listening to another child and this is different when the stories are acted. It is important to bear in mind that children's literature addresses children in elementary or primary schools about the age of 6-14 years. Thus, the variety of what stories are about is huge and the subject matters are limitless. Simply, the main idea behind this kind of stories is to attract the children's attention to "what

people do, why they do it and what results from the doing and not what people think about what they do for thought processes are generally a bore to the young" (Davis, 1973, 7).

Children also like the well-known stories about animals, parents, or grandparents. Children actually like themselves and the stories about themselves. Children up to the age of nine years like the stories of familiar situations. Certainly, at some point, children love the made up story that is apparently about themselves and their own fresh activities. From this enjoyment and happiness in the familiar, children shift into the type of story that opens in their known world a huge scope of choices and it is better than the typical one. Children may also like stories about other real children whose actions are rather unusual, or break the rules, or are not capable to cope with them, who get into problem, confront the authorities, and victory over people who are older (Obi et al, 2010, 7).

2. Literature Review

Children's literature occupies a large area of attention in the present time. Therefore, many studies and researches are devoted to tackle the main strategies of this kind of literature. Some of these studies are dedicated to investigate the effects of this kind of literature on the children's mentality and behavior. Other studies are concerned mainly with the sense of humour and enjoyment that this kind of literature provides for the children. For instance, Amanda Craig (2004) sheds the light on the Gruffalo stories from the perspective of the trickster and the development of the social skills for the children. Betsie van der Westhuizen (2007) discusses the ways of 'locus of control' in the stories of the Gruffalo and explains how the locus of control mingled with humor delivered to the children. Matthew Creasy (2015) discusses the main components of the Children's literature from the perspective of different topics found in the stories of The Gruffalo which he compares to Harry Potter stories by J. K. Rowling. However, none of these studies discusses the criteria of children's literature. This study is devoted to shed light on the criteria of the children's literature and apply them on the stories of the Gruffalo.

3. Criteria for Children's Literature

Since most of the literature is in a written form, the language that is used in literature comes to be important and unique. The organic material of literature is language whether it was written or spoken. Even if it was the same language, still the use can be different. Language in literature has its own selections, patterns, distinctive systems to send the

messages (Obi et al, 2010, 3). No one can ignore the role of language in constructing the body of literature because literature is made out of language. It is the cart that the story writers use to deliver their own views to the readers or to the listeners. In fact, two points must be emphasized here; first the writer's experience, in that the readers learn something new and add more knowledge about the world. Second, it is when this experience helps the readers to find out something new about themselves in terms of humanity. Study or read about other people's experiences definitely enlarge the scope of perception and knowledge about the world. Therefore, the writers need the language as a raw material to design their points of view about the human experiences and launch them into the world. It means that the language is the main tool to deliver the messages. "This is the reason that literature is defined as language" (Williams & Owens, 1997, 23).

Since the children are the target of the children's literature, the books with pictures may be more appealing. These books are depending mainly on the fusion of linguistic texts with the visual images. In fact, the illustrations that accompany the text can facilitate the process of the understanding as well as insert more ideas. Pictures and illustrations show to the reader what is meant by the linguistic text, so that the reader may comprehend the subject matter or actions directly. The qualities of the pictures or the illustrations that accompany the text should be matching the content and do not disturb the message conveying (Nodelman, 2005, 131). The use of illustrations is important to the general understanding of the story to create an everlasting experience.

In fact, there are certain criteria to look for in the stories that are meant to be children's literature. Nathenson and Escamilla propose three criteria that are necessary to be found in the stories for the children. These criteria are "(a) strong, believable story lines, well crafted, not contrived or condescending; (b) believable, well-written language; and (c) quality illustrations that matched and supported the story" (Nathenson and Escamilla, 2003, 108). In fact, there are also some additional criteria that shape the structure of children's literature. These additional criteria like whether the heroes are children or teenagers which is important to be familiar to the child's mentality and whether the ideas or themes are simple or complex with special attention, of course, to the relationships and language in the story. The plainness of themes and language is the most dominating structure that shapes and defines the story as children's literature. Stories can be named as children's literature "if the ideas, relationship

and language are simple. However, literature is not children's literature if the ideas, relationship and language are found too complex whether oral or written" (Obi et al, 2010, 4).

The writer of such type of literature must be aware of the child's mind, psychology and the ways of understanding of the child. He/she also needs to recognize the differences in the children's psychological states, needs of understanding that arouse his interests to know more about this world. The writer of children's literature must not allow himself to enforce a particular way of reaction to this or that event. The way of reacting to the story may differ from one child to another. The nature of the child's world is different from the adult's one and it is not easy to predict his interests, responses and reaction (Obi et al, 2010, 25-26).

One of the most important goals of the children's literature is to please children by creating a lovely environment and motivate his imagination as well as develop his senses to grow with good perceptive to the world. The themes can be rotated about the neighborhood life or may go further to tackle universal ideas like pride and self identity. Once the writer thinks about a theme for his story, he needs to put in his consideration the audience and recount the theme to children's culture and age in this case the child will get benefit from reading the story. Moreover, children's literature is the best tool to transfer and reinforce the traditional values (Obi et al, 2010, 26).

4. **Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child* as a Study Case**

One of the pioneering writers in this field is Julia Donaldson. She was born in 1948 and raised in London. In the period of 2011-2013, she became 'The Children's Laureate'. *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child* which were written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated with pictures by Axel Scheffler stand as land marks for the children's literature in the present days. *The Gruffalo* was published in 1999 and won many grand awards like the 'Smarties Gold Award'. In 2004, *The Gruffalo's Child* was published. The character of a mouse facing the difficulties in a forest is the main story line in both of these two dramatical stories. They were translated into many languages all over the world and more than million copies have been sold. Moreover, they have been acted on stages of many countries like USA, Ireland, Poland, Canada. Most recently, *The Gruffalo* was made a film with a musical adaptation (Westhuizen, 2007, 56-7).

In the domain of the children's literature, there are many stories in which the mouse is the chief character and it may represent many concepts or ideas that found in the human

world. One of the most important features in the stories of mice is the element of humour which comes to be an essential part of *The Gruffalo*. With the sense of humour, the child is moved by the character of the mouse and tries to identify with its success in difficult situations. Van Coillie argues that with such type of stories, the child aged four to five may enjoy the sense of humour with the surprises and the repetitions of the phrases, while the child who aged six to eight may find the enjoyment in the phonetic features of the language in terms of rhyme and definitely the sense of humour will take a considerable part of his/her thinking (Cited in Westhuizen, 2007, 58).

The story opens with the painting by Axel Scheffler on two pages wide to a woodland area in which the colors of brown and green are the main drawing frame. Then the linguistic text begins with a song that brings the sense of adventure to the child as he/she reads or hears it. The child's curiosity is risen by the careful choosing of words that indicates the start of an adventure.

"A mouse took a stroll through the deep dark wood.

A fox saw the mouse And the mouse looked good." (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 2)

The character of the mouse is portrayed through the words as being careless and joyful at the beginning. As the mouse enters the woods, it faces three predators: the fox, the owl and the snake respectively. These predators invited the mouse to a meal or a tea to devour it, but the mouse refused these offers and outwitted them all. The Mouse's technique is to outwit them one by one and tells each one different fearful attributes about the gruffalo, an imagined creature. The mouse was controlling the situation very cleverly. No single word in the text refers to the matter that the mouse was afraid from these predators. The mouse may has fearful feelings, but cleverly it hides them from these predators and this is an advantage to outwit them all (Westhuizen, 2007, 59). In fact, this behavior is a moral lesson in the sense that you can always hide your feelings from your enemies and do not let them know that you are afraid. Moreover, the bulling among the children in schools is widely spread and Donaldson may attempt to treat this issue in this way.

The mouse used his imagination to create an imaginary beast to scare the predators in his way. It tells everyone different features about this imaginary beast. But, unexpectedly the mouse faced a real beast that matches all the features that it mentioned to the other animals. However, the mouse was very quick in recovering from the astonishment. The mouse

cleverly uses this meeting with the Gruffalo to bring benefit by reversing the events to the beginning again. The mouse asked the Gruffalo to walk with him back in the same way in the wood to show the gruffalo that it (the mouse) is the most fearful creature in this wood. The Gruffalo agreed because he did not believed the mouse. The character of the Gruffalo is a part of the fantasy and it was connected with the mouse's fears. In fact, the fear from the unknown is normally found in the child's imagination. The child may create some images of dreadful things in his/her mind like monsters or beast. Thus, it is easy to see the child identify himself with the mouse swiftly (Westhuizen, 2007, 59). As far as the relationship between the monsters and the child's fears, J.E. Cirlot explains this relation as

> The symbolic of the cosmic forces at a stage one step removed from chaos. … On the psychological plane, they allude to the base powers which constitute the deepest strata of psychological geology, seething as in a volcano until they erupt in the shape of some monstrous apparition or activity. … They are the antithesis – or the adversary – of the 'hero' and of weapons. For weapons are the positive powers granted to man … In the case of Mouse, its weapons are its wits, its strong sense of survival and its assertive counteraction. (quoted in Westhuizen, 2007, 65)

It is clear that the life of the mouse has been endangered four times in this play. Each danger represents in fact one of the child's feelings of being unsafe. The first danger that the mouse faces is the fox which may represent the malicious intention of some people and this is clear when the fox spoke to the mouse:

"Where are you going to, little brown mouse?

Come and have lunch in my underground house." (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 2)

Some linguistic features, like the repetition, may add the flavor of enjoyment to the child as he/her reads or hears the story. All of the words in this story are simple and taken from the child's world. Besides, the well-built rhyme and rhythm give the story the capability of being memorized and close to the child's mentality. The mouse is also clever in his replies which were mixed with irony and exaggeration:

"It's terribly kind of you, Fox, but no –

I'm going to have lunch with a gruffalo.'

He has terrible tusks, and terrible claws,

And terrible teeth in his terrible jaws," (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 2-3)

And straightforwardly the fox escaped because it was outwitted by the mouse which repeats his sentence after fleeing each of these predators:

"Silly old Fox [Owl/Snake]! Doesn't he know,

There's no such thing as a gruffalo?" (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 3)

The second danger is when the mouse met an owl which invited the mouse to a cup of tea. The owl may stand also to some of the child's fears or type of people who are hate to see you happy. The owl says:

"Come and have tea in my treetop house.

It's frightfully nice of you, Owl, but no.

I'm going to have tea with ... a gruffalo," (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 3)

It will be well noticed if the light of investigation directed to the use of the word "no" that is rhymed with the next line that ends with the name of the beast "the gruffalo". The refusal is associated with the name of the beast. It is a source of power to refuse the bullying by denoting to a more powerful creature. In the child's world, a child may face a bully boy, but can outwit him by mentioning another source of power, of support and certainly of justice.

The third danger is the snake. Definitely a snake in literature is a symbol of malice and treachery like that of *Hamlet*. The mouse is the best meal for the snake which pretends to be friendly. The child needs to know that not everyone who speaks friendly can be honest.

"Come for a feast in my log-pile house.

It's wonderfully good of you, Snake, but no.

I'm having a feast with a.....a gruffalo," (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 4)

In the middle of the story and when the mouse got out peacefully from all of these dangers, it faces the unexpected moment. The mouse is in front of a real gruffalo. All the features that the mouse has mentioning to the last three predators are found in this creature. As if the writer was trying to convey a moral message that the child should not lie because his lies will be bigger and bigger to the extent it cannot be controllable anymore. Though the mouse was always saying that

"There's no such thing as a gruffal ..... OH!'

But who is this creature with terrible claws

And terrible teeth in his terrible jaws?

'Oh help! Oh no!

It's a gruffalo!" (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 5)

In fact, this is the turning point in which the events are reversed, but with different aims and intentions. The story is put in reverse and this technique may help the child to remember the characters that have been mentioned before. Nevertheless, the mouse was capable of outwit even the Gruffalo and made an advantage from its presence to assure to the previous predators that the mouse is really a friend of the Gruffalo. These predators do not know what was the relationship between him and the gruffalo and on the other hand the gruffalo also does not know what the mouse has told them before. The mouse is using each one's fear against the other. Although a lot of tension is taken place, but the mouse was calm with self confident and that's why it outwitted even the Gruffalo which represents the fourth danger.

"'My favourite food!' the Gruffalo said.

'You'll taste good on a slice of bread!'

'Good?' said the mouse. 'Don't call me good!

I'm the scariest creature in this wood.

Just walk behind me and soon you'll see,

Everyone is afraid of me.'

'All right,' said the Gruffalo, bursting with laughter.

'You go ahead and I'll follow after.'" (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 6)

The sense of time comes to be crucial to the events in that the mouse succeeded in escaping the spot of danger as quickly as possible except that meeting with the Gruffalo. Thus, the story has speedy pacing which adds the sense of tension. Though the events start in a chronological order, the climax point lies in the meeting with the real Gruffalo. After that, the events are reversed. The repetition of the events in this way makes the experience of reading more enjoyable and the child may (consciously or not) know what is coming. The child may create an image in his/her mind that the mouse is the most cleverest character in this story and it controls everything around him since its plan works flawlessly (Westhuizen, 2007, 69-70).

The story of *The Gruffalo* is portrayed from outside in the sense that no one of these characters knew how the mouse was thinking. The mouse may be afraid, but there was no sign of its fear and that's why it was in control of itself and the other predators even the Gruffalo. In fact, controlling is very important in this story in which the mouse, due to its tricks and wit, was capable of controlling everyone around it. This was the result behind the clever use of language. The language was the only tool that the mouse has. According to Lacan, as explained and illustrated by Chris Barker and Dariusz Galasiński, "language formation is motivated by the pleasure that comes through feelings of control." Lacan regards the language as "the symbolization of desire and the never ending search of control" (quoted in Westhuizen, 2007, 62). One of the pedagogical goals that has been implanted in this story is the assertiveness that can be achieved only through controlling over the situation. The child may learn how to use the inner qualities to get control on his/her fears. Then he/she may develop the sense of self confident and being able to solve the hard situations that he/she may face in this life as well as overcomes the fears from the past. At the end, the mouse outwit everyone who tried to eat it. The mouse now can stroll freely or can simply sit anywhere in the wood to enjoy eating a nut:

"All was quiet in the deep dark wood.

The mouse found a nut and the nut was good." (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 8)

These phrases can refer to the atmosphere in the wood at that given moment in which everything is good and cool. The nut may stand as a prize for the winner who is relaxing and enjoying the moment of victory. In fact, the Mouse is symbolizing "the human self-image" in which the gender of the mouse was unknown and therefore the child can spiritually connected with it and no matter whether the child was male or female (Westhuizen, 2007, 63).

The sequel to this story is *The Gruffalo's Child* in which Julia Donaldson with the illustrations by Axel Scheffler portrayed another wonderful story. *The Gruffalo's Child* was published after five years from *The Gruffalo*, in 2004. In fact, the question of gender was answered for the first time in this story in which the mouse is identified as male and the Gruffalo's child as female:

"The Gruffalo's Child

unclenched her fist.

'The Big Bad Mouse –

so he does exist!" (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 5)

Again, the story is being told from a different character to give the imagination the needed license to travel into the land of reverie. In this story, the Gruffalo's daughter plays the main role with the mouse in a different way that gives the sense of adventure. The Gruffalo's daughter represents the child's curiosity and the spirit to discover the world around her. When she knew that her father has some fear from what is described as "terribly big" and "terribly bad" mouse, she slipped in the night to look for that Big Bad Mouse. The child can recognize easily these simple words "terribly big" and "terribly bad". This story can be copied with both boys and girls aged three to nine. It may answered the question of why the parents always prevent their children from going out alone. The world around them is not a safe place and the parents' prevention is definitely for reasonable reasons (Donna, 2015, 1).

"The Gruffalo said that ...

No Gruffalo should ever set foot

in the deep, dark wood.

The Gruffalo's child asked that …

Why not? Why not? Oh!

Because, if you do,

the Big Bad Mouse will be after you" (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 2)

Children's curiosity is directed in the opposite way to the parents' interests and concern. Here, the Gruffalo's child is questioning her father's fear and sneaks off in the night alone to find the big bad mouse, she turned out to be afraid herself. Although this can be regarded as bravery, but still the discussion of this behavior comes under the banner of dangerous act and this is the main pedagogical goal that this story was lunched for.

"One snowy night

when the Gruffalo snored...

...the Gruffalo's child was feeling bored.

The Gruffalo's child was feeling brave

so she tiptoed out of the Gruffalo cave" (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 3)

In the forest, the little Gruffalo started her journey. The forest can be a symbol for the unknown zone that attracts the child's attention. The child is eager to discover and search for the this unknown zone. Besides, the unknown zone can be the unconscious world of the child.

"The snow fell fast

and the wind blew wild.

Into the wood went

the Gruffalo's child." (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 3)

After encountering the same predators in the forest, the little Gruffalo was convinced that there is nothing named Big Bad Mouse. Therefore, there is no need to fear from the wood.

"It's all a trick.

Said the Gruffalo's child

as she sat on a stump

where the snow lay piled.

I don't believe

in the Big Bad Mouse" (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 5)

Again in the middle of the play, the little Gruffalo meets the mouse, but the mouse is small and not like what her dad has described. Thus, the little Gruffalo was not afraid at first and decided to eat the mouse. At that juncture, the mouse asked the little Gruffalo to give it time to call the big mouse. The trick this time was to leap on a branch of a nearby tree and uses the light of the moon to reflect a big shadow. The little Gruffalo thought that the shadow is the big bad mouse. Thus, the mouse succeeded again to overcome the predator which tried to devour it.

"The Mouse hopped into the hazel tree.

He beckoned, then said... Just wait and see.

Out came the moon. It was bright and round.

A terrible shadow fell onto the ground." (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 5-6).

After meeting the tricky mouse, the Gruffalo's child was deceived and return back to the cave quickly. In fact, the shadow of the mouse may represents the exaggeration of the child's fear. Some of these fears are seen bigger because the child's mind look at the shadow, not on the real content of the matter.

"To the Gruffalo cave

where the Gruffalo's child was a bit less brave.

The Gruffalo's child was a bit less bored.

And the Gruffalo snored ... and snored." (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 6).

The most important thing that is shared between these two dramas, *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child,* is the mastery of the situation in which the mouse outwits everyone and this time is the Gruffalo's child (Donna, 2015, 1).

On the linguistic level, Donaldson's mastery of language is shown in the use of the rhythm and rhyme. In each section and subsection, Donaldson uses replicated rhythms and rhyme. She breaks the rhythm in the middle of the story after she expresses the joy of the mouse in deceiving the predators (Creasy, 2015, 1). This is when the syllable "oh!" is used to express the mouse's shock in facing the real Gruffalo:

"Oh, help!

Oh, no!

It's a gruffalo!" (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 5)

One of the main linguistic features in these stories is the use of the Direct Speech in which the texts are relying heavily on the dialogues among the characters. Phonological devices are also important to keep the child concentrated. For example, the rhyming of the couplets became a frequent linguistic trait: {house-mouse, said-fled, good-wood, lake-snake, claws-jaws}. Moreover, the alliteration is having its clear presence in the phrases of "terrible tusks, terrible teeth, and deep dark wood … etc}. The alliteration gives more emphasis and power to the descriptions to be attached in the children's minds. Throughout these stories, Donaldson uses the present simple tense since it is easier for the children to comprehend. but, there are many occasions in which the past simple tense is used like "and away he sped" (Graham & Baxter, 2016).

The narration technique of this story is swaying between the first person and third person narration. Thus, the unbiased viewpoint is clear and the reader or the listener has a superior position in which he/she knows more about the mouse and it's way of thinking than the other predators. This is where the dramatic irony lies. It is promoted also by the use of the active voice since the focal point is the action of the mouse. Simple sentences are used widely to avoid complication and drive the children to a full understanding. However, there are certain occasions in which a compound sentence is used to describe the Gruffalo's appearance. (UK.Essays.com)

The story of the Gruffalo is not only textual, but there are also non-linguistic features that are represented by the illustrations throughout the book. The illustrations by the German artist Axel Scheffler help this story to be spread widely. He sent at the beginning few rough sketches about the forests of Hamburg. He draws on the "deep dark wood" and its residents

with a lively manner. Scheffler's drawings are loaded with heavy ink and intense colors which produced unique animal characters and for this reason the drawings combine both realism and cartoonish overview. Donaldson seems to be conceived with the image of Gruffalo as an "alien like creature", but Scheffler was depending largely on the descriptions that found in her writings. Scheffler reached a kind of mixture between cuddly and fearful in special harmony way that covers the whole story (Creasy, 2015, 1).

Without these illustrations, there will be no comprehensive understanding to the thoughts. If the play is being acted on the stage, the audience may depend on the characters' dressing to built a comprehensive perceptive of thoughts. Amanda Craig (2004) says that "the illustrations need to not just match the text but deepen it in unexpected ways". Therefore, the main idea behind the illustrations is to add some non-linguistic components to the story. For example, the Gruffalo is pictured with more features than the mouse mentioned for the predators. The mouse didn't mention the big ears or the horns or the huge body. Moreover, the illustrations show that the Gruffalo is standing in the middle of the road and closing it to the extent there is no space for the mouse to pass by (Westhuizen, 2007, 71). In her interview with *The Independent*, Julia Donaldson described the image of the Gruffalo:

> I didn't really have a preconceived idea of what the Gruffalo would look like, … It just came into being according to what rhymed with what. … I think I originally envisaged him as being more weird and less furry. Before I had a publisher for the book I would tell the story in schools and ask the children to draw the Gruffalo. On the whole, theirs looked more like aliens and less like cuddly animals. (Independent Review)

Amanda Craig argues that the mouse is in the state of innocence when it met the Gruffalo in the sense that it was pictured with big round eyes and pale brown body. On the other hand, the Gruffalo was pictured more furious than what the mouse has described, "which builds the tension and makes the climax far more terrifying" (Craig, 2004). The illustrations are participating of increasing the tension in the story. For example, the illustrations give picture of "the dark hues and saturated colours of the forest – the deep greens and dark browns" (Craig, 2004) which adds more tension to the atmosphere of the story. Here, the suspense is the active feeling in that it creates psychological milieu. The wood may stand also for the state of the unconscious, the same as in many of the fairy tales. The harmony between the pictures and the words goes far to embrace the rhythm of the

book's design as well. The triumph of Scheffler and Donaldson in joining the bright visual storytelling along with the textual materials is an achievement that will last for decades at least (Creasy, 2015, 1).

5. Conclusion

The Gruffalo comes to be one of the most prominent landmark in the realm of the children's literature. In the form of story-poem, *The Gruffalo* and its sequel *The Gruffalo's Child* have powerful charming traits and take the reader/listener to the land of imagination where the forces of good and evil are still fighting. In fact, these two stories are matching the criteria of the children's literature for having strong and believable story lines, well-written language, and good illustrations that support the story. Moreover, these two stories can be named as children's literature because the ideas, relationship and language are simple.

On the pedagogical level, the child may create monsters and beasts in his mind due to the situation or the psychological state at a given moment. Thus, these stories feed the brain with new ideas that may be helpful one day. The methods and techniques that the child needs to learn to overcome these fears are concealed in these stories. Besides, the child may learn how to control his/her problems and anxieties whether they are real or just fantasy. The identification with the character of the mouse may have different affects because the strategy of each person may differ from person to another. Definitely, these two stories are not drained from notable moral lessons. When the adults pave the way for the children to be more assertive and give them a chance to develop the internal power of control, the children will have strong personalities. Moreover, these stories invite the children to face what happens by using the power of brain. Here, it is clear that the brain can be more powerful than muscles in some difficult situations.

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EFL Learners' Perceptions of Their Autonomous Learning Abilities

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Abstract

Learner autonomy is an essential component in educational contexts and plays a key role in language learning. The aim of the current study is to explore the EFL learners' perceptions of their autonomous learning abilities in terms of language learning at the tertiary level in the Turkish EFL context. In accordance with this purpose, a 5-point Likert scale, which was developed by Demirtaş (2010), was utilized. Participants of this research were randomly selected 87 preparatory class students in two different language levels (i.e., elementary and starter). Besides, this paper attempts to ascertain whether there is a relationship between students' autonomous learning abilities and their language proficiency level. The collected data were analyzed by running an independent sample t-test on SPSS software. The findings reveal that most of the students in this study perceive themselves as having low-level autonomous learning abilities. This investigation indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between students' autonomy levels and language proficiency levels. These results provide important insights into the perceptions of Turkish EFL learners of their autonomous learning abilities.

Keywords: learner autonomy, autonomous learners, learning abilities, EFL learners, language proficiency level

1. Introduction

Language teaching methods have constantly improved due to changes in technology and social life and new teaching approaches. Teacher-centered traditional education approaches have been replaced with student-centered methods to enable them to take part in learning throughout the last thirty years. Teachers are not the key instrument in the language learning process, and the classroom is not the only place where learning occurs. Students have played a vital role in their own language learning process; that is, they are responsible for their own learning process. (Holec, 1981; Benson,2001, Little,2002) It is possible to say that 'learning autonomy' has emerged as the concept of changing students' and teachers' roles in this process. According to this concept, learners should plan their own learning, determine their own objectives and control the learning process. Little (2002) highlights that learners' awareness, which can be defined as conscious understanding and sensitivity in language learning, plays a vital role in the language learning process. It is not possible to set learner goals and evaluate progress for learners who are not aware of their responsibilities. While learners are responsible for their learning process, teachers have the responsibility of promoting and supporting learning autonomy.

Studies of learner autonomy show the importance of autonomous learning and explore different viewpoints in language education. (Nunan, 1999; Chan,2001) Learners' perceptions of their autonomous learning abilities have been previously observed by researchers in the previous literature. (Sönmez, 2016; Mehdiyev, 2020) In the Turkish EFL context, some studies show that students do not regard themselves as sufficiently autonomous. (Üstünlüoğlu,2009; Demirtaş,2010). These results contrast with the results that show learners have positive attitudes to learner autonomy. (Sönmez,2016; Ünal, Çeliköz & Sarı, 2017) Language level has been the subject of various classic studies in learner autonomy. (Balçıkanlı, 2010; Tılfarlıoğlu & Çiftçi,

2011; Zarei & Zarei,2015) To date, there has been little agreement on the relationship between autonomous learners and high proficiency levels. Numerous studies explored there is a positive relationship between learners' autonomy and their academic success. (Dafei,2007; Valadi & Rashidi,2014; Sönmez,2016, Şakrak-Ekin & Balçıkanlı, 2019) On the other hand, it has been observed that there is not a significant difference between learner autonomy and proficiency levels. (Demirtaş,2010; Ünal, Çeliköz & Sarı, 2017; Güneş & Alagözlü,2020) Motivated by earlier studies, this study set out to examine EFL learners' perceptions of their autonomous learning abilities in the Turkish EFL context. Also, this research focuses on the relationship between learner autonomy and language proficiency level.

1.1 Literature Review

There is a large volume of published studies describing the role of learner autonomy in the language learning process in educational contexts. In 1971, the establishment of the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project had a major impact on the concept of "learner autonomy". The term 'learner autonomy' was coined by Holec (1981). In the literature, several definitions of learner autonomy have been proposed. Learner autonomy can be defined as "the capacity to take charge of one's own learning as the result of self-directed learning." (Holec,1981). Little (1999) uses the term 'learner autonomy as a potential for organization, critical thinking, decision-making, and individualistic action. According to the definition by Allwright (1990), learner autonomy is the balance 'between maximum self-development and human interdependence' (p. 12). According to Nunan (1999), autonomy can occur in a variety of contexts and completely autonomous learners have the ability to make their decisions. Benson (2008) claims that there is a relationship between language learning and autonomy; that is to say, learners need to be autonomous in language learning. It is possible to say that autonomous

learning highlights the active role of learners in the learning process. Students' taking responsibility for learning and directing their own learning have resulted in serious changes in the roles of teachers. Promoting and supporting learners have a pivotal role in language learning rather than teaching. Benson and Huang (2008) argue that students may have problems being autonomous, especially at early stages, and therefore teachers should play an essential role in guiding and encouraging them. Teachers' roles can be described as 'facilitator', 'adviser', 'knower', 'mentor', which differs from traditional teachers. (Ridley,1997) Students should be given opportunities to choose their tasks and realize their responsibilities. They are also supported in identifying their aims and preferences by their teachers. Teachers can prompt students to self-evaluate, plan their activities and learning process. The fact that the students are active in this process, directing the process, and taking on their responsibilities has revealed some issues. Learner motivation has received considerable critical attention in autonomy. Previous research has established that motivation is a dominant feature of autonomy. (Spratt, Humphreys & Chan, 2002; Yeşilyurt,2008) It is possible to say that highly motivated students have a high-level autonomy. Autonomous motivated learners can have lifelong and fruitful learning. In addition, the relationship between the high level of autonomous students and the culture they belong to has also been influential at this point. (Little, 2002; Ertürk, 2016.) Many studies have highlighted this subject since students' different cultural backgrounds affect their learning processes and styles. (Littlewood, 1999; Benson, 2001; Chan, 2001) Shifting student-teacher roles and emphasizing student independence may not be appropriate for all cultures. Ertürk (2016) argued that being an autonomous learner differs in Western and non-Western cultures, and the concept of autonomy may not be proper for non-western cultures.

In the Turkish EFL context, learners' perceptions of learner autonomy have been investigated. Some studies show that students cannot be defined as autonomous learners. (Kocak, 2003; Üstünlüoğlu,2009) Demirtaş (2010) examined the level of autonomous learning abilities of 173

university preparatory class students in his study. According to the findings, it was observed that the students had insufficient and low-level autonomous abilities. Üstünlüoğlu (2009) analyzed the data from 320 first-year students at a Turkish state university. This study investigated language learners' levels of autonomy and concluded that participants do not perceive themselves as adequately autonomous. It is also stated that students still regard teachers as authorities; they avoid taking responsibility for their language learning processes. Kocak (2003) examined 186 preparatory students in terms of their readiness to engage in autonomous language learning. Students' perceptions of their motivational level in learning English, their metacognitive methods, their perceptions of their own and their teachers' responsibilities in the learning process, and their autonomous activities outside of class are all included in the questionnaire. According to the findings, students regard the teacher as more responsible for their learning than they are for themselves. This study suggests that the students are not ready for the teacher to take their own responsibility. Nevertheless, some studies confirm that learners have a positive attitude towards learner autonomy. (Olur,2013; Sönmez, 2016; Ünal, Çeliköz & Sarı, 2017) Olur (2013) investigated the awareness of high school learners of learner autonomy with the participation of 98 English language learning high school students in Turkey. This study suggests the participants are continually autonomous; however, they are in need of being directed or controlled by their teachers.

Language proficiency has been instrumental in our understanding of learner autonomy. The relationship between learner autonomy and language proficiency in terms of academic success has been investigated by some researchers. Demirtaş (2010) analyzed the correlation between students' academic success and autonomous learning abilities in preparatory school. The results show that no significant correlation was found between students' autonomous learning ability and GPA. In another study investigating the relationship between language proficiency and learner autonomy, Zarei and Zarei (2015) analyzed Iranian EFL learners' language proficiency

and autonomous abilities. The findings represent that learner autonomy positively affects language proficiency. A recent study by Şakrak-Ekin and Balçıkanlı (2019) reported that the level of autonomy of Turkish EFL learners at the tertiary level was high. Also, the results reveal that the level of university-level students' autonomy has a strong effect on their language proficiency. In another analysis of learner autonomy, Ünal et al. (2017) examined 326 Turkish-English Language Teaching (ELT) learners' perceptions of learner autonomy with learner's language proficiency level. The participants' levels varied from beginner, elementary, intermediate, high intermediate, to advanced. Participants' proficiency levels were determined by a placement test. The results suggest no notable difference between learner autonomy perceptions of learners and their proficiency level. From these studies Thus, the effect of language level on learner autonomy seems to remain unclear. When related studies are analyzed, it can be clearly seen that there is a gap in the literature. Motivated by previous studies and this gap, this study aims to examine EFL learners' perceptions of their autonomous learning abilities and explore the relationship between students' learner autonomy and language proficiency level.

1.2 Research questions

The main aim of the present study is to EFL learners' perceptions of their autonomous learning abilities in Turkey. Additionally, this study set out to explore the relationship between students' autonomy level and language level. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1) What are the perceptions of preparatory class students of their autonomous learning abilities?

2) Is there a relationship between students' autonomous learning abilities and language proficiency level?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

This study was conducted in the preparatory class at a state university in Turkey in the fall semester of the 2021-22 academic year. Students have to take an English language proficiency exam at the beginning of the term. They have two alternatives based on their exam results. They can either go on with mainstream courses or language preparation classes. In preparatory classes, it is required to complete a one-year preparatory program where the students only focus on language learning. Students can go on with one of these languages: English, Arabic, or French, Russian and Greek according to their preferences if they have the competence in English as required at the university. The English language placement test determines the students' language level as starter, elementary and pre-intermediate. The participants in this study were recruited from English preparatory classes. It can be seen from the data in Table 1, the total number of participants for this study was 87. The participants were chosen randomly from a total of 830 preparatory class students. The majority of the study group is male, so there are 85 male and 2 female students for this study because of the school's unique feature. The age range of the students was between 18 and 20, and the mean value of the participants' age was 18,73. As can be seen from Table 1, there were 43 elementary level and 44 starter level participants in this study. The participants have been learning English for approximately eight years. All the students in this preparatory program attend 25 hours of Main course and Four skills courses (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening) in a week.

Table 1

Age and Level

Level	*Age (M)*
Starter (n=44)	*18,69*
Elementary (n=43)	*18,77*

2.2 Data Collection Instrument

The data were collected in the fall term in the 2021-2022 academic year. To assess the perceptions of EFL learners' autonomous learning abilities, Autonomy Perception Scale, which was developed by Demirtaş (2010), was used. The questionnaire was distributed online to 87 English preparatory class students. The questionnaire consists of 30 questions investigating students' autonomous learning abilities. All survey questions utilized a 5-point Likert scale (5 = always, 4 = often, 3 = occasionally, 2 = seldom, 1 = never) and participants are asked to answer each item. The participants were informed about the importance and purpose of the study by the researcher. The questionnaire was used in students' first language to avoid any misunderstanding from language. A small part was included to obtain personal information at the beginning of the questionnaire, which is about the participants' gender, age, language level, and placement test score. In order to measure reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used. According to the statistics, the reliability coefficient was calculated for the scale, and this value was found to be .89. The results show that the reliability of the scale is at a high level. (Demirtaş, 2010).

As the second instrument to examine the relationship between students' autonomous learning skills and language level, the university's placement test was utilized. The participants had the language placement test at the beginning of the term and their language proficiency levels were determined as starter and elementary level. The test is divided into three categories, each with

100 questions: grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. It's a multiple-choice test that needs to be completed in 100 minutes by the students. Permission from both the participants and the university was obtained prior to the data collecting procedure for both data collection sources.

3. Results

Participants were asked to respond to thirty questions to assess their autonomous learning abilities. In order to explore the students' perceptions of their autonomy, first, the mean for the 87 participants' answers was computed. For each question, the lowest possible score was 1(one), and the highest possible score was 5(five). The score of 1-2.49 indicates that students perceive that they do not have autonomous learning abilities, while 2.50-3.49 shows that the level of their autonomous learning abilities is not sufficient, 3.50-4.49 indicates that they have adequate autonomous learning abilities, and scores of 4.50 and above reveal that they have effective autonomous learning abilities.

According to the mean scores of responses to the questions about EFL learners' perceptions about their autonomous learning abilities, 62 students were categorized as having a low autonomy level, and 25 students were classified as moderate level autonomous learners. None of the participants were classified as having effective autonomous learning abilities in this study. As shown in Table 2, the results demonstrate that most of the participants (71,2%) perceive that they do not have effective autonomous learning abilities in the English language learning process.

Table 2

Autonomy Level

	Frequency	Percent
Low-level Autonomy	62	71,2
Moderate- level Autonomy	25	28,7

Table 3 represents the distribution of mean scores on EFL learners' perceptions of their autonomous learning abilities.

Table 3

Distribution of mean scores on EFL learners'

perceptions of their autonomous learning abilities

	N	Mean	SD
Item 1	87	3,023	,8624
Item 2	87	2,885	,8549
Item 3	87	3,586	,9220
Item 4	87	3,126	,8734
Item 5	87	3,253	,9303
Item 6	87	3,299	,9659
Item 7	87	2,943	,9807
Item 8	87	3,667	,9107
Item 9	87	2,782	1,0502

Item 10	87	2,460	1,1186
Item 11	87	2,805	1,0325
Item 12	87	2,391	1,1243
Item 13	87	3,161	1,0877
Item 14	82	3,805	,8231
Item 15	82	3,610	,9396
Item 16	82	3,671	1,0190
Item 17	82	3,390	1,1305
Item 18	80	3,187	,8728
Item 19	82	3,207	,9524
Item 20	87	4,115	,8684
Item 21	87	3,379	1,1127
Item 22	87	3,195	,9381
Item 23	87	3,138	,9903
Item 24	87	2,736	,9208
Item 25	78	3,718	,9102
Item 26	79	3,519	1,0236
Item 27	79	3,418	,9950
Item 28	79	2,367	,8649
Item 29	79	2,987	,8842
Item 30	79	3,089	,8798

As it can be observed from Table 4, the students perceived themselves to be insufficient in terms of autonomous learning skills, especially in the following items. It has been observed that they perceive themselves as inadequate in receiving, giving, and writing comments about the learning process and using recently learned words.

Table 4

Least highly-rated items about learner autonomy

	M	SD
Item 10: I ask my friends or teachers to comment on how much I have learned at the end of a learning activity.	2,46	1,11
Item 11: At the end of a learning activity, I make constructive comments about how much my friends have learned.	2,80	1,03
Item 12: I write comments about my learning activities that I have made myself or that I have received from others.	2,39	1,12

Item 29: I try to use every new word or phrase I encounter by speaking at every turn. 2,98	,88

Table 5 presents the most highly rated items by participants in which participants can be labeled as autonomous in terms of various autonomous behavior. It is apparent from this table that most of the participants are aware of the subjects they do not understand, and they are open to getting help from their teachers or friends. (Item 8) Also, items 14 and 20 show that the participants are careful about the language while listening or watching English. Additionally, the majority of the students try to make predictions about the topic from the title and pictures before reading texts.

Table 5

Most highly rated items about learner autonomy

	M	SD
Item 8: I try to get help from my friends or teachers about a subject that I do not understand.	3,66	,91

Item 14: I concentrate on important keywords while listening to English.	3,80	,82
Item 20: When watching English TV programs or movies, I pay attention to the vision for a better target.	4,11	,86
Item 25: Before I start reading a text, I try to guess the topic from the title and pictures.	3,71	,91

Independent-samples t-test was carried out to examine any statistical differences between the English preparatory students' autonomy level concerning their language proficiency level. The results of the independent sample t-test analysis are summarised in table 6. It is obvious there is not a significant difference between the means of Starter students (M= 3.11, SD= .58) and Elementary students (M= 3.25, SD= .40)

Table 6

Independent Sample T-test

	Language Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean

Autonomy Level	Starter	44	3,1149	,58130	,08763
	Elementary	43	3,2588	,40402	,06161

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	4,783	,031	-1,338	85	,184	-,14393	,10756	-,35779	,06993
Equal variances not assumed			-1,344	76,804	,183	-,14393	,10713	-,35725	,06939

As presented in Table 6, t-tests found no significant differences in mean scores on these variables, conditions; t(85)= -1,338, p=,184.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis was utilized to examine whether there was a relationship between the participants' placement test scores and their autonomy level. It is highlighted that closer values to 1 revealed a stronger correlation between two variables, while values near 0 indicate a weak connection. (Mackenzie &Knipe,2006) The results of the correlational analysis are set out in Table 7.

Table 7

Correlation between Placement Test Scores and Autonomy Level

		Placement Test Scores	Autonomy Level
Placement Test Scores	Pearson Correlation	1	,134
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,216
	N	87	87
Autonomy Level	Pearson Correlation	,134	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,216	
	N	87	87

Table 7 illustrates no significant correlation was found between students' autonomy level and their placement test scores, r=.134, n=87, p=.216

4. Discussion

This study examined the EFL learners' perceptions of their autonomous learning abilities in language learning at the tertiary level in the Turkish EFL context. Concerning the first research question, "What are the perceptions of preparatory class students of their autonomous learning abilities?" the data revealed that most Turkish preparatory school students (71,2) in the study were labeled as having low autonomous learning abilities. The rest of the participants (28,7) are moderate-level autonomous learners. This finding is consistent with that of Üstünlüoğlu (2009), who investigated the perceptions of university students regarding responsibilities and abilities related to autonomous learning and autonomous activities. The results indicate that students do not take responsibility for their learning which can be associated directly with autonomous learners. Also, Üstünlüoğlu (2009) highlighted that students still perceive the teacher as a dominant figure. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in another study conducted by Sert (2006), who posits that students may not have autonomous learning abilities in some educational contexts such as Turkey because of the authority figure in the class.

A possible explanation for this might be that students continue to perceive teachers as authority figures. It can be said that they do not take responsibility for their own learning, and teachers continue to have the responsibility for learning in the Turkish EFL context. In general, therefore, it seems that promoting and encouraging learner autonomy in and outside class has become a crucial topic in educational contexts. Hence, it is necessary that teachers motivate students to be active in this process, direct the process, and take their responsibilities for a better learning environment. The fact that how to promote and encourage language learners to be more autonomous learners has been a significant issue for future research.

With respect to the second research question, whether there is a statistically significant relationship between autonomous learning abilities and their language proficiency level, the results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between students' autonomy levels and language proficiency levels. (p = .184) In addition to students' language proficiency level, students' autonomy levels and placement test scores were analyzed using Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis. According to this analysis, no significant difference between the two groups was evident. (p=.216)

Another similar learner autonomy study was carried out by Şakrak-Ekin & Balçıkanlı (2019), exploring the relationship between EFL learners' level of autonomy and language levels. The results indicate that there was not a significant relationship between learner autonomy and language level. These results are in agreement with Koçak's (2003) findings which showed the relationship between learner autonomy and language level. The findings demonstrate that there was no evidence that language proficiency level has an influence on students' perceptions of learner autonomy. A possible explanation for these results may be the lack of different language levels in this study. The reason why autonomy level appeared to be unaffected by language proficiency level is that starter, and elementary groups are close in terms of their levels.

5. Conclusion

The present study was designed to explore Turkish university students' perceptions of learner autonomy. The first research question of the current study examined Turkish preparatory class students' perceptions of their autonomous learning abilities. These experiments confirmed that Turkish EFL learners do not perceive themselves as autonomous learners, which aligns with a body of relevant studies in the literature. The second research question focused on the relationship between the students' autonomous learning abilities and their English language

proficiency. According to the analysis, there is no statistically significant difference between students' autonomy levels and language proficiency levels. Additionally, there is not a significant correlation between participants' autonomous learning abilities and language placement test scores. Although the improvements and changes in the language learning and teaching process recently, it is not possible to expect the students to be autonomous learners in a short time. It can therefore be assumed that learners need time to be effective autonomous learners. These findings have some limitations for understanding the perceptions of students and their language proficiency. First, this study was conducted at a single state university, and the number of male students was considerably higher than the number of female students because of the school's unique feature. Secondly, this questionnaire was applied only to starter and elementary language levels. Hence, a limitation of the study is the lack of different language levels such as pre- intermediate, intermediate, advanced. Another limitation of this study is that the participants' age range is between 18-20. Therefore, the inability to evaluate autonomous learning skills according to age and gender limited the study. In spite of its limitations, the study certainly adds to our understanding of the Turkish EFL learners' autonomy level at the tertiary level. A further study could assess asking teachers' opinions on how to encourage and promote autonomous learning abilities in the language learning environment.

İngilizce Öğrenenlerin Özerk Öğrenme Becerilerine İlişkin Algıları

Özet

Öğrenen özerkliği, eğitim bağlamında önemli bir bileşendir ve dil öğrenme sürecinde kilit bir rol oynar. Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenenlerin, Türkçe EFL

bağlamında üçüncül düzeyde dil öğrenimi açısından kendi özerk öğrenme yeteneklerine ilişkin algılarını keşfetmektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda Demirtaş(2010) tarafından geliştirilen 5'li Likert tipi ölçek kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın katılımcıları, starter ve elementary düzeyinde olmak üzere farklı iki dil düzeylerindeki 87 hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisi rastgele seçilmiştir. Toplanan veriler SPSS yazılımı kullanılarak analiz edildi. Bulgular, bu çalışmadaki öğrencilerin çoğunun kendilerini düşük düzeyde özerk öğrenme becerilerine sahip olarak algıladıklarını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, bu makale öğrencilerin özerk öğrenme yetenekleri ile dil yeterlilik düzeyleri arasında bir ilişki olup olmadığını belirlemeye çalışmaktadır. Bu araştırma öğrencilerin özerklik düzeyleri ile dil yeterlilik düzeyleri arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olmadığını göstermektedir. Bu sonuçlar, İngilizce öğrenenlerin özerk öğrenme yeteneklerine ilişkin algıları hakkında önemli bilgiler sağlar.

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THE EFFECT OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE ON EFL LEARNERS' PROFICIENCY

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Abstract

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has been an essential element in the world as the intercultural settings and the need for communication between the countries gain prominence. It has been a part of the language learning process due to the fact that language learning per se conveys the culture in it. This study investigates the cultural intelligence of the participants and the relationship between cultural intelligence and foreign language proficiency by using a correlational study. The research was conducted in the preparatory class at a state university. As the participants, 86 randomly selected students were incorporated. The Turkish version of the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CIS), which contains 20 items with 7-point Likert type, was used to analyze the participants' cultural intelligence and the placement test scores which had been conducted at the beginning of the semester by the state university was utilized as the language proficiency indicator. According to the results, the study showed a significant positive correlation between participants' CQ levels and their language proficiency levels. The study aimed to shed light on participants' CQ levels and whether the CQ affects foreign language learning.

Keywords: *Correlational study, Cultural intelligence, Cultural intelligence scale, CQ, EFL Proficiency, Language learning*

1. Introduction

1.1 Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence (CQ) was first established by Early and Ang (2003), and it is defined as a person's ability to function and manage effectively in a multicultural environment (Earley & Ang, 2003). In other words, cultural intelligence can also be defined as understanding and having the enthusiasm to learn about other cultures. Cultural intelligence consists of four components which are cognition, metacognition, motivation and, behavior (Ang et al., 2007). Cognitive CQ is a measure of general cultural knowledge and knowledge systems. The mental ability to acquire and interpret cultural knowledge is reflected by metacognitive CQ. Motivational CQ is the individual ability to have excitement toward learning about and operating in intercultural circumstances. Finally, behavioral CQ states individuals' ability to demonstrate acceptable verbal and nonverbal actions in culturally varied encounters (Ang & Dyne, 2008).

1.2 Cultural Intelligence and Language Learning

Early (2002) believes that those who lack the ability to learn languages, at least to a fair level of skill, have a low CQ. Moreover, Ang and Dyne (2008) claim that there is a positive

relationship between language skills and CQ. We could refer that we can use the CQ to predict the students' language-learning ability in the language learning classrooms.

Exposure to many cultures might be considered the main component that intensifies cultural intelligence (Crowne, 2008). Living in a different country could affect the level of cultural intelligence and naturally enhance it. It does not mean that it can only be enhanced by living abroad. Also, in the classrooms, the level of cultural intelligence can be analyzed and supported with cultural activities. Alahdadi and Ghanizadeh (2017) posit that the learners with a higher CQ perform better in tasks such as task completion, connection building, and communication; hence, it is obvious that language acquisition is fully embedded within a given cultural context. Cultural contexts might be adapted in the process of teaching and learning a language.

By means of this, having a high level of cultural intelligence might be one of the major factors of the ability or the motivation to learn a foreign language. If there is an evident correlation between cultural intelligence and language learning, this can be used as important evidence of the success of language learning in the classrooms. There is currently no information on what causes greater CQ levels (Crowne, 2008). However, understanding CQ will provide some insight for both teachers and students during the process of language learning.

Language proficiency has long been a prominent issue in foreign or second language studies since defining and measuring proficiency in language learning for non-native speakers is a difficult task. Morrow (1979) defines language proficiency as how effective the person is expected to be as a language user in common sense. According to the traditional perspective, grammar and lexis are the main dominances of proficiency (Harley et al., 1990) yet, competence includes skills (productive or receptive) and fluency (North, 2000). Foreign language competency can also be defined as the ability to express ideas and information utilizing the linguistic capabilities (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) and the cultural setting of the language being learned (Lange, 1990)

There are a lot of measurements of language proficiency that are being used currently in language learning settings; however, the most popular ones are the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Also, there are many schools making their own proficiency exams.

2. Literature Review

The ability to understand and think properly with concepts and solve issues is referred to as intelligence (Schmidt & Hunter's, 2000); however, there are many intelligence types that focus on specific contexts such as emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1993), practical intelligence (Sternberg et al., 2000) and social intelligence (Thorndike & Stein, 1937) while CQ is mostly centered on a particular domain–intercultural environments. CQ is a type of intelligence that can explain differences in enduring diversity and operating in different cultural environments (Early & Ang, 2003), and it has been a popular topic in business settings and social interactions. Since cultural intelligence has been a new issue, there are no adequate studies focusing on the relationship between language proficiency and CQ. Yet, CQ has been used and shown as one of the factors on language learning in some studies. A notable example of one of these studies is Kahraman's (2016) investigation about the factors affecting cultural intelligence. Some variables such as attitudes towards foreign languages, language learning strategies, and the conception of culture teaching were examined with 340

undergraduate students from different branches of the faculty of economics and administrative sciences. According to the result, middle-level cultural intelligence was found among the participants, and positive correlation between the participants' cultural intelligence level and their English proficiency level even the participants weren't a member of a preparatory class. A similar study was conducted in Iran, focusing on the relationship between CQ and other variables such as education, gender, traveling abroad and, place of living in Iran (Khodadady & Ghahari, 2011). As reported by the study, which was performed with 854 undergraduate and graduate students majoring in five branches, there is a role of CQ in education. The evidence of the effect of CQ on language achievement can be clearly seen in the case of Alahdadi and Ghanizadeh's (2017) research conducted with 180 TEFL and translation students. The interrelationships among variables, for example, cultural intelligence, tolerance of ambiguity, adaptability, learning approach, and language achievement were analyzed, and it was discovered that CQ affects learners' language achievement. Furthermore, there are some studies measuring cultural intelligence and another variable rather than exploring more than one. This is exemplified in work undertaken by Ghonsooly and Shalchy (2013). The prediction of CQ in writing scores of L2 learners was assessed, and a significant relationship between these two variables was discovered. The relationship between cultural intelligence and writing ability was an interesting and rare finding in the education context of language learning. Moreover, language learning strategies have been a well-known subject in the language learning context; it is one of the most important factors in the second language learning process, and there is an important study about the relationship between language learning strategies and CQ as well. However, there was no significant correlation between CQ and language learning strategies (Rachmawaty et al., 2018). The study reported here illustrates that cultural intelligence may not affect the strategies of language learning but may affect language learning per se. Last but not least, motivation has been an essential factor of language learning, and it is primarily predictable in foreign language success (Nikolov, 1999). In the study set in the preparatory class with 96 students carried out by Canbay (2020), the relationship between cultural intelligence and language learning motivation was investigated, and a positive correlation was found.

However, currently, there are no data specifically focusing on the relationship between cultural intelligence and language proficiency with the students in the process of language learning, especially in the Turkish EFL context. Motivated by this lack in the literature, this study aims to find answers for the following research questions:

1. What is the level of cultural intelligence of the participants?

2. What is the relationship between the cultural intelligence of the participants and their language proficiency?

3. Methodology

3.1 Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in the English preparatory class at a state university with 86 students via stratified random sampling. A placement test exam was conducted to determine students' English levels consisting of starter and elementary levels at the beginning of the year. Students take 25 hours course including Main Course and Four Skills Course (e.g., reading, listening, writing, speaking). The age range of the students was between 18-20 (M= 18,73; SD=,72). The majority of the students were male n=83, and the other students were female n=3 because of the university's unique feature. It can be observed in Table 1 that there

were 44 starter students and 42 elementary students in the study. They were asked to provide information on their level, age, gender, and placement test score.

Table 1
Age and Level

Level	Age (M)
Starter (n=44)	*18,82*
Elementary (n=42)	*18,64*

3.2 Data Collection Instrument

As the data collection instrument, the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CIS) developed by Ang et al. (2007) was used. The Turkish version of the cultural intelligence scale was retrieved from Validity and Reliability Study of the Turkish Version of the Cultural Intelligence Scale by İlhan and Çetin (2014). The scale has four sub-dimensions, including cognition, metacognition, motivation and, behavior. Items 1 to 4 are in the metacognition, 5-10 items are in the cognition, 11-15 items are in the motivation, and 16-20 items are in the behavior component.

The CIS consists of 20 items with a 7-point Likert type. In this analysis, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be .90 by İlhan and Çetin (2014). The scale, which has a strong, positive and, significant correlation, was stated to be valid and reliable. On the scale, 1 refers to strongly disagree, and 7 refers to strongly agree. The scale can be observed in the appendix. The second set of data consists of students' placement test scores as an indicator of students' language proficiency. The placement test was conducted by the state university at the beginning of the term to determine the levels of students. The placement test includes 100 questions containing grammar and vocabulary parts. Each question values 1 point. Hence, students can get 100 points from the test at most. According to the results, students study in the level classes consisting of starter and elementary for a year. The data was analyzed using SPSS. For the first research question, the mean scores of the CIS were calculated, and the correlation between the CIS scores and students' placement scores was tested for the second research question.

4. Results

Students were asked to answer the CIS questionnaire to discover their level of cultural intelligence. The highest point of the questionnaire is 140, and the lowest is 20. Therefore, the points between 20-59 indicate the lowest cultural intelligence, 60-100 indicate the medium level of cultural intelligence, and 101-140 show the highest cultural intelligence points according to the CIS scores. The mean scores of students' CIS points were calculated to yield the level of cultural intelligence of the participants. The mean score of CIS of students was found to be M=99,83, SD=16,14. It can be referred that students have a medium cultural intelligence level. As Table 2 shows, elementary level students have a higher cultural intelligence level than the starter level group. Elementary level students have a high level of CIS (M=102,81, SD=16,62).

Table 2
Distribution of mean scores of students' CIS scores and English Levels

	Level	N SD	M
CIS Total	Starter	44 15,31	96,98
	Elementary	42 16,62	102,81

The distribution of mean scores of all the items can be observed in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Distribution of mean scores of students' CIS scores

	N	M	SD
Item 1	86	5,21	1,149
Item 2	86	5,26	1,285
Item 3	86	5,24	1,246
Item 4	86	5,31	1,331
Item 5	86	4,52	1,509
Item 6	86	3,93	1,478
Item 7	86	5,00	1,363
Item 8	86	4,52	1,524
Item 9	86	4,66	1,360
Item 10	86	4,60	1,374
Item 11	86	5,76	1,414
Item 12	86	5,43	1,351
Item 13	86	5,49	1,253
Item 14	86	4,97	1,765
Item 15	86	5,43	1,435
Item 16	86	5,08	1,220
Item 17	86	4,59	1,544
Item 18	86	4,65	1,517
Item 19	86	4,85	1,203
Item 20	86	5,31	1,161

As it can be observed in Table 4, students gave the higher points to item 11, item 12, item 13, and item 15. The implication from this table might be the confidence of students. Participants are fond of having interaction with people who are from other cultures and countries. They have self-confidence while having a conversation with people from different cultures, and they trust themselves in some situations which might be difficult to encounter in different customs.

Table 4
Most highly-rated items of CIS

	M	SD
Item 11: I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	5,76	1,41
Item 12: When I meet people from a culture that is foreign to me, I feel confident to socialize with them.	5,43	1,35
Item 13: I feel confident in coping with the stress I will experience in the process of adapting to a new culture.	5,49	1,25
Item 15: I am confident in getting used to shopping conditions in a different culture.	5,43	1,43

Table 5 represents the least highly-rated items of CIS and it can be observed below.

Table 5
Least highly-rated items of CIS

	M	SD
Item 5: I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.	4,42	1,50

Item 6: I know the rules of other languages (e.g., vocabulary, grammar).	3,93	1,47
Item 8: I know the marriage structures of other cultures.	4,52	1,52

When the least highly-rated items of CIS are examined, it can be referred participants don't have the knowledge of other cultures' legal and economic systems and their structures of marriage. Interestingly, students gave lower points to item 8, which is related to the rules of other languages such as vocabulary and grammar despite their approximately 12 years of English education.

Table 6

Distribution of CIS subdimensions

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Metacognition	86	21,02	4,167
Cognition	86	27,24	5,957
Motivation	86	27,07	5,696
Behavior	86	24,49	4,737

As the given information about the subdimensions of CIS at the beginning of the study shows, metacognition reflects the mental ability to acquire and interpret cultural knowledge; cognition indicates a measure of general cultural knowledge and knowledge systems; motivation reflects the individual ability to have excitement toward learning about, and operating in intercultural circumstances and behavior item of CIS reflects individuals' ability to demonstrate acceptable verbal and nonverbal actions. The cognition items of CIS have the highest mean value (M=27,24; SD=5,95) while metacognition sub-dimension has the lowest mean value (M=21,02; SD=4,16) in this study. Furthermore, cognitive CQ reveals comprehending of norms, customs, economic, legal, and social systems, as well as the knowledge of basic patterns of values in other cultures (Triandis, 1994; Hofstede, 2001; Ang & Dyne, 2008).

Table 7
Students' CIS scores and students' placement test scores

	N SD	M
Placement Test Scores	86 20,141	49,53
Total CIS Scores	86 16,142	99,83

Table 8

Correlation of CIS scores and Language proficiency

		Placement Test Scores	CIS Total Scores
Placement Test Scores	Pearson Correlation	1	,234[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,030
	N	86	86
CIS Total Scores	Pearson Correlation	,234[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,030	
	N	86	86
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

As for the second research question of the current study, as Table 8 shows, there is a statistically significant positive correlation at a weak level (r=,23*; p=,03) between the students' CIS scores (M=99,83; SD=16,14) and their language proficiency levels (M=49,53; SD=20,14). Therefore, there is a significant relationship between participants' language proficiency levels and their cultural intelligence levels.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to determine the participants' cultural intelligence level and the relationship between their cultural intelligence level and language proficiency. The first research question dealt with the students' cultural intelligence level, and results indicated that they have medium level CQ (M=99,83; SD= 16,14). These results are in accord with the recent study indicating that the participants had medium-level CQ (Kahraman, 2016). Also, results seem to be consistent with the other research carried out by Rachmawaty et al. (2018) which found the medium level of CQ as well. A possible explanation for these results may be the lack of adequate exposure to the language. Crowne (2008) concluded that spending time abroad for education, work or any other reason makes a positive contribution to the cultural intelligence of individuals. However, these students may not have any experiences of spending time abroad which can affect their CQ level. On the other hand, some students have a high medium level of CQ. It may be that these participants benefitted from TV, the internet, social media websites, music, film, etc. thanks to today's current communication tools all around the world in the target language. Also, elementary and starter group students don't have a great difference in their CQ levels. Furthermore, as Table 6 shows, the highest subdimensions are cognition (M=27,24; SD=5,95) and motivation (M=27,07; SD=5,69) indicating the importance of getting to know and interact with people from different cultures. These are in agreement with Khodadady and Ghahari's (2011) findings which showed the motivation and cognition subdimensions of CIS have the highest scores in the study.

With respect to the second research question, by using Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis, the current study reveals that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the participants' CQ levels and language proficiency levels (r=,23; p=,03). This implies that as foreign language success levels increase, the cultural intelligence levels of the students increase as well. This study supports evidence from previous observations (e.g.,

Kahraman, 2016; Khodadady & Ghahari, 2011; Alahdadi and Ghanizadeh, 2017). In contrast to these findings, however, no evidence of correlation was detected in Rachmawaty et al.'s (2018) research among CQ, language learning strategies and English language proficiency. It is difficult to explain this result, but it might be related to students' personal features since in the study metacognition subdimension is the highest in CIS, which also differs from the current study.

6. Conclusion

The current study was designed to examine the cultural intelligence levels of the participants and whether there is a relationship between language proficiency and cultural intelligence. It was seen that the participants have a medium level of cultural intelligence and there is a significant positive correlation between the students' language proficiency and cultural intelligence levels. This finding has important implications for language learning. It can be suggested that CQ levels might be the indicator and predictor of language learning and its process and CQ can be enhanced like other intelligence types. Besides, teachers can use cultural activities during their classes and give more cultural information about the customs of the target language since the culture and the language are impossible to separate. If it is possible, people who desire to learn a foreign language can go abroad to study or work, or they may have exposure to the language via TV, films, music, etc.

7. Limitations and Suggestions

This study, however, is not without limitations. The first limitation is concerned with the data collection instrument. The validity and the reliability of the placement test used as the second data collection instrument could not be statistically proved. In future investigations, it might be possible to use different, more valid and reliable exams' results such as IELTS or TOEFL to observe learners' language proficiency. Another limitation is that the placement test was conducted at the very beginning of students' language learning process. It is believed that exit exams or final exams at the end of the year might be more effective and predictive about the appropriate results of achievement in language learning. However, it was an obligation to use the existing exam because of the time restraints of this study. Another weakness is that the study includes two variables. Some other effects such as individual differences and socio-economic factors can be combined in future studies and their relations could be analyzed as well. Future studies on the current topic are therefore recommended since there is no current investigation on the relationship of CQ and language proficiency, especially in the Turkish EFL context and preparatory classes in which the real language learning process can be observed and examined.

Appendix

Turkish Version of the Cultural Intelligence Scale

Madde No	Maddeler	Kesinlikle uygunsuz	Uygunsuz	Biraz Uygunsuz	Tarafsızım	Biraz Uygun	Uygun	Tamamen Uygun
1	Farklı kültürel geçmişe sahip insanlarla etkileşim kurarken kullandığım kültürel bilgilerin	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	farkındayım.							
2	Bana yabancı bir kültürden gelen insanlarla etkileşim kurarken kültürel bilgimi ayarlarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Kültürlerarası etkileşimlerde kullandığım kültürel bilgimin farkındayım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Farklı kültürlere sahip insanlarla etkileşim halindeyken, kültürel bilgilerimin doğruluğunu control ederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Diğer kültürlerin yasal ve ekonomik sistemlerini bilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Diğer dillerin kurallarını (örneğin; kelime bilgisi, dilbilgisi) bilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Diğer kültürlerin dini inançlarını ve kültürel değerlerini bilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Diğer kültürlerin evlilik yapılarını bilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Diğer kültürlerin sanat ve zanaatlarını bilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Diğer kültürlerin sözel olmayan davranışları (jest ve mimik) ifade etme şekillerini bilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	Farklı kültürden insanlarla etkileşim kurmaktan zevk alırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Bana yabancı bir kültürün halkı ile karşılaştığımda onlarla kaynaşabilme konusunda kendime güvenirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	Yeni bir kültüre uyum sağlama sürecinde yaşayacağım stres ile başa çıkabilme konusunda kendime güvenirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Yabancısı olduğum bir kültürde yaşamaktan hoşlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	Farklı bir kültürdeki alışveriş koşullarına alışabilme konusunda kendime güvenirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	Konuşma davranışlarımı (örneğin; ses tonu, aksan vb.) kültürlerarası iletişimin gereklerine göre ayarlarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	Farklı kültürlerarası durumlara uyum sağlamak için duruma göre duraksar ya da sessiz kalırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	Konuşma hızımı kültürlerarası etkileşimin gereklerine göre	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	değiştirebilirim.							
19	Sözel olmayan davranışlarımı kültürlerarası etkileşimin gereklerine göre değiştirebilirim.2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	Yüz ifadelerimi kültürlerarası etkileşimin gereklerine göre değiştirebilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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THE USE OF REPORTING VERBS IN L2 WRITING BY IRAQI POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AT TIKRIT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The current study describes the use of RVs in essays written by Iraqi MA students at Tikrit University (in Tikrit province, Iraq). The main aim of the present study is to discover how participants use RVs in essay writing to provide a detailed analysis that will assist them in improving their writing. 15 Iraqi MA students participated in this study. The participants wrote 30 essays; each participant wrote two essays on a different topic that was chosen. The theories from Biber, et al. (2002) equipped by Quirk (1985) are applied to analyze RVs. RVs used by the participants were classified into three categories: communication, activity, and mental verbs. The results of the current study show that the participants used Activity Verbs (55%), followed by Communication Verbs (27%) and Mental Verbs (18%). It was concluded that the students had overused the Activity Verbs, such as 'point', 'show', 'find', 'give', and 'focus'. The present study also concluded that students' ability in using RVs must be developed to reach the proper academic level in their writing.

Keywords: Reporting Verbs, Essay writing, Qualitative

1. Introduction

Several studies have examined the topic of employing Reporting Verbs (RVs) in academic writing, the use of RVs is acknowledged as an essential feature of academic writing, according

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to Jaroongkhongdach (2015). RVs mainly serve "to give credit to other researchers and to use their work in the cumulative construction of knowledge" (Charles, 2006, p.326). Additionally, RVs represent a primary rhetorical option (Hyland, 2002) since they enable authors to report on the source material and express their viewpoint or attitude regarding the referenced material. Scollon, Tsang, Li, Yung, and Jones (1997) demonstrate how direct and indirect quotes, denoted by reporting verbs, distinguish between the writer's and the original author's voices. According to Charles (2006), authors can communicate the concepts they want to convey via quotations or citations in their writing with the proper use of RVs. As a result, learners of academic writing need to become proficient in using RVs in the citation (Clugston, 2008). Consequently, the present study will explore and discuss Iraqi MA students' use of RVs to fill the gap that there are very limited studies focused on RVs among Iraqi students at Iraqi universities. Additionally, as Jomma and Bidin (2019) suggest, "The outputs of such studies can be employed pedagogically to equip students in higher education institutions with more knowledge and instructions on citations and academic writing."

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reporting Verbs

Reporting verbs are essential features in academic writing and allow writers to link their reported research activities to the information they are reporting and provide them with a method of evaluating the message they are reporting on. The use of reporting verbs is a simple but effective method of identifying the original author of a piece of text (RVs). To be brief in communicating one's knowledge or the results of another person's effort, the use of reporting verbs is a necessary academic ability. But both teachers and administrators tend to disregard its significance and complexity in grammar and language textbooks because it is considered a highly common language that does not need more explanation (Zhang, 2008).

The goal of this study is to investigate the usage of reporting verbs in the writings of Iraqi MA students in order to illustrate that reporting verbs are essential and should be applied with caution in academic writings. To put it more simply, one of the most influential academic devices is reporting verbs, such as using the words "assert" or "claim," which a writer can utilize to accomplish his or her lofty goals of stating claims (Charles, 2006). In his introduction,

Hyland (2002) asserts that one of the distinguishing aspects of academic writing is the reporting of the work of others or the citation of previously conducted research. They offer an adequate environment for persuasion by illustrating how current work builds on and reworks past utterances to develop intertextual linkages to the larger discipline. This is the relevance of their role in academic discourse. Another assertion that Hyland makes which conveys the findings of this study is that reporting verbs are essential in academic discourse. This is due to the fact that they allow the writer to convey the type of action being reported as well as differentiate an attitude toward that information, indicating whether the claims should be accepted or rejected. Furthermore, a citation is a vital component of every research endeavor; hence, a suitable reporting verb must be used to represent the knowledge received from the work of others (Hyland, 1999, p. 344).

According to Wray& Reid & Chin, and Yamazaki (2013): "Reporting verbs have different meanings and different levels of strength. It is important to choose a reporting verb that accurately matches the meaning of the source information and the strength of the author's source position or attitude" (98). Literature reviews contain many citations and the opinions of scholars, which reveals, even more, the tendency of articles to repeatedly use the same reporting verbs. It is ironic because reporting verbs come in a variety of forms. However, according to the observations of Geeslin and Long (2014), users of a language are not always aware of the sociolinguistic variation decisions they make. They continue as: "the choices a speaker makes when selecting the forms necessary to convey a message that is appropriate in a given context" (p.3).

2.2 Related studies

There have been several studies on the topic of a citation from a variety of fields, including chemistry (Gooden, 2001), medicine (Thomas & Hawes, 1994), social sciences (Zhang, 2008), sociology of knowledge, EPA, and information science (Swales, 2014). This enormous number of research may be attributed to several factors. To begin, using citations can provide the statements and arguments presented in the text an additional boost of rhetorical force (Hyland, 2004). Besides, the presence of citations in a document is, due to the very nature of citations itself, an indicator that the material is scholarly. Commenting on the work of other academics

and researchers, also allows authors to participate in the academic community in which they are enrolled. It is also clear proof of the text's interaction and textuality (Swales, 2014).

The use of reporting verbs by diverse authors has been the subject of citation studies. An example of this type of research is the work of De Oliveira and Pagano (2006), who studied reporting verbs in two distinct forms of writing: Portuguese research papers and scientific articles published in Portuguese publications. Studies found that articles aimed at the general public used reporting verbs with the connotation of direct discourse representation more frequently than those aimed at scientists. Journalists in texts on the science used quotation voices to signal a discursive stance superior to their own, according to this study's findings But in research papers, the use of verbs that conveyed direct engagement indicated a less discursive stance between the authors and the authors they quoted. In addition, the majority of verbs in scientific popularization pieces were written in the present tense, suggesting that the findings were relatively recent. On the other hand, the majority of verbs in research papers were written in the past tense.

Bloch (2010) planned to use the concordance technique to give educational resources concerning the importance of reporting verbs in academic writing. He made two very small corpora by copying an excerpt from a paper that was published in a scholarly journal. He next collected a sample of words to go along with each of the 27 reporting verbs that he had chosen at random. In light of this premise, he collected writing samples from students and compiled a second corpus with the intention of contrasting the reporting verbs used by students with those employed by well-known authors. He arrived to the idea that we could acquaint youngsters with the use of language by presenting them with examples from real-world situations and explaining how a writer chooses what to write about. In addition to this, he made use of the findings to compile an online database of terms that teachers of academic writing courses and those who build curricula can use to produce instructional materials (Bloch, 2009).

Using Swales' categorization of citations from 1990, Kim (2012) analyzed the usage of citations in the introductory sections of forty research publications in the field of educational psychology. Of these publications, half were written by authors from China, and the other half

were written by authors from the United Kingdom. His research showed that English authors cited their sources five times more frequently than Chinese writers did, leading him to the conclusion that teaching Chinese students how to use citations could improve their academic writing abilities. The citation practices of graduate and undergraduate students, as well as a corpus from the field of biology, were the focus of an investigation that was conducted by Swales (2014). Through the process of analyzing the corpus, he evaluated the prevalence of integral and parenthetical citations, the choice of reporting verbs, the impact of the citing system, and whether or not students included the city's initial name in their work. When citing one's own or others' claims , selecting the appropriate reporting verb to use in the citation has become widely recognized as a crucial component of academic writing. The findings did not disclose any substantial differences between the articles written by undergraduates and those written by graduate students.

In their research for their Master's Theses, Manan and Noor (2014) analyzed the reporting verbs that were used. The researchers wanted to determine the reporting verbs that Master's students used, the frequency with which these verbs were used, and the impact that these verbs had on the theses. To do this, they made use of the framework that Hyland (2000) had devised. The findings of six theses indicate that students' use of reporting verbs from the research acts category was much more prevalent than students' use of verbs from the cognition acts category and the discourse acts category, accordingly. They indicated, on the basis of their findings, that rather than instructing various parts of research in classes on research methods, it would be more useful for students to comprehend reporting verbs. This would be the case rather than teaching students various components of research.

Charles (2006) evaluated reporting verbs from a variety of different fields. In this study, the language patterns that are employed to refer to research through making use of reporting clauses are investigated. The collection of these texts was written in native English by people working in a variety of domains: There are a total of 190,000 words in the section devoted to politics and foreign affairs. There are around 300,000 terms in all that are used in the discipline of materials science. According to the findings, these reporting verbs are used by a significant number of researchers across both fields, and quotes from human subjects are used as integrated quotations the vast majority of the time. He provides evidence to support the claim that a

particular verb group argues most frequently in both regions, as well as the assertion that the reporting phrase appears frequently in both corpora. Find and display groups, on the other hand, come up quite frequently in material science. 34 The fact that the frequency of research reports is comparable between the two different corpora lends credence to the notion that this pattern is common in the reporting literature. Having said that, it is essential to keep in mind that this does not necessarily suggest that the two businesses typically provide the same quotations. Both the political sciences and the material sciences make use of this complement to a comparable degree in their reporting provisions. The previous study studied dissertations in two disciplines, namely ideological affairs and materials sciences, but the current study investigates journal articles from four disciplines.

L2 authors in a North American first-year writing program were examined by Kwon (2017) for their use of porting verbs, which she found to be common. An assignment from the Corpus and Repository of Writing was chosen to study how first-year L2 writers employ reporting verbs in academic writing (Crow). These semantic categories' frequency and mode of use among writers are being scscrutinizedVerb forms and semantic categories are documented by the writers, who show how they ututilizeerbs in various contexts. The rhetorical functions of reporting from the text (R), self-reference (S), and unsourced gegeneralizationU) are examples of this type of evidence-based rhetoric. Researchers found no difference in verb reporting between second-and third-year authors. L2 authors' usage of reporting verbs is examined in this study. A literature review assignment from a larger corpus is used and written.. The corpus of the current study focuses on assessing reporting verbs in published journals by comparing the use of reporting verbs in hard and soft domains.

Mar (2020) analyzed reporting verb use in scholarly writings. This research seeks to determine which reporting verbs are used most often. Moreover, the rarest form of verbs in academic writing is explored, as the use of reporting verbs in academic writings. This analysis seeks to explore the reporting verbs used in scholarly articles. This study analyses fourteen articles from English departments in Myanmar to identify which reporting verbs are employed most frequently and infrequently in scholarly works. Under Hyland's taxonomy, the reporting verbs are classified as research, cognition, and speaking actions. The data indicate that speaking actions are the most prevalent, whereas cognitive acts seen in articles are the least frequent. The taxonomy of reporting verbs by Hyland comprises the verb forms and voices of a number

of subclasses. It is advised to do further analyses of a subset of research publications from diverse fields. In this report, data were gathered and evaluated using a checklist. Ten 2019-published research articles are selected at random from the Banmaw University Library. The papers were written by 22 instructors from the English divisions of Myanmar's Ministry of Education.

Applied linguistics, engineering, medicine, and accounting were all included in Uba's (2020) study on research papers' use of reporting verbs. Each of the study's 120 papers has 30 components, making for a massive archive. In this study, two stages of research were carried out. It begins by selecting five articles from each topic area and reading and rereading any item that describes verbs, their meaning and the rationale behind their application. This method aids the author in defining reporting verbs' semantic groups. A second application of the list was for the author to create concordance findings for quantitative textual analysis of the four fields' sub-corpora, based on the established semantic kinds of reporting verbs included in the general corpus. Authors in the soft domain use more reporting verbs than those in the harsh realm. In addition, it demonstrates that there are differences and parallels between fields. There are similarities and differences between this research and this one. Both of these studies focus on reporting verbs in a variety of fields, which is a resemblance. The author utilizes two soft domain disciplines and two hard domain disciplines in this study.As this research is quantitative, the technique and conceptual framework vary from those of the present study, which is qualitative.

According to Yeganeh and Boghayeri (2015), writing is a vital learning tool and a way of evaluating and adding authors to communities of punishing speech. Students are aware of its essential components when writing academic genres, including form and purpose. The use of quotations in scholarly discourse demonstrates an admiration for the authors' past works. This research examines the frequency and function of the most used reporting verbs. This approach integrates the findings of sixty journal articles, of which half were written by native speakers and the other half were written by non-native speakers. These articles were published in both international and national journals. The findings suggest that reporting verbs are used in a distinct manner by the two separate corpora. The findings may be put to use in the development

of projects and the teaching of compositions that place an emphasis on grammatical, rhetorical, and various other types of writing.

When it came to legal arguments, Yu (2021) found that reporting verbs were used a much. The study places a particular emphasis on the frequency of reporting verbs as well as their distribution throughout judicial decisions. According to the research, the verbs that are utilised to report events in judicial decisions are distinct from one another. An investigation into the judicial and educational systems can throw some light on the situation. A written sampler from the British National Corpus is used as a reference corpus, and the decisions from other courts are compared to this corpus to look for reporting verbs that are frequently employed in those courts. Court judgments, in general, use more reporting verbs than other forms of writing. The self-created court decision corpus has far more speech act verbs than the original corpus. Mental verbs, on the other hand, show how people get to their own legal conclusions without relying on the authority of others. (four) Verbal reporting tendencies differ dramatically between court rulings and ordinary texts. According to the data, reference verbs play a significant part in court decisions, which may shed light on legal and educational operations.

Swear and Kalajahi's (2019) paper emphasized vital issues highlighted by technological universities. This study's participants are Postgraduate students. They are inexperienced with the proper usage of reporting verbs and often overuse or misuse certain reporting verbs. Thus, their task becomes monotonous and repetitious. The research was conducted using only a small corpus, which consisted of three master's theses authored by students who attended the University of Technology and got their master's degrees in engineering there. The master's student who recalls knowledge and ideas from 38 past studies on the same issue is referred to as the "author," while the individual who has been credited with this work is referred to as the "source", thus this article was written by the master's student. The research revealed that students prefer factive to non-fictional verbs, although they cannot employ the opposite verb in the language. This analysis demonstrates that they cannot challenge the current circumstance. The acquired data were evaluated numerically in terms of the frequency of these reporting verbs and qualitatively to understand the function of each reporting verb type. The examination included Factual, Non-Factual, and Counter-Factual verbs.

Yilmaz and Ertür (2017) undertook an analysis to determine the prevalence of reporting verbs in scholarly publications. One hundred sixty research publications written by native and quasi authors and published in international journals that are reviewed by peers were chosen for this study. The researcher chooses to focus on papers published by native authors and articles produced by non-native authors and selects a total of 160 for analysis. The research indicated that non-native authors are more likely to use reporting verbs like observed, notice, suggest, and reveal than native writers are. The researcher observed that the findings might help non-native researchers in picking appropriate reporting verbs and avoiding selecting reporting verbs at random in an academic setting. Verbs that fall within the reporting category include observed, noticed, indicated, and revealed.

Luzon (2018) analyzed the RV trends in RAs written by Anglophone and Spanish-speaking researchers in English. The findings demonstrated that the frequency of RVs in both corpora was comparable, but the kinds of verbs varied. Researchers who speak Spanish make use of a significantly higher percentage of speech act RVs than researchers who speak English do. The author contends that Spanish authors were "less register sensitive" than Anglophone writers and that they may have overlooked valid semantic distinctions while utilising "falsified cognates" or evaluating with RVs. In addition, the author suggests that Anglophone writers may have been "more register sensitive" than Spanish authors (Luzon, 2018, p.188).

There were 40 original manuscripts prepared by experienced French academics, 40 published research papers written in English in Engineering, Science, and Computational Linguistics, and 40 published RAs written in French by French scholars appraised by Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2014). According to the data, English-speaking researchers used considerably more "reporting-that" clauses. According to the authors, the French academic sector employs a variety of reporting systems, which may be to fault.

2.3 Research Questions

1- What kinds of RVs do Iraqi students use in their papers?

2- How much do Iraqi MA students overuse RVs in their essays?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In the present research, a qualitative technique was used to investigate reporting verbs in the essays submitted by Iraqi MA students at Tikrit University. RVs were categorized according to the theories of Biber et al. (2002) equipped by Quirk (1985) in classifying the RVs. RVs are divided into three groups as follows:

- **Communication verbs:** *say, claim, tell, quote, report, confirm, refuse, announce, advise, decline, sentence, deny, explain, add, agree, speak, suggest, accuse, conclude, vow, warn, offer, echo, impose, insist, argue, interject, acknowledge, complain, call, pledge, ask, criticize, describe, doubt, respond*
- **Activity verbs:** *reveal, list, give, prove, find, demonstrate, reach, show, point, issue, bristle, focus, feature, capture, post, back up, release*
- **Mental verbs:** *estimate, expect, decide, believe, note, think, assume, hope, weigh, consider*

3.2 Sampling

Fifteen Iraqi students participated in this study; each participant submitted two essays. There are ten essays on each subject. Each essay exceeds 1000 words. The soft application (AntConc) was used to analyse the writing of Iraqi master's students.

4. Findings

According to the order of the research questions, below are the findings:

- **Research question one**: What are the RVs used by Iraqi students in their essays?

  The first question is answered by using accurate computerized reading of Iraqi MA students' essays.

Table 1. *RVs Used by Iraqi MA Students*

Reporting Verbs Categories	Reporting Verbs used by the Participants
Activity Verbs	Reveal, Give, Find, Demonstrate, Reach, Show, Point, Issue, Focus, Feature, Post
Communication Verbs	Say, Claim, Tell, Quote, Report, Confirm, Refuse, Sentence, Deny, Explain, Add, Agree, Speak, Suggest, Conclude, Offer, Argue, Call, Ask, Criticize, Doubt, Respond
Mental Verbs	Estimate, Expect, Decide, Believe, Think, Hope, Consider, Assume

Table 1 displays the overall usage of RVs by students. In accordance with the Biber, et al. (2002) and Quirk (1985) classification of RVs, the participants' RVs were divided into three categories: This section includes verbs for communication, activity, and mental expression. There were total of 41 RVs, including 11 activity verbs, 22 communication verbs, and 8 mental verbs, as shown in Table 1.

Table 2. *RVs used according to categories*

Reporting Verbs	Frequency
Activity Verbs	154
Communication Verbs	76
Mental Verbs	50

According to the types of Rvs, table (2) provides a summary of the number of each type used by Iraqi MA students. Participants used Activity Verbs (f=154), Communication Verbs (f=76), and Mental Verbs (f=50).
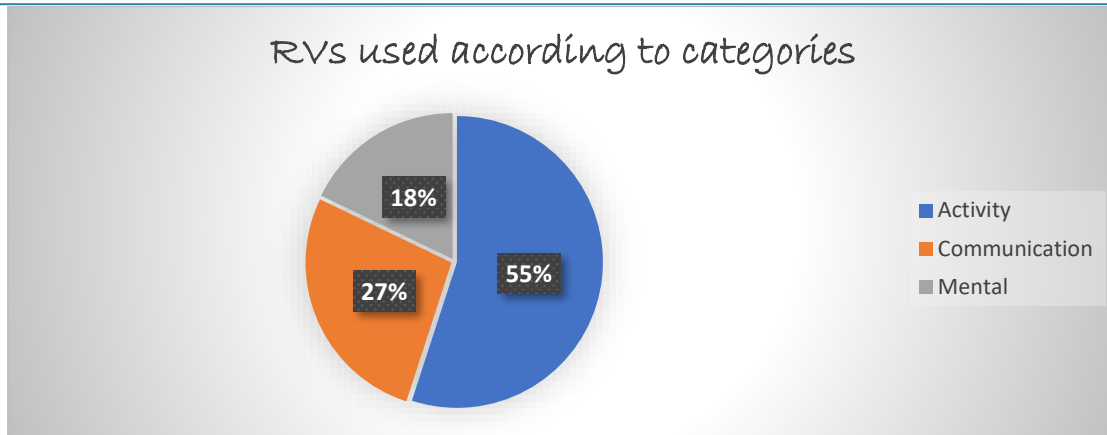
Figure 1. *Percentage of the RVs used by Iraqi MA students*

The percentage of each category that was utilised by the participants is displayed in Figure 1. According to the conclusions of the data analysis that was carried out using AntConc, the participants utilised Activity Verbs at a rate of 55 percent, Communication Verbs at a rate of 27 percent, and Mental Verbs at a rate of 18 percent. Activity Verbs have the greatest rate of Recurring Verbs.

- **Research question two**: To what extent do Iraqi MA students in their essays overuse RVs?

Table 3. *The Frequency of Reporting Verbs*

Reporting Verbs	Frequency
Say	4
Tell	3
Add	3
Quote	4
Show	26
Report	1
Claim	2
Decline	0
Warn	0
Speak	2
Suggest	2
Believe	12
Announce	0
Deny	2
Give	19
Expect	4
Find	25
List	0

Accuse	0
Argue	2
Confirm	1
Respond	4
Sentence	8
Decide	3
Doubt	2
Note	0
Call	3
Capture	0
Demonstrate	10
Issue	13
Offer	10
Post	2
Prove	0
Ask	3
Assume	2
Back Up	0
Complain	0
Conclude	5
Reveal	2
Reach	4
Point	28
Bristle	0
Focus	16
Feature	9
Refuse	2
Advise	0
Explain	7
Agree	5
Vow	0
Echo	0
Impose	0
Insist	0
Interject	0
Acknowledge	0
Pledge	0
Describe	0
Criticize	1
Estimate	1
Think	11
Hope	11
Weigh	0
Consider	6
Release	0

The results of the students' use of reporting verbs are shown in Table (3). The RVs that were used the most frequently by the students were point (f=28), show (f=26), find (f=25), and provide (f=19). As can be seen, the students' usage of RVs such as release (f=0) and describe (f=0) was nonexistent.

In addition, RVs such as Confirm and Criticize had a relatively low usage rate among the student population.

Table 4. *The Frequency of Activity Verbs*

Activity Verbs	Frequency
Reveal	2
List	0
Give	19
Prove	0
Find	25
Demonstrate	10
Reach	4
Show	26
Point	28
Issue	13
Bristle	0
Focus	16
Feature	9
Capture	0
Post	2
back up	0
Release	0

Table (4). shows the results of the use of Activity Verbs by the students, the most used Activity Verbs are *point* (f=28), *show* (f=26), and *find* (f=25). In this category, students did not use RVs like *List* (f=0), *Prove* (f=0), and *Bristle* (f=0). Furthermore, RVs like *Reveal* and *Post* were very rarely used by the students.

Table 5. *The Frequency of Communication Verbs*

Communication Verbs	Frequency
Say	4
Claim	2
Tell	3
Quote	4
Report	1
Confirm	1
Refuse	2
Announce	0
Advise	0
Decline	0
Sentence	8
Deny	2
Explain	7
Add	3
Agree	5
Speak	2
Suggest	2
Accuse	0
Conclude	5
Vow	0
Warn	0
Offer	10
Echo	0
Impose	0

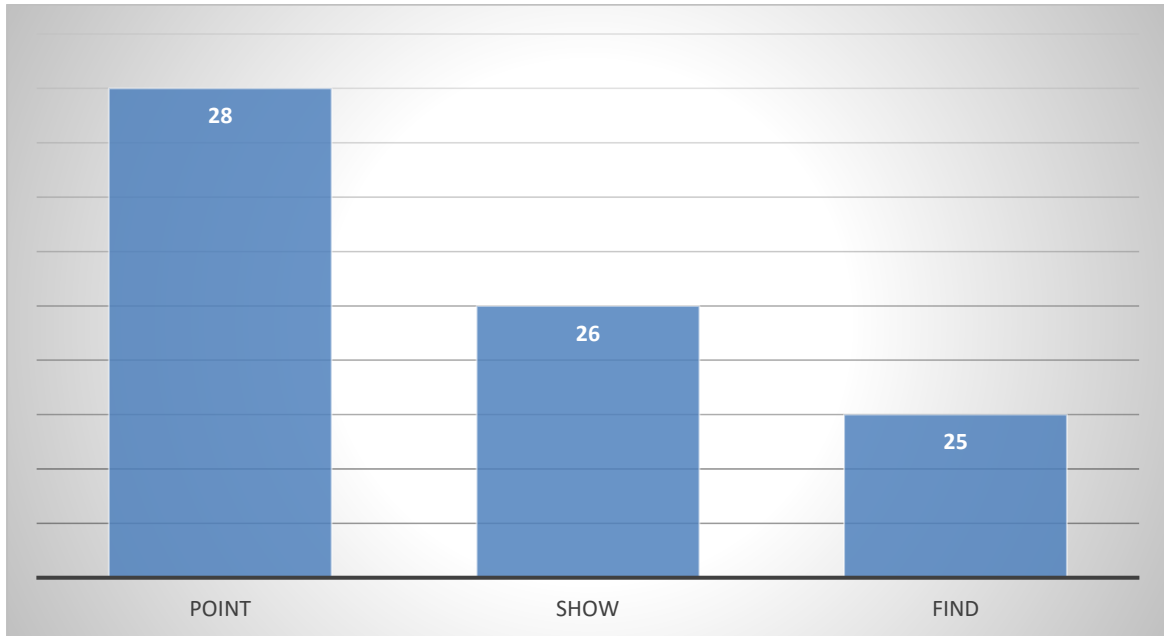|	
Insist	0
Argue	2
Interject	0
Acknowledge	0
Complain	0
Call	3
Pledge	0
Ask	3
Criticize	1
Describe	0
Doubt	2
Respond	4

The table (5). Offer (f=10), Sentence (f=8) and Explain (f=7) are the most often operated Communication Verbs by the participants. There were no RVs like Decline (f=0), Advise (f=0), and Accuse (f=0) in this category. RVs like Criticize and Report, on the other hand, were hardly ever used by the students.

Table 6. *The Frequency of Mental Verbs*

Mental Verbs	**Frequency**
Estimate	1
Expect	4
Decide	3
Believe	12
Note	0
Think	11
Hope	11
Weigh	0
Consider	6
Assume	2

Table (5). shows the results of the use of Mental Verbs by the participants, the most used Mental Verbs are *Believe* (f=12), *Think* (f=11), and *Hope* (f=11). In this category, the students did not use RVs like *Note* (f=0) and *Weigh* (f=0). Furthermore, the students rarely used RVs like Estimate and Assume.

Figure 2. *The overuse of RVs in the writing of Iraqi MA students*

An example of a popular recreational vehicle (RV) is seen in Figure 2. Point (f=28), Show (f=26), and find (f=25) were employed by participants in figure 2. Earlier studies by Uba (2019), Jarkovská and Kurková (2020), and Junnak and Veerachaisantikul (2016) support the current findings, which reveal that students frequently utilise the words "show" and "discover" when composing their essays.

5. Discussion

Reporting verbs are verbs used to describe what people say, think, and learn, as well as how they speak (Stevenson, 2010, p. 46). Bonelli and Camiciotti also claim that RVs have been studied to see how writers evaluate previous studies and present their findings using tense (Bonelli & Camiciotti, 2005, p. 71). At the university level, academic writing often involves students to review various sources of information and evaluate the strength of their arguments. Reporting verbs are a critical tool for accomplishing this. However, careful verb choice can help demonstrate the assessment of the quality of what they have been said. Additionally, depending on the sort of information being mentioned, it is necessary to be aware of and endeavor to employ a variety of reporting verbs.

The current study identifies reporting verbs in the 30 essays produced by Iraqi master students. The central taxonomy for analyzing reporting verbs in these sections is Biber's (2002) theory equipped by Quirk (1985). The semantic category of the reporting verbs discovered in the data is analyzed, and three categories are observed: activity, communication, and mental verbs. The types assist in improving pass-level work and developing critical thinking skills in approaching the levels of the Iraqi students. The results of analyzing their writings show that (18 percent mental, 27 percent communication, and 55 percent activity) verbs indicate that discourse is being quoted or paraphrased. For this category, students must consider the most appropriate words to use in order to incorporate active verbs. The most commonly used reporting verb is 'point,' which appears 28 times, indicating that most students prefer to be neutral rather than tentative or firm. They prefer to use tangible language to communicate the writer's methodology. Students should, however, use stronger verbs to impress readers; using a higher level of reporting verbs in essays will make them more exciting and increase the acceptability of the works.

Understanding linguistic features enable master's students to create clear, coherent, and effective tasks. This study also gives information on how to aid university students, particularly master's degree students, in the usage of compelling reporting verbs while producing persuasive essays. This material is provided as part of the study. In conclusion, it is possible to state that the student's voice is permitted to be used in each essay; however, it is required to be supported by established statements in which citations are used to support the student's own ideas, and this will be accomplished by making use of powerful reporting verbs.

6. Conclusion

From the data analysis, it can be concluded that it is frequently necessary to refer to other people's research and report on their findings using reporting verbs in academic writings. Many reporting verbs are available for authors to pick from in place to avert overuse, which is a method they utilize to support their current claims. However, Uba (2019) notes that authors in the science domain mostly use distinct symbols, equations, and images from those in the humanities domain; this could be viewed as one of the primary reasons for the limited use of reporting verbs (Uba, 2019, p. 97). As a result, the essays of 15 Iraqi students are used to demonstrate the percentage of the frequent and rare use of reporting verbs. This study

explain Iraqi MA students' use of RVs to fill a void left by the fact that very few studies have concentrated on RV use among Iraqi students at Iraqi universities. What's more, Biber's theory (2002), the semantic categories of the reporting verbs that can be discovered in the essays written by Iraqi students may be categorized into three categories: the categories of activity verbs, communication verbs, and thought verbs. The analysis of the essays reveals that the authors of current data use active verbs more frequently than other reporting verbs. Iraqi students typically use purposeful activity to refer to an intentional act performed by a specific doer. However, using the same verb repeatedly; will result in a slight variation in their writing. Thus, each reporting verb has a slightly different meaning depending on the author cited.

Eventually, the study displays the most commonly used verbs within the same category to describe alternative ways of referring to literature and emphasizing the voices. The most frequently used verb is construed as referring to the idea that students are drawing on other people's work directly to construct their argument. Thus, reporting verbs express agreement, disagreement, suggestions, or even neutrality (Wai Ho & Brooke, 2017, p. 75). The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of earlier research conducted by Uba (2019), Jarkovská and Kurková (2020), and Junnak and Veerachaisantikul (2016). All of these researchers discovered that students used the words "show" and "find" in their writing at a relatively high frequency.

Finally, rather than relying solely on the curricular materials for the composition course, the English Department at Tikrit University ought to offer a course in academic writing as a means of enhancing students' capacity to satisfy excellent writing requirements. This would be preferable to the current situation. Also, as Jomaa (2019) suggests, cause of "the complexity of both academic and non-academic discourses could probably require using multiple approaches and methods to obtain either emic or etic perspectives from a writer, a context or set of texts through employing varied lenses" (p.12).

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INESCAPABLE CONFORMITY OF IMMIGRANTS IN *JASMINE* AND *THE NAMESAKE*

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Abstract

This paper examines the confusions and struggles of the immigrant characters in two novels Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine (1989) and Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake (2003) to be able to find a possible representation through their diversities despite being reduced in so-called multicultural areas. These characters remain foreign to their actual selves due to being in the state of becoming, that is, their roots shadow them no matter how far away they travel. Thus, further analysis of the experiences of first and second-generation immigrant characters in both novels helps us better understand the reflections of how they shuttle back and forth between the two different cultures. The paper aims to provide insight into how the characters end up with inescapable conformity to the dominant culture, yet, as Homi Bhabha proposes, in a reformed, creative and iterative way called mimicry. The paper then aims at shedding light on this struggle of conformity in the light of Bhabha's formulation of the third space and even offering a new matrix for looking at conformity as an advantage since ultimately it enables the immigrants to be in either place at once. As a result of such an unsettling 'reversed' situation, in Lacanian terminology, not only do they perform the Other, but they can also undertake the role of the Self.

Keywords: Identity, roots, the third space, conformity, reversed situation.

1. Introduction

> *Throughout history many nations have suffered a physical defeat, but that has never marked the end of a nation. But when a nation has become the victim of a psychological defeat, then that marks the end of a nation.*

> — Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*: *An Introduction to History.*

In today's world, globalization process has been compelling the societies all around the globe to melt in one pot and become more homogenous. As one would expect, globalization is more of a capitalist term because the aim behind 'the melting-together' model is changing the world into a global market. Since we started inhabiting in a global village, every single individual, with no exception, has been facing certain cosmopolitical problems which neglect "the inherent heterogeneity of world culture" and reacting to the rapid shift to "the universalism" (Shaw, 2018, p. 25). This overarching globalization today indicates "the

increasing pace at which people, ideas, and culture move from one nation and culture to another" (Nyman, 2009, p.18). With this in mind, globalization can be "best understood as a socio-cultural and economic phenomenon which deepens existing forms of exclusion and inequalities of access as much as it activates new patterns of connectivity" (Shaw, 2018, p. 24-5). In such a "nothing happens because too much happens" atmosphere, the integration and adaptation of immigrants into diverse spheres has led to cultural and psychological ambivalence and identity crisis since they are one way or the other marginalized and underprivileged members of the colonial center (Mishra, 2006, p. 4). Being acculturated, new life abroad renders them to be alienated from even their own selves. Thus, immigrants feel the significance of one's background and culture maybe more than any other marginal groups.

As mentioned in the above paragraph, the dissemination of globalization is conceived as a right by the hegemonic power holders. The diffusion of dominant ideas is occurred expeditiously by means of technology. The technology of the West has evidently helped –and even legitimized- the colonizer exploit the poor countries as cheap labor force and violate the indigenous people's lives. That is, the more the world becomes borderless, the more the colonialist states get benefits. Yet, there is an indisputable problem with this order. In such a framework, there is no welcoming atmosphere for the immigrants. It is due to the repressive and intolerant frame of the hegemony that first and second generation-immigrants can place themselves neither in their home country nor the latter one. However, the first generation-immigrants' roles in diaspora are seemingly different from that of the second generation's as well as both generations similarly pursue a life without complexity and doubt. Therefore, the following part of the article is designed not only to present some differences between the struggles and pursuits of first and second-generation immigrants but also to suggest how they finally come to terms with their new identities in order to forge a place at least where they can feel relatively safer and free. Examining the immigrant characters' resistance to any possible psychological defeat as Ibn Khaldun's above cited idea also indicates, this article will pursue Homi Bhabha's selected concepts, primarily *the third space* which significantly helps us think of the act of mimicry in the lives of the immigrant characters of *The Namesake and Jasmine* as a reformed and creative way to keep on living in the alien culture.

2.   The Third Space and Other Concepts

> *And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves.*

> ― Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture.*

Several researches have been conducted on postcolonial criticism of each of two novels so far. In my research, Bhabha's concepts such as hybridity, mimicry, and conformity will be incorporated to dig deeper into the functionality of the third space in adaptation process of the diasporic characters in both novels. The reason why Homi Bhabha's ideas are implemented to conduct this study is that he ardently emphasizes the power of mimicry which enables the

immigrant characters of the either of the stories to adapt and negotiate the changes. As such, this resistance challenges the dominant discourses as it is a reversal in a certain way.

Although (re)interpreting Bhabha's ideas is notoriously challenging, it would still be appropriate to suggest that his notion of the third space -which is a kind of negotiation- in fact proposes an alternative space for once-colonized people by deconstructing meta-discourses established by the West and providing a possible representation. What Bhabha does differently than his contemporaries lies in his criticism towards mainstream Western superiority which puts the Western subject/the Self at the center whereas objectifying the Other. He insists on the value of the difference between these two and rejects the hegemonic language of the West that came up with assumptions made about it(Self) and the rest. Thus, he focused more on demolishing such fixed perception of the rest being inferior and the west being the canon of power since his time coincides with the decolonization of various areas. He highlights incommensurability of differences and ambiguous area of the third space by implying the impossibility of purity of any culture. With this in mind, the reader will find the immigrant characters having to negotiate their former and latter selves, yet with "a tension peculiar to borderline existences" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 218), and eventually gaining awareness of their hybrid identity and being more vigilant as to carry "the burden of the meaning of culture" (Bhabha, 1994, p.38) thereafter.

Discrimination between the self and the other, in Lacanian term, leads to an adherence to the values for immigrants living in foreign culture. Such an outcome is what colonialists exactly intended to create so that the present cultural division becomes wider and more obvious. As a result of such relationship between 'the mother and its bastards', so to speak, immigrants are exposed to a double transformation and subjected to "a process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different—a mutation, a hybrid" (Bhabha, 1994, p.111). By doing so, denial of subjugated people is constantly iterated by the colonialist until the division becomes ossified enough to make immigrants feel fragmented, ambivalent and half. They, not to remain unable to speak up for themselves, needed to find an alternative way to negotiate their former and latter selves and become a whole anew. Having to unlearn the previous codes and unthink the current colonial ones, they need somewhere else "besides" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 64), which Bhabha also names as "a third space - the negotiation of incommensurable differences" (1994, p. 218). However, such negotiation brings about a great deal of ambivalence due to the construction of the self based on the other:

> The intervention of the Third Space enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People (Bhabha, 1994, p.37).

What Bhabha intends to highlight as to hybridity is that it should be seen as a reevaluation of the colonial assumptions through the iteration of differences. It becomes a reversal in the end and this reversal unsettles so-called "authority" by challenging its prescribed definitions and the holistic concept of the entire history. Therefore, with this interpretation, hybridity represents "that ambivalent 'turn' of the discriminated subject into the terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification—a disturbing questioning of the images and presences of authority" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 113).

Rapid migration across the cultural borders in the contemporary world brings us to multicultural modernity today. This cultural multiplicity is indeed what Homi Bhabha has popularized in his studies on *mimicry* and *the third space*. As is well known, the condition of mimicry creates a deep ambivalence and confusion not only in the colonized individuals but also the colonizers. In the state of mimicry, the mimic is constantly split between the two possible ways: as neither being the same nor different, they are rendered in a shift between two pillars of obscurity. This "almost the same but not quite" level of mimicry proves these minorities' successful yet unsettling adaptation as a result of the amalgam of difference and iteration (Bhabha, 1994, p.122). By blending both, the immigrants could then find a way to present and re-present themselves. We can state that their conformity to the social environment somehow comes as a result of mimicry. When we observe Jyoti -becomes Jasmine following her marriage-, Ashima and Gogol, we witness their struggle for being able to live as an outsider and any possible way of representation with the hope for a better life in abroad. These are, thus, despite ambiguity, the stories of resilience of those who seek to find their 'own' voice in a distant and foreign land.

3.   Struggle of Conformity: Undertaking the Self and the Other Simultaneously in *Jasmine* and *The Namesake*

The novel *Jasmine*, written by Indian female author Bharati Mukherjee in 1989, tells the story of a hyphenated identity, an Asian-American woman, who struggles with identity and cultural crisis both within and outside of her own culture. To put it another way, the plot depicts Jasmine's hopeful and triumphant quest for herself and unshattered personality as well as the changes she undergoes. We can say that it is the story of a female character's spiritual integrity which she gained by deconstructing all the social and cultural norms. Mukherjee's book is far more than a traditional bildungsroman because it covers a brief yet tense period in the heroine's life, and it depicts her battle with not only the ordinary struggles of growing up that any young individual faces, but also issues concerning her racial, sexual and cultural identification. Jasmine spends her childhood in Punjab, India. At the age of seventeen, she becomes a widow, which is accepted as the turning point in her life. After Prakash's death, his dream to be able to go to America to study turns out to be her obsession. Afterwards, we witness her relocation to the United States and rooting herself there as an Indian woman. In fact, her situation mirrors turbulent experiences of many other eastern women in the contemporary world. On the whole, the novel concentrates on being an easterner and a woman at the same time by addressing ethnic tensions and identity crisis.

Her name, Jasmine, is even determined by her husband, Prakash, which we can regard as another limiting act towards her rights. In fact, she is keen on being renamed as Jasmine but the issue is that she is given another definition which is as if an attempt to erase the traditional name and give a modern one instead. Now she is completely confused about what she really is: is she a woman still bearing the traces of her traditional past or a woman open to multifarious possibilities in a modern future? Irony lies in the fact that either ways are at some level provided by the interior patriarchy with the aim of conforming to the exterior patriarchy. Jasmine openly expresses this sense of in-betweenness as follows: "I felt suspended between worlds" (Mukherjee, 1991, p. 76). Such deep cultural clash between home country definitions and the current process of transformation is also revealed in an interview with the author of the story, Bharati Mukherjee as seen below:

> the novel provided so many different points of focus: the experience of dislocation and relocation is handled by each of the immigrant characters. As in Akbari miniatures, my novel compresses the immigration histories of many minor characters (Edwards & Mukherjee, 2009, p. 78).

As observed in the above citation, Mukherjee's characters in the novel are usually split into two different identities throughout the story in the same way as her protagonist Jasmine. Although that is the fact, Jyoti/Jasmine never gives up and also remains very eager to have a baby because she is in need of self-articulation and esteem someway. In this case, it is only possible, as she does believe, after having a child. Her growth mindset seems to welcome any kind of challenge as she is going through the changes for the sake of self-inventions. It is obvious that she has the awareness of the necessity of dislocation in order to relocate the self. Throughout the story, she remembers her husband Prakash's words: "… love was letting go. Independence, self-reliance" (Mukherjee, 1991, p. 76). Upon his dreams, she has come to the US to make peace with her hyphenated identity due to the exigencies of possibility: "I do believe that extraordinary events can jar the needle arm, jump tracks, rip across incarnations, and deposit a life into a groove that was not prepared to receive it" (Mukherjee, 1991, p. 127).

Jasmine's first day experience in America is dreadfully unfortunate yet still beneficial one in terms of reclaiming her identity. She not only takes vengeance on her rapist but also ends his life instead of her own life. This incident makes her a "walking death", as she herself claims too, but for a very short time to find her new self (Mukherjee, 1991, p. 106). Jasmine's actions remind us of a phoenix, burning former version of herself and rising from the ashes with her renewed self so that she can now live through anything. She also defines her transition within an alien culture as a suicide and expresses that "we murder who we are so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams" (Mukherjee, 1991, p. 25). After she wears a blue jean-jacket –which is to me her first symbolic rebirth– she begins to Americanize herself day by day. She undergoes such changes unconsciously since she is exposed to discrimination and overgeneralizations concerning her Indian roots. Thus, she was so ready to shift to her new life that she welcomed every step of the transformation in the quest for her identity:

> If we could just get away from India, then all fates would be canceled. We'd start with new fates, new stars. We could say or be anything we wanted. We'd be on the other side of the earth, out of God's sight. (Mukherjee, 1991, p. 85)

Although she faces a great deal of troubles and turbulent experiences in the United States, she courageously manages to reposition her identity by putting the jigsaw pieces of her life together. She hints at her adaptation way which includes the amalgam of difference and iteration in the following lines: "I have had a husband for each of the women I have been. Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, Bud for Jane. Half-Face for Kali" (Mukherjee, 1991, p. 175). We can confidently suggest that being a fluid character, she has negotiated her yesterday, today and tomorrow. Being a diaspora, she is in a constant flux and movement. As can be understood, she inevitably comes to terms with the American life in the end, but it must be seen as her conformity to her own hybrid self in her own unique way owning her unique voice. Even though so-called globalization and modern environmental factors expect her to behave like an American, she makes use of her current American identity in order to forge at least a stable and permanent space where she can feel safe and free. To do so, she, in fact, does not choose between her previous and latter identities created by the cultural milieu. It is more of a choice to intervene and reconfigure the self by repositioning the new Jasmine despite "the violent shuttling" in Spivak's saying (Chrisman & Williams, 1993, p. 102). Jasmine, being well aware of her hybrid power, knows that her survival depends very much on the self-affirmation which will follow the acculturation to the new culture. Her adaptability is the only thing that comforts her in the end.

In the second novel scrutinized in this paper *The Namesake*, we observe the thirty-year story of an Indian Bengali immigrant family. Ashoke, the family guy, leaves his hometown, Calcutta, in search of a better life and possibilities in America, as well as a place where they can call 'home'. We witness the struggles and pursuits of the Ganguli family and their recently born children as they endeavor to negotiate their new identity and new life in an alien culture.

Ashima and Ashoke, since they are the first generation immigrants, seem more ambivalent and vulnerable to those cultural differences during the story. We often find them homesick, hesitant and dubious about this very alien way of life to which they are exposed in America: "… don't want to raise Gogol alone in this county. It's not right. I want to go back" (Lahiri, 2006, p. 33). When we put the story under the scope, we can notice that all the Ganguli family members are neither entirely Indian nor American, but rather somewhere in the middle. Due to the impossibility of an abandonment of all the cultural codes that have been ingrained and prescribed throughout their lives in the hometown, India, they have to take the middlemost way possible. This middle way is actually a negotiation between one's former and the latter self. We can also think of this strategy, in Freudian terms, as a defense mechanism which functions to defend against threatening and very unpleasant occurrences (1907). Such kind of survival strategy requires those marginalized and otherized people to adapt and conform to the new way of living in the USA. Yet, the issue here is that they are Indian in the USA and this past confuses Ashima and Ashoke and their children about their

Indian past and American present: "She has given birth to vagabonds. She is the keeper of all these names and numbers now, numbers she once knew by heart, numbers and addresses her children no longer remember" (Lahiri, 2006, p.167). The Ganguli's constant transformation also makes imitation/mimicry process compulsory for them to build a new identity for themselves at the expense of their past:

> Eventually he begins to practice his new signature in the margins of the paper. He tries it in various styles, his hand unaccustomed to the angles of the N, the dotting of the two i's. He wonders how many times he has written his old name, at the top of how many tests and quizzes, how many homework assignments, how many yearbook inscriptions to friends (Lahiri, 2006, p.98).

The quotation above represents Gogol's reinscription process. As in the case of Gogol, Bhabha similarly argues (2006) that such reinscription occurs in the process of mimicry, or in other words in this compulsory borrowing process. It is an ambiguous third dimension which "challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force…" (pp. 155-157). It is exactly that the third space which can be seen, in Fanon's term, as a "fluctuating movement" of the instability of culture having no fixity (Fanon, 1967, p. 168). Being a fluid entity, cultural identity is constructed through the interaction with people around us. However, the second space, which is imposed by colonizing structure, doesn't allow for the articulation of the first space identity - identity that of the indigenous people. Thus, they have to carve out an alternative space: the third space. As can be anticipated, it is impossible for Gogol -Jasmine too- to function in both spaces due to the ongoing discrimination and unhomeliness. It is now time for indigenous people to develop a hybrid identity. From now on, they can express their hybrid identity by making use of the first two spaces. I thereby will argue that having a transgressive potential, the third space is a hybrid manifestation of the first two spaces. In those moments of master-slave encounter during the first two spaces, the assumed *sanctity* of the colonizers claimed to be their own is suddenly replayed or mimicked by the colonized. Here, I can firmly suggest that in the third space anything is open to appropriation, retranslation, replay, rereading and even rehistoricization which puts an end to the cultural difference rhetoric, as Susan and Henry Giroux tactfully suggest with their idea of Bhabha's "making the political more pedagogical" or vice versa (Giroux, S. S., & Giroux, H. A., 1999, p.139):

> The theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualising an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. It is the inbetween space that carries the burden of the meaning of culture, and by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves (Bhabha, 1994, p. 38).

The first and second generations' approaches to the traditional culture left behind in the homeland and the adopted culture are diametrically opposed to one another. The first generation takes great pains to preserve the tradition that has been passed on to them whereas

their children being born in America can feel no closeness towards Indian identity as well as American one. We can claim that the first generations are more in between as we deduce from the name of their son, Gogol itself. This in-betweenness is passed down to Gogol as well. Gogol despises the fact that his name is both ludicrous and vague one, that it does not represent who he really is. This name has nothing to do with either Indian or American representation. Thus, what frustrates him is that he has to come to terms with such an obscure nickname after all. As we may see, Gogol and Sonia become more obsessed about their lack of roots and fragmented past. They, differently from their parents, attempt to establish their historical existence in mainstream society. Having a cultural identity, Gogol always believes and seeks for his cultural history since he knows well that everything has a root. As Hall puts it in his own life context, there are two possible ways of viewing "cultural identity", the first one is "in terms of one, shared culture", and the second one as "a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' which belongs to the future as much as to the past" (1993, pp. 223-225). For it is rather a matter of becoming, then being an immigrant is problematic because each immigrant finds oneself stuck at the threshold during a lifetime, burdened with memories of their former place clashing with the conditions of the contemporary world. As the title of this study declares, such way of life spent in-between makes immigrants feel quite bewildered unless they finally comply with the adopted way of living. At the end of the novel, the reader finds 'namesake', Gogol, reading *The Short Stories of Nikolai Gogol* given to him by his father. This scene shows the fact that he has overcome several issues related to his name so far and now comes to terms with his process of becoming, and thereby begins to negotiate his hybrid identity:

> Plenty of people changed their names: actors, writers, revolutionaries, transvestites. In history class, Gogol has learned that European immigrants had their names changed at Ellis Island, that slaves renamed themselves once they were emancipated. Though Gogol doesn't know it, even Nikolai Gogol renamed himself, simplifying his surname at the age of twenty-two from Gogol-Yanovsky to Gogol upon publication in the Literary Gazette (Lahiri, 2006, p. 97).

As Bhabha suggests in his masterpiece *The Location of Culture*, ambivalence about the cultural practices of India and the adaptation to the new land is quite felt in the characters' attitudes throughout the events in Lahiri's story. What leads to identity crisis is that the immigrants have an intense sense of belonging to neither side, yet at the same time try to make efforts to stick to their culture in the foreign land as much as the recollection of their memories permits. Since having migrated with the memory and nostalgia of their pasts, the characters in both stories leave not only their former lands but also their identities in both cultural and psychological senses and have to start a new life from scratch in the US. Without cultural representations that are extremely rigid and efficient for the formation of social structures, life is never easy for anyone because humans are socially constructed beings who can only exist within socio-cultural framework. Main issue here is that dominant Western frame puts cultures "within a universalist framework" (Rutherford, 1990, p.209). It has been always-already problematic for different cultures to coexist because culture by its nature is, as Bhabha sees it, "incommensurable" (Rutherford, 1990, p. 209). Any sort of restricting look at

cultures evokes cultural displacement within underprivileged newcomers. As Bhabha investigated this very problem of disoriented voices anthropologically, he reiterated the term *liminality* which basically explains immigrants' situation of standing at the threshold and belonging to neither side hence either side. With Ashima, Jhumpa Lahiri, as well, draws a parallel between the situation of liminality and a lifelong pregnancy as follows:

> Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy—a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that that previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding. Like pregnancy, being a foreigner, Ashima believes, is something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect. (Lahiri, 2006, p.49)

In an interview with the author, Lahiri highlights this situation of liminality once again:

> I wanted to please my parents and meet their expectations. I also wanted to meet the expectations for my American peers, and the expectations I put on myself to fit into American society. It's a classic case of divided identity (Agarwala, 2007, p. 40).

As Bhabha suggested once, western patriarchal discourses may seem liberating on one hand, yet always remain restricting on the other. Living in the US, she felt torn between her roots and requirements to be an American imposed upon her by both former and latter identities. She, just as the Ganguli family members, belongs to either side in a constant state of becoming and reshaping her identity until negotiating it.

As Kant provokes the modern reader to rethink with his book, *Critique of Pure Reason*, knowledge is only the construction of our vision (2003, p. 22). If it is how we perceive the world, then our knowledge is nothing less than *our* mere assumptions and suppositions. As such, colonized societies are forcefully reduced to a linear existence out of these mere assumptions, which I believe should be seen as the displacement of the angle of vision. Likewise, Homi Bhabha is completely against such assumptions since he advocates that every cultural encounter brings about extremely valuable hybrid and evolved outcomes at the end of the day. He offers people to hold a multicolored and multi-voiced view which will help them articulate and enunciate their hybridity.

4.   Conclusion

All in all, these are the stories reflecting the conditions and struggles of immigrant characters dwelling within the borders of dominant cultures in different areas of the world. By blending the hybrid manifestations of the first two spaces, the immigrants could find a way to present and re-present themselves in an alien culture. It was this unique strategy developed by immigrant characters in both works that caught my attention and how their resistance to a psychological defeat made an undoing of colonization possible. What particularly struck me was how they had to deconstruct the prescribed western definitions by proving the incommensurability of differences and cultures, and how they carved out a self-defined/third

space. The analysis of both works shows us that the characters have overcome various problems related to their identity crisis and finally come to terms with their diasporic identities and find an articulation of their thoughts and beliefs.

As a result of my comparative analysis, both Jasmine and Gogol utilized their new identities to handle the situation in abroad as diasporas. They maintained a successful relationship with their own selves by seeing the problems as an opportunity for growing and getting stronger, which can also be called *coping mechanism* strategy. Bhabha's formulation of the third space enabled those minority characters from once-colonized countries to own their voice in a very foreign culture. Having such a hybrid identity, diasporic characters had a great deal to say regarding their past and present and inevitably let people hear about their stories in the quest for rescuing shattered identity.

Bhabha advises the third space against the stereotypical colonial discourses as to how to gain more consciousness on the issue and expose its productive capacities: "For a willingness to descend into that alien territory may open the way to conceptualising an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (*The Location of Culture*, 1994, p.38). He further suggests "by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves" (Bhabha, 1994, p.39). For Bhabha, this attempt does not still have to have an impact on the colonizer's attitude; instead it has to offer a *third space*, definitely not a de facto one, for the colonized.

Speaking from an anthropological perspective, both works have proved how remarkably adaptive and resilient human species is. This study showed that it is possible for everyone to overcome certain difficulties by realizing and admitting the fact that none are superior to one another; in fact there is not the "Self" or the "Other". With this in mind, these oppositions are mere concepts and one of the hallmarks of European worldviews. In the case of Jasmine and Gogol, it will be appropriate to say that they let go of whatever limits them in life: traditions, definitions, prejudices, etc. and fit into this way of life in abroad. However, conformity should not be confused with giving in to the pressures of the American culture; on the contrary, it is more of an acceptance of the state of a constant flux towards finding one's own identity. All in all, the protagonists of both novels succeed to detach themselves from fixed representations and stereotypes allocated by the colonial discourse, and instead recultivate an intrepid and adaptive manner. What Lahiri and Mukherjee similarly do is not only abandoning firmly established opposition of the West and the Other, but also cultivating endless possibilities of their characters' identities. Since they are open to any possible change and in "perpetual motion", this study tried to offer a new matrix for future studies to see conformity as an opportunity and tackle it in the same manner (Fanon, 1967, p. 224). It is only possible with this conformity that both Jasmine and Gogol are constantly evolving and show us they, no matter which ethnic group or gender one may belong to, can be anything they want to be apart from colonial definitions and even beyond. Last but not least, such conformity in turn renders the condescending idea of the West regarding itself to be the purest and the most advanced throughout the human history invalid.

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