Journal of
Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature:
Dynamics and Advances

JALDA

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and Applied Literature:
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Advances

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Journal Information

About Journal

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JALDA's Aims and Scope

The Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances (*JALDA*) is an ambitious academic publication which aims to encourage and disseminate cross-disciplinary research targeting real-world problems and real-life concerns where language and/or literature are at the center. Bringing together the now-well-established discipline of *Applied Linguistics* and the thriving subject of *Applied Literature*, *JALDA* stimulates and promotes innovative work within applied studies on language and literature. In the first place, it publishes articles on the two inter-related subjects of *Applied Linguistics* and *Applied Literature*. However, as an essential component of *JALDA*'s long-term goals, a new focus has been added, namely the dynamic relationship between language teaching and literature, a fast-growing and dynamic field that requires special attention. In fact, the long-term prospective ambition is to bring this inter-subject dynamic from background to the foreground in the journal. *JALDA*'s precise outlook on each of the three intended areas is outlined below in the hope of further illumination on its publication policies and planned purview.

1. *Applied Linguistics*

The most prevailing definition of *Applied Linguistics* so far, with a consensus on, conceives the field as "the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue" (Brumfit, 1997, p. 93). Although real-world problems concerning language may involve each of the three questions regarding the nature of language, its use and its learning, historically, the question of efficient learning and teaching of languages has been a predominant concern among real word problems attended to in *Applied Linguistics*. Accordingly, the following subjects are well-seated areas of investigation within mainstream *Applied Linguistics* which are included in *JALDA*'s scope of focus. *JALDA* considers English as a foreign language as the subject of learning:

- Second language vocabulary acquisition
- Grammatical development in L2
- Teaching and learning L2 skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening)
- Technology in language learning and teaching
- Second language curriculum and materials
- Individual differences in second language learning
- Social issues in language learning
- Language teaching methodology
- English for specific purposes
- English as a Lingua Franca
- Language assessment and testing
- English as an international language
- Research methods in applied linguistics
- Language teacher education
- Bilingual education

Although the subject of *Language Learning and Teaching* seems to have already established itself as the mainstream concern in *Applied Linguistics*, the sheer fact that language learning and teaching take place in various ecological conditions, brings forth the warning that ignoring the questions concerning the nature of language and language use might carry with it the risk of blocking our views of the true nature of language learning and teaching as well. *Applied Linguistics* studies need to preserve the flexibility to be inspired by and note the insights from the studies concerning the nature of language and language use, an area which has been labeled as the "*Linguistics Applied*" or "*Applications of Linguistics*" by Davis and Elder (2007). In other words, language pedagogy needs to be examined in its social background in order to be able to reap benefits from the *blessings of the unknown*.

It must be reminded as a word of caution that linguistics is not alone in inspiring *Applied Linguistics Studies*. In fact, attention to the contextual aspects of language learning and teaching highlights the cross-disciplinary nature of *Applied Linguistics*. In this perspective, any research that associates a language-related problem to the core knowledge in psychology, sociology, anthropology, education, neuroscience, economic and political sciences, law, business, etc. counts as *Applied Linguistics*. In this view, *Applied Linguistics* can equally be based in psychology, education, sociology, computer sciences and any other relevant area as it is in linguistics. The intention in these interdisciplinary inquires is to offer reformative, corrective and ameliorative views and suggestions for a language-related real-world problem. In this sense, the discipline of *Applied Linguistics* will be open to the attempts to account for the issues of language learning and teaching alongside its various dimensions as outlined above by giving way to the studies inspired by other language-related studies including the following:

- Corpus Studies
- Discourse Studies
- Economy and language
- Forensic linguistics
- Language and culture
- Language and environment
- Multilingualism
- Neurolinguistics
- Other related areas
- Politics and language
- Translation

According to *JALDA*'s policy formulated here, a few canonical considerations make *Applied Linguistics* distinctive from *Linguistics Studies*. Also, these key features define the nature of work on *Applied Linguistics* that is expected to be submitted for publication in *JALDA*.

1) Problem-orientedness
2) Language in its ecology
3) Cross-disciplinary nature
4) Reformative goals
5) Real-life data

2. *Applied Literature*

Applied Literature has emerged recently as an effort to draw literary studies more akin to human beings' everyday needs. A problem-oriented view of literature might be alien to most of the scholars in English Literature, one way or another, since the established tradition in literary studies does not concern itself primarily with real-life problems. However, there is an urgent call upon the experts and academicians of English Literature to further concern themselves with the real word, an appeal that needs to be responded effectively. Literary studies seem to be in an urgency to be taken out from the academic world into the real world. Literature needs to be treated as a real-world art concerning itself with people's lives and not simply an academic art that is analyzed and criticized within academic forums.

Inspired by this urgency, *Applied Literature* is defined here as any systematic research where literature can solve or ameliorate a real-world problem. In this sense, literature acts as a stimulus to reform. *Applied Literature* examines the effect of literature on human beings whereby the literary text is in service of dealing with real-life problems. To be able to account for the various aspects of human life in all its contexts, *Applied Literature* must be interdisciplinary in its nature. Furthermore, to meet the essential requirements of a scientific research, it has to give allegiance to a satisfactory level of methodological rigor. By definition, *Applied Literature* is thus:

1) Problem-oriented in terms of objectives
2) Effect-driven in its rationale
3) Multi- disciplinary in its scope
4) Method-conscious in its procedure
5) Data-based in terms of its subject
6) Reform-oriented in its applications

What Is Not *Applied Literature*?

Articles in *Applied Literature* that are based on the following research orientations, generally classified under *Pure Literature*, do not comply with the policies of *JALDA*:

1. The starting point of the research is based on a piece of literary work rather than a problem in the outside world.
2. The rationale and justification of the study is theory-driven rather than effect-driven.
3. The study commits itself exclusively to the tradition of literary studies without any attempt to invoke insights from other disciplines.
4. The study acts upon literary texts as the only data available for analysis and does not attend to the data from the real-world human life.
5. The study does not imply any reform, amelioration or solution to a real-world problem in its conclusion.

Areas of Research in Applied Literature

Following are some subjects that can be included in *Applied Literature.* The list is not exhaustive; *JALDA* encourages initiatives and innovations in this regard:

- Therapeutic value of literature
- Trauma studies in literature
- Literature and ethical development
- Literature and science
- Literature and environment
- Literature for professional training
- Literary literacy education
- Other innovative areas

3. *Dynamics* between *Applied Linguistics* and *Applied Literature*

The most ambitious and prospective goal of *JALDA* is to propagate research on real-life problems where both language and literature are at the core. Here, the intention is to deal with language-related problems where literature acts as a source of solution or amelioration to the problem. *JALDA* considers this interdisciplinary preoccupation as a highly promising area of research concern for the specialist in both *Applied Linguistics* and *Literary Studies*. As part of its long-term policy, *JALDA* team fervently encourages researchers to step in this innovative forum of inquiry. *Novel* as it is, the concept of the research on the *Dynamics* between *AppliedLinguistics* and *Literature* can be illustrated with the few following areas of inquiry. The list is inevitably tentative and open for further promotion. *JALDA* is opening a special forum for discussing the options and potentials available regarding the feasibility of this new research area. We ardently invite scholars and experts of the related fields to share their initiatives with us by submitting their prospects in the form of Review Articles or reporting their interdisciplinary research findings.

- The role of literature in language teaching
- The role of Literature in language teacher education
- The role of Literature in language assessment
- The role of Literature in Language teaching curriculum
- Other innovative areas

Basic Criteria for Publishing with *JALDA*

A research article published in *JALDA*:

1) starts and deals with a real-life problem, where language and/or literature is at the center.
2) introduces clear suggestions for tackling problems.
3) upholds an iterative relationship between theory and practice.
4) involves symptomatic and documented evidence in the form of real-world data.
5) may rely on the research data of quantitative, qualitative or combined nature.
6) involves a wide spectrum of research designs ranging from highly qualitative ethnographies or case studies to statistics-based experiments

SUBMIT MANUSCRIPTS

General Guidelines

The articles submitted to *JALDA* should follow the APA 7th style with some adaptations specific to *JALDA*. Contributing authors are advised to download and read *JALDA's Concise Guide for APA's 7th Edition Manual*. Please consult the *Paper Submission Template to JALDA* for submission instructions, guidelines, and contact information of the journal's editors.

Online submission

Manuscripts should be written in English and must be submitted online through our online submission website. **Submit Manuscript** is an online submission and review system where authors can submit manuscripts and track their progress. Registration and login are required to submit items online and to check the status of current submissions.

PUBLICATION ETHICS

As a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), JALDA is committed to maintaining the highest standards of publication ethics and supporting ethical research practices.

Ethics Statement
Authorship

The authors' central obligation is to present a concise, accurate account of the research performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to public sources of information. The results of research should be recorded and maintained in a form that allows analysis and review, both by collaborators before publication and by other scholars for a reasonable period after publication.

Fabrication of data is an egregious departure from the expected norms of scholarly conduct, as is the selective reporting of data with the intent to mislead or deceive, as well as the theft of data or research results from others.

Proper acknowledgment of the work of others used in a research project must always be given. Authors should cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, should not be used or reported without explicit permission from the investigator with whom the information originated. Information obtained in the course of confidential services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, cannot be used without permission of the author of the work being used.

Authors must obtain permission for the use of any previously-published materials from the original publisher. Proof of permission must be provided before manuscripts containing previously-published material can be published. Proper credit lines for all previously published material must be included in the manuscript.

Plagiarism constitutes unethical scholarly behavior and is never acceptable. Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the concept, design, execution, or interpretation of the research study. All those who have made significant contributions should be offered the opportunity to be listed as

authors. Other individuals who have contributed to the study should be acknowledged, but not identified as authors.

All collaborators share some degree of responsibility for any paper they co-author. Every co-author should have the opportunity to review the manuscript before it is submitted for publication. Any individual unwilling or unable to accept appropriate responsibility for a paper should not be a co-author.

It is unethical for an author to publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal of primary publication. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently is unethical and unacceptable. When an error is discovered in a published work, it is the obligation of all authors to promptly retract the paper or correct the results.

J*ALD*A*'s Commitment Form*

JALDA's Commitment Form for Publication Ethics Observance, Assignment of the Financial Rights, Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest and Introduction of Authors can be downloaded in *MS Word Format* or *PDF Format* on *JALDA*'s website. The form includes the following 4 sections:

1. Commitment to scholarly publication ethics and introduction of the corresponding author
2. Assignment of the financial rights to publish an article
3. Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
4. Introducing the authors, their order of appearance, and their contribution

Please read the terms of this agreement, use the Word file or PDF file of the Commitment Form, fill in and sign it, and send the document as one of the required files upon submission.

Author Guidelines

Articles submitted to the *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances* (*JALDA*) should represent outstanding scholarship and make original contributions to the field. The Editors will assume that an article submitted for their consideration has not previously been published and is not being considered for publication elsewhere, either in the submitted form or in a modified version. The articles must be written in English and not include libelous or defamatory materials. The articles should be between 4,000 and 8,000 words (including the abstract and references). *JALDA* operates a double-blind peer-review process. To facilitate this process, authors are requested to ensure that all submissions, whether first or revised versions, are anonymous. Authors' names and institutional affiliations should appear only on the web-fillable sheet. All authors are asked to submit five files including the Main File of the article (anonymous), Title Page (containing authors' names, affilliations, email and ORCID), Authorship Form (containing all authors' short biographies and Photo), Authorship and Conflict of Interest Form and Supplementary Persian Abstract.

JALDA (previously *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Discourse Analysis*) has been published since 2016 as *the Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances*. As part of the Open Access policy, publishing articles in *JALDA* is *free of charge* for authors. The similarity rate of all submissions to *JALDA* is checked through *plagiarism-detecting software* before being processed for peer review.

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CONTENTS

Structural and Functional Characterization of Citation Practices in Academic Research Writing: A Concordance-Informed Analysis

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Abstract

In the last two decades, citation behaviour in academic research writing has been highlighted in English for academic purposes. This concordance-informed, corpus-based study has focused on cross-disciplinary analysis of citations by English and Iranian academic writers in English Economics and Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering research articles published in international and Iranian national English-medium journals. To that end, research articles in Economics and Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering were developed and divided into four sub-corpora: English corpus and Iranian corpus. Thompson and Tribble's (2001) classification and Thompson and Ye's (1991) framework were used to analyse citations. The computer program AntConc (version 3.5.7) was used to identify 1,032 citations. The results of data analysis showed more frequent uses of citations by Economics than Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering writers. In terms of citation structures, more integral citations were utilised by Economics writers, and more non-integral citations were used by Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering writers. In addition, the citation analyses of native and non-native writers revealed that English writers employed more citations than Iranian writers. The findings imply that the cultural context of publication, in addition to the linguistic background and knowledge structures of their disciplines, seems to shape the writers' citation choices when writing their research articles.

Keywords: citation practices, research article, part-genre, economics, industrial and manufacturing engineering

Introduction

Citations play a central role in the construction and co-construction of knowledge in academic research writing. When crafting a research article (RA), researchers need to cite the works of other researchers to provide evidence for the claims they make (Lee et al., 2018; Zhang, 2022). In Swales' words (2014), "citation is the most overt and most immediately obvious indication that a text is indeed academic" (p. 119). Expert published authors also employ citations to help them to present research findings more convincingly (Mansourizadeh & Ahmad, 2011). Writers use citations in academic papers to introduce and discuss the research works of other researchers and, in so doing, they can identify themselves with particular disciplinary communities (Donner, 2021; Hu, 2023). As White (2004) noted, citations are effective measures universities, governments, and other institutes tend to use to evaluate the productivity and reputation of individual researchers and employees in the workplace.

Prior research has revealed that citations vary across disciplines. Citations play a vital role in humanities in comparison to sciences, and researchers use more citations in soft sciences than in hard sciences (Petric, 2007). Research has shown the higher proportion of integral citations in soft disciplines than in hard disciplines, and in soft disciplines writers tend to adopt a critical writer stance to cited sources, in contrast to a more neutral stance manifested in hard disciplines (Thompson, 2005). In addition, "writers in the hard sciences generally employ slightly more verbs indicating their belief in the truth of a report while those in the soft fields withhold judgement" (Hyland & Jiang, 2018, p. 17). Disciplines also use citations functionally differently. Notably, computer scientists use signposting citations more frequently, while sociologists much more often employ engaging citations (Harwood, 2009).

Several reasons motivated the present researchers to develop a corpus-driven study to examine citation practices across disciplines between two writer groups. The first reason has to do with the importance of citations in the academia. Comparison of data from expert writers of research articles can illustrate experts' use of citations and can guide novice writers how to write in a similar way as experts do (Mansourizadeh & Ahmad, 2011; Petric, 2007). The second reason has to do with the understanding of acceptable citation patterns which are used by academics, which is concerned with the generalizability of citations in, for example, natural sciences to all academic discourse (Hyland, 2013). Citations are persuasively effective tools of scientific discourse (Kwan & Chan, 2014), which play a leading role in academic writing, showing how a new piece of research develops and is grounded in the recurring pattern of disciplinary knowledge. As a result, they provide the transparent disclosure about the nature of research (Lee, et al., 2018). Furthermore, Charles (2006) indicates that citations enable "the writer to acknowledge or take issue with the contributions of other researchers and, in displaying knowledge of the field, to establish his / her own academic authority and credibility" (p. 311).

In the present study, we, therefore, examined the structural and functional features of citation practices of results and discussion section of RAs in two writer groups (non-native Persian writers publishing in English and Native-English writers) in two disciplines (Economics and Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering). We have focused on the "results and discussion" part-genre in RAs because of two major reasons. This section, as Samraj (2013) argues, tends to be challenging because, intertextually, researchers need to establish relations between previous literature and the findings of their own study, and this implies citing prior research to interpret the results of the study. Secondly, as Thompson (2005) shows, this part-genre includes the highest citation after introductions. This high density of citation is because the researcher "places the findings of his analyses within the research literature" (p. 316). Following this line of argumentation, we have drawn on the following two research questions in the present study to examine structural and functional features of citation practices in academic research writing.

1. What are the most frequent structures and functions of citations in results and discussion section of IME and economics RA between native and non-native English speakers?

2. Are there any differences between native and non-native English writers in the structures and functions of citations in results and discussion section of IME and economics RAs?

Literature Review

This section includes prior research on citations. First, a distinction is made between integral and non-integral citations, followed by a brief discussion on the structure ad functions of the citations. Next, the taxonomies used in this study to analyse citations in terms of forms and functions are explained, with numerous examples added from the data of the present study. Finally, we review the previous research focused on citations and summarise the findings of some of the research studies.

Typological Analyses of Citation Practices

One classification relates to textual and formal citations (Swales, 2014), and a combination of formal linguistic and functional criteria (Thompson, 2005; Thompson & Tribble, 2001). Some other researchers have investigated citations solely based on rhetorical functions (Harwood, 2009; Petric, 2007; Samraj, 2013) and others have analysed the forms of citations (Hyland, 1999) or the writer's stance (Coffin, 2009). Also, citations can be analysed based on the categorisation of reporting verbs (Thompson & Ye, 1991). For a more recent update on these typologies, readers are referred to Arizavi and Choubsaz (2021). Because in the present study, Thompson and Tribble's (2001) and Thompson and Ye's (1991) frameworks have been used, the primary focus is on these two models in the following paragraphs.

Following formal linguistic and functional criteria, researchers usually divide citations into two categories: integral and non-integral. Integral citations place heavy emphasis on the authors cited in the sentence or sentences, but non-integral citations primarily focus on the research reported and the cited authors tend

to be of secondary significance and are added in the footnote or enclosed within parentheses (Samraj, 2013). Thompson and Tribble (2001) (Table 1) divided integral and non-integral citations into several subcategories. They examined 16 PhD theses in agricultural botany and agricultural and food economics to present their model and used formal linguistic and functional criteria to account for the citations. Both integral and non-integral citations are formal, but they serve a number of functions as shown in Table 1, with some examples provided[i]. Integral citations, as shown in Table 1, include three subcategories according to the function they serve in the text, although, as Thompson and Tribble report, fine distinctions between these categories are somewhat difficult and considerable overlap is seen.

As presented in Table 1, non-integral citations include five subcategories. According to Thompson (2000), the function of source is "to attribute a proposition to another author", with the proposition being a statement of "what is known to be true, such as the factive report of findings in other research, or the attribution of an idea to another" (p. 95). Identification is related to the author, and a writer focuses his / her attention on the information he / she wants to express (Jallilfar, 2012). Origin shows "the originator of a concept, technique or product" (Thompson, 2000, p. 105); and reference points to the work which includes additional information (Thompson & Tribble, 2001). A writer uses directive verbs such as *see* in order to provide support for the propositions made; it is somewhat similar to source, but the difference is that in reference the writer refers the reader to another text as well as the present text while in source the writer just refers the reader to the present text (Petric, 2007).

Table 1

Thompson and Terrible's Classification of Integral and Non-Integral Citations

Category	Function	Example
Integral		
Verb Controlling	The verb is controlled by the citation given by the author(s).	As ***Orlikowski (2010)*** suggests, incorporating technology into theoretical accounts provides additional explanatory power.
Naming	The citation is a noun phrase or a part of a noun phrase	***In Toussaert (2016)***, I used menu choice to study the commitment demand of participants in a weight-loss challenge.
Non-Citation	A reference is made to another writer, but the name is given without a year reference	Golovko and Valentini (2011) find that growth rates are higher for firms that couple innovation with exports. ***They*** attribute this …
Non-Integral		
Source	It shows the origin of the idea.	The 0–2 km radius is chosen based on previous findings in the literature ***(Zabel & Guignet, 2012)***.
Identification	Where the information within the parentheses identifies the author of the study referred to.	The extraction costs are also added to these, because unlike buy-back contracts, in production sharing contracts the production phase is connected to the development phase ***(Iranpour, 2014)***.
Reference	Usually signalled by the inclusion of the directive "see"	To understand why the rules are long and complex, consider the ban on proprietary trading ***(see, e.g., Davis Polk, 2013)***.
Origin	Indicates the originator of a concept or a product	In order to answer the question of wheter the Fixed Effect Model (FEM) or Random Effect Model (REM) is better, the Hausman test ***(Gujarati, 2004)*** is used.

Citations can also be analysed based on the categorisation of reporting verbs. We followed Thompson and Ye's (1991) framework (Table 2) to identify author stance in reporting verbs of integral citations. According to Table 2, reporting verbs can be divided into factive, non-factive, and counter-active. Factive verbs (e.g., recognise) characterise the author as stating true information, correct opinions, or right ideas. By contrast, counter-factive verbs (e.g., misuse) are used to portray the author as adding false information, or incorrect ideas. Non-factive verbs (e.g., examine) are neutral because they do not give us any clear signals as for the author's attitude towards an idea, opinion, or piece of information. Thompson and Ye's classification of reporting verbs is based on the context and frequency of occurrence

Table 2

Thompson and Ye's (1991) Classification of Reporting Verbs

Type	Definition	Example[i]
Factive	Show the information is true.	demonstrate, notice, identify
Non-Factive	No specific position is adopted by the author.	note, propose, discuss
Counter-Factive	The opinions expressed or the ideas presented are not correct.	ignore, confuse, disregard

of the verbs. For instance, *report* in their study was classified as a factive verb because it occurred mostly in the context that the writer wanted to convey his / her positive attitude toward cited sentences or ideas. In the present study, this tripartite classification of factive, non-factive, and counter-active was used to identify reporting verbs, although as Thompson and Ye commented, this method of identification is subjective and may change from one study to another.

Citation Practices across Research Articles (RAs)

Although many researchers have examined citations across multiple text types, only those studies which have analysed RAs are reported here because this is the primary focus of the present study. Several researchers have examined the genre-specific patterns of citations across subsections of research articles (in comparison with those of other academic genres). Jalilifar (2012), for example, compared citation behaviour in the introduction sections of RAs and MA theses. Following Thompson and Tribble's (2001) framework, he found that in integral citation, verb controlling was the first, and naming citation was the second most frequent type employed by both RA and MA writers. The difference between RA introductions and MA theses was the patterns of citations. MA writers mostly used "according to…." while RAs writers used "X (year)". In verb controlling, they mostly used non-factive verbs, and factive verbs were used more diversely by the RA writers than the MA thesis writers. In non-integral citation, sources were used markedly in both genres, but sources were more frequently used in MA theses. Reference was the least frequent non-integral citation in both genres, especially in the MA theses. One of the marked differences was the preference of MA writers in using integral

citation, while there were no differences in using integral and non-integral citation in RA writers.

Samraj (2013) revealed different citation behaviours in the discussion section of RA and MA theses of biology writers. Both groups preferred to use verb controlling to naming in integral citation in discussion section, but MA thesis writers used verb controlling much more frequently than RA writers. Both groups rarely used non-integral citations, but RA writers used them more than MA thesis writers. Frequency of functions of citations in MA theses and RA discussion section showed *comparison of results* was used by both groups, but this frequency was much higher in RAs than in MA theses. *Interpretation of results* was used by both groups, but it was more frequent in MA theses than in RAs, because using intertextual links in RAs is not only for interpreting the author's own findings, but also for interpreting the results of other studies. In *explanation of results*, Samraj did not find any discernible patterns in both MA theses and RAs.

Similarly, Kwan and Chan (2014) examined citation behaviours in the results and discussion sections of empirical RAs in two different journals of information system. They also considered the results and discussion sections of each article to investigate different citations in these two sections. They found the high density of citations in results sections was used to show methodological rigor and in discussion section to show that researchers tend to extend the territory of their work and compare their findings with those of previous researchers. These differences were due to the different journals' policies. In Information and Management (IM) journals, the number of citations decreased. The other reason was due to the limitation on the length in IM journals, so in this way the first thing that is omitted is citations. The other reason was the practitioner readership that the journal aims to serve. For example, Kwan and Chan argued that "saying that 'practitioners [referring to readers of IM] are basically interested in the results but not so much interested in the origins of ideas', thus reducing the need to cite in great numbers" (p. 36).

Dobakhti and Zohrabi (2018) analysed citation behaviours of applied linguists in the discussion sections of 45 RAs. They used Swales' (2014) and Samraj's (2013) typologies to concentrate on the textual and rhetorical aspects of citations. The results showed that writers tended to use non-integral citations more frequently than integral citations. They also found that the density of using citations in the discussion section was lower than that in the introduction section investigated by Jalilifar (2012). The findings suggest that citations are closely related to various rhetorical functions because authors use them to compare their findings with those of previous ones, to confirm possible explanations, and to support interpretations.

As the foregoing review of literature reveals, researchers have examined citations in as diverse genres as possible across a wide range of disciplines in writer diverse groups in different cultural contexts of publication to help us to understand how they behave structurally and functionally and how often they recur in distinct text types. Although such research studies have contributed considerably to the variations of disciplinary knowledge and furthered our understanding of these

linguistic features, citation practices appear to have been under-researched in distinct part-genres of research articles, one of which is results and discussion section, which as Thompson (2005) found, includes the highest density of citations after introductions. This lacuna prompted us to explore frequency counts, structures, and functions of citation practices in the results and discussion sections of two disciples: Economics as a soft science and Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering as a hard science.

Methodology

Corpus Development

In this study, a written corpus of research articles in Economics and Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering (IME) was developed. The cross-disciplinary focus on economics and industrial and manufacturing engineering was due to the very fact that they are traditionally members of soft and hard sciences (Moed, 2005) and they tend to represent soft and hard discplines (e.g., Fløttum et al., 2006).

With the aim of analysing citation behavior of the merged results and discussion section of Economics and IME RAs, the present researchers developed two corpora: Economics Corpus (EC) and IME Corpus (IMEC), each with 59 English RAs. Each corpus contained two sub-corpora. In other words, EC contained 25 English Economics RAs by Persian-native writers (referred as Economics Iranian Corpus (EIC)), and the other sub-corpus was composed of 34 English RAs in Economics written by native English writers (referred as Economics English Corpus (EEC)). The other corpus, IMEC, contained 59 IME RAs, out of which 25 RAS were written by Persian writers (referred as Iranian IME Corpus (IIMEC)) and 34 RAs written by English native writers (referred as English IME Corpus (EIMEC)). Overall, the two corpora included 118 RAs amounting to 258,974 running words, and 1,030 citations were identified.

In order to select the texts that would make up EC, the researchers surfed online websites for main fields of study and research in economics, selected three classifications introduced by Stanford School of Economics (SSE) https://economics.stanford.edu/), Federal Reserve Bank of New York (FRBNY) (https://www.newyorkfed.org/), and Journal of Economic Literature (JEL) (https://www.aeaweb.org/journals/jel), made a list out of the three classifications, and ordered them alphabetically. Finally, an economist in the Department of Economics at Shahid Beheshti University (SBU) in Iran was requested to mark the mainstream fields on the list. As a result, ten sub-disciplines were determined (Table 3). Considering SImago Journal Rank (SJR) and the reputation of the publisher, only the journals with the highest SJR and the most widely known, internationally recognized publishers were used in the development of English corpus. As a result, we selected the top 10 journals (Table 3).

Table 3

The Top 10 Journals of Economics in EEC

Journals	Sub-disciplines
1. Quarterly Journal of Economics	Business Economics Macroeconomics
2. World Development	Development Economics
3. Econometrica	Econometrics
4. Energy Journal	Energy Economics
5. Journal of Environmental Economics and Management	Environmental Economics
6. Annual Review of Financial Economics	Financial Economics
7. Journal of Finance	Finance
8. Journal of International Business Studies	International Economics
9. Journal of Money, Credit and Banking	Monetary Economics
10. Journal of Public Economic Theory	Public Economics

To develop the EIC, the present researchers used the experts' opinions and availability of journals, too. Lamentably, we could not find a clear classification of research journals, so we identified all available Iranian English-medium journals. We, therefore, finalised seven Iranian journals publishing economics RAs in Iran (Table 4).

Table 4

The Journals of Economics Used in EIC

Journals
1. Iranian Economic Review (IER)
2. International Journal of Management, Accounting, and Economics (IJMAE)
3. International Journal of Business and Development Studies (IJBDS)
4. International Journal of Finance, Accounting, and Economics (IJFAES)
5. Iranian Journal of Economic Studies (IJES)
6. Journal of Money and Economy (JME)
7. International Economic Studies (IES)

Table 5 shows the total number of journals, text types, words, and RAs as well as the publication date of RAs, raw frequency of citations, and normed frequency of citations.

Table 5

Characteristics of Developing EC for Both Writer Groups

	Economics Corpus	
Corpus Features	EEC	IEC
Total Number of Journals	10	7
Text Type	Research Articles	Research Articles
Number of Research Articles	34	25
Research Article Publication Date (year)	2018	2018
Total Number of Words (corpus size)	111,704	36,202
Citation Frequency	432	103
Citation Frequency Per 1,000 Words	3.9	2.8

In order to select the texts which would make up IME Corpus, we followed similar procedures to develop EC. We first visited online websites for main fields of study and research in industrial and manufacturing engineering, randomly selected three classifications introduced by School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering at University of New South Wales (UNSW) (https://www.engineering. unsw.edu.au/mechanical-engineering/), Industrial and Manufacturing engineering at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) (https://www.uwplatt.edu/program/ industrial-engineering), the Engineers Ireland STEPS, and International Journal of Machine Tools and Manufacture (https://www.journals.elsevier.com/international-journal-of-machine-tools-and manufacture), and ordered the list alphabetically. Finally, an industrial engineer at Sharif University in Iran was requested to mark the mainstream fields on the list. As a result, eight main sub-disciplines were determined (Table ٦). We considered SImago Journal Rank (SJR) and reputation of the publisher, so we selected only the journals which had the highest Impact Factor (IF) and were from the most widely known, internationally recognized publishers. Finally, 11 journals were included the English corpus (Table 6).

Table 6

The Top Eleven Journals of IME Used in EIMEC

Journals	Sub-Disciplines
Robotics and Computer-Integration Manufacturing Computer and Industrial Engineering	Computer Aided Design
Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management	Finance and Decision-Making
Quality Engineering	Manufacturing, Automation and Quality Control
Material and Manufacturing Processes Additive Manufacturing	Material Handling & Distribution
European Journal of Industrial Engineering	Product / Process Design and Management
Journal of Operations Management	Supply Chain Management and Logistics
International Journal of Machine Tools and Manufacture	Tool Design and Systems Design Modelling
Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing & Service Industries	Work Design, Human Factors and Ergonomics

To develop IIMEC, the researchers followed the same procedures for the development of EIC and identified six prestigious Iranian journals in IME, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Journals of IME Used in IIMEC

Journals
1. Journal of Quality Engineering and Production Optimization (JQEPO)
2. Journal of Optimization in Industrial Engineering (JOIE)
3. International Journal of Research in Industrial Engineering (IJRIE)
4. Journal of industrial and system engineering (JISE)
5. Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management Studies (JIEMS)
6. International Journal of Industrial Engineering & Production Research (IJIE)

Table 8 summarises information on the two sub-corpora. The information includes the number of RAs, text type, publication date, corpus size, and citation frequency.

Table 8

Summary of Journals Used to Develop IMERA Corpus

	IME Corpus	
Corpus Features	EIMEC	IIMEC
Total Number of Journals	11	6
Text Type	Research Articles	Research Articles
Number of Research Articles	34	25
Research Articles Publication Date (year)	2018	2018
Total Number of Words (corpus size)	79,128	36,558
Citation Frequency	421	76
Citation Frequency Per 1,000 Words	5.3	2.1

Instrumentation

As explained in the literature review, we have built on Thompson and Tribble's (2001) and Thompson and Ye's (1991) frameworks to analyse citations practices. Both classifications have been frequently used by different researchers (e.g., Pecorari, 2006; Petric, 2007). These classifications have been used for academic purposes in different genres, including research proposals, MA and PhD dissertations, textbooks, and RAs. The present research has also analysed RAs, so they are best suited for the present study. The third reason has to do with their comprehensiveness, considering both structures and functions of citations in a single categorisation. These two classifications contain both integral and non-integral citations and a wide variety of functions (integral: naming, verb controlling; non-citation; non-integral: source, identification, reference, origin) for analysing citations.

Corpus Processing

Using the electronic versions of the RAs in both disciplines from each of selected journals, the researchers downloaded all the RAs from all the issues of their last year (2018) of publication. Then, all the RAs were examined one by one keeping those articles that met all of our criteria and excluding the others from our initial corpus and then saved them separately. Once the RAs were saved, following Flotton, et al. (2006), the front matter (title, authors, abstracts / summaries), figures, tables, captions, footnotes, and all back matters (i.e. acknowledgments, endnotes, references, and appendixes) were manually deleted in order to produce files being readable by computer program utilised in this research.

The results and discussion section of the selected RAs was converted into the plain text format for corpus analysis. The major reason why the merged results and discussion section was examined in this study is based on Peritz' (1994) study on RAs, showing the predominant role of results and discussion section. This section is challenging in nature, because authors compare and contrast the results of their

study with those of previous similar studies and citations serve several functional purposes in this subsection. As Thompson (2005) noted, citations are highly dense in this subsection, so we can find a wide range of citation types for further structural and functional analyses to better understand their behaviour.

In terms of the size of the corpus for this study, corpus sizes in different studies were identified. The maximum size of the corpus for analyzing citation behavior in RAs belonged to Hyland and Jiang (2018) study on 360 papers of 2.2 million words, and the smallest corpus was the corpus of Fazel and Shi (2015) on six papers of 1,221 words, and they identified 78 citations in these six papers. However, the majority of previous studies have used corpus sizes which range from 100,000 to one million words (Hewings, et. al., 2010; Lee, et. al., 2018; Petric & Harwood, 2013). In this study, 118 RAs were examined with 258,974 words, and 1,032 citations were identified. The size of this corpus, hence, conforms to and falls in the range of the corpus size of previous studies.

The researchers focused only on empirical research articles in 2018 in EC and IC in both disciplines for several reasons. The first reason was to take advantage of using the most recent articles, to make the analysis more credible, and exclude the variable of time. The second reason was due to journals' policies; journals may change their policies each year, so they may influence citation frequency. For example, Kwan and Chan (2014) found that journal's policies influenced directly citation frequencies. For RAs to be accepted, "the number of references should be kept to a minimum" or length restriction causes scarcity of citation because "When there is a limit on the length, the first thing that you would reduce would be the citations" (Kwan & Chan, 2014, p. 36). The third reason for using empirical RAs rests on White's (2004) study on both empirical and theoretical RAs, the findings of which showed empirical articles used more citations than theoretical articles, so we excluded from our study theoretical articles and articles in special issues, because research has shown that the general structure of an article type may vary with its type (Crookes, 1986).

Data Analysis

Anthony's (2018) AntConC was used to identify citations in the corpora. The concordance tool, as implemented in AntConC, showed the search results in a key-word-in-context (KWIC) format and allowed the researchers to identify the frequency of citations and to see how the citations were used in a corpus of texts. The search included all instances of integral and non-integral citations, the subcategories of these citations, and reporting verbs.

We normalised the data. First, the total number of words was calculated. Second, the total number of citations was identified. Third, the total number of citations was multiplied by $10n$. Finally, the result was divided by the total number of words. All the above four procedures can be translated into the following simple formula: $F_n = F_o(10_n) / C$, where F_o stands for the number of citations, C refers for the total number of words, Fn is the normalised frequency per $10n$ words, and n in $10n$ stands for 3.

Results

In this section, the findings of the study are presented in tabular and textual forms. Statistical tests such as chi-square procedures are employed to show statistically significant differences in the frequency, form, and function of citations between the two writer groups. Textual extracts are utilised to show how the two writer groups have used the citations structurally and functionally.

Structure of Citations in EC and IMEC Between Persian and English Writers

Citations can be analysed in terms of the structure: integral and non-integral citations. As shown Table 9, English writers used about four times as many citations as Persian writers did as far as EC is concerned. Integral citations featured markedly in both writer groups' corpora. Like EC, English writers employed citations more frequently (about six times) than Persian writers did as far as IMEC is concerned. Unlike EC, both writer groups used non-integral citations more frequently in IMEC.

Table 9

Frequency of Citation Structure in EC and IMEC

Structure of Citations	EC		IMEC	
	EEC	IEC	EIMEC	IIMEC
Integral	235	60	133	21
Non-Integral	194	45	278	50
Total	429	105	411	71

Function of Citations in EC Between Persian and English Writers

Citations can also be analysed in terms of their functions. Integral citation is divided into three types: naming, verb controlling, and non-citation. Non-integral citation is broken down into four types: source, identification, reference, and origin. As presented in Table 10, both English and Persian writers used naming more frequently than other functions. However, English authors used verb controlling about two times more frequently than Persian authors. In terms of non-integral citations, source (attributing information to an author) was used frequently in both datasets. Source featured markedly in EEC. Reference as the second most frequent function of non-integral citation did not appear in IEC.

Table 10

Functions of Integral and Non-Integral Citations in EEC and IEC

EC		EEC		IEC	
		f	*%*	*f*	*%*
Integral	Verb Controlling	93	39.6%	13	21.6%
	Naming	133	56.6%	45	75.1%
	Non-Citation	9	3.8%	2	3.3%
	Total	235	100%	60	100%
Non-Integral	Source	79	40.7%	28	62.2%
	Identification	31	16%	15	33.3%
	Reference	63	32.5%	0	0%
	Origin	15	7.8%	2	4.4%
	Total	194	100%	45	100%

As shown in Table 10, *source* was more frequent in both corpora. Writers use it to confirm the findings of their own and the methods they choose to carry out their study. Extract 1 and Extract 2 represent how English writers and Persian writers have employed *source* to let readers know their findings agree with those of previous studies.

1. Results suggest electoral deforestation cycles may be explained by rent-seeking behavior, which supports previous findings that election cycles are strongest in countries with weak institutions (Shi and Svensson, 2006). (English writers)

2. The 0–2 km radius is chosen based on previous findings in the literature (Zabel & Guignet, 2012). (Persian writers)

After source, *reference* was more frequent in EEC. Based on the results presented in Table 10, English writers used *reference* to point out that the current work contains further information and readers may refer to it for more information about the topic.

According to Table 10, *identification* is the second most frequent function in IEC. Extract 4 and Extract 5 show that writers use *identification* when they want to focus on the information or the idea rather than the person who has provided it. Most of the time, the verb that the writers used was passive voice to refer to action.

Origin was less frequent in both corpora. English and Persian writers used *origin* to indicate the originator of a theory, a technique or a product.

In the present study, as shown in Table 11, *naming*, as a function of integral citation, occurred more frequently than the other functions in both corpora. We analysed concordance lines to better understand why this occurred in our study, and we identified several patterns as shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Naming Citation Patterns in EEC and IEC

Naming Citation Pattern	EEC		IEC	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*
…In X (2018)…	29	21.8%	4	8.9%
…by X (2018)…	19	14.3%	9	20%
In accordance / line with X (2018)	18	13.5%	7	15.5%
…work / result of X (2018)…	16	12%	12	26.6%
…as X (2018)…	9	6.8%	2	4.4%
…on X (2018)…	9	6.8%	0	0%
Verb X (2018)	7	5.3%	0	0%
Following X (2018)…	6	4.5%	0	0%
…from X (2018)…	6	4.5%	4	8.6%
In contrast / similar / related to X (2018)	5	3.7%	0	0%
According to X (2018)	2	1.5%	3	6.6%
Other	7	5.3%	4	8.9%
Total	133	100%	45	100%

The pattern *In X (year)* is clearly preferred by the English writers, who used it to show that the works done or the results obtained by the author are important to them, but they do not mention the word "work" explicitly. For example, instead of

using in Ellis' (2008) work, research, study, etc., they tended to cite it as in Ellis (2008).

By X (year) was the second most frequent naming pattern, and it occurred more frequently in the EEC than in the IEC, indicating that EEC writers tended to use this function to mention the author of that action rather than his / her work. Although *work / result / method / ... of X* was the highest frequent pattern in the IEC, it received the third highest frequency in EEC. Writers used this function to refer to the work, results or the method which were used or done by the author. Furthermore, they cite these words explicitly in the sentence.

Other naming patterns which received lower attention in both corpora were *to + X* and *Following + X*, in that the overall attention of the writer is on the author of that action. In *to + X*, the writer intends to compare and contrast his or her findings with those of the other authors. In *Following + X*, the writer wants to show that in his / her work the same procedures or methods were used.

As mentioned in Table 10, verb controlling was the second most frequent function of integral citation in both corpora. We grouped verbs into three main categories: factive verbs (i.e., recognise, substantiate); (b) counter-factive verbs (such as ignore, criticize); and (c) non-factive verbs (examine, utilise). Non-factive verbs were the most frequent in EEC (60 out of 93) and IEC (9 out of 13), which authors use to show a neutral stance toward the text cited. Writers rarely used counter-factive verbs. Results show the following instances: factive verbs (31 out of 93 in EEC and 4 out of 13 in IEC) and counter-factive verbs (2 out of 93 in EEC).

The third type of non-integral citation functions, which had the lowest frequency, was non-citation. In this type of citation, the author does not refer to the year in parentheses because he / she may have mentioned it in the previous, or the following sentence, or paragraph. For example, in Extract 3, *they* refers back to Golovko and Valentini, and in Extract 4, *His* stands for Demski.

3. Golovko and Valentini (2011) find that growth rates are higher for firms that couple innovation with exports. They attribute this to a "virtuous, reinforcing circle" of learning and asset exploitation in which firms acquire new knowledge in foreign markets that is then utilised in product improvements, enhancing their sales performance. (English writers)

4. This result is accordance with results of Demski (2004). His results also revealed that the second group (numbers 3 to 6) as the reported earnings first digit show a rate of 362 / 3% lower frequency in comparison to expected frequency in companies with high conservatism. (Persian writers)

Function of Citations in IMEC Between Persian and English Writers

As Table 12 shows, a vast majority of citations in the Persian writers include naming, whereas English writers used both naming and verb controlling in a similar way. Persian authors used naming about twice more than English authors did. In non-integral citations, *source* was used overwhelmingly frequently in the two datasets. *Reference* and *origin* were used very infrequently by both writer groups.

Table 12

Functions of Integral and Non-Integral Citation in EIMEC and IIMEC

IMEC		EIMEC		IIMEC	
		f	*%*	*f*	*%*
Integral	Naming	65	48.9%	20	95.3%
	Verb-Controlling	56	42.1%	1	4.7%
	Non-Citation	12	9%	0	0%
	Total	133	100%	21	100%
Non-Integral	Source	193	69.4%	39	78%
	Identification	60	21.5%	9	18%
	Reference	13	4.6%	0	0%
	Origin	12	4.3%	2	4%
	Total	278	100%	50	100%

Source was used frequently in both corpora. Extract 5 and Extract 6 show writers' agreement with the information. In this type of citation, writers confirm their findings by attributing information to another author and want to show their agreement with the cited information.

5. We assessed the significance of the indirect effects using Monte Carlo simulation with bias-corrected confidence intervals (Preacher and Selig, 2012). (English writers)

6. Since performance of the evolutionary algorithms strongly depends on their parameters (Bashiri & Geranmayeh, 2011). (Persian writers)

Identification was the second most frequently used citation function in both corpora. Writers used this citation type when they wanted to focus their attention on the cited idea rather than the person who proposed the idea. The focus of their attention is on the information. Most of the time, the verb that they have used is passive. *Origin* was rarely used in both corpora. Using this citation, writers introduced the originator of the concept.

Reference was used only by English writers, and it was not common among Persian writers. Writers employed reference to point out that the current work contains further information.

Like the EC, naming was the most frequently used function of integral citation in IMEC. As in EC, the present researchers used concordance lines to identify the naming patterns in IMEC. The results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Naming Citation Patterns in EIMEC and IIMEC

Naming Citation Pattern	EIMEC		IIMEC	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*
…in X (2018)…	12	16.4%	4	21%
…by X (2018)…	24	36.9%	11	57.9%
In accordance / line with X (2018)	6	9.2%	0	0%
...work / result of X (2018)…	7	10.7%	1	5.2%
….as X (2018)…	3	4.6%	0	0%
Verb X (2018)	3	4.6%	0	0%
Following X (2018)…	2	3%	0	0%
…from X (2018)…	4	6.1%	2	10.5%
In contrast / similar / related to X (2018)	1	1.5%	0	0%
According to X (2018)	2	3%	1	5.2%
Other	1	1.5%	0	0%
Total	65	100%	19	100%

The pattern *by X (year)* is clearly preferred by both Persian and English writers. Persian writers used this pattern one and a half times more than English writers. The second most frequent naming pattern was found to be *in X (year)*. The writers wanted to show that the results or works of the cited author were essential to them. *In accordance / similar / in contrast / relate to + X* was used less frequently in the two corpora. In this citation, the ultimate intention of the author is to show a relation between authors' study and their own study.

After *source*, *verb controlling* was used more frequently in EIMEC. *Verb controlling* can be classified in terms of the functions they assume: (a) true, using factive verbs (report, show, find, indicate, demonstrate, describe, notice, identify); (b) false, using counter-factive verbs; or (c) neutral, non-factive (note, point out, propose, state, utilize, use, examine). Non-factive verbs featured markedly in both corpora. Results show that both groups were inclined to use a neutral stance. For example, in Extract 7, writers used *note* to show their neutral stance, and in Extract 8 writers used *find* to show a positive stance toward the cited idea.

7. Vuppalapati et al. (1995) note that "all the major elements of JIT are embedded in a more comprehensive TQM campaign". (English writers)

8. Ghadimi et al. (2012, 2013) find that the first step to achieve this goal is to assess the sustainability level of any manufactured product inside the company with a great precision. (Persian writers)

Frequency Differences in Citations Between Writer Groups

To examine if there were significant differences in citations used by Persian and English writers, a 4 x 2 chi-square test was employed. As Table 13 shows, a statistically significant difference was found in the number of citations in the results and discussion section between writer groups [χ^2 = 56.114, p = .000, Cramer's V = 0.235]. As illustrated in Table 14, further analysis of standardized residuals revealed that the significant difference was caused by non-integral citation for EEC (z = -5.8), for IEC (z = -.2.8), for EIMEC (z = 6.3), and for IIMEC (z = 2.6) as well as integral citation for EEC (z = 5.8), for IEC (z = 2.8), for EIMEC (z = -6.3), and for IIMEC (z = -2.6). The z values were greater than 1.96, which implies that English writers and Iranian writers in both international journals and Iranian journals used different numbers of integral and non-integral citations in the results and discussion section of their RAs.

Table 13

Chi-Square Test for Results and Discussion Section

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	56.114	3	.000
Cramer's V	.235		.000
N of Valid Cases	1016		

Table 14

Frequency of Citation in Native and Non-Native Writers

			Citation		
			Integral	Non-Integral	Total
Corpus	EEC	Count	235	194	429
		Expected Count	186.6	239.4	429.0
		% within Corpus	54.8%	45.2%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	5.8	-5.8	
	IEC	Count	60	45	105
		Expected Count	46.4	58.6	105.0
		% within Corpus	57.1	42.9	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	2.8	-2.8	
	EIMEC	Count	133	278	411
		Expected Count	181.6	229.4	411.0
		% within Corpus	32.4%	67.6%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-6.3	6.3	
	IIMEC	Count	21	50	71
		Expected Count	31.4	39.6	71.0
		% within Corpus	29.6%	70.4%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-2.6	2.6	
Total		Count	449	567	1016
		Expected Count	449.0	567.0	1016.0
		% within Corpus	44.2%	55.8%	100.0%

Discussion

The present study intended to analyse citation practices between native and non-native RA writers in two disciplines of Economics and IME to find the structures (integral and non-integral) and the functions in the results and discussion section. We discuss the results below.

Citations in Economics and IME

The first finding of the study was that citations were used more frequently in Economics than in Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering. This finding confirms some of those from previous studies (e.g., Hyland & Jiang, 2018), which have also generally shown that citations feature markedly in soft sciences than in hard sciences. Unlike hard sciences, which follow the same path and are bound to clearly identifiable areas of study, soft disciplines need to "revisit previously explored features of broad landscape" to provide a credit for the work, which in turns necessitates utilizing more citations (Hyland, 1999, p. 353).

In terms of structure of citations, significant differences were observed between the two disciplines. Economics included more integral citations and fewer non-integral citations; by contrast, more non-integral citations and fewer integral citations were found in Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering. This finding supports those of Hu and Wang (2013) and Pecorari, (2006). In soft sciences, writers use more integral citations because, as Hyland (1999) commented, "typically [soft

sciences] consist of long narratives that engage the arguments of other writers, consistently included cited author in the reporting sentence; [however, in hard sciences], journal styles often require numerical-endnote, which reduces the prominence of cited author considerably" (p. 346). Similarly, as Thompson and Ye (1991) noted, de-emphasizing the role of researcher is conventional in science disciplines because they mainly concentrate on the concept, and they claim "the human factor is not consequential" (p. 99). Meanwhile, due to the significance attached to the use of integral citations in soft sciences, writers are able to attribute their stance toward cited authors. This establishes a professional persona which shows that the writer has been inspired by the author's cited idea.

As for the function, Economics writers tended to use verb controlling citations more frequently than other types of integral citation functions. On the other hand, IME writers tended to use naming citations more frequently. In hard sciences like IME, naming citation is used frequently because it can identify particular equations, methods, and formulations, which are the main features in engineering disciplines (Thompson & Tribble, 2001). As Lee, et al. (2018) noted, hard sciences use a certain amount of technical lexis, which force writers to use more naming citations to express their findings. However, in soft sciences such as Economics, writers tended to use more verb controlling citations because in these disciplines, human factors are consequential and writers need to attribute stance toward cited authors. Employing more discourse reporting verbs helps writers to utilise a wide range of citations to refer to diverse theoretical backgrounds in soft disciplines (White, 2004). As Charls (2006) claimed, writers in soft sciences mostly want to show their positive, or negative stance, toward the cited author which requires using more verb controlling citations.

Citation Differences Between Native and Non-Native Writers in EC

The other findings of the study show that Iranian writers used citations less frequently than English writers did. This is due to the fact that Native-English writers possess a more extensive range of linguistic strategies to draw on (Mansourzadeh & Ahmad, 2011). The other reason is that, as Nisbett (2003, p. 74) noted, in native speaker's writings, interpersonal and rhetorical norms are "constructed bit by bit from nursery school through college" and become part of their authorial identity. When we consider the "culturally favored communicative and discursive practices" (Hu & Wang, 2014, p. 27), it is rarely surprising that the English RA writers contest other researchers' propositions more frequently than the Iranian RA writers do.

A statistically significant difference was found between native and non-native writers in terms of citation structures and functions. Both groups used integral and non-integral citations in a way that was similar to some of the previous research (e.g., Lillis, et al., 2010). It was also found that native and non-native writers used both types of non-integral and integral citations to keep the flow of the argument uninterrupted and for comparison purposes in the discussion (Hewings, et al., 2010). In terms of functions, *naming* citation among integral citation functions and *source* among non-integral citation functions were utilised frequently by native and non-

native writers. Writers use *naming* integral citation frequently because it uses nominalized forms and compressed language and these two features help writers to add more information using fewer words and less space (Lee, et al., 2018). Also, source function, as the most frequent function, is known to be the default non-integral citation function which is used by native and non-native writers. Both native and non-native writers tended to use source more because it requires less complex structures and enables writers to compare and contrast their findings with previous research, which shows their familiarity with the history of the topic (Petric, 2007).

Citation Differences Between Native and Non-Native in IMEC

Findings related to IMEC revealed that some differences were found in terms of structures and functions of citations between native and non-native writers. Both native and non-native writers used non-integral citation frequently. As is documented in the literature in hard disciplines, non-integral citation is utilised frequently by both native and non-native writers because most of the engineering journals prompt them to use numbers in the brackets instead of presenting the names of the author in the sentences to save space and pay more attention to the content rather than the person who has presented the idea. Therefore, this style ultimately reduces the use of integral citations and increases the number of non-integral citations (Hu & Wang, 2014; Samraj, 2013).

Among functions of citations, naming citation was used remarkably in non-native writings, while native writers used both naming and verb controlling approximately equally. Using both types of naming and verb controlling in native writings reveals writers' awareness of the wide range of functions, and using naming function provides writers with the ability to express more information by using fewer words (Petric, 2007). Meanwhile, source was the most preferred non-integral function in both groups, and it is known as a default non-integral citation function (Petric, 2007). The results are in line with some previous studies (ElMalik & Nesi, 2008; Myers, 1990; Thompson, 2001).

Conclusion

The results of our study point to the disciplinary tendencies in the structural and functional uses of citations which writers may decide to choose for the confirmation of their findings. The different uses in citation practices imply that citation practices tend to be discipline-specific. Moreover, writers' choices of citation structures and functions seem to depend on knowledge structures of their disciplines (Charles, 2006; Hyland, 1999). Native writers' use of more citations and various citation functions suggest that citation is culture-specific. Meanwhile, this illustrates the familiarity of native writers with different and complex structures and reveals that citation use depends on their competence and linguistic background in English. Apparently, shared knowledge of the community of practice is crucial in enabling writers to use citations structurally and functionally more frequently. Iranian non-native English writers publishing in L2 have to gradually acquire the norms, culture, practices, and standards of the community of practice before they are able to contribute to the knowledge of their community of practice, and this requires

they first be well-versed in linguistic competence and demonstrate sufficient knowledge on the shared practices of that community (Wenger, 1998).

Results of the current study showed the different citation behaviours between native and non-native writers in international and national publications as well as the different structural and functional citations used by both groups. The results reported in this study may be useful for Iranian, or other international Economics and IME scholars, who wish to adjust their writing styles to meet the common citation conventions. Being familiarised with various structural and functional configurations and permutations of citations appears to be a useful way of establishing writers' credentials as members of the community of practice. Moreover, non-native or novice academics may benefit from the findings of this study in their RAs with different academic purposes. The skillful use of citations is an important method to avoid being accused of committing plagiarism. EAP teachers, therefore, may invest in the various forms citations may assume structurally and functionally to show how novice non-native writers can use them to acknowledge previous knowledge and sources, to increase their credibility in the particular discourse community, and to be identified with disciplinary communities.

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Notes

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[i] These examples are from the corpus of our study.

[i] These include some of the verbs which we identified in our study.

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Unveiling the invisible Gem: Identifying the Obstacles on the Path of Critical Literacy Practices in EFL Digital Classes in Iran

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Abstract

In the present climate, Critical Literacy has become an area gathering momentum more than ever before, tantamount to an 'invisible gem' as almost many education systems have attempted, but failed, to incorporate it into their curricula. To address this elusive notion, this study aimed to investigate the obstacles in the way of possible dilemmas, challenges, constraints, and limitations Iranian EFL teachers face in the process of implementing critical literacy in their online classes. This qualitative research study was conducted in two phases. First, an open-ended set of questions was developed after reviewing the literature, scrutinizing the existing questionnaires, and collecting data from experts in the field. To do so, after reviewing the literature, a list of questions was composed. Subsequently, qualitative data were collected (and analyzed) from 29 EFL teachers through an open-ended questionnaire and interview. The framework and elicited data led to the development of 23 items for the interview part. Accordingly, the online classes of all the teachers were observed by the researchers for an entire term. From what has been discussed, the following conclusion may be drawn that critical literacy needs to be part of the language teaching curricula in Iran. The finding can potentially aid the key educational stakeholders, including second/foreign language (L2) policymakers, teacher educators, authorities in charge of recruiting teachers, and materials developers, to take appropriate measures to increase pre- and in-service L2 teachers' critical literacy and, as a result, encourage the implementation of this key concept in the instructional contexts.

Keywords: critical literacy, obstacles, online EFL classes, Iranian students

Introduction

The responsibility for the growth and development of individuals is on the shoulder of the educational system and pedagogies that practice, promote, and preach criticality, critical thought and critical literacies (Shor, 1999). It is only in this context that students will be able to "develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society" (UNESCO, 2004, p. 13), that is precisely what critical literacy intends to do. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many educators turned to online classes as an alternative to face-to-face classes. This even makes it more urgent to investigate different practicalities of such settings, one of which is the Critical Literacy practices, especially in societies where English has the function of a foreign language.

For decades, the teaching practice of foreign languages, especially English, in Iran was influenced by traditional methods limited to the memorization of linguistic structures, isolated vocabularies and materials which are largely inauthentic (Rahimi & Askari, 2015). In such a system, teachers rarely operationalized the well-known communicative language teaching practices (although recently CLT has started to gain popularity) and tend to present the information to the learners who are its passive receivers. This is in line with what Freire (1970) termed as the 'banking' view of education that construes learners as hollow vessels that are to be filled by the knowledge the instructor provides. Concentrating merely on linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge goes against Freebody and Luke's (1990) definition of literacy. To them, literacy is more than decoding written texts and being passive receivers of knowledge.

Prior to delving into the issue of critical literacy (CL), the very concept of literacy needs to be looked at more closely. Although "[t]here is no single, uniform literacy, no linear path," it is believed that literacy encompasses the main four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing across texts providing a rich diversity of "print, visual, digital, audio, and oral," experiences (Faulkner, 2011, p. 108). The interpretation and application of such texts, however, vary from time to time and across different locations (Schultz, 2002). Weng (2023) highlights the significance of research in English as a foreign language setting as it has been neglected by researchers. The never-ending conflict between accepting the status quo and the endeavor to consciously ~~to~~ ask learners to question the extant assumptions can pose numerous problems for classroom teachers. Researchers have increasingly been showing dispositions towards the fact that educators are growing more and more sensitive when it comes to exercising control within the restrictions offered by the classroom (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2014), The driving force of the present study, therefore, was to examine the existence of this tension in an attempt to provide practitioners with the awareness that they are, in fact, agents of operationalizing CL in their classrooms, and not to suppress or ignore it (Kubota, 2014). This study explored the extent to which such roles are assumed by teachers.

Theoretical Framework

The quote 'Education as The Practice of Freedom' can best represent the practices which stem from the social justice pedagogy stipulated by the founding father of Critical Literacy, the Brazilian theorist and educator, Paulo Freire, as first described in his most famous book Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1968). He added socio-political dimensions to the bare notion of literacy. Then, in one stance, using a problem-posing method of pedagogy, he managed to instruct Chilean and Brazilian farmers to read by showing them lexical items that were germane to their daily routines. Having employed 'words' as incentives, Freire successfully had them reflect critically upon the oppressive realities surrounding them, enabling the peasants to transform their worlds by freeing themselves from such oppressions. Later, Freire figured out that people were still capable of retaining the words as these had assisted them to gain a critical consciousness of their circumstances.

Writing and reading for Freire are tools which are accompanied by exploring the underlying causes and effect of the students' lived experiences, for social transformation. This socio-political standpoint ultimately gave rise to the movement of which evolved to become an influential ideological, theoretical, and pedagogical construct (Cadeiro-Kaplan & Smith, 2002). Although implicit in critical pedagogy (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993), liberation and emancipation are not the focus of the present contribution as they are beyond the scope of the present study.

Literature Review

Different contexts and perspectives concerning CL have been the result of discrepancies in practicing it due to postulated theories and approaches (Knobel, 1998). The three main orientations of critical literacy have been discussed by Lankshear's (1997) three viewpoints of CL, providing an insightful framework used for investigating different takes by examining each one via its *object(s) of critique*:

1. Having a critical perspective on literacy or literacies per se, where literacy itself is the object of critique;

2. Having a critical perspective on particular texts, where the critique of texts and their world views is the object;

3. Having a critical perspective on, i.e., being able to analyze and critique– wider social practices... etc. which are mediated by, made possible, and partially sustained through reading, writing, viewing, transmitting, etc. texts. Here, social practices, their histories, their normative work, and their associated literacy practices and artefacts, etc. are the target of analysis and critique. (p. 44)

Concerning critical literacy, many studies have focused on English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers who share the same concerns as those of their students when it comes to CL. Teachers liked the exposure and experience of critical literacy, critically reflecting in the company of their workmates (e.g. through action research) on power relations in the organizations or institutions they work for, resulting in gaining an understanding of the complicated social challenges, feeling what minority groups that have been marginalized feel (DeMulder, Stribling, & Day,

2013). Acquainting themselves with the notion of critical pedagogy stimulated in-service teachers to be able to pool their newly discovered educational philosophy among their coworkers in conferences and workplaces (Sangster, Stone, & Anderson, 2013). Particularly worth mentioning was the cases of changes in the attitudes of Asian language teachers who, after being familiar with critical literacy, welcomed the shift in their teaching methods towards grasping the meaning rather than being obsessed with language forms (Ko, 2013).

The Literature concerning the practice and theory of CL in both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts happens to be relatively limited. Among the few existing ones, Wallace (2003) investigated the ideological and social underpinnings of critical literacy practices in her EFL students analysing texts to see the ways in which the author's presentation of a given topic can affect the readers. When her students focused on the textual practice decisions of the authors, they were able to realize how texts and ideological constructions could imbue with intention, bias, and design of human taste.

Targeting higher education, Kuo (2009) explored CL by employing dialogue activities. Most students showed a positive attitude towards the activity. Kou, however, fearing the detrimental effects that lack focus on traditional pedagogical literacy instruction may have on the capability to underperform on language proficiency exams warned of the possibility of exercising CL "at the cost of reading delight and spelling/grammar correctness" (p. 493) in EFL classrooms. Yilmaz (2009) studied school teachers in Turkey regarding Critical Literacy practices, too; this study's outcome was a valid questionnaire that investigated the use of critical literacy and critical thinking by instructors within a classroom setting.

Cho and Johnson (2020) observed Korean high-schoolers' presentation regarding gender equality, discussing how pupils managed to be equipped with chances to re- and deconstruct the unequal power relations by means of problems posing format (Freire, 1970). Pack (2023) attempted to put forth an alternative to critical literacy education when it came to preservice teachers. The author defended the merits of introducing critical literacy to preservice teachers by observing their relationship with power relations.

Zaini (2022) introduced a new approach to reading ~~the~~ texts i.e. ambivalence which was connected to the understanding of the truth. Participants in the study managed to critique and modify their interpretations of the text. Bender-Slack (2010) pointed out the fact that many teachers refrain from talking about issues, other than the restricted topics that are offered, as a result of fear of chaos in the class which might result in things growing beyond control.

Ghaffar Samar and Davari (2011) investigated English Language Teaching (ELT) professionals' and university tutors regarding their use of critical thinking and critical ELT. The analyses of the collected data revealed that Iranian ELT educators and practitioners had a disposition towards a newly growing critical-oriented shift as the one which has been mostly dominated by the mainstream linguistic imperialism front.

Abednia and Izadinia (2013) conducted a study in the context of Iran, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran. They targeted learners in a Reading Comprehension course, analyzed the students' learning process improvement and critical thinking development during an entire term. The researchers asserted that students enjoyed the course because "they appreciated the significance of the opportunity that encouraged critical and creative treatment of different issues rather than passive adoption of a single interpretation of the world" (p. 348). According to Abednia and Izadinia (2013), the reason behind the students' 'heightened awareness' was specifically observable in their writing skill as "they tried to capture the complexity of issues through contextualizing them, identifying their problem areas, offering appropriate solutions, and reconsidering their own previous conceptualizations of them" (p. 348). The study concluded with an emphasis on the role of the teachers stating that "teachers must remain open to students' feedback, as openness is a prerequisite for dialogical education" (p. 349). It is, thus, crucial for teachers to assist explicit help regarding critical literacy and critical pedagogy as students may struggle with the notion due to a lack of familiarity with it.

Regarding the implementation of critical literacy in online EFL classes in Iran, our study revolves around exploring the possible implementation of critical literacy practices in online Iranian EFL classes through the lens of the teacher's lived experiences. Despite the fact that previous research has provided invaluable insight into the incorporation of Critical Literacy into education in general and language learning programs in particular, very little attention has been given to the 'if' and 'how' of integrating Critical Literacy Practices in online settings. With the global pandemic COVID-19 and the world-wide lockdowns, face-to-face classes were almost shifted to online ones. It is, thus, justifiable that more light needs to be shed on numerous aspects of the ways using which teachers develop or practice critical pedagogy. This is to be carried out in conjunction with how scholars picture the future of CL in online EFL classes in Iran as a result of scant attention given to the mentioned notion.

The vitality of Critical Literacy and the urgency of its incorporation into online EFL classrooms was the driving force in conducting this study. As a result, the prime purpose of the present contribution is delving into the implementation of critical literacy in online EFL classrooms in the context of Iran, along with coming up with a model appropriate for the context based on the shared experiences of teachers. To this end, their perspectives were surveyed, making sure such a practice exists, though minimally.

In order to come up with responses to address the needs recognized in the literature so as to provide insight into Critical Literacy Practices, the following question has been posed which guide the present study, addressing the requirements of the current research:

- What are the possible challenges and limitations that Iranian EFL teachers face in the process of implementing critical literacy in their online classes?

Method

Research Design

In order to keep the original context of the experiences intact, a transcendental phenomenological design was adopted to provide access to teachers' perspectives. To follow Patton's (2015) proposal that transcendental phenomenology has the capability to equip the researcher with the necessary tools to see, sense and excavate the participants' lived experiences first-hand and to the fullest, such design guided the study. This design, therefore, was adopted as it favors the exploration of context-specific, interpretive and descriptive analyses of conscious experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Transcendental phenomenology targets only ~~the~~ observable behaviors. It was selected as it was suitable for the present study. It gives researchers the liberty and dynamism in conducting research as the research question posed in such studies can be dynamic, subject to ongoing revision, and refined as the research has the mission to uncover new knowledge (Mackay & Gass, 2005). The various methods in phenomenology include interviews, diaries, audio/video recordings, observations, and documentation as when doing so the researcher can gain access to an in-depth perspective into the concept under investigation.

MAXQDA 2020, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis package, was employed to analyzed the gleaned data. The program ascertained that interview texts were categorized in a specified order. The MAXQDA 20 simplifies the analysis of multiple texts and organizes content analysis. Coding on the interviews conducted by the researchers led to the emergence of some themes, using coding of the data (MAXQDA, 2020).

Searching out for themes in participants' responses, researchers established some themes that signified critical literacy practices. In this study, the main extracted themes were separately coded, tabulated and classified. Coding is of utmost importance as Bazeley and Jackson (2013) define it under the terminology of an abstract avatar of an object, notion, or phenomenon. Coding was adopted as it was recommended by Creswell (2014) in critical ethnographic studies. To functionally analyze the data gleaned from interviews extracting the themes comprising Critical Literacy, exploratory thematic analysis was employed along with content analysis. Mertens (2009) has talked about the four stages of qualitative data analysis: preparation, exploration, reduction and interpretation. This approach, according to Weber (1985), comprises of a series of procedures helping researchers to drag out underlying themes hidden in the files.

Classroom Observation

The nature of online classrooms requires direct observation as it is dynamically shifting and evolving (and also in case a problem happens). In order to gain a better perspective, moving in line with common modes of data collection, researchers decided to turn to observation as a means to gain insight into how the intended practices take place inside the virtual classroom. This method of data

collection is employed to glean first-hand data from both teachers' activities and learners' level of engagement in classes, as it was previously decided not to directly engage with the learners. The classes were recorded for transcription serving further analysis and research purposes.

Not only this, but field notes were also taken as a common practice in class observation because "[N]otes may supplement information from other sources, including documents and interviews, or they may comprise the main research data" (Ary et al., 2010, p. 435). As the classes are being observed, the notes along with recorded audio (or video) can provide great insight into what actually goes on in classrooms. In order to ascertain what went on in the classes, and to further make sure nothing was missed, all the sessions of all the classes were observed by the researchers. Finally, the transcribed data were coded to extract the constructs under investigation for the sake of the study. Of all the data, 20 percent of the data were coded by a second assessor in order to ascertain interrater reliability (Cohen's Kappa = 0.9).

Teachers' Interview

For the sake of more in-depth knowledge, interviews were arranged with the teachers. King and Horrocks (2010) point out that the most commonly used means of qualitative data collection are interviews. Researchers strongly recommend interviews accompanied by diaries (Williamson et al., 2015). Although direct observation has always been considered to offer first-hand data, the incorporation of interviews was deemed necessary by the researchers so as to serve as a method for further triangulation of data, despite being construed to provide a secondary set of data. Another benefit of the interview is that they can broaden the scope of the study as they are the most commonly employed method of data collection in qualitative research (Talmy, 2010).

Based on the objectives of the study, researchers developed questions fitting the purpose of the present research. Through the comments of a panel of Applied Linguists, the relevance, consistency, and content of the questions were checked. Content validity, was applied as an estimate of the validity of the findings of the study. Inter-coder reliability was another factor to be taken into consideration in measuring the relevance, appropriateness, and consistency of the extracted themes.

Each interview session lasted a maximum of 20 minutes and was recorded. To give the searchers more liberty in asking questions, the interview was semi-structured in which "the researcher uses a written list of questions as a guide, while still having the freedom to digress and probe for more information" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p.173). The researchers developed the questions themselves, validated by experts in applied linguistics.

The content validity of the interview was evaluated by 7 faculty members specializing in the field of Applied Linguistics who evaluated each question for its

language clarity and relevance to the issue under investigation. On a Likert scale (1) was deemed irrelevant, (2) needed a major modification, (3) needed a minor modification and (4) was completely relevant. Likewise, the clarity of the questions was rated on a 4-point scale where (1) was unclear, while (4) was completely clear. The ratio of relevance and clarity to the total number of items was, ultimately, computed. According to Rodrigues et al. (2017), the item is clear or relevant if the ratio is above .79. Based on the raters' evaluation, the content validity of the interview was above .81.

Participants

In the present study, based on convenience sampling, only those groups of English teachers working full-time or part-time at English language institutes in Iran were targeted to participate. To cater for the needs of the study, the participants were selected from among Iranian EFL teachers working in two private language schools (which for issues of confidentiality shall not be named directly). Due to issues of practicality, the participants were mainly selected from the cities of Rasht and Tehran and although the main concern of the study was online EFL classes, the possibility of face-to-face interviews was considered, hence the need for selecting the participants from the cities where researchers were based. The total number of participants included about 29 non-native EFL instructors with at least 5 years of experience, teaching at private English language schools in Iran.

The exclusion criteria included unwillingness to cooperate, novice and in-training teachers, teachers of languages other than English and those who held only private classes with only one student. The reason for selecting 29 participants was provisioning the possibility of participants dropping out or withdrawing from the study and the fact that data saturation would be the ultimate goal of interviews and data collection. The participants are selected from teachers whose educational backgrounds ranged from Bachelor's, and masters. They had teaching experiences ranging from five to 18 years. Such institutes usually hold classes with a maximum of a dozen students partaking in online classes (to maintain social distancing considering the Covid-19 pandemic in case classes are formed in a face-to-face manner).

As the classes are mainly conducted in English, the majority of teachers are TEFL graduates having passed TTC courses prior to starting their teaching practice. As the concept of critical literacy may be far-fetched for elementary and beginner students, the researchers decided (employing purposive sampling) to select the instructors teaching at the intermediate level and above, who met the requirements, to participate in the study. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the participants of the study.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Participants

Demographic information	Participants (f)
Gender	
Female	21
Male	8
Age	
20-29	11
30-39	17
40-49	1
Educational level	
BA	12
MA	14
PhD	3
Geographical Locations (i.e., Provinces of Iran)	
Guilan	16
Tehran	9
Mazandaran	2
Isfahan	1
Shiraz	1
Years of Teaching Experience	
5-9	10
10-14	15
15-20	4
Majors	
Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)	5
English Language and Literature	15
Linguistics	9

This qualitative study aimed to interview teachers, out of whose words the main tenets of CL taking place in Iranian online classrooms were extracted. In the interviews, thick descriptions were provided regarding critical literacy application along with actual classroom practices. Last, but not least, the study sought to examine the extent to which such practices, if any, proved to be fruitful from the point of view of the teachers.

Results

Interview Results

To answer the research question of the study, i.e. what possible dilemmas, challenges, constraints, and limitations Iranian EFL teachers face in the process of implementing critical literacy in their online classes, teachers mostly concurred on the issues of technicalities, rigid curricula, and the restrictive nature of online classes. As quoting every single comment the participants made was beyond the scope of the present study, the researchers decided to insert relevant hypertexts along with their own comments in the following section. The details are tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2

Structure of the Themes

Themes	
Activities/ conditions claimed to cause constraints on critical practices	Activities that were actually observed
Boring nature of online classes	Not considering CL practices as lesson-related
Internet connection problems	Viewing CL practices as taboos and forbidden
Lack of opportunity to provide feedback	Fear of losing jobs by questioning authority
Low chances of group / pair work	Sensitive nature of cultural, religious, political subjects
Rigid education system	Censorship of L2 course books
Syllabi restrictions	No time dedicated to out-of-the-book questions
Not knowing exactly what CL is	total absence of CL practices

Dull Nature of Online Classes

One participant pointed to the lackluster nature of online classes as many nonverbal cues are omitted, cues which could have been subject to interpretation leading to circumstances under which critical literacy could have been facilitated.

> [1] *Most of our body language is missing in online classes and in busy classes, the learners do not even see each other so that they can convey some parts of the message through non-verbal communication. This can be*

> *problematic and cause some misunderstanding. For example, humor is not very well-received if it is written in a chat box. (Participant 4)*

As clear as it may be, this participant mentioned their preference for face-to-face classes over online ones, due to the same reasons mentioned above:

> [2] *First of all, getting students to focus is very hard in online classes, and explaining some terms takes long eons because of the fact that they cannot express their problems as easily as face-to-face classes. (Participant 12)*

One participant said that they could only encourage learners to state their opinions when they are incentivized by, for example, the teacher playing the devil's advocate:

> [3] *I ask them questions in the form of follow-ups. They might express their own lived experiences. As a teacher I have no choice but to play the devil's advocate to keep the discussion going. (Participant 7)*

Internet Connection Problems

Another highly cited problem had to do with internet connection. The overwhelming majority of teachers attributed their lack of opportunity to practice critical literacy to poor quality of internet connectivity:

> [4] *Having a low chance to engage the learners in the activities due to limitations in interactions and to use proper materials owing to low speed and breakdowns in connections. (Participant 29)*

Again, the problems of online classes resurfaced here. Another issue that came up along with the internet connection in online classes was the time that was also wasted for constant re-logs:

> [5] *Right now the biggest challenge is the lack of time. I have 90 minutes and a lot of content to cover. Another issue would be a breakdown in communication due to internet speed problems or technicalities. The same problems could continue to persist in the future. (Participant 26)*

Providing feedback was among the areas discussed by the teachers. Participant 13 went on further to the issue of feedback, saying that: *"I assume giving feedback on their way of thinking in this online platform would be challenging"*. This participant described feedback as both in-action comments given to students during the classes and feedback on assignments, highlighting the difficulty of providing the first one in the class.

Low Chances of Group / Pair Work

Participant Two was critical of the fact that it is virtually impossible for online classes to have the commodities of face-to-face classes such as group/ pair work which are necessary for CL:

> [6] *...activities such as group discussion, a decent presentation from the part of the learner, presenting and analyzing texts in the form of questions*

without worrying if the person on the other side of the line could hear you; all of these are very hard to implement... (Participant 2)

As the classroom restrictions did not create a relaxed atmosphere, as the teachers claimed, one participant told the researchers that they had created a group in social media so that the students could freely discuss and challenge what went on outside the class:

[10] *I have some groups in social media where learners get to tell me what they think of the procedure of the class. Since I encourage them to talk about the things they find helpful and those they do not, they often feel free to share their opinion. I believe they usually know what works for them best. However, this process needs to be done discreetly in a way that it won't backfire ... (Participant 2)*

Rigid Education System

A very thought-provoking idea that emerged regarding the obstacles on the pathway of implementing critical literacy practices would be the rigid nature of the hierarchical education system:

[7] *I think we need to create a safe environment so that people wouldn't be afraid of expressing their political sidings and more importantly, we need to maintain an unbiased mediator's role. People should feel like they might end up at a disadvantage for having had a different view than that of their teacher. (Participant 9)*

No room for creativity was brought up by another candidate, highlighting the fact that the syllabi leave no space for anything beyond the lesson to be covered:

[8] *The reality is that our syllabus does not consider cultural elements at all. The teacher him or herself needs to have a critical mindset. Both inside and outside the class. (Participant 8)*

There were many more cases where the participants claimed that it was not possible for teachers to practice criticality as the restrictions of syllabi did not permit it:

[9] *By entailing actual subjects and dedicating space in the syllabus to this part; by emancipating teachers and not forcing them to cover an inflexible syllabus. They can easily change the way everything works by changing the evaluation process; because of the fact that everything within this country is based on evaluation; therefore, if you change the evaluation medium in a way that it entails critical thinking the syllabus and educational system will follow. (Participant 12)*

During the study, it was noticed that the teachers were critical of their own practices, with many commenting that since there do exist rigid limitations regarding the educations system, syllabi, and socio-political climate, the blame rests on their own shoulders to firstly know what critical literacy is and secondly to do implement it by taking the lead themselves:

[11] *The teacher must be able to think critically himself to begin with; s/he must be able to explain the matter if s/he is forced to and the instructor must possess an avidity about knowledge so that he can always make progress and go forward, that is exactly how s/he can obtain more information and can operationalize anything within his classroom but in the real universe, teachers get lazy after a while and they do not follow up anything seriously once they have job security. (Participant 11)*

Again, the idea of the fact that teachers have to bear the responsibility of first knowing what critical literacy is and then implementing it resurfaced. This participant saw criticality as a tool to bring about change not just a way of asking complicated questions:

[12] *Well as I said that earlier a teacher should not be a "preacher who is not a believer". Plus, a good knowledge of the concept of critical literacy is also important. I meet some teachers that they thought critical literacy is just about asking complicated questions. It's good to know that the ultimate purpose for critical literacy, in my opinion, is to bring about a change." (Participant 19)*

Another participant blamed the teachers for their indolence claiming that they do need to take charge, seeing this inactivity as their main fault:

[13] Most of the teachers have claims and statements of their own and sometimes they write books and articles about it. But when it comes to practice, they themselves don't follow what they have said. So I believe a teacher should make claims in a way that they really believe in what they are saying not just to address the problem I think everyone is aware of the most of political problems in society but solving those problems needs "a man of action". I hope it is clear enough! (Participant 21)

Observation Results

What was observed during the sessions was that many teachers taught in a way as if they felt activities related to critical literacy were not part of the classroom procedure and were, in fact, something to evade; an area that the teacher is not supposed to talk about or that the authorities forbid, or what must be done clandestinely: a taboo!

Evading Criticality

As some instructors knew they were being observed, whenever a question came up that challenged the "status quo" the teachers would blush and then directly remind the students not to distract their attention from the main focus of that specific lesson. A case in point was that of Participant 9 who forbade the students from asking the question of why they were not supposed to talk about the boy-girl relationship since it was part of the lesson. The researchers would like to comment here that this is but an example from among a mounting number of cases of teachers of any subject matter in Iran, who would barely digress from whatever is dictated by the curriculum from the authorities. This rigid education system is what keeps both

the instructors and the learners form thinking about any creative 'move' towards asking the question why.

During observations of the classes taught by Participant 16, once the teacher said that this tendency to avoid encouraging students to be critical stemmed from the fact that they might have been criticized for not following what they were supposed to, i.e. the lesson:

[14] *I ask you questions when it is related to the lesson because if I ask out-of-the-book questions you might feel it is not related to the lesson and get distracted.* (*Participant 16*)

Another participant, for example, was observed telling the learners the reason behind not following up on some ideas such as those that are:

[15] *Mostly social and political issues and sometimes cultural phenomena are the things we tend to avoid going about religious matters is the red line in this class. Please do not comment on these issues during the class (Participant 10)*

This teacher had told the researchers that many colleagues had the same challenge to various extents with the main reason being the fear of losing their jobs. Although most language institutes are privately-run, they are constantly monitored by the 'Ministry of Education'.

Another teacher was observed telling the students that he did not have a clue what the topic mainly revolved around. The students were mostly silent after that and they did not ask anything else:

[16] *Guys I can't answer your questions because I don't know much about this issue myself. The aim of this exercise was to teach you present perfect. So, let's stick to the plan. (Participant 19)*

The Barrier of Logistics

There were a countless number of times when the connection would break down and ruin the atmosphere. In one class the teacher managed to fire the imagination of the students in the freer practice section of the speaking, but poor connection along with the reverb of the voices did not let the class to go as planned with the teacher commenting:

[17] *I can't hear you properly and I think your friends got kicked out of the room. Everyone please log out and log back in so we can try again. Of course, this the peak hour and there is a lot of load on the servers. (Participant 21)*

It was also observed that the teachers complained during the class about not having the possibility of putting the students in group pods as was the case in many face-to-face classes. In applications like 'Sky room' this option is absent and many other ones mostly glitch when more than two students are grouped in one pod. It was very interesting to see one teacher calling digital class as an unreal one:

[18] *If this was a real class I would group you so that you could practice asking and answering questions but unfortunately it is not possible. Hopefully, the institute would open soon and we can see each other again. (Participant 8)*

Fear of being observed was another factor that pushed the teachers to refrain from either challenging the situation or letting the students do so. One teacher was very obsessed with the fact that the class was being recorded and was afraid that whatever was said in the class could be used against them later:

[19] *Pay attention that it is being recorded so it is better to just talk about the lesson and nothing else. Thank you. (Participant 28)*

Add time constraints to all these and we come to an amalgamation of problems that are so convoluted it is not clear which knot needs to be untied first. Classes were already no longer than 90 minutes and as a couple of minutes were always killed by technicalities, teacher felt under pressure to be able to teach all the aspects of the lesson:

[20] *As we have very few minutes left, I think we need to cover the next page to finish the unit quickly. (Participant 3)*

Overall, it is palpably clear that many participants expressed concerns over technicalities such as Internet connectivity, time constraints, rigid syllabi and lack of awareness regarding critical literacy practices in their digital classes, blaming these factors along with the nature of online classes for the low regard of such practices.

Discussion

The findings indicated that a majority of teachers had little or no prior knowledge of what exactly critical literacy was, let alone being able to implement such critical practices in their own online classes. Having said that, they believed that English teachers should look critically at what they do more in the future. It is palpably clear that, in spite of appreciating the opportunity of being exposed to critical literacy in the present study, many of the participants felt ambivalence towards the very notion of the concept.

Teachers Appreciating Critical Literacy

As a result of being engaged with critical reflection, the researchers noticed a gentle slope in most teachers' interest in inequalities and power relations in socio-political issues as was the case for the study carried out by DeMulder et al., (2013) whose participants gained an understanding of such matters and began to feel toward marginalized minorities and those underprivileged. This could be partially rooted in the fact that those who hold TEFL degrees usually pass courses germane to critical applied linguistics; a finding that is totally in line with what Aliakbari and Faraji (2011), Yilmaz (2009), and Abelrahim (2007) were unanimous on.

Researchers of the present study hope that, as teachers became more aware of their responsibility towards a more inclusive education, they might re-evaluate the indirect influence of their own pedagogical practices. This is in line with current research accentuating the fact that educators are growing more and more sensitive when it comes to exercising control inside the classroom (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2014), the gravity of the restriction and control they impose to inhibit the learners' views (Kubota, 2014), or opting for safe topics for classroom discussion as a result of fear of the outbreak of "'mutiny" (Bender-Slack, 2010).

Several other studies have found that exposure to CL motivated teachers to share this newly discovered philosophy with their own colleagues (Sangster, Stone, & Anderson, 2013). Some studies have been successful in changing the mindset of teachers, especially Asian ones, who, after being introduced to CL, started advocating a shift in their own teaching; moving away from mere instruction to comprehension (Ko, 2013; Ko & Wang, 2009), form strategy-based teaching to the test to discussing socio-cultural issues (Ko & Wang, 2009), from teacher-dominated monologues to learner-cantered interactions (Ko, 2013), from mere text decoding to seeing the text as a tool in making meaning (Tan et al., 2010).

The point is not to be missed that, despite acknowledging the significance of CL, those partaking in this study raised numerous concerns so as to the applicability and appropriacy of implementing CL in their classes due to a number of existing assumptions which give rise to several factors which prevent them from applying it in their classrooms.

Targeting the System

What else that came under the spotlight was teachers' penchant for prerequisites of agendas favouring the incorporation of CL in curricula and syllabi. They felt the lack of such practices and complained regarding the restrictions imposed as a result of rigid education systems. Some teachers have raised concerns about the direct implementation of critical literacy or critical thought about institutional practices, policies, or even materials that would invite questioning of the education system that such institutions are attempting to give credit to and work hard to establish. As White (2009, p. 56) puts it, "paradoxically, when charged with teaching students critical literacy, teachers should be wary of actually succeeding in the endeavour!" Perhaps this was the root cause of many of these teachers showing conservatism to initiate change in their classes (Sangster et al., 2013).

Another important finding was that teachers identified many technical, practical, and educational restrictions when it came to practicing critical literacy in their classes. More specifically, they knew that the ultimate goal of education was not only teaching what was provided in the book. These teachers seemed to sense that something was missing in their teaching affairs. The first barrier was the rigid curricula that both implicitly and explicitly devalued CL, which was also the case for some studies (Curdt-Christiansen, 2010; Masuda, 2012; Tan et al., 2010). This was the underlying cause of teachers' penchant for focusing on the learners'

proficiency (Ko & Wang, 2009; Masuda, 2012; Tan & Guo, 2009) rather than extracting the literal meaning of the text; so that instead of interpreting it they could go for its implications (Curdt-Christiansen, 2010).

Critical Literacy is one of those approaches armed with an egalitarian view towards education and society as English language teaching has been strongly influenced by power relations in the world. Just as Pack (2023) proposed and proved, critical literacy education needs to be incorporated into the whole teacher education program as a sure measure to boost self-exploration instead of studying the theoretical concept. Little has been done to compensate for this shortage of critical literacy practices in language classes, despite the international status of the English language. One reason might stem from the prevalent educational misconceptions many practitioners and professionals hold and enforce leading to suppression and marginalization (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). As Kumaravadivelu has put, "by their uncritical acceptance of the native speaker dominance, non-native professionals legitimize their own marginalization" (p. 22).

In contexts where English is the first language, culture was not seen as a barrier to the implementation of critical literacy, while in EFL contexts it was (Ko, 2010; Kuo, 2009; Park, 2011). For example, Hao (2011) found that in non-Western countries, teachers construed the silence of students as an inhibitor to CL (as critical literacy centres around the importance of empowering students by giving voice to them. Although the teachers made positive comments about the implementation of CP, the findings showed an absence of CP in online classes in Iran as they felt unable to get a hold of the concept. This finding was in line with that of Mehranirad and Behzadpoor (2022) who came upon the idea that teachers felt they needed to be equipped with specific skill sets that they themselves may not be capable of handling. There is no denying the fact that a critical standpoint in English language education rooted deeply in critical practices is the missing ingredient in Iranian context of ELT.

Conclusion

To be unique, our study embarked to investigate critical literacy in Iranian's language education context. The results can also pave the way for new grounds of research to test and theorize the notion of critical literacy in online language classes. What is more, the present study managed to present the obstacles and the requisites of a classroom setting in which critical literacy could easily be practiced. The themes in this study can function as road maps to guide other interested researchers' development of instruments to explore critical literacy more.

These findings, therefore, call for educational policymakers to revise their educational policies along with teacher training programs for courses that incorporate the CP principles, which can steer TTCs toward this destination. Familiarity with critical literacy can assist policymakers to reconsider the urge for implementing CP in language education. Providing and promoting criticality in lessons in educational curricula enables teachers to help students develop those

essential skills that prepare them to critically question the power structure that persists in society resulting in the genesis of equitable and fair education in the world in the long run.

Educators need to hold the highest regard for critical literacy by acknowledging what learners bring with them to the learning environments. Teachers and educators need to encourage criticality by removing the fear of being oppressed by both inside factors (peers and the teacher) and outside factors (curriculum-developers and policy-makers). In order to build confidence, learners can start the process of critical learning in small groups (We tend to call them mini-groups).

More specifically, we propose that, firstly, teachers and teacher-educators be informed of the notion of critical literacy so that they would be able to appreciate and engage in such activities in their classes. Language learners should be informed of, and more importantly expect, some form of recognition of power relations, gender issues, cultural differences and religious concerns in their class interactions with their peers. This demands Iranian language institutes to majorly redesign their curriculum, teaching, and materials to better suit the reality of language learning, i.e., asking questions. English culture in particular should be included, compared, and contrasted in teaching materials in juxtaposition with the Persian one.

From what has been discussed, and in order to come to a conclusion, it was found that some participants seemed to display no interest in critical literacy. It would be fascinating if future research could follow up with such participants to understand how they would change. It would also be interesting to conduct a more detailed study to identify the factors that make such participants apathetic in the first place. Weng (2023), for example, desperately calls for more research on critical literacy in EFL contexts. Also, the carrying out of this study coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a result, the main source of data collection was online classes. It is highly recommended for further research to focus on critical literacy practices in face-to-face classes as it might provide insights that would have, otherwise, been deemed not attainable in digital ones.

As a final word, the very notion of critical literacy ~~is~~ stands equal to a precious gem that is invisible to the unaided eye. It is of utmost importance to unveil it so that the entire world can enjoy seeing it.

Results of the present study are, inevitably subject to some limitations. The first limitation of the present contribution is concerned with its scope and generalizability as it solely deals with EFL learners and teachers in the domestic milieu of Iran. Another challenge was convenience sampling, which was adopted as the sampling approach as the researchers had no choice but to choose only those in the EFL context of Iran who displayed propensity to cooperate. What is more, regarding interpreting interview reports, care is of utmost importance as these are very, very personalized opinions.

Another threat might be the participants' tendency to provide responses suitable for interview setting rather than what actually goes on inside their classrooms (self-flattery syndrome). No control, whatsoever, was exercised over the gender, age, educational, cognitive, or ethnic roots, and socio-cultural background and conditions of the participants.

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Appendix

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Exploring Critical Literacy

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the concept of critical literacy and how Iranian EFL teachers can incorporate it into their online classes. Your answers will be confidential. I will use pseudonyms on all notes and reports. Is it OK if I audio record this interview? If you want to stop at any time, or stop recording at any time, just let me know. Do you have any questions before we begin?

First, tell me about yourself and your experience in education.

a. What is your gender and racial identity?

b. What is your age?

c. How long have you taught?

d. What subject(s) and grade level(s) do you teach/have taught?

e. What is your highest degree level, and what subject is it in?

Age:	Teaching Experience (in years):	Gender: Male Female	Major: Teaching Translation Linguistics Literature Other	Degree: Undergraduate BA/BSc MA/MSc PhD	Hours you teach English per week:	Type of Institution: University School Institute Other

1. I would like to discuss your views on the purpose of education. What is your philosophy of education?

2. In your opinion, what do you think critical literacy is? What components does it have? What does it mean to you?

3. How did you become familiar with this idea of critical literacy?

4. Which part of your teaching do you consider to be related to critical literacy in your online classes? What are the effects of your teaching tasks and strategies on students' critical literacy?

5. What practices do you think <u>cannot</u> be considered important in making students critically aware?

6. What skills or knowledge do you think students should learn as part of critical literacy?

7. To what extent does the employment of online class features (e.g. shared slides and materials, using chat box, and break-out room) have an effect on enhancing students' critical literacy in their language learning?

8. How do you think teachers should enter/address the political and ideological issues in online classes with the hope of making students more critical and changing society?

9. How do you motivate your students to think critically about their own culture or previous experiences in life?

10. How do you involve all students in your class to promote equality and Justice? In What ways do your programs tend to make students effective decision makers?

11. What qualities does a teacher need to have to be able to operationalize critical literacy in classes?

12. In planning what to do in the classroom, how do you consider your students' expectations and immediate needs?

13. How are the students' future needs and interests considered for organizing your class agendas?

14. For teaching language skills, how do you try to relate topics in the syllabus to your students' social and cultural experiences?

15. How do you involve your students in expressing their viewpoints about teaching materials and topics?

16. What was the biggest problem you encountered when implementing critical literacy practices in online classes? What about implementing critical literacy practices in online classes in the future?

17. What critical literacy practices would you change in your own teaching? (Please share your coping strategies if any.)

18. How can the decision-makers help ensure success for students in the critical literacy in online classes?

19. When you start an online or digital class, which topics do you engage in the most?

20. What suggestions, if any, would you have for teachers as it pertains to increasing student critical literacy?

21. What practical strategies do you suggest to help teachers emancipate students from the restrictions of traditional teaching practices (such as the banking view)?

22. Do you feel teaching critical literacy is important? Why or why not?

23. Anything else you would like to share?

Probes include:

Can you tell me more about that?

What do you mean by _____?

Authors' Biographies

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Syntactic Priming: Is Shared Semantic Content an Obligation?

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Abstract

Syntactic priming has been suggested to be an efficient paradigm in studying mental language representations. However, further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms. Recently it is suggested that argument-based constructions are present at both the syntactic and discourse levels of representation predicting that priming effect does not occur in the absence of shared semantic content. The study used a pre-test and post-test approach within a quasi-experimental design to investigate whether sentences with no shared semantic content, but similar syntactic structure, could prime one another in L2 written production tasks. Ninety students at the University of Tabriz participated in the study and were divided into intermediate or upper-intermediate groups based on their proficiency test performance. Both groups narrated a silent movie in the pre-treatment phase. In the treatment phase, the participants were primed with motion phrasal verbs by reading and rating a booklet including pictures followed by phrasal motion verbs describing them. Immediately afterward, they were required to narrate a silent movie. It was hypothesized that if semantically unrelated structures could prime one another as is supported by some reported findings, priming participants with motion phrasal verbs would boost non-motion phrasal verb usage in the treatment phase. However, the authors failed to find a significant difference between the performance of participants in the pre-treatment vs. post-treatment phase. The findings support the claim that syntactic similarity is not sufficient to trigger structural priming, and shared semantics seems to be required, and are justified with regard to semantic roles and compositional vs. non-compositional meaning.

Keywords: Structural Priming, Syntax, Semantics, L2 production, Semantic roles

Introduction

Storing and processing language-related information in the brain has been studied with regard to different levels of representation. These levels include phonetics (the physical properties of speech sounds), syntax (the structure of sentences), semantics (the meaning of words and sentences), and discourse (the use of language in communicative contexts). In this vein, a controversial topic in the field of language studies pertains to whether syntactic and semantic information of lexical items are distinct or combined. Priming paradigm has been deployed as a reliable technique in cognitive science to study these mental representations of language.

Literature Review

Syntactic Priming

Syntactic priming refers to the idea that speakers tend to reuse the structures they have recently processed (Bock & Griffin; 2000; Goldberg,1996) and has long been an established mechanism in cognitive psychology both in L1 (e.g., Bannard, et al.,2009; Kidd, 2012; Saffran, 2002) and L2 (e.g., Segalowitz, 2008; Shin & Christianson, 2012). The paradigm is used not only in exploring the underlying mental representations of language (e.g., Branigan & Pickering, 2017), but also is investigated as a potential learning mechanism (Kaschak, Kutta, & Jones, 2011), and this way the paradigm can be considered as a significant and promising technique for L2 learning which is the reason why applied linguists are interested in exploring the underlying mechanisms and the potential applications of the paradigm to L2 settings.

However, At the core of the current research, syntactic priming is supposed to be a promising technique for exploring the way linguistic information is stored in speakers' minds, and whether access to the language information happens at separate levels of representation or at a joint level at the (syntax-semantics) interface.

Underlying Mechanisms of Syntactic Priming

One of the long-standing issues regarding syntactic priming is the nature of the underlying features of the representations that trigger the priming effect with some researchers suggesting that it is the shared syntax that is responsible for the priming effect (e.g., Bock, 1986; Branigan & Pickering, 2017; Chen et al., 2022; Rowland et al., 2012) and with others arguing that semantic similarity is needed for any similar syntactic production to occur (e.g., Bidgood et al., 2020; Federenko et al., 2020; Ziegler et al., 2019). Similarly, there has been a lot of controversy over the idea that either there are different levels of representations in speakers' minds i.e., lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels (Chomsky, 1995), or linguistic patterns (either in L1 or L2) are already paired with meanings so that choosing one lexical item would restrict the other choices the speakers would come up with (Fillmore, 1968; Goldberg, 2003; Lakoff, 1970; Levelt, 1989). Those advocating the first view argue for the separation of syntax and lexicon while proponents of the second view argue

that choosing one lexical item activates other information that the form is already paired with which in turn restricts the choice of upcoming items in the sentence. In other words, according to the second view, syntactic and semantic information are interrelated.

One of the early demonstrations of syntactic priming was the experiment conducted by Bock (1986). The participants in the study were presented with pictures that could be described by either an active or a passive structure. They opted for the passive structure "The church is struck by lightning" rather than an active alternative "Lightning is striking the church" after being primed by a sentence that shared form but not semantic content with the prime. The author concluded that semantics is not necessary for priming effect to occur. Hare and Goldberg (1999) in a similar experiment replicated the study with structures sharing syntactic constituent structures with datives but sharing semantic content with ditransitive structures. The assumption was that in case structural priming was stimulated by syntax alone participants would have produced more dative responses. On the other hand, if semantic information had a role, more ditransitive structures would be produced. She concluded that semantic content was obligatory for syntactic priming.

Bock (1986)'s study was replicated recently in Chen et al., (2022) who conducted the study as closely as possible to the original study and reported the same results.

However, Ziegler et al. (2019) put forth the idea that if two sentences with no semantic similarity could prime each other, structural priming would have occurred in the absence of shared semantic information. However, the authors argued that the sentences used in the Bock (1990) study shared semantic information which could be responsible for the reported priming effect. The point was that the intransitive locative structures used as primes in the study included two lexical elements ("by" and "be" verb) similar to the components of passive structures. The authors pointed to the fact that all priming structures used in the study shared semantic content with the target structures and argued that it was the drawback of the study. The hypothesis led the authors to propose that if what Bock (1990) argued for was responsible for the reported priming effect, the sentence "The 747 has landed near the airport control tower" would prime passive structures in the same way as the sentence "The 747 was altered by the airport's control tower" since the two sentences shared the same content-less syntactic trees. However, if the lexical item "by" could affect the production of subsequent sentences in a way different from "near" the reported priming effect would have involved not only syntax but also semantics. In order to test the hypothesis, the authors primed the participants in their study with structures containing "by" phrases and structures which did not. The authors concluded that shared syntax alone was not sufficient for the syntactic priming effect to occur. To sum up, the reported literature concerning the issue indicates mixed results and there is a need for further research addressing different structures to shed light on the unresolved issue.

Following Ziegler et al. (2019), for the present study, we argued that if shared syntax was sufficient for syntactic priming to occur, structures encompassing motion events as "He fell down the tree" could prime structures "As he looked for food" which included phrasal verbs expressing non-motion events. The hypothesis

was that since the two sentences shared content-less syntactic structures even in the absence of shared semantic content the priming effect should be observed. What interested the researchers in using the two categories of phrasal verbs was the idea that the two types were different in terms of compositional meaning. While phrasal verbs expressing motion events have compositional meaning, the other category that is phrasal verbs expressing non-motion events did not. Therefore, the two categories were considered as appropriate candidates to be investigated. The point is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Syntactic Trees for Motion and Non-Motion Verbs
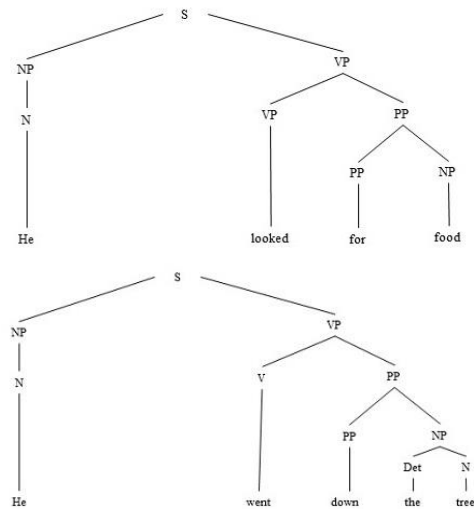
It should be mentioned that assigning constituents of two sentences to similar surface syntactic roles does not necessarily mean they would entail similar semantic roles. Providing evidence in support of each of the hypotheses will suggest a different view of the underlying mental representations and the way they are related.

There are two features of the structures that justify syntactic priming involving semantics. The two features will be discussed with regard to two related but distinct hypotheses. First of all, the linguistic approach to semantics proposed by Fillmore (1977) will be used to discuss the discrepancy. Considering the semantics of the two sentences mentioned as examples in previous sections, we argue the way the semantic roles of the constituents of the two example sentences "He looked for food" and "He went down the tree" differ in terms of the number of the required arguments and their thematic roles. The verb in the first sentence is transitive and has a verb-particle-object structure ([V Prt OBJ]) while the verb in the second sentence is intransitive and has a verb-particle-location structure ([V Prt Location]). Once more, it should be reminded that the two sentences yield the same syntactic tree structures and are syntactically similar. Considering the issue from this

perspective is associated with case grammar and the hypothesis put forth by Fillmore (1977). According to the case grammar, semantic roles refer to the different functions that a noun phrase can have in relation to the action or state conveyed by the dominant verb in a sentence which is distinct from the grammatical role the lexical item possesses in the sentence. This way, two lexical items having the same surface syntactic role might have different and unrelated semantic roles. The study by Fillmore (1977) mainly emphasized semantic aspects and how they impact syntax, which marked a departure from Chomsky's previous approach (Chomsky, 1994) which heavily prioritized syntax and the idea that it operates independently.

Secondly, the authors argue that although the verb and particle used in the sentence "He went down the tree" retain their original out-of-context meaning while the particle in the sentence "He looked for food" loses its core out-of-context meaning and combines with the verb to form a rather new meaning. Decomposing the two parts of the phrasal verb *look for* will reformulate their meanings into a rather different meaning. This idea is associated with compositional vs. non compositional meaning which is another major difference between the two sentences which according to the authors might play a role in inhibiting the priming effect.

Combining the two above-mentioned ideas into a single hypothesis, Eddington et al., (2010) suggested that argument-based constructions seem to be present as both levels of representation and access rather than syntax-based components. The Goldbergian strand of construction-grammar (Goldberg, 1995) that he referred to contains not only abstract predicates but also argument roles and meaning relations integrated into a single unit, and this way is accessed as a whole rather than on a purely syntactic basis.

Further research addressing the issue regarding various notions surrounding the topic is needed to bring further clarity to the matter. Although there are a number of studies investigating the issue from different issues in L2, to the best of our knowledge there are few studies addressing the issue from an L2 perspective.

The present study was designed to explore the underlying components of structures that stimulate structural priming with a specific focus on the possibility of motion phrasal verbs priming non-motion phrasal verbs. It was hypothesized that in case motion phrasal verbs could prime non-motion phrasal verbs then syntactic priming would occur in the absence of shared semantic similarity between the prime and target which in turn would suggest separation of syntax and lexicon. To investigate the issue, the present study deployed the presentation of priming phrases with motion phrasal verbs as the independent variable to see its effect on non-motion phrasal verbs usage in L2 written production tasks as the dependent variable.

Therefore, the research question of the study was formulated as follows:

Research question: Will priming participants with phrasal verbs expressing motion events lead to more use of phrasal verbs expressing non-motion concepts?

Method

In order to test the hypothesis of whether there are separate levels of representation for semantic and syntactic information, the study drew upon a pre-test

and post-test design to investigate if exposing participants to non-motion phrasal verbs would lead them to use non-motion phrasal verbs in written production tasks.

Participants

One hundred fifty-seven students participated in the study from the University of Tabriz. They were divided into four groups. Fifty-four of the students were studying English language and literature and were enrolled in either developed writing or research methods courses. The other 103 students were from the faculties of Electrical and Computer Engineering or Mechanical Engineering, and they were taking English as a general and compulsory course. All of the participants had taken English lessons in high school, and some had taken English courses in private language school institutes. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 24 (M= 21.5), and all reported normal or corrected to normal vision. The Oxford Quick Placement t-test was attached to their final exam paper, and the students were put into the either intermediate or upper-intermediate group accordingly. The data for students who failed to score above the minimum requirements was excluded from further analysis though they were allowed to take part in all sessions. This way the data for a total of 90 students was used for analysis.

Materials
Data Collection Materials

In order to collect data, the researchers used the short films "Banjo Frog and Chafe's Pear Film". The films were absent of dialogue and feature a considerable number of motion events, providing participants with ample opportunities to narrate them using phrasal motion verbs. "Banjo Frog" depicts the journey of a frog trapped in the back of a truck and is transported to a garbage dump, with various motion events occurring such as "climbing a tree", "going back to the dump", and "falling out of the truck". Similarly, "Chafe's Pear" showcases a gardener in his garden picking pears, with motion events transpiring like "going down the tree to put the pears in the basket" or as "boys passing by the tree".

Priming Materials

Children's book "Frog, where are you?" by Mercer Mayer was used to prime participants for the study. The story is about a boy and his dog finding a frog and bringing it home. The frog escapes from the jar as the boy and his dog sleep. The boy and his dog go around the area to find the frog. This way, the book depicts various types of motion events, such as climbing, falling, and carrying away. The book was modified for the purpose of current research, and each picture was accompanied by a description. Out of the 22 pictures, 14 utilized phrasal verbs in their descriptions while the remainder was used as fillers. The phrasal verbs used for the purpose of priming are listed in Table 1.2:

Procedure

Students in three intact classes of general English courses and two classes of advanced writing and research methods participated in the study. The data was gathered over the course of two designated sessions for the midterm assessment.

During the first session, the movie was projected, and the students had 30 minutes to narrate it. In the second session, the students were presented with priming materials at the start of the class. The material included a booklet of pictures depicting motion events, containing both phrasal and non-phrasal verbs describing the pictures. The students were informed that the booklets would be used to create a storybook for children, and the investigator was interested in finding out whether the descriptions that followed the pictures could be appropriate descriptions for the pictures. To make sure that they would read the material and would process it, they were asked to rate how well the sentences described the pictures by circling the number on the Likert scale. After the booklets were gathered, they watched the movie. They were allowed to make notes while watching the movie. After the booklets were collected, the students were shown the first silent movie and were asked to provide a detailed narration for it. They were required to write at least 200 words and were instructed to write in detail.

Table 1

Priming Phrasal Verbs Used in the Experiment

Primes
Put in
Come out
Fall out of
Go down
Fall on
Go up
Fall off
Climb up
Carry away
Fall into
Climb over
Go away

Coding

All instances of phrasal verbs involving motion events were coded under the category of motion event and all other instances of phrasal verb usage were coded under the category of non-motion phrasal verb. The criteria for coding a verb under the motion event category was that the structure included a verb and a satellite (describing movement). It should be reminded that motion phrasal verbs all had a compositional meaning. As for the non-motion category, all instances of verbs that included a verb part and a particle that had a non-compositional meaning were counted. It was to make sure that the prime and the target structure did not share any semantic similarity. The example for this category was the word "find out". What is more, it should be mentioned that grammatical errors that did not damage the intended meaning like wrong tense markings or incorrect forms of past tense, as well as spelling errors, were discarded.

Data Analysis

      A paired t-test analysis was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference between the means of the two sets of scores in the pre-treatment vs. post-treatment production for both groups. Since the production task was free writing, the writings and the scores were corrected for length before carrying out any kind of analysis.

<div align="center">

Results
</div>

      It should be reminded that each participant performed two silent movie narration tasks, one in the pre-test and the other in the priming session. The descriptive statistics for production are reported in Table 2. Although the means for both groups in the pre-test vs. post-test showed an improvement, the difference was not significant. Figure 2 illustrates the means and STDs for the upper intermediate group.

Figure 2

Means and STDs for Upper-intermediate Group
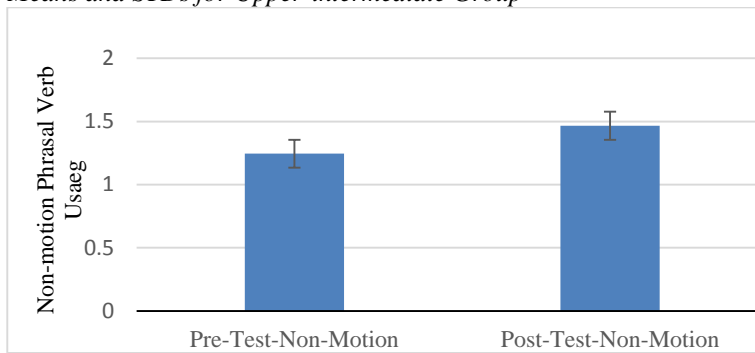
      The p-value for the upper intermediate group was $(0.14 > 0.05)$ which meant that the difference between the two groups was not significant. In other words, the participants in the upper-intermediate group did not use more non-motion phrasal verbs after being primed by motion phrasal verbs. Table 1.2 illustrates the results for means and STDs for the intermediate group.

Figure 3

Means and STDs for Intermediate Group
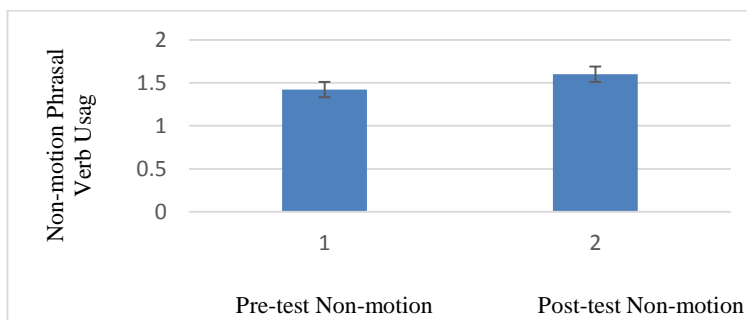
Table 2

Paired Samples Test of Pre-test vs. Post-test

Group			Mean	Std. Error Mean	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Int.	Pair 1	pre.test	1.4222	0.09790	44	
		post.test	1.6000	0.11192		0.103
Up.	Pair 1	pre.test	1.2444	0.11282	44	0.142
		post.test	1.4667	0.11958		

A paired t-test was carried out to see if the difference between the mean of the two groups was significant. The p-value ($0.10 > 0.05$) indicated that the difference between the two groups in intermediate was not significant either. Table 2 gives the results.

Discussion

The present work was an attempt to answer the question if syntactic priming is syntactic in nature or if there are other factors at play. The idea that intransitive locatives could prime passive structures has been used as a piece of evidence supporting the hypothesis that syntactic priming occurs in the absence of shared semantic content (e.g., Bock & Loebell, 1990). However, as further research investigates the underlying mechanisms of structural priming, it is argued that shared syntax is not enough to trigger the syntactic priming effect. The present study investigated the hypothesis from a different perspective using motion vs. non-motion phrasal verbs. It was hypothesized that if what Bock and Loebell (1990) argued could account for the underlying principles of syntactic priming, and shared syntax alone was responsible for stimulating similar structures, phrasal verbs involving motion events would prime phrasal verbs from any other semantic areas. For this purpose, written productions of the narration of two silent movies were compared both before and after being primed. However, the results did not indicate a significant difference between phrasal verb usage in pre-treatment vs. post-treatment written productions, and the results support the hypothesis that shared syntax alone is not enough to trigger syntactic priming, and the overlapping meaning seems to be a requirement. However, in order to account for the findings of the present study, the semantics of motion-phrasal verbs and non-motion-phrasal verbs will be briefly discussed. The authors argue that despite having similar syntactic tree structures the two sentences differ in two significant but less apparent features, namely semantics of the arguments and compositionality.

Conclusion

Overall, we argue that if syntactic priming was purely syntactic in nature as claimed in the literature, the aforementioned differences would not restrain it. In other words, in case, the syntactic structure trees would be sufficient to trigger similar structures in language production, phrasal verbs drawing upon other

semantic areas would occur in the narration task carried out by participants in the priming session. Generally, the present study provides evidence to support the hypothesis that shared semantic content is necessary for priming effect to occur. However, further research exploring the issue from different structures as well as different production tasks is needed to support the findings.

The major drawback of the study was the limited number of participants available for the purpose of data collection. It is suggested that future research include more participants and address other structures that have similar syntactic structures but different semantics to see if the same results can be obtained.

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Appendix A

Sentences Used in Priming Booklet

1. One day a boy and his dog found a frog and put him in a jar.

2. When they went to bed at night, the frog came out of the jar.

3. In the morning, the boy and the dog found that the frog had gone away.

4. They explored everywhere.

5. The boy opened the window and yelled "Frog, where are you?

6. Suddenly, the dog fell out of the window with the jar in his head.

7. The boy was mad, but the dog was happy.

8.   They were outside searching for the frog.

9.   The boy looked in a hole in the ground thinking that the frog might have gone down there.

10. The dog started howling at the bees.

11. The bees' nest fell on the ground, and the boy went up the tree.

12. The boy fell off the tree, and the bees chased the dog.

13. An awl came out and scared the boy.

14. The boy climbed up one of the big rocks.

15. A deer carried him away.

16. The boy and the dog fell off the cliff.

17. And fell into a mud puddle.

18. The boy heard a noise; maybe it was the frog.

19. "Be quiet," said the boy.

20. They climbed over the log.

21. They found the frog.

22. Baby frog had found his family.

Authors' Biographies

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Iranian TEFL Students' Perceptions and Challenges in Collaborative Content Learning Across Gender

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Abstract

Collaborative content learning (CCL), as a process of learning that contributes to effective learning of the content of the courses in EFL contexts, has recently gained prominence in the research literature; however, the male and female students' perceptions regarding CCL's efficacy and their challenges in experiencing it are open questions. Thus, this mixed methods research investigated the contribution of CCL to Iranian TEFL students' learning of the content. It focused on their perceptions and challenges across gender. Sixty male and female participants in the master's program participated in the study. To collect the data, a questionnaire and interviews were used. The findings of the study, using quantitative data analysis, showed that more than half of the learners believed that CCL is effective in EFL teaching and learning context, especially, in terms of negotiation and problem-solving. Moreover, the results showed no statistically significant difference between male and female students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL. Finally, the analysis of the interviews' data qualitatively revealed that male learners had methodological challenges in CCL, while female learners had communication challenges. The findings of the study suggest the beneficial role of CCL in raising students' awareness of skillful collaboration for maximum learning of the content.

Keywords: challenges, collaborative content learning, gender, perceptions

Introduction

Nowadays students prefer to take liability for their learning and prefer group learning (Alfares, 2017). Collaborative learning (CL) is an educational viewpoint in which group work helps learners to construct a joint outcome. In the classroom context, CL can enable, stimulate, and support learning. It facilitates productive interaction and learning (Schnaubert & Bodemer, 2019). The rationale for considering the role of the CL environment in the EFL context of Iran is to investigate whether this environment can enhance students' content learning. CCL is a conceptual approach to learning, that integrates the foreign language learning process with the content subject, and roots in psychological, social, and sociocultural theories. According to Cantwell and Andrew (2002), students prefer collaborative work on the content since it enhances their learning. Martin et al. (2019) discuss the application of CL at the university level which assists the learning process.

Some studies have considered the usefulness of CCL (Chen et al., 2021; Sousa et al., 2019). Chen et al. (2021) assume that students' CL at the group level may encourage learners to learn content easier. While students interact with each other they manage consultations in a friendly setting and have high levels of mutual reliance. The outcome is independency and joint information (Sousa et al., 2019). To investigate the effect of gender on group work procures, the whole presentation of the curriculum should be brought into consideration (Tinkling, 2003). A detailed resolution shows the gender-specific variations in perceptions and educational progression (Murphy & Elwood, 1988). Some studies support genders' different perceptions of the effectiveness of CLL and their different challenges when working collaboratively (Wu & Wang, 2020). There have been some studies contributing to the operational role of CCL in enhancing language learning, but to the best knowledge of the researchers, learners' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL have not gained enough attention. In addition, to have a complete perspective on the contribution of CCL, the researchers focused on gender differences regarding their perceptions of the efficacy of CCL and also explored male and female learners' challenges in CCL. Therefore, this study was an attempt to investigate Iranian TEFL students' perceptions and challenges in CCL across gender.

Literature Review

CL is defined as a process in which learners get information from other learners through collaborative activities to have joint outcomes. Its origin comes from Vygotsky's (1962) social development theory and zone of proximal development (ZPD), both emphasizing the role of interactions and social activities. In this regard, as an example, Bruffee's (1972) method, Classroom Consensus Group, was offered in that the students were put into groups by the teacher and answered the questions to find answers altogether. CL is central to crucial thinking abilities. It implies that through collaborative activities, spoken interactions, self-organization, and management abilities can be fostered (Buzhardt et al., 2007). According to Kagan (1989), CL and putting learners in groups to detect and master the content of the courses were influential improvements in the academic context. Slavin (1991) believes that learning the content of the courses through collaboration

may lead to better achievements and increases social interactions in the classroom context. It leads to positive attitudes toward learning.

CL helps students to build collaborative skills in learning. Collaborative education aids learners to overcome the obstacles to learning encountered while working independently (Buzhardt et al., 2007). It aids various learners and increases content comprehension. Students support one another by asking questions, sharing ideas, and discussing them thoroughly (Torgesen et al., 2017). Through collaboration, learners can have higher degrees of reciprocal actions and higher levels of association. So, professionals can observe and change the learning and teaching workouts planned and performed to elevate interactions between the student (Ruta et al., 2013). As Mayne and Wu (2011) state, social communication techniques have a positive influence on students' communication skills.

Performing activities collaboratively in the classroom contribute to students' problem-solving and management proficiencies (Colbeck et al., 2000). Schnaubert and Bodemer (2019) believe that CL stimulates productive communication in the learning process. In addition, the motive to learn specific content can be boosted via CCL as students work together to solve problems of learning (Järvelä et al., 2010). CCL encourages learners to become more perceptive about particular plans for mastering the content (Stevens & Slavin, 1995). Working together on a piece of content, by participating in the learning process in a metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral way, develops the ability to self-adjust the learning. (Zimmerman, 2008).

Moreover, learners' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL can influence its effectiveness. Teachers need to consider students' ideas regarding their experiences with CCL (Gillies & Boyle, 2010). According to Chiriac and Granström (2012), students confirm the effectiveness of CL on academic performance because of social interactions that increase the quality of learning.

In a study, Chen (2005) inspected the efficacy of a collaborative education model on the reading comprehension of students. He concluded that teaching comprehension strategies help subjects understand ideas and improve their ability to find answers to questions. Jalilifar (2010) compared the differences between traditional English learning and student teams in a CL domain and realized that learner groups attained notable improvements on tests. Cokparlamis (2010) examined the impact of collaboration on the academic tasks of EFL classroom students. The results showed that CL created a more student-centered classroom environment.

As for CCL, a meta-analysis led by Lou et al. (1996) observed that CL had a remarkably positive role in content production. Bernard et al. (2009) found a connection between academic performance and interaction in distance learning. Torgesen (2017) had research on intermediate-level content learning classes. The teacher put students in groups that required collaboration. The results showed that students achieved better results.

According to Hartley and Sutton (2013), boys believe that girls are better at motivation and performance in collaborative work. Tannen (1991) states that along with the distinction between task and socio-emotional support, male learners prefer wise statements, lengthy postings, and self-advancement, whereas female learners show a tendency toward support and incapacitation. Ro and Choi (2011) argued that female learners need confirmation and they have negative perceptions about CL.

Therefore, gender differences are among learner variables influencing the process of education in language learning, particularly in collaborative tasks. However, the results are mixed in different studies. For example, the results of the study by Hargittai and Shafer (2006) showed no significant gender differences in challenges in CCL.

The research literature also illuminates different aspects of CL. Montazeri and Salimi (2019) investigated the effect of learners' tendency for CL. They revealed that interactions affect learning the subjects. Ebadi and Ebadijalal's (2020) study showed the participants' willingness to interact in the FFL context. Jamalvandi et al. (2020) showed that the teachers' role is influential in the students' willingness for CL and some students had conflicts in CL. However, there have been few studies, if any, on postgraduate TEFL students' perceptions and challenges across gender.

To meet the objectives of the study, this research aimed to answer the following research questions to fill the gaps in the research literature:

1. To what extent do TEFL students perceive the efficacy of CCL?
2. What are TEFL students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL?
3. Is there a significant difference between male and female TEFL students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL?
4. What are the challenges male and female TEFL students experience in CCL?

Method

Design

This descriptive and mixed methods study was conducted among TEFL students at the MA level. It was conducted at Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch during two semesters of the 1399-1400 academic years. Before conducting the study, the instructors got permission from the participants. They ensured the participants about keeping anonymous. The variables of the study were perceptions of the participants, their challenges, and their gender. In order to test the validity of the questionnaire a pilot study was used. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the internal reliability of the questionnaire. Moreover, in order to test the construct validity of the questionnaire, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) was used. Also, the interview questions were prepared and finalized based on expert views.

Qualitative data analysis (i.e., thematic analysis) was used for questions 2 and 4 which were about the perceptions of learners and challenges of the male and female students in CCL. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the first research question, and for the research question, 3 independent samples t-test was used. The data was analyzed by SPSS software version 26.

Participants

This study was conducted with the participation of 30 male and 30 female students. The participants were selected through convenience sampling. The participants' age range was 23-35 and they were at the MA level. They majored in TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch. The professor of all of the participants was the same and applied the same method of teaching in all the classes involved in the study. They had the experience of CCL for two semesters

during their MA program for three courses (a) Principles of Teaching Foreign Languages, (b) Teaching of English Language Skills, and (c) Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation of language. The participants were native speakers of the Azari and Persian languages.

Instruments

To measure the participants' perceptions of the efficacy of the CCL, a questionnaire was used, and to explore the participants' challenges in using CCL a focus group interview was conducted, in which MAXQ software was used for its data analysis. Their detailed descriptions are as follows.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire that had both close-ended and open-ended questions was used to check students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL and answer the first three research questions (Appendix A). This questionnaire is based on the study carried out by the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance, Concordia University (2020), which was modified by the researchers to be compatible with the context of the study. For each of the statements in the close-ended part, students had to check the answer. The response scale included a) Strongly Disagree (1) b) Disagree (2) c) Undecided (3) d) Agree (4) e) Strongly Agree (5). The questionnaire originally had 57 items. Based on the expert view, which was used for content validity, the researchers modified the questionnaire and reduced the items to 24. In items 1, 2, 5, 16, 23, and 40 the word content was added. In items 11, 12, 20, 30, 31, and 47, CCL was added. Items 10 and 22 were added to the questionnaire. Thus, 33 items were omitted, 13 items were modified, and 2 items were added by the researchers. In addition, at the end of the questionnaire, there were three open-ended questions about the perceptions of TEFL learners of the efficacy of CCL. These three questions were based on three factors (a) Enhancement of learning (first question); (b) Learners' helping each other (second question), and (c) Their preference for CL (third question). Before conducting the main study, the researchers validated the modified questionnaire through a pilot study (N = 15). From the same context, 15 students were selected based on convenience sampling by the researcher and participated in the pilot study. The researcher put the questionnaire in the participants' group on WhatsApp and they had three days to fill it out and send it back to the private chat of the researcher. In order to test the internal reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers used Cronbach Alpha, the result of which was .81, which is an acceptable level of reliability. The construct validity of the questionnaire was tested through the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO). The data showed that KMO was .92. The Bartlett test was also employed and the results revealed that the Bartlett test was at a significant level (sig<0.05) for the research variables.

Focus Group Interview

A structured focus group interview with five questions was prepared and finalized based on expert views. It was used to explore the challenges of students in

CCL (fourth research question) These questions were based on four factors including, a) Challenges in disciplinary issues (first question); b) Challenges in collaboration with classmates (second question); c) Challenges in content learning (third question); d) Challenges in decision-making (fourth question). The fifth question sought suggestions from participants to overcome the challenges they faced in the process of CCL. The focus group interview was conducted with 18 students in three groups of six members. Each focus group interview lasted for 50 minutes. The interviewer was one of the researchers of the present study.

MAXQDA Software

MAXQDA is software for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis. It enabled the researchers to conduct research using codes and many methods of analysis, such as those used in Grounded Theory and thematic analysis. It can be utilized for coding and analyzing the data, interning the results of the study for analysis, and creating many different data visualizations. This software in the present study was used to answer the second and fourth research questions.

Procedures

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, administering both the questionnaire and the interview was done through the WhatsApp application. The researcher created a group in WhatsApp and after creating the questionnaire in Google Docs, making it available to the participants by providing the URL to them. The interview was also conducted through WhatsApp. They were asked to send both the questionnaire and the responses within three days. Before using the instruments, they were piloted with the pilot group (N = 15) from the same context.

By sending her voice to the group, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants. They have been taught the courses 1) Principles of Teaching Foreign Languages, 2) Teaching of English Language Skills, and 3) Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation of language through CCL by one of the researchers, as the instructor of these courses. The participants were justified about the aims of the research and they were assured about the confidentiality of their responses to the questions.

During the first sessions, before implementing the CCL, the instructor made the students familiar with the underlying assumptions of CCL, based on Smith and MacGregor (1992). She encouraged the participants to become active learners, think critically, and develop social skills to cooperate with classmates and develop independence. As a facilitator, she monitored the performance of the groups and controlled the quality of the content. She also helped the learners to be skillful in cooperation with each other by giving feedback to them. She has announced how she will assess their performance while supporting their efforts. To motivate students for the utmost effort for CCL, she mentioned that the assessment would be based on group performance, as well as individual performance within the group. She emphasized the role of organization and planning of the group work and the role of positive feedback.

Participants established groups of 3-5 members, alphabetically, but they were free to change their groups. Even though they were classmates, some of the students did not know each other well before creating groups, but little by little they started getting to know each other. The main collaborative activities included forming study teams for preparing and presenting PowerPoint presentations of the lessons, doing research and projects, and preparing for the final exams. Their main focus was content mastery of the courses. There was a head in each group selected voluntarily to handle duties. The head put different responsibilities, such as summarizing, finding supplementary materials, and designing PowerPoint presentations for group members according to their consultation, decision, and personal abilities. The assigned responsibilities were not fixed. If there was a problem for one of the group members, the others tried to cover their duties to stop group failure, and the duties were circulated among the group members once a month. They were in sustained contact with each other and discussed course content issues, related projects, and the quality of their group work. These activities lasted for two semesters for gathering the required data.

Results

Results of the Questionnaire

The first research question quantitatively investigated to what extent Iranian TEFL students perceived the efficacy of CCL. To check the normality of the data collected from the questionnaire about learners' perceptions of CCL, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used. Table 1 shows the results of running these normality tests on the collected data.

Table 1

Shapiro-Wilk Test for the participants' Perceptions

	Options	Shapiro-Wilk		
		statistic	df	Sig.
Perceptions of CCL	Disagreement	.914	30	.219
	Agreement	.950	30	.165

As Table 1 shows, the significant value of the participants' perceptions of CCL scores (.219 & .165) was higher than the alpha level of .05. Because the value of the Shapiro-Wilk Test was greater than 0.05, the data was normal. If it was below 0.05, the data significantly deviated from a normal distribution. So, the participants' perceptions of CCL scores had a normal distribution.

Construct Validity & Reliability

The collected data from the 24 items of the perceptions of the efficacy of the CCL questionnaire was entered into the SPSS software to run the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to establish the validity of the questionnaire. Table 2 shows the results of KMO and Bartlett's Test.

Table 2

KMO and Bartlett's Test

	KMO	Bartlett Chi-Square	Sig.
Perceptions of the Efficacy of the CCL	.925	3398.646	0.000

As Table 2 shows, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) was used to measure the sampling adequacy. The data showed that KMO was .92, which was higher than the proposed minimum value of .6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). It was sufficiently large to perform EFA. In addition, the Bartlett test was employed to confirm the relevance of the data. The correlation matrix adopted in the analysis was not zero in the population. The results revealed that the Bartlett test was at a significant level (sig<0.05) for the research variables. It showed the satisfaction of the correlations. Table 3 illustrates the total variance of the data.

Table 3

Total Variance Explained

Component 1	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	18.241	76.004	76.004

According to Table 3, the results of the parallel analysis for the questionnaire showed only one factor with eigenvalues exceeded the corresponding criterion values for a data matrix of the same size. The one-factor solution explained a total of 76% of the variance of digitalization. The factor's rotating matrix is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Rotated Component Matrix

Perceptions of the Efficacy of the CCL	Component 1
Q1	.766
Q2	.682
Q3	.703
Q4	.805
Q5	.735
Q6	.776
Q7	.727
Q8	.805
Q9	.823
Q10	.782
Q11	.786
Q12	.804
Q13	.822
Q14	.864
Q15	.823
Q16	.723
Q17	.743
Q18	.643
Q19	.667
Q20	.707
Q21	.613
Q22	.755
Q23	.733
Q24	.760

Each variable in this matrix has a factor load (factor score) greater than 0.5 and is classified under the umbrella of the desired factor. The contribution of the relevant factor to the overall variance of the target variable is greater when the coefficient's value is larger. As Table 5 illustrates, all of the questions belonged to one factor.

The results of Cronbach's alpha are shown in Table 5 to examine the overall internal consistency of the scale.

Table 5

Results of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceptions of the Efficacy of the CCL	24	.924

To answer the first research question, descriptive frequencies and percentages, and the mean of the responses, were used to compute the items of the questionnaire (Table 6).

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics Regarding Participants' Perceptions

	Learners' Perceptions of CCL							
	SD	D	Total	Un	A	SA	Total	M(SD)
Item	Numbers	f (%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	
Item1	7 (11.7)	9(15.0)	16(26.7)	11(18.3)	14(23.3)	19(31.7)	33(55.0)	3.27(1.30)
Item2	6(10.0)	11(18.3)	17(28.3)	12(20.0)	16(26.7)	15(25.0)	31(51.7)	3.10(1.27)
Item3	6(10.0)	12(20.0)	18(30.0)	11(18.3)	14(23.3)	17(28.3)	31(51.6)	3.25(1.30)
Item4	5(8.3)	11(18.3)	16(26.6)	12(20.0)	16(26.7)	16(26.7)	32(53.4)	3.27(1.22)
Item5	7(11.7)	11(18.3)	18(20.0)	11(18.3)	19(31.7)	12(20.0)	31(51.7)	2.97(1.13)
Item6	5(8.3)	10(16.7)	15(25.0)	14(23.3)	15(25.0)	16(26.7)	31 (51.7)	3.18(1.21)
Item7	5(8.3)	10(16.7)	15(25.0)	13(21.7)	15(25.0)	17(28.3)	32 (53.3)	3.13(1.21)
Item8	8(13.3)	11(18.3)	19(31.6)	8(13.3)	16(26.7)	17(28.3)	33(55.0)	3.53(1.31)
Item9	8(13.3)	13(21.7)	21(35.0)	8(13.3)	15(25.0)	16(26.7)	31(51.7)	2.97(1.25)
Item10	5(8.3)	8(13.3)	13(21.6)	8(13.3)	16(26.7)	23(38.3)	39(65.0)	2.97(1.13)
Item11	4(6.7)	9(15.0)	13(21.7)	15(25.0)	15(25.0)	17(28.3)	32(53.3)	2.95(1.24)
Item12	6(10.0)	9(15.0)	15(25.0)	8(13.3)	22(36.7)	15(25.0)	37(61.7)	2.97(1.16)
Item13	9(15.0)	11(18.3)	20(33.3)	14(23.3)	11(18.3)	15(25.0)	26(43.3)	3.20(1.40)
Item14	5(8.3)	12(20.0)	17(28.3)	13(21.7)	14(23.3)	16(26.7)	30(50.0)	3.23(1.27)
Item15	8(13.3)	9(15.0)	17(28.3)	10(16.7)	15(25.0)	18(30.0)	33(55.0)	3.12(1.25)
Item16	3(5.0)	11(18.3)	14(23.3)	18(30.0)	15(25.0)	13(21.7)	28(46.7)	3.30(1.15)
Item17	7(11.7)	6(10.0)	13(21.7)	10(16.7)	23(38.3)	14(23.3)	37(61.6)	2.97(1.22)
Item18	5(8.3)	12(20.0)	17(28.3)	12(20.0)	15(25.0)	16(26.7)	31(51.6)	3.33(1.28)
Item19	12(20.0)	11(18.3)	23(38.3)	12(20.0)	13(21.7)	12(20.0)	25(41.7)	2.98(1.12)
Item20	6(10.0)	9(15.0)	15(25.0)	12(20.0)	16(26.7)	17(28.3)	33(55.0)	3.03(1.15)
Item21	7(11.7)	6(10.0)	13(21.7)	15(25.0)	17(28.3)	15(25.0)	32(53.3)	3.50(1.20)
Item22	4(6.7)	9(15.0)	13(21.7)	13(21.7)	13(21.7)	21(35.0)	34(56.7)	3.23(1.21)
Item23	8(13.3)	7(11.7)	15(25.0)	13(21.7)	17(28.3)	15(25.0)	33(53.3)	3.33(1.13)
Item24	8(13.3)	8(13.3)	16(26.6)	16(26.7)	12(20.0)	16(26.7)	28(46.7)	3.30(1.14)

Total 3.17(1.22)

Note: SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, UN= Undecided, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 6, the highest percentage of the efficacy of CCL was related to item 10 (38.3%), stating that they can solve the problems related to the content of the courses by negotiating with group members, followed by item 22 (35.0%), saying that working in the group on the content help them to focus on the task more effectively, item 1 (31.7%), showing satisfaction on better-quality work. And item 15 (30.0%), focuses on getting better grades in CCL. It showed participants' degree of positive perceptions of the efficacy of CCL. The highest rate of solving problems in group work indicates this facilitative function of CCL in learning more than other functions.

To compare the mean frequency of disagreement and agreement about perceptions of the efficacy of CCL used by participants was of significant difference or not, the researchers employed Descriptive Statistics (Table 7).

Table 7

The Means and Standard Deviation of the Disagreement and Agreement

	Options	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceptions of CCL	Disagreement	30	16.03	2.62
	Agreement	30	32.13	3.57

As is illustrated in Table 7, the mean score and standard deviation of the participants' disagreement regarding their perceptions of the efficacy of CCL were (M = 16.03, SD = 2.61) and the mean score and standard deviation of the learners' agreement with the perceptions of the CCL were (M = 32.13, SD = 3.57), respectively. The higher mean showed the participants' agreement on the efficacy of CCL. Thus, the higher rate of agreement shows the overall positive perceptions of the participants.

To see whether the differences were significant or not, the Independent Samples T-test was run (Table 8).

As indicated in Table 8, the p-value for Levene's Test for Equal variances was .284, implying that the equal variances were assumed equal and the statistics in the first row should be used. It was found that the t (58) = -19.918, p= .000 < .05, revealed a statistically significant difference between participants' agreement and disagreement of perceptions of the efficacy of CCL.

Table 8

Independent Samples T-Test for participants' Agreement and Disagreement

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Perceptions of CCL	Equal variances assumed	1.168	.284	-19.918	58	.000	-16.10	.81	-17.72	-14.48
	Equal variances not assumed			-19.918	53.213	.000	-16.10	.81	-17.72	-14.48

The second research question qualitatively sought TEFL students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL. The data obtained from the open-ended part of the questionnaire were analyzed using thematic analysis. Based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis, an iterative and reflective data analysis process was conducted.

1. Familiarize selves with the data. Responses to the open-ended part of the questionnaire were read carefully.

2. Generating initial codes. The obtained texts were analyzed and labeled (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to find statements that are units of meaning. The following are some sample answers to those three questions:

A) Why do you think that collaborative work enhances or does not enhance content learning?

"It enhances learning". "Human is a social creature". "It is enjoyable". "It enhances learning a lot". "It depends on learners' motivation". "Learners share their ideas about important points". "I think collaborative work enhances content learning because students can share their background knowledge".

B) Why do you believe that while working collaboratively on the content, group members can help or cannot help each other well to learn?
"Students can help each other a lot because they share the information". "In group work, students have to help each other." "Because when a student cannot understand a point, other members can help him or her and it is more effective than the teacher's help". "Students are not worried about being judged and they don't feel anxious".
"Because every one's perception is different and it could be useful to improve our understanding". "All of the members can help you to solve the problems and learn the course easily".

C) Why do you like or dislike working collaboratively to learn the content of the courses?

"I like to work collaboratively because it gives me new insights and a better understanding of the content". "More minds, more help, more options". "I like it because it is more profitable". "Collaborative learning can enhance my information about the subject matter". "I don't like it because sometimes group members do not cooperate". "In collaborative learning, all members of the group learn the content easily". "I have a deeper understanding if I think for myself".

3. Searching for themes. Ordering and connecting the related codes to shape the related themes were done.
4. Reviewing themes. The codes were reviewed to follow a coherent pattern.
5. Defining and naming themes. The themes were labeled. They included the social facet, the personal facet, the educational facet, and the emotional facet.
6. Producing the Report. Initial codes and emerging themes were reported.

Extracted initial codes were as follows: encouraging learners to have teamwork, producing hope and happiness among learners, communicating irrespective of gender differences with/without difficulty, being a member of a group with/without inferiority/superiority issues, tolerating/not tolerating the opposite ideas, working in the group with/without dominance by some of the members, prioritizing/not prioritizing group ideas to personal ideas, forcing some ideas into other ideas, social anxiety, the difficulty of shy people, low rate of participation for some, the important role of students, active/non-active role of the teachers, and its efficacy for language learning classes.

The third research question investigated the difference between male and female students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed by running an independent-samples T-test. Table 9 represents the descriptive statistics of male and female students in terms of their perceptions of the efficacy of CCL.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics of Male and Female Students' Perceptions

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Group	Male	30	84.5	.105	.774
	Female	30	89.6	.623	.774

According to Table 9, the mean score of male participants, which was out of 120, was 84.5 and, the female participants' mean score was 89.6. So, an independent-samples t-test was run (Table 10).

Table 10

Independent Samples T-test for Male and Female Students' perceptions

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	FF	Sig.	t	df	Sig	MD	Std. Error Dif	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.647	.323	.55	29	.12	5.1	1.948	-2.515	3.948
Equal variances not assumed			.55	29	.12	5.1	1.948	- 2.515	3.948

According to Table 10, the data of Levene's test for equality of variances revealed that it did not violate the assumption of equal variance as the sig value in Levene's test was greater than .05. Also, the sig value (2-tailed) was .12, which was

higher than the required cut-off of .05 (t (29) = .82, α =.05, p =.12). So, it can be said that there was no statistically significant difference between male and female students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL. Regarding the descriptive statistics, although female participants gained a higher score, the difference was not significant.

Results of the Interview

The fourth research question sought the challenges male and female students experienced regarding CCL. The data obtained from the focus group interviews were analyzed and coded according to the principles of grounded theory using MAXQDA software (Glaser & Strauss, 2012). Seventeen codes were extracted out of 37 codes for male learners. The following refers to the male learners' codes:

    a) "The teacher hardly ever motivates students to attend the group activities".
    b) "The students' unwillingness to participate in the teamwork is the educational system's inefficiency".
    c) "Students do not tolerate others' ideas".
    d) "Students have different learning styles and qualities".
    e) "The behaviors of some students affect the learning process".

Open codes of male learners and the number of their occurrences were as follows: Not being encouraged by the teacher (4), learners' various interests (3), lack of teamwork in the dominant educational system (4), the gender-separated educational system of Iran (6), lack of supervision, not respecting the opposite ideas (3), being bullied by some members (2), not considering personal ideas(1), not considering individual differences (2), social anxiety (5), inappropriate relationships among members (2), irresponsibility (1), better learning performance among females (4), time limitations among females (2), various learning types (3), personal performance (2), lack of communication outside of the educational system (1), lack of cooperation (1), lack of personal freedom (1), and not considering personal features (1).

The obtained data from female learners were analyzed and coded using MAXQDA software. They were classified to form codes. Twenty codes were extracted out of 37. The following refers to the female learners' codes:
    a) "The class is too crowded to have cooperative activities".
    b) "In any group work members criticize each other and they do not tolerate the criticism".
    c) "Due to cultural and religious norms, students have difficulty communicating with the opposite gender".
    d) "Students need constant encouragement to attend the group activities".
    e) "Some students can't express their ideas in the group".

Open codes of females and the number of their occurrences were as follows: A large number of students in the class (1), Not tolerating criticism (2), Weak self-confidence (2), Reluctance to teamwork (2), Poor communication with

the opposite gender (2), Shyness (2), Feeling superior (2), Personal beliefs (2), Not motivated by the teacher (1), Not encouraged by the teacher (2), Individual cognitive differences (4), Individual affective differences(3), Forcing their ideas (2), Difficulty in coming to a conclusion (4), Cultural taboos (1), Not setting the details of the teamwork (1), Not arranging clear goals (2), Unfair task division among the members ()1, Inability in developing the discussion with the members (1), and Inability to convey their ideas (3).

After coding, it is vital to form bonds between the axial categories and the concepts dealt with them regarding their textual and conceptual aspects (Ary et al., 2010). For male learners, four categories were extracted out of the seventeen codes. The categories included methodological challenges, challenges with communication skills, individual differences, and gender-related challenges. For female learners, four categories were extracted out of the 20 codes. The categories included challenges with communication skills, methodological challenges, individual differences, and gender-related challenges. Finally, these sources of challenges were ranked. For male learners, the methodological challenge in CCL was the main challenge. For female learners, communication skills were the main challenge in CCL.

Discussion

This study investigated Iranian TEFL students' perceptions of and challenges in CCL across gender. The first research question, based on the quantitative study, sought to what extent participants perceived the efficacy of CCL. The results showed that about half of the students had the idea that CCL improved their learning; the highest contribution of the CCL was related to the negotiation of meaning and problem solving According to Chen et al. (2021), collaborative work results in learning better, having positive perspectives, and performing wiser, which is in line with the findings of the present study. Similarly, Colbeck et al. (2000) showed the participants' tendency for teamwork since they believed that it boosted their content learning, and Gatfield (1999) concluded that the learners who had experience with CL expressed a great level of satisfaction, suggesting that effective implementation of CL can create richer learning. These advantageous qualities can range from cognitive skill expansions to increased outlooks on scholarly works according to Sheridan et al. (1989). They also showed students' satisfaction with CL. These studies correspond to the findings of the present study.

The second research question, based on the qualitative study, sought the perceptions of TEFL learners regarding the efficacy of CCL. The results of the thematic analysis revealed four themes: social facet, personal facet, educational facet, and emotional facet. According to Silver and Bufiano (1996), the usefulness of CL is from interceding variables of group aims. By performing tasks acceptably positive perspectives about CL can be gained; it may influence the joint purposes of group members and leads to positive outcomes in group performance (Bandura, 1977). Dawson (2006) examined the relationship between students' mutual actions and their feeling indicating that students have stronger levels of success through interactions. These findings confirm the results of the present study in that it

revealed the emotional facet, as one of the obtained facets, by producing hope and happiness among learners and feeling good to be a member of a group, not an inferior or a superior, is one important element in students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL. Torgesen et al. (2017) researched the effectiveness of CL. They concluded that one engaging approach for students is utilizing CL and providing them with clear guidance in strategy use. It corresponds to the results of the present study that revealed the importance of educational outcomes of CCL. Social presence is another indicator of learners' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL (Mayne & Wu, 2011). It is in the same vein as the findings of the second research question in that the social facet was introduced as one of the important facets in students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL. So and Brush (2008) found a connection between students' CL and their success in the courses. It showed that learners who had positive perceptions of CL were more fulfilled with learning outcomes. According to them, high levels of CL affect the social presence of the learners. Edmunds (2012) argued that usefulness is a key aspect of students' perceptions of the efficacy of CCL. This confirms the findings of the second research question which revealed the important role of the learners in the process of CL, which was under the educational facet.

The third research question, based on the quantitative study, sought perceptions of male and female TEFL learners towards the efficacy of CCL. The analysis of the data ascertained no statistically significant difference between male and female learners' perceptions. Dewi and Muhid's (2021) study showed both males' and females' agreement on the positive role of CL in learning the content. Although there was a difference between their perceptions, it was not significant. Chiou (2019) noted that interaction between students is encouraged by group work that enhances their learning. It is in line with the findings of the present study. The findings of the present study also correspond to the results of a study conducted by Zhan et al. (2015) in that they found no significant difference in different genders. Hartman and Hartman (2003) reported women's positive perceptions toward group-work in comparison to men. It doesn't correspond to the findings of the present study.

The fourth research question, based on the qualitative study, sought challenges faced by learners during CCL. By analyzing the data from the interview, it revealed that for male learners, the main challenge was the methodological challenge, whereas for female ones the main challenge was the challenge with communication skills. As Harskamp et al. (2008) state, CL by interpersonal discourse can aid learners to dissolve learning difficulties. Female and male students have different communication styles so they may have different challenges. Other studies did not find any significant gender differences in challenges in CCL (Hargittai & Shafer, 2006). Ruta et al. (2013) showed that female learners prefer concurrent work with other members whereas male learners prefer solitary work. They showed females' tendency for CL at greater levels compared to males. These findings contrast the findings of the present study. Onah and Ugwu (2010) indicated that collaborative work depended on gender and there was a significant difference

between male and female learners concerning their challenges in CCL. Their study is in the same vein as the findings of the present study.

Conclusion

This mixed methods research investigated Iranian TEFL students' perceptions and challenges in CCL across gender. The positive perceptions of the participants suggest that by providing learners with experience of CCL, we can improve understanding, which offers support for the social cognitive theory of learning. Researchers within EFL need to consider the context of learning and be aware of the benefits of collaborative work in the classroom as the interactions can influence the productivity of learning. Through interaction and negotiation of meaning, students can improve problem-solving and improve retention in content learning. As Martinez et al. (2016) state, there is a connection between CL, enjoyable environment and activities, and academic achievements.

According to Sarobol (2012), CL simply doesn't imply assigning learners into groups and asking them to have a joint effort to achieve a joint outcome. Rather, it should be considered an efficient method in which learning increases (Muijs & Reynolds, 2005). Therefore, educating teachers to raise their knowledge of the efficacy of CL along with appropriate education of learners is very important (Al-Yaseen, 2012). Students should learn to be responsible for their learning. If one of the learners in the group cannot take responsibility, the other learners should retaliate and try to complete the assigned tasks (Sarobol, 2012). A very influential operant in the useful application of CL is increasing learners' awareness of some skills such as helping others, raising questions, giving feedback, and having a critical analysis of the process of CL.

For CL to be useful, the educator should see teaching as a process of boosting students' capability to learn. In the broad context of CL, an important element for learners may be consciousness-raising about what the group is accomplishing in content goals, how it is being accomplished, and whether it could be accomplished in more satisfactory ways. Learners should reflect on what it is about group learning that is supposed to help them learn the content. Individual expectations have to be negotiated with those of each group member, especially regarding gender differences (Chen et al., 2021) as they have different challenges in CL.

Future studies can different variables that can be influential in the CCL: Group combination, incongruous versus congruous group work, group size, CCL construction, and teacher interposition.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A

Close-ended and Open-ended Questionnaire for Students' Perceptions of the Efficacy of CCL

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Working collaboratively on the content can lead to better-quality work.					
2. Working on the content collaboratively takes longer to complete.					
3. I enjoy the material more when I work with other students.					
4. Working with others on the content makes me feel that I am not as smart as other group members.					

5. The material becomes easier for me to understand while working collaboratively on the content area.	
6. Collaborative content learning leads to good grades in courses.	
7. My grades depend on how much we all learn together on the content of the course.	
8. The workload for me is less in working with others on the content.	
9. It is hard to express my thoughts when I work collaboratively on the content.	
10. What is fascinating for me is that I can solve the problems related to the content of the course by negotiating with group members.	
11. I feel working in groups to learn the content of the courses is a waste of time.	
12. What I like about working collaboratively is that it provides more opportunities to express opinions.	
13. The content of the courses is more interesting for me when I work with group members on it.	
14. When group members work on the content collaboratively, they get more elaborative information about it.	
15. When I work collaboratively on the content, I can get the grades I deserve.	
16. I like to work collaboratively because I can compare my strategies of learning with group members to improve them.	
17. I believe learning the content with other group members is more efficient than learning alone.	

18. Working collaboratively on the content is not challenging for me.	
19. I think I learn more elaborately while working collaboratively with other group members.	
20. Working collaboratively on the content gets on my nerves because usually group members say the same thing several times, which is a waste of time.	
21. Collaborative content learning helps assignments get done on time.	
22. Working in a group on the content helps me to focus on the task more effectively.	
23. Working collaboratively on the content help me to do better in exams.	
24. I do not have a positive attitude toward the effectiveness of collaborative content learning.	

1. Why do you think that collaborative work enhances or does not enhance content learning?

2. Why do you believe that while working collaboratively on the content, group members can help or cannot help each other to learn?

3. Why do you like or dislike working collaboratively to learn the content of the courses?

Appendix B
Interview Questions About Challenges of Students in CCL
1. Did you face any challenges such as different styles of working or communicating, power relationships among members, differences in preferred communication style, or prior educational experiences in the collaborative content learning environment?
2. What were some challenges faced due to gender differences and individual beliefs in collaborative content learning?
3. What were the main problems that occur in your team when doing collaborative content learning?

4. How could you resolve differences in the cognitive and social abilities of your team members and their different ideas about their beliefs related to mastering the necessary techniques to achieve the goals of collaborative content learning?

5. What suggestions do you have for any challenges that you faced in the process of collaborative content learning?

Authors' Biographies

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Dynamic Interplay of Critical Thinking and Vocabulary Learning Strategies Among Iranian EFL Learners with the Moderating Role of Gender

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Abstract

Critical thinking (CT) is extensively considered to be a prevalent notion in teaching and learning processes. Thus, this paper set out to pinpoint the association between EFL pupils' CT capabilities as well as their vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) across gender. To do this, 140 Iranian male and female intermediate students studying at Iran Language Institute (ILI) in Urmia, Iran were chosen randomly. The study was conducted in the form of a survey with data being gathered via using Preliminary English Test (PET) to homogenize the students, Schmitt's VLSs questionnaire to recognize the kinds of the strategies employed by students, as well as Ennis' Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT) to ascertain the students' CT capabilities. The data was subjected to analysis using the Pearson correlation. The findings indicated a significant association between CT abilities and VLSs. Furthermore, male learners showed more CT skills and VLSs compared to female students. Thus, identifying the students' preferred VLSs would help them overcome the difficulties in learning words. Also, instructors should design classroom activities that encourage learners' reflective thinking.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, EFL Learners, Gender, Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition is a decisive element in Second Language (L2) learning as it enables learners to comprehend and produce language efficiently (Tayler, 1990). Differently stated, having a favorable grasp of vocabulary is essential for learners in achieving high levels of proficiency in a foreign language and communicating more effectively (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2008). It is commonly accepted that the development of a comprehensive lexicon plays a crucial role in language learning and improves effective communication skills (McCrostie, 2007); therefore, there is a growing body of research and teacher attention focused on vocabulary development (Zu, 2009). As it is axiomatic, vocabulary plays a great role in determining students' efficiency in four language skills. Students' inadequate lexical knowledge leads to difficulties in comprehension and language development (Shen, 2008). As Krashen and Terrell (1983) state, vocabulary has a primary function in communication and inability in comprehending the meaning of words used by others can hinder individuals from participating in conversations.

The notion of critical thinking was originally introduced by Socrates more than two millennia ago; however, it is widely acknowledged that modern critical thinking tradition was established by the American philosopher, John Dewey (1909, cited in Fisher, 2001). Dewey's conceptualization of CT encompasses a meticulous examination of a belief taking into account the underlying justifications and the subsequent implications it entails. Building on Dewey's conception, Glaser (1941) clarified critical thinking as an attitude characterized by a disposition to thoughtfully consider the problems that one faces, an understanding of the techniques of systematic investigation and logical deduction, along with specific expertise in implementing those approaches.

CT is a compelling factor in higher education (Golden, 2023) and a major concern in mainstream education (Gelder, 2005). As a consequence, enhancing learners' CT ability can empower them to make informed decisions and employ effective strategies for language acquisition, particularly vocabulary learning. While the enhancement of students' abilities to think critically is highly appreciated by instructors, there appears to be a dearth of focus in this regard in developing countries (Khalili, et al., 2004). For instance, in Iranian EFL context, there is a prevalent belief that students are just passive receivers of information and the teachers act as the authority in the classrooms and prefer to give lectures and present their knowledge and expertise to the students (Heydarnejad et al., 2021). Consequently, it implies that CT abilities improvement receives inadequate priority in this context.

Learning L2 vocabulary has myriad difficulties which can be overcome by teachers' special instruction. However, VLSs are not explicitly taught in most EFL classes, and unfortunately students attempt to learn vocabulary by themselves without receiving any guidance or instruction. Besides, learners choose LLSs based on various factors, including age, gender, motivation, learning style along with CT abilities (Nikoopour et al., 2011). Although there are numerous courses available for various L2 skills, courses that focus on vocabulary rarely exist (Ghezelseflou &

Seyedrezaei, 2015). Moreover, in EFL classes, there is often a greater focus on teaching grammar and pronunciation than on vocabulary (Fernandez et al., 2009), despite the fact that vocabulary is deemed crucial for acquiring both native and foreign languages (Morra & Camba, 2009). Neglecting lexicon can hinder students' ability to achieve remarkable attainment as it is a key element in language learning and should not be taken for granted (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2008). Furthermore, most of the research studies on VLSs have focused on vocabulary presentation and memorization and more emphasis was laid on the strategies related to memory (Gu & Johnson, 1996). Most learners use mechanical strategies, including repetition to learn complex words (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). The fundamental role of vocabulary in language acquisition cannot be neglected, since it functions as the cornerstone for effective communication and the advancement of other language skills. However, according to Hunt and Beglar (2005), there is a scarcity of research studies conducted on VLSs.

Regarding the role of gender in determining CT, some studies have revealed that men and women have disparate approaches to thinking and acquiring knowledge (e.g., Clinchy, 1994; Miller et al., 1990). Although gender has a great impact on CT and VLS, the number of studies is rare and more investigation in this realm is needed. Consequently, improving students' CT competencies could potentially exert a noteworthy impact on their overall linguistic progression and more specifically, their acquisition of lexicon.

To recapitulate, the previous studies investigated language learners' use of VLSs in general (e.g., Al-Omairi, 2020; Alqarni, 2018; Ghalebi et al., 2020, 2021; Thiendathong & Sukying, 2021). Moreover, Ravandpour (2022) investigated the relationship between EFL learners' CT, learning engagement, flipped learning readiness and autonomy. As a corollary, the eminence of the study lies in the fact that no study before has appraised the interplay between CT and VLSs among Iranian EFL students by taking gender into consideration all in one study. This is a virgin and pristine territory upon which more studies are needed.

Literature Review

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Inspired by language learning strategies (LLSs), Gu (2003) and Schmitt (1997) introduced VLSs as the sub-category of LLSs. It is appropriately substantial for EFL learners to possess them to acquire the essential lexicon (Nation, 2001). According to Nation (2001), the application of VLSs can empower language learners to assume greater accountability for their own learning process. Many researchers stressed the prominence of VLSs use from different points of view. For instance, Oxford (1990) emphasizes that in their process of learning a language, learners should be encouraged to take advantage of strategies. In the same vein, Cameron (2001) identifies VLSs as certain activities that facilitate the students' comprehension and retention of vocabulary.

In the past few years, researchers (Sadeghi & Farzizadeh, 2013; Barzegar & Rahimi, 2012) have directed extra attention towards diverse methods for instructing vocabulary. In a classroom context, vocabulary training should be emphasized since a strong lexical repertoire is essential for effective language learning. Hence, researchers have proposed divergent methodologies, encompassing the employment of tangible artifacts, visual representations, as well as translation. However, Schmitt (2000) contends that explicit instruction may not be an efficacious method for teaching vocabulary. While explicit instruction may be beneficial for elementary learners, other methods may be more effective for more advanced learners (Schmitt, 1997).

The previous studies (e.g., Al-Omairi, 2020; Alqarni, 2018; Ghalebi et al., 2020, 2021; Thiendathong & Sukying, 2021) investigated language learners' use of vocabulary learning strategies in general and the impact of learners' levels on the use of such strategies. For instance, Ghalebi et al. (2020) investigated EFL learners with different levels of academic degrees to figure out how they differ in using VLSs. The outcomes demonstrated significant differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students' usage of VLSs. Moreover, Ghalebi et al. (2021) examined the differences between Iranian high and low English vocabulary learners in terms of using VLSs. The findings showed significant differences between high and low English vocabulary learners' usage of determination, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. However, there was no significant difference in their use of social strategies. Therefore, to the researchers' best of knowledge, there are scarcity of research studies conducted on the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' VLSs and CT taking gender into consideration.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is widely regarded as a fundamental skill and a crucial determinant of an individual's accomplishments in the contemporary era (Luk & Lin, 2015). There is no pleasant educational context without the concept of CT. Thereupon learners ought to be motivated to engage in critical thinking activities. Correspondingly, teachers should support learners to develop CT by providing opportunities in educational settings (Mohammadi Forood & Khomeinjani Farahani, 2013). Dewey (1933) elucidated CT as a form of reflective thinking that involves considering an opinion actively and persistently. Smith (2003), on the other hand, refers to it as a kind of high-level thinking. Simply put, CT enables students to go beyond their own perspectives and engage in a thorough analysis of the data (Celuch et al., 2009). According to Bandyopadhyay and Szostek (2019), critical thinkers are capable of assessing the reliability and accuracy of what they read and hear. In addition, they are open-minded and analytical, that is, they can interpret and analyze information effectively (Bandyopadhyay & Szostek, 2019). Moon (2007) asserts that the acquisition of CT abilities can be facilitated through explicit instruction and emphasis within educational settings. According to Emir (2009), any educational setting should strive to help the students accomplish higher levels of thinking and become reflective thinkers. As explicated by Mahyuddin et al. (2004), learners who can ponder critically in a vocabulary class are more likely to achieve the curriculum objectives and use their CT abilities for a lifelong learning.

The ability to engage in critical analysis is generally regarded as an indispensable life skill (Galinsky, 2010). Many psychologists and educators state that it is regarded as one of the most striking thinking abilities that learners should acquire and is one of the major goals of any educational setting (Morra & Camba, 2009). However, it was observed that in Iranian context, students are not able to think critically (Khalili et al., 2004). Correspondingly, the dominant objective of any pedagogy needs to be enhancing learners' critical thinking skills to achieve autonomy and independence (Barzegar & Rahimi, 2012). Likewise, Weiler (2005) emphasizes the significance of CT in the learners' learning and cognitive development. Additionally, teaching CT is complicated for many teachers since a broad array of approaches offered for its instruction (Schmaltz et al., 2017). According to Mendelman (2007), due to the prevalence of passive activities including video games, internet, and TV in children's lives, teaching CT skills remains a fundamental practice in the classroom.

Recently, some studies have explored EFL instructors' and learners' attitudes toward the principles of CT (e.g., Sadeghi et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020; Zhang & Yuan, 2022; Zhang & Yuheng, 2023). The outcomes of these studies revealed that EFL teachers concurred that the infusion of CT into the EFL syllabus and classroom teaching is indispensable. Moreover, Ravandpour (2022) investigated the relationship between EFL learners' CT, learning engagement, flipped learning readiness and autonomy. Furthermore, Heydarnejad et al. (2021) examined the relationship between CT, self-regulation, and teaching style preferences among EFL teachers. However, investigating the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' VLSs and CT taking gender into consideration is a rarely touched topic in Iranian EFL context.

Empirical Studies

Regarding the studies in this field, Sharafi-Nejad et al. (2016) examined the effectiveness of critical thinking on 60 male undergraduate EFL students' vocabulary learning in Malaysia. The participants in experimental group were instructed on how to employ critical thinking strategies on vocabulary learning. The results of the post-test showed that the experimental group who received formal instruction based on the critical thinking strategies revealed the prominent development and interest in vocabulary learning. In the same vein, Farahanynia and Nasiri (2016) explored the correspondence between lexical inference as well as CT and they disclosed that the group with higher CT abilities achieved outstanding success in lexical inference tasks.

Similarly, Abadi and Baradaran (2013) conducted research on the association between VLSs use by the pupils and their level of autonomy. The results confirmed that more autonomous learners used more VLSs. In the same vein, Boroushaki and Ng's (2016) study revealed a compelling interconnection between 75 Malaysian postgraduate students' CT ability and VLSs. Besides, the study conducted by Changwong et al. (2018) as well as Hove (2011) demonstrated that teaching and practicing CT strategies explicitly in high school can develop learners'

academic performance. Furthermore, Shirazi and Heidari (2019) evaluated the interrelation among the learning styles of nursing students, their CT abilities, and their intellectual accomplishments. They concluded that students' CT skills score was low, indicating a need for greater emphasis on CT in academic lesson planning.

Regarding gender differences, Liu et al. (2019) conducted a study concerning the impact of gender on CT as well as critical behavior within the population of Taiwanese nursing pupils. The results highlighted that both masculinity and caring behaviors were positively correlated with nursing students' critical thinking abilities. Nonetheless, Walsh and Hardy (1999) investigated critical thinking measures among various university majors across gender. The findings revealed that females achieved higher scores compared to males in terms of open-mindedness and maturity. Similarly, Zetriuslita et al. (2016) observed that females outperformed males in certain high-level CT abilities that involve the identification of concepts and the analysis of algorithms. However, Marni et al. (2020) sought to assess the authenticity of tools utilized for measuring critical thinking and examined the variations in critical thinking abilities among students based on gender and level of knowledge. The findings suggested that there wasn't any discernible inconsistency in CT abilities among gender groups or levels of knowledge. Likewise, Bagheri and Ghanizadah (2016) explored the influence of gender on the two constituent elements of critical thinking, and one constituent element of self-regulation. It was determined that gender did not have any impact on critical thinking subcomponents, and self-monitoring.

As Nour Mohammadi et al. (2012) state, the effect of CT on language learning is worth investigating. Nevertheless, most studies in this domain have focused on the effect of CT on the utilization of learning approaches by learners in general (e.g., Faravani, 2006; Barjesteh & Vaseghi, 2012). Furthermore, very few attempts (e.g., Boroushaki & Ng's, 2016; Sharafi-Nejad et al., 2016) have been made to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between VLSs and CT and if investigated at all, most have been done on a small scale of participants; that is, 75 postgraduate and 60 male undergraduate students with different fields of study in Malaysian university context.

Therefore, the number of studies evaluating the relationship between learners' VLSs and CT in Iranian EFL context is meager. Moreover, the current query pinpoints the relationship between 140 Iranian EFL learners' VLSs and CT across gender in a private language institute which is different from university context and to the best of our knowledge, no such exploration has hitherto been carried out to delve beneath this particular issue. It is noteworthy to mention that the aforementioned studies did not take gender into account, which is thoroughly pertinent to the ultimate focus of this paper. In addition, despite huge investments of effort and resources put into learning foreign languages in Iran, many students still struggle with learning and remembering vocabulary. In sum, the interplay between CT abilities and VLSs among Iranian EFL learners is to a large extent unresolved and a limited quantity of research has examined the construct of CT in EFL settings. The present study signifies a progressive stride in the quest to explore the degree of

congruity between critical thinking and vocabulary learning strategies. Thereby, this inquiry endeavors to tackle the subsequent research queries:

1. Is there a relationship between CT abilities and VLSs choice among Iranian male EFL learners?
2. Is there a relationship between CT abilities of Iranian female EFL students and their VLSs choice?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference in CT abilities across gender?
4. Is there a statistically significant difference in VLSs use across gender?

Method

Design

The methodology adopted in the present scrutiny was of associational nature. A correlation is simply defined as a relationship between variables. Specifically, this inquiry endeavored to probe the correspondence between CT and VLSs among EFL students, with a focus on gender variations.

Participants

140 intermediate EFL students (70 male and 70 female) at Iran Language Institute (ILI) in Urmia, West Azarbayjan took part in the examination. The participants were selected in a random manner out of a pool of 180 intermediate learners. Their mother tongue was either Persian or Turkish and as an international language, they were studying English. Likewise, the participants' selection was according to the results of the PET test, and the participants were in the age span of 16 and 20 years old.

Materials and Instruments

The current investigation employed the subsequent instruments.

Preliminary English Test (PET)

PET was implemented to gauge the individuals' English language proficiency at an intermediate level. It measures language skills and consists of 67 items, i.e., auditory comprehension with 25 components, written expression with 7 components, and textual comprehension with 35 components. Its dependability was determined to be 0.81.

Ennis' (1985) Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT)

In this study, CCTT designed by Ennis (1985) was utilized to evaluate students' critical thinking abilities. It comprises 52 multiple-choice items and was disseminated after a pilot test to ensure its reliability. The questionnaire's credibility was established to be 0.80. This questionnaire was examined by several EFL professors to ensure its content validity. It also enjoyed convergent validity of .72.

Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)

Schmitt's VLSQ was applied in the present investigation that encompassed 41 items on a Likert format to assess learners' VLSs. The questionnaire was piloted and obtained the reliability of 0.78. This questionnaire was assessed by several EFL experts to ensure its content validity. It also enjoyed convergent validity higher than .60.

Procedure

Data collection tools encompassed two questionnaires, namely Ennis' (1985) Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT) questionnaire including 52 items and Schmitt's (1997) VLSs scale which includes 41 items. Before using the questionnaires in the main study, the researchers piloted the questionnaires to ensure that they were reliable enough. The findings indicated a high reliability for both of them. Moreover, the questionnaires were examined by the EFL experts to ensure their content validity. Both scales enjoyed higher validity indices. During the study, through PET test, a cohort of 140 pupils with an intermediate level of proficiency, comprising 70 female and 70 male learners, was chosen from a population of 180 individuals who obtained scores of 1SD higher and lower than the mean. The researchers distributed the questionnaires among the participants at ILI in Urmia, West Azerbaijan for gathering data. First, Ennis' (1985) CCTT questionnaire was given to the participants who had approximately an hour to complete it. Subsequently, Schmitt's (1997) VLSQ survey was disseminated among the identical individuals the next session and they were given 45 minutes to provide their responses.

Data Analysis

The researchers conducted a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to assess the normality of the sample. Then they used an independent-samples t-test to ensure the homogeneity of the individuals. To investigate the interdependence between CT skills and VLSs among Iranian EFL pupils across gender, the investigators employed Pearson correlation. Finally, to identify any variations between male and female groups with respect to CT as well as VLSs, t-tests were carried out.

Results

Quantitative Data Analysis for Normality of the Population

The researchers evaluated the normality of the sample. The outcomes showed that the sample was normally distributed ($p=.14>.05$).

Quantitative Data Analysis for homogeneity of the Participants

Initially the researchers administered the PET test to 180 pupils. As a result, 140 students (i.e., 70 females and 70 males) were selected the scores of whom were 1SD higher and lower than the average. The researchers employed a t-test to validate the absence of any notable variation between the female participants (M=41.08 SD=4.47) and their male counterparts [M=40.89, SD=3.00; t (138) = .06, p=.76> .05]. This suggests that both groups were homogeneous in nature, as indicated by the mean scores (see Table 1).

Table 1

T-Test for PET Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	11.09	.00	.30	138	.76	.18	.622	-1.043	1.416
Equal variances not assumed			.30	138	.76	.18	.622	-1.044	1.418

Quantitative Data Analysis for the First and Second Research Questions

The investigators used Pearson correlation to examine the interconnection between CT and VLSs among males and females. Accordingly, the outcomes are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for CT and VLSs Among Males and Females

Gender		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Males	CT	85.89	5.490	70
	VLSs	85.26	5.705	70
Females	CT	60.56	6.014	70
	VLSs	58.26	5.551	70

As can be seen, Table 3 indicates a significant connection between CT as well as VLSs among males [r = .97, n=70, Sig= 0.00<0.01] and among females [r = .85, n=70, Sig= 0.00< 0.01]. Therefore, the first and second hypotheses stating that there is no relationship between CT abilities and the choice of VLSs among male and female EFL students are rejected.

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Between CT and VLSs Among Males and Females

Gender			CT	VLSs
Males	CT	Pearson Correlation	1	.975**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	70	70
	VLSs	Pearson Correlation	.975**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	70	70
Females	CT	Pearson Correlation	1	.856**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	70	70
	VLSs	Pearson Correlation	.856**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	70	70

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Quantitative Data Analysis for the Third Research Question

The researchers performed a t-test to appraise and contrast the mean score of male and female participants with reference to their CT abilities. A notable dissimilarity existed in scores for males (*M*=85.89, *SD*=5.49) and females [*M*=60.56, *SD*=6.01; *t* (148) = 26.9, *p*=.00 < .05], that is, males were more critical thinkers than females. Thereby, the third hypothesis which stated that there is not any remarkable disparity between the CT abilities of different genders has been disproven (see Table 4).

Table 4

T-Test for the Difference Between Females and Males Regarding Their CT Ability

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.294	.58	26.9	138	.00	25.33	.940	23.4750	27.1915
Equal variances not assumed			26.9	138	.00	25.33	.940	23.4749	27.1917

Quantitative Data Analysis for the Fourth Research Question

The study compared the VLSs scores of male and female participants using a t-test. A differentiation in the scores was detected for males (*M*=85.26, *SD*=5.70) and females [*M*=58.26, *SD*=5.55; *t* (148) = 26.3, *p*=.00 < .05], that is, males used VLSs more than females. Thereupon, the fourth hypothesis stating that there is not any notable disparity between the VLSs employed by males and females is hereby refuted (see Table 5).

Table 5

T-Test for the Difference Between Females and Males Regarding VLSs

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.028	.867	29.3	138	.00	27.00	.9192	25.1835	28.8164
Equal variances not assumed			29.3	138	.00	27.00	.9192	25.1835	28.8164

Discussion

This paper delved into the correspondence between CT and choice of VLSs among Iranian EFL pupils taking into consideration gender differences. The results revealed a positive interrelation between CT and VLSs across gender. These results support a preceding inspection done by Nikoopour et al. (2011), which indicated that the application of LLSs could enhance learners' CT. Furthermore, the findings align with Sharafi-Nejad, et al. (2016) investigation which revealed that Malaysian male undergraduate EFL learners with advanced CT skills outperformed those with limited CT abilities in vocabulary learning.

By the same token, the outcomes are consistent with prior researchers' (Farahanynia & Nasiri, 2016) result which indicated a noteworthy correlation between lexical inference and CT determining that the students with superior critical thinking skills accomplished exceptional triumph in lexical inference assignments. Moreover, the outcomes share a number of similarities with Boroushaki and Ng's (2016) findings, which indicated a significant correlation between Malaysian postgraduate students' CT skills and VLSs. Besides, the findings are in accordance with Fahim and Komijani's (2010) research, which indicated that students who had exclusive CT skills tended to exploit a range of strategies including memory, determination, cognitive, and meta-cognitive to enhance their learning. This means learners with higher CT ability were more independent in making decisions and solving problems and more creative in generating innovative ideas. Thus, CT is a pivotal conception ascertaining the achievement of language learners as L2 learning necessitates the utilization of higher-order cognitive abilities (Liaw, 2007). To put it another way, teachers can develop the learners' language performance by employing CT into language learning process.

Regarding the disparities observed between male and female learners related to CT and VLSs, the outcomes indicated male learners' superiority. Obtained results are in contrast with studies conducted by Walsh and Hardy (1999) as well as Zetriuslita, et al. (2016), which manifested higher scores among females in comparison with males in CT measures, including high-level CT skills. Additionally, Bagheri and Ghanizadah's (2016) study found no significant gender variations in CT measures. Moreover, the research conducted by Marni et al. (2020) revealed no observable incongruity in CT capacities between different gender groups or levels of expertise. Nevertheless, the findings of the present inspection are in conformity with a scrutiny carried out by Liu, et al. (2019) that underscored a positive association between masculine traits and nursing pupils' CT capabilities.

The learning environment, including teaching methods, curriculum design, and classroom culture, can contribute to the observed disparities. If instructional approaches primarily cater to the learning styles or preferences of male students, it may disadvantage female learners. Additionally, biases in assessment methods may favor certain skills or approaches that align more closely with male learning styles. It's crucial to recognize that individual differences play a significant role in performance outcomes. There is considerable variation in aptitude, interests, and learning styles within each gender that can contribute to the observed disparities.

Conclusion

Taking into account the language learning in EFL contexts, it is necessary that the students be prepared for the world beyond their own context. CT is the most fundamental concept in language education. According to Rezaei, Derakhshan, & Bagherkazemi, (2011), it is essential that learners learn the required thinking skills and enhance their CT ability during L2 learning in order to express themselves clearly and cope with the outside world. Thus, enhancing the learners' CT abilities as well as regulating their thinking processes can have a remarkable impact on their language acquisition on the whole. To recapitulate, developing students' CT capability will help them to make their own decisions and follow their own learning strategies in language learning process. To this end, the current paper aimed at exploring the association between students' CT abilities and VLSs. By the same token, the study intended for uncovering the gender variations with regard to the application of VLSs and CT abilities. The findings exemplified a significant association between CT abilities and VLSs. Furthermore, male learners showed more critical thinking skills and VLSs compared to female students.

The present findings have important pedagogical implications. Identifying the students' preferred VLSs would help them overcome the difficulties in learning words. Moreover, teachers can help learners develop the strategies that motivate them and help them become more independent and accountable to accomplish their language acquisition goals. As Zimmerman (2000) expresses it so eloquently, "because to their higher motivation and adaptable learning strategies, self-regulated kids are not only more likely to achieve academically, but also more positive about their future." (p. 66). In addition, instructors should educate students to select the strategies suitable for their language needs and provide them with beneficial tasks to develop their vocabulary knowledge. As Paul and Elder (2005) state, "the only capacity we can use to learn is human thinking. It can be concluded that the utilization of critical thinking skills would help EFL students learn L2 vocabulary more effectively and profoundly." (p.10)

Regarding CT, the current examination indicates the imperative capacity of CT in enhancing self-determination of the learners in the process of acquiring a new language. It behooves language instructors to design classroom activities that encourage active student participation, such as reflective thinking, questioning, discussion, and self-evaluation. Consequently, students will obtain confidence and self-determination in communications. Applying CT in course books can motivate students to effectively apply CT skills to their academic studies (Kealey, Holland, & Watson, 2005). Considering the impact of CT on learners' vocabulary knowledge, Ayhan and Payan's (2023) study indicated a high correlation between the students' CT ability and L2 vocabulary knowledge.

The outcomes of the current study concern educators in TTC programs, to provide the EFL instructors with the required atmosphere and impetus to guide the class in the right path by employing the most appropriate teaching materials and methods according to the principles of CT since increasing EFL instructors'

knowledge regarding the notions of CT will, no doubt, give rise to the improvement in quality of teaching and consequently accomplishment in successful learning.

Unfortunately, instruction, in Iranian EFL context, is centered upon a traditional teaching paradigm; therefore, pupils are not instructed to think critically. Similarly, the instructor's duty is just to cover the instructional materials rather than enhancing learners' reflection on learning materials. Instructors should help passive learners to become active participants. Additionally, they should provide opportunities for the low critical thinkers to learn the CT skills (Fahim & Ahmadian, 2012). The outcome of this research evinces the necessity of renewing the current syllabi and curricula regarding CT principles by consulting all stake-holders. Consequently, it can be concluded that CT principles should have more room to be applied in the curricula and syllabi in English language schools.

On the whole, the novelty of the present investigation has opened up opportunities for upcoming researchers to thoroughly examine the congruence of CT in the EFL setting with the aim of refreshing the instructional resources and methodologies, in order to enhance the EFL educational framework for the forthcoming generation. In a nutshell, the results are hoped to facilitate the functioning of the educational system, resulting in effective consequences for curriculum developers, educators, and learners. This can be achieved by incorporating the findings into the university curriculum, potentially motivating instructors to reevaluate their teaching methods and align their instruction with the principles of CT.

As with any research study, the present exploration has a number of shortcomings. The most consequential limitation resides in the utilization of a small sample size, potentially compromising the credibility as well as applicability of the outcomes. To obtain more accurate outcomes, further investigations with larger sample sizes are required to validate our findings. It is recommended that subsequent inquiries need to be undertaken on the current topic in various contexts and proficiency levels. Finally, future studies are needed to scrutinize the present issue by employing data collection tools other than questionnaires including think-aloud protocols, observations, as well as diaries to guarantee the dependability and authenticity of the results. Moreover, future researchers can explore the impact of different instructional approaches such as teacher-centered approaches versus student-centered approaches on the development of critical thinking skills and the choice of vocabulary learning strategies. Furthermore, future researchers can examine how cultural factors influence the relationship between critical thinking, vocabulary learning strategies, and gender among Iranian EFL pupils. They can consider conducting cross-cultural comparisons to gain a broader perspective. Additionally, future researchers can investigate whether learners who excel in critical thinking in vocabulary learning also demonstrate enhanced critical thinking abilities in other language skills, such as reading, writing, and speaking. Besides, it is recommended that future researchers conduct longitudinal studies to explore the development of critical thinking skills and vocabulary learning strategies over time. Finally, they can investigate how critical thinking skills relate to the use of metacognitive strategies in vocabulary learning.

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Investigating the Role of Syntactic and Semantic Awareness in the Sentence Comprehension of EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study investigated how English semantic and syntactic awareness contribute to the sentence comprehension of beginner, intermediate, and advanced EFL learners. Consequently, 188 Iranian EFL learners were recruited for the study and, pertinent to their English proficiency levels, were divided into three groups. To elucidate the possible contribution of semantic and syntactic awareness for comprehending English sentences, five sets of sentences were constructed controlling the frequency, length and difficulty of their comprising words: 20 syntactically correct / semantically incorrect, 20 syntactically incorrect / semantically correct, 20 syntactically / semantically incorrect, 20 syntactically / semantically correct, and finally 20 Garden-Path sentences (which are both semantically and syntactically correct but difficult to comprehend by the first attempt). With the aid of a software application (Com-Chron) designed specifically for this study on the UX platform, the participants' comprehension was checked both in terms of their success-rate and their reaction-time. Through a multiple-choice online task, the participants were asked to select the option which showed the correct understanding of the constructed sentence in 30 seconds. Statistical analyses revealed that semantically-incorrect sentences were the most challenging and syntactically-incorrect sentences were the least demanding for the participants of three proficiency levels. The findings affirmed the dominance of semantics over syntax when it came to the comprehension abilities of EFL learners across different English proficiency levels.

Keywords: English sentence comprehension, semantic awareness, syntactic awareness, Garden-path sentences

Introduction

For more than three decades, language comprehension in general and sentence comprehension in particular have been a controversial issue (Artetxe & Schwenk, 2019). It was not until recently that researchers came to the conclusion that syntax and semantics did not operate independently and their interaction accounted for the comprehension (Traxler, 2014; Huang et al., 2021; Briscoe, 2020). According to Demberg and Keller (2019), psycholinguistic evidence has shown that language comprehension takes place incrementally; that is, people normally do not wait for a sentence to be finished to form a syntactic representation. In other words, hearing or reading every new word helps the completion of the constructed representation.

Sentence comprehension refers to cognitive processes that take place in the mind while the speaker of a language is spontaneously trying to decipher the meaning of utterances or a written text (Muller & Hagoort, 2006; Khaghaninejad et al., 2022). Different factors can contribute to the sentence comprehension among which are the syntactic and semantic awareness (Sternberg & Sternberg, 2016), which is a yardstick which determines whether or not a sentence is possible within a particular language (Artetxe & Schwenk, 2019).

Kim and Sikos (2011) claim that for comprehension to happen, one needs to extract and decode all the syntactic and semantic cues in the language input. Almost the same idea is held by Demberg and Keller (2019) who mentioned that in order to comprehend linguistic input, an interaction between syntax, semantics, and discourse processes is requisite. In addition, Van Gompel et al. (2006) claimed that for comprehending a sentence, one needs to activate a proper syntactic structure. In the same vein, Frazier (1987) documented that in sentence comprehension, the syntactic analysis happens autonomously irrespective of semantic awareness. On the contrary, Hagoort (2003, p. 883) argued that "syntactic constraints conspire with semantic constraints; semantics is neglected by syntax if its contribution is not necessary. That is to say, when it comes to comprehension, syntax is a bit selfish, unlike semantics". However, Hopp (2006, p. 369) argued that proficiency level plays an important role "in L2 learners' capability to analyze specific types of morpho-syntactic information during sentence processing".

Sentence comprehension is instrumental in keeping the stream of communication going. Although numerous studies have been carried out to analyze the interconnection of semantic and syntactic processes and comprehension (e.g., Khodadady et al., 2012; Demberg & Keller, 2019; Tanenhaus et al., 1995; Matar et al., 2021; Chwilla, 2022), many of them have been in neuroscience which have specified the part(s) of the brain responsible for sentence comprehension. In fact, almost no comprehensive study has been conducted, especially in the EFL context, to determine which one of these variables is more contributing to the comprehension of English sentences, and, in addition, how comprehension varies among students of different proficiency levels. More importantly, not enough attention has been paid to comprehension on the part of the teachers in spite of the fact that comprehension is the key to understanding (Robertson & Gallant, 2019). Therefore, practitioners have

never been thinking about the supremacy of syntax over semantics or vice versa which can be pivotal in the course of instruction (Kumar et al., 2020). Knowing the secret behind sentence comprehension, whether it is done through syntax, semantics or an interplay of both, will be a huge step forward in designing syllabi more effective and productive that can probably fit a wider range of learning styles.

This study investigated the influence of syntax and semantic knowledge in English sentence comprehension in Iranian EFL learners of different proficiency levels. Moreover, the comprehension of GP sentences is compared with either of semantically or syntactically incorrect English sentences to determine the burden imposed on the mind for perceiving each of these sentences. This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- Which one, syntactic or semantic awareness, primarily contributes to the comprehension of technical English sentences for EFL learners of different proficiency levels?

- Which type of sentence (general-purpose, syntactically-incorrect, semantically-incorrect, or semantically / syntactically incorrect) requires the most time for EFL learners to comprehend, as measured by their response time in a reading comprehension task?

- How does the proficiency level of EFL learners, as determined by standardized language tests, impact the comprehension of general-purpose, syntactically-incorrect, semantically-incorrect, and semantically / syntactically-incorrect sentences?

Literature review

Sentence Processing

For language comprehension to happen, human mind should rapidly extract and coordinate syntactic and semantic cues from the received input (Kim & Sikos, 2011). It was first believed that sentence comprehension happens at a clause boundary, meaning that readers would stop at the end of a clause or sentence to make a conclusion of what had been read (Fodor, et al., 1974; Juffs, 1998). Nevertheless, later on, various techniques such as fast shadowing, and eye movements were employed to check the credibility of such assumption which resulted in discovering that sentence comprehension does not take place at clause boundaries, but rather happens on a word-by-word basis (Perfetti, 1985).

First assumptions regarding sentence comprehension claimed that, initially, a representation of a sentence is created based on its grammatical features in the mind of a reader or listener, and each new word which is read or listened to would be attached to this syntactic representation (Perfetti, 1985). It is argued that semantic interpretation only provides input when syntactic parsing is completed, and the parser has encountered difficulties (Warren, 2013; Khaghaninezhad & Kaashef, 2014). As a result, in case of structurally complex sentences, readers or listeners have to go over the text again or listen to the sentence several times to revise the

created representation of the sentence (Prystauka & Lewis, 2019). What actually these assumptions suggest is the separation of syntax and semantics, that is, one can construct a representation of a sentence in either domain without constructing one in the other (Warren, 2013).

Another model for language processing by Friederici and Hahne (2001) referred to three functionally distinct processing phases. Firstly, the syntactic information is analyzed and then the lexical knowledge is processed and finally the syntactic structure is adapted to the lexical knowledge. Later on, with the introduction of *Lexicalist Movement*, the focus shifted towards how individual lexical items contribute to parsing (Pozzan & Trueswell, 2016; Chwilla, 2022).

Syntactic/Semantic Awareness and Sentence Comprehension

Two types of psycholinguistic models have been presented in relation to sentence comprehension: *syntax-first models* and *interactive models*. The former recommends that the input's syntactic structure is built first, and then thematic responsibilities are assigned subsequently. However, reanalysis would be required in the final stage if the syntactic structure and thematic roles did not match. In contrast, the latter claims that there is an interplay between syntactic and semantic processes, which happens at an early stage (Ye et al., 2006; Drury et al., 2016; Pozzan & Trueswell, 2016). Despite some scholars' early ideas about language, such as Chomsky's who proposed the independence of distinct parts of linguistic ability, Briscoe (2020) supported the idea of syntax and semantics interacting. In the same vein, Huang et al. (2021) conducted a study on 80 individuals and utilized self-embedded phrases with three relative clauses each to prove whether the aforementioned premise is correct. When compared to semantically neutral sentences, participants found it significantly easier to comprehend sentences with semantic support. On the contrary, Miller (2014) discovered that learners rely on the syntactic awareness for processing wh-dependencies.

Omaki and Lidz (2015) used a range of measurements to look at the sentence comprehension for EFL learners and found that the syntactic awareness was a proper predictor of foreign language sentence comprehension using power correlations and regression analysis. Brimo et al. (2017) checked if syntactic awareness had any effects on teenagers' sentence comprehension. Findings implied that participants' syntactic awareness influenced sentence comprehension significantly. Clahsen and Felser (2006) believed that sentence comprehension calls for the ability to segment the input into comprehendible strings of words; hence, semantic awareness plays the primary role.

Friederici and Kotz (2003) carried out several studies using different neurolinguistic techniques of comprehension analysis on both healthy and retarded participants. Their findings supported the supremacy of syntax for comprehension. Kim and Osterhout (2005) employing event-related potentials (ERP) showed that due to the semantic connection between the words, participants did not pay attention to the syntactic cues denoting that the sentence is syntactically incorrect. Hence, they inferred that comprehension is influenced by semantic processing even in the face of unambiguous syntactic cues.

A Garden-path (GP) is a type of sentence that can be ambiguous structurally and semantically. In these sentences, the syntactic structure causes a different prediction and the reader assumes one meaning for a clause at first and then realizes that his assumption was erroneous; this forces him to go back and reinterpret the statement (Barahuee et al., 2020). Ambiguity of GP sentences are primarily attributable to existence of multiple possible interpretations based on the sentence structure and the comprising words. The comprehender's first interpretation may result in failure due to being led down the wrong garden road, s/he is obliged to attempt again to evaluate the statement and return to the correct garden path (Pozzan & Trueswell, 2016).

One interesting point regarding sentence comprehension is that L2 learners, the same as native speakers of the language, analyze and decode the input incrementally. As Pozzan and Trueswell (2016) documented, bilinguals are not able to integrate contextual information in the way that native speakers do that, based on *Interface Hypothesis.* It is worth mentioning that besides the syntax-semantics dimension which directly influences language comprehension, so does the level of proficiency of the person hearing a speech or reading a text. Hopp (2006) found that both the advanced German L2 speakers could use case-marking information to interpret German Garden-Path sentences after conducting an experiment utilizing a self-paced reading task. Considering the inconsistent findings of the previous studies, this study endeavored to put the contributive role of semantic and syntactic knowledge of beginner, intermediate and advanced EFL learners under scrutiny regarding the comprehension of semantically incorrect, syntactically incorrect, and Garden-Path sentences.

Method

Participants

For this study, 188 Iranian EFL learners who were native Persian speakers have been selected   via convenient sample selection procedure from a private language institute and recruited for the study. There were both males (87 learners) and females (101 learners) with the age range of 18 to 30 whose consents were gained before the study and were divided into three groups of beginners (66 learners), intermediate (66 learners), and advanced (66 learners). In order to avoid potential inconsistencies and biases, more than the classification standards of the language institute, McMillan Placement Test (MPT) was also employed to assure the English proficiency of the participants. Before the study's commencement, the participants were provided with ample elaborations on the online test rubrics and the answering time limitations.

Instruments and Materials

Macmillan Placement Test (MPT)

The purpose of employing this standard test was to recheck the proficiency level of the participants and was to obtain a homogenous sample of participants in each group. This test which was conducted at the beginning of the study contained

70 multiple-choice test items and formulated to measure the EFL / ESL learners' proficiency level and to categorize them into different English proficiency levels. The satisfactory reliability (.92%) of the test is documented by Khodadady et al. (2012) and Macmillan Test Developer (2022).

Online Comprehension Test

In order to check the contribution of semantic and syntactic awareness to the sentence comprehension, 5 sets of sentences were constructed; 20 syntactically correct / semantically incorrect sentences, 20 syntactically incorrect / semantically correct sentences, 20 both syntactically and semantically incorrect sentences, 20 both syntactically and semantically correct sentences, and finally 20 GP sentences which are both syntactically and semantically correct, albeit having ambiguities which make them difficult to understand (Barahuee et al., 2020). It is worth mentioning that the sentences were meticulously constructed by the words of roughly similar frequency and difficulty levels and with approximately similar number of comprising words (between 9 to 12 words) in order to neutralize the possible effects words' frequency, words' difficulty and the sentence length on the participants' sentence comprehension. Following sentences are examples of each set, respectively:

- *Doctors have been cured to find a try for years.*

- *She went the stairs up in a hurry and fell down.*

- *The car wasn't paying attention when it happens.*

- *He couldn't obtain his degree for he failed the test.*

- *The man who hunts ducks out on weekends.*

In continuation, for each sentence, a multiple-choice test item was designed to check its accurate comprehension (100 multiple-choice test items in general). As an example:

*Q: Doctors have been cured to find a try for years.*

    A. *Doctors want to find a try.*

    B. *Doctors have already found a try.*

    C. *Doctors are still curing.*

    D. *Doctors want to find a cure. ***

A special software application (Com-Chron) was designed on the UX platform to provide the participants with 100 multiple-choice test items and to calculate the number of correct answers in addition to the elapsed time for answering each item. The items were randomly mixed to avoid the sensitivity of the respondents. Each question has 30 seconds time limit to be answered; in the case the time limit was over, the respondent had to skip the item and move to the next. 100 multiple-choice test items of the study were fed into the software application and the participants were provided with four options one of which was determinant of the

correct comprehension of the sentence. As an outcome, Com-Chron provided a file which contained the number of correct answers and the participants' reaction times. Figure 1 presents an instance of the online test item and the output of Com-Chron for one participant.

Figure 1

An Example of Com-Chron Test Item and the Output
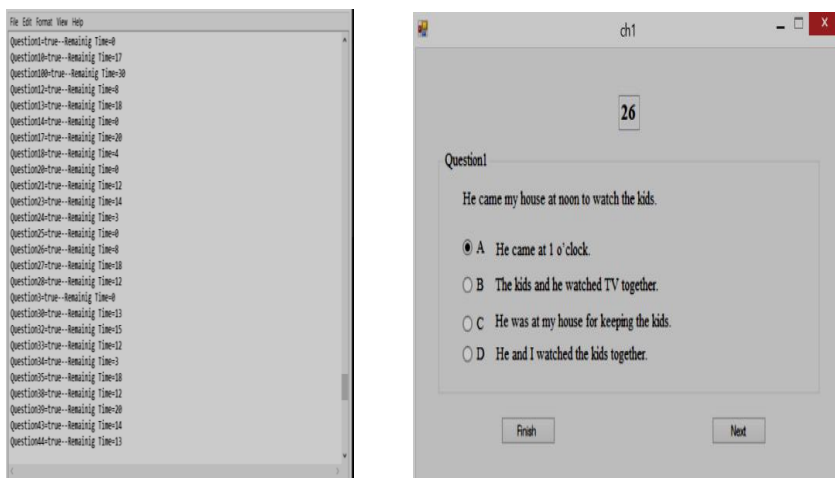
Data Collection Procedure

After classifying 188 participants into three English proficiency groups considering the institute's classification, their proficiency levels were assured with the aid of McMillan Placement Test. After a brief introduction to the test and Com-Chron, their comprehension of different constructed sentences (i.e., 20 syntactically correct / semantically incorrect, 20 syntactically incorrect / semantically correct, 20 syntactically / semantically incorrect, 20 syntactically / semantically correct and finally 20 Garden-Path sentences) was evaluated. Participants were supposed to read each sentence on the screen and click on the choice which best interprets the sentence as soon as they reached to a conclusion. Since the time consumption was a concern, the participants were asked to stop the test whenever they were distracted and continue it when they felt ready.

After the test termination, for answering the first research question, the number of the correct responses for each one of the sentence type was determined and through multiple comparisons the more difficult sentence types were distinguished. To answer the second research question, the elapsed time for answering the test items was measured and more problematic sentence types for comprehension were determined. Considering the elapsed time for answering each item, the mental challenge for answering each item could be evaluated. Based on the

comparison of the participants' performance on different sentence types, a hierarchy for the difficulty levels of comprehension for different sentence types became available. The normality of the collected data was checked by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, then they were analyzed through SPSS; more than descriptive analyses, inferential statistical analysis procedures were employed to determine the meaningfulness of possible differences on sentence comprehension among different sentence types and different English proficiency levels.

Results

In order to check the normality of the obtained data the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is employed. If the significance level of this test is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis that the data is normal is accepted. It should be mentioned that different sentence types are defined in the following way for the software: Syntactically Incorrect (SYI), Semantically Incorrect (SEI), Semantically-Syntactically Correct (SSC), Semantically-Syntactically Incorrect (SSI) and Garden Path (GP) sentences.

Table 1

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of the Data

	SYI	**SEI**	**SSC**	**SSI**	**GP**
Mean difference	13.94	8.49	14.06	10.64	10.38
Std. Deviation	4.08	2.99	4.49	3.39	2.97
Absolute	.189	.154	.167	.101	.125
Positive	.10	.07	.09	.07	.08
Negative	-.18	-.15	-.16	-.10	-.12
Test Statistic	1.12	1.07	1.12	1.03	.10
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.098	.176	.109	.200	.096

As discernible in the table above, considering the Sig. values, the data were shown to be normal. Consequently, a one-way ANOVA was employed to investigate whether there were statistically significant differences among the performance of participants on the comprehension of different sentence types.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Performance for Comprehending Different Sentence Types

	Mean difference	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error**	**95% Confidence Interval for Mean**	
				Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**
SYI	12.917	4.483	.486	11.95	13.88
SEI	7.976	3.101	.336	7.30	8.64
SSC	12.752	4.720	.512	11.73	13.77
SSI	10.094	3.318	.359	9.37	10.81
GP	9.776	3.075	.333	9.11	10.43
Total	10.703	4.233	.205	10.29	11.10

As Table 3 suggests (noting the *p* values), statistically significant differences were diagnosed concerning the participants' comprehension of different sentence types based on their responses to the constructed teat items.

Table 3

Comparing the Performance of Participants Regarding the Comprehension of Different Sentence Types

| | | **Mean Difference** | **Sig.** | **95% Confidence Interval** | |
				Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**
SYI	SEI	4.94	.000*	3.79	6.08
	SSC	.164	.778	-.98	1.31
	SSI	2.82	.000*	1.67	3.97
	GP	3.14	.000*	1.99	4.28
SEI	SYI	-4.94	.000*	-6.08	-3.79
	SSC	-4.77	.000*	-5.92	-3.62
	SSI	-2.11	.000*	-3.26	-.96
	GP	-1.80	.002*	-2.94	-.65
SSC	SYI	-.16	.778	-1.31	.98
	SEI	4.77	.000*	3.62	5.92
	SSI	2.65	.000*	1.51	3.80
	GP	2.97	.000*	1.82	4.12
SSI	SYI	-2.82	.000*	-3.97	-1.67
	SEI	2.11	.000*	.96	3.26
	SSC	-2.65	.000*	-3.80	-1.51
	GP	.31	.587	-.83	1.46
GP	SYI	-3.14	.000*	-4.28	-1.99
	SEI	1.80	.002*	.65	2.94
	SSC	-2.97	.000*	-4.12	-1.82
	SSI	-.31	.587	-1.46	.83

As is discernible in Table 3, the participants' performance has been compared in pairs based on their mean scores. It can be concluded that SYI sentences have been the least difficult to comprehend for the participants. Interestingly, the mean difference between SYI and SSI sentences was the smallest; this may imply that they were more or less at the same level of difficulty for the participants. With regard to SEI sentences, the mean score was found to be significantly different from all the other groups, denoting that along with GP sentences, they were the most difficult sentences to comprehend. Concerning SSI sentences it was deduced that they were significantly different from SEI, SYI and SSC sentences, however, no statistically significant difference was realized between them and GP sentences. Comparing the mean differences, it can be pointed out that comprehending SSI sentences have been more demanding than SYI and SSC sentences but easier compared with SEI sentences. Deduced from the comparison report, GP sentences were found to be slightly less difficult than SEI sentences for participants to comprehend while they were harder than SYI and SSC sentences. It

was also depicted that SSC sentences were more or less similar to SYI in terms of the mental challenge on the part of the comprehenders.

Considering the fact that the needed time for accomplishing a task can be regarded as the indicator of the task's mental challenge in psycholinguistic studies (Warren, 2013; Robertson & Gallant, 2019), the average elapsed times for the challenging sets of sentences (i.e., SYI, SEI, SSI and GP) were compared through an ANOVA to check for possible statistically significant differences to answer the second research question. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the average elapsed time for more challenging sentence types.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of the Average Elapsed Time Comparison Among the More Challenging Sentence Types

	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
SYI	22.37	4.35	.44	21.48	23.26
SEI	26.49	2.92	.30	25.89	27.08
GP	25.58	3.18	.32	24.93	26.23
SSI	24.67	3.98	.34	25.15	26.98
Total	24.82	3.94	.23	24.36	25.28

Table 5 depicts the differences of the needed time for comprehending the more problematic sentence types of SYI, SEI, GP and SSI.

Table 5

Comparison of Elapsed Time for Comprehending SYI, SEI, GP, and SSI Sentences

		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
SYI	SEI	-4.11	.514	.000*	-5.13	-3.10
	GP	-3.20	.554	.000*	-4.22	-2.19
	SSI	-3.75	.564	.000*	-498	-2.45
SEI	SYI	4.11	.414	.000*	3.10	5.13
	GP	.909	.313	.078	-.10	1.92
	SSI	1.65	.456	.003*	-.65	2.67
GP	SYI	3.20	.514	.000*	2.19	4.22
	SEI	-.909	.513	.078	-1.92	.10
	SSI	-1.78	.498	.056	-3.76	.67
SSI	SYI	3.75	.876	.000*	2.98	.83
	GP	1.78	.546	.056	-.987	.76
	SEI	-1.65	.456	.003*	-1.98	.50

As Table 5 indicates, SYI sentences differed significantly from all other sentence types, implying that they were significantly less demanding for participants to comprehend. No significant difference was reported between the average elapsed time of GP and SEI sentences, referring to the fact that these two sentence types were approximately similar in terms of the mental burden they impose on the participants; however, the comprehension of SEI sentences were slightly more time-consuming. Comprehension of SSI sentences was significantly less challenging than SEI sentences while it was not the case when compared with GP sentences. Overall, close to what was found for the first research question, the comprehension of SEI, GP, SSI, and SYI sentences were the most time-consuming (hence, challenging), respectively.

To check the contribution of participants' proficiency level to their sentence comprehension, their performance regarding the comprehension of the study's five sentence types were compared. Consequently, an ANOVA was employed to analyze the data and answer the third research question. Tables 6, 7, and 8 demonstrate the comprehension differences of beginner, intermediate, and advanced participants for various sentence types of the study.

Table 6

Comparing the Performance of Beginner EFL Learners for Different Sentence Types

		Mean Difference	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
SYI	SEI	3.300	.001*	1.445	5.155
	SSC	1.100	.242	-.755	2.955
	SSI	1.300	.167	-.555	3.155
	GP	1.800	.057	-.055	3.655
SEI	SYI	-3.300	.001*	-5.155	-1.445
	SSC	-2.200	.021*	-4.055	-.345
	SSI	-2.000	.035*	-3.855	-.145
	GP	-1.500	.112	-3.355	.355
SSC	SYI	-1.100	.242	-2.955	.755
	SEI	2.200	.021*	.345	4.055
	SSI	.200	.831	-1.655	2.055
	GP	.700	.456	-1.155	2.555
SSI	SYI	-1.300	.167	-3.155	.555
	SEI	2.000	.035*	.145	3.855
	SSC	-.200	.831	-2.055	1.655
	GP	.500	.594	-1.355	2.355
GP	SYI	-1.800	.057	-3.655	.055
	SEI	1.500	.112	-.355	3.355
	SSC	-.700	.456	-2.555	1.155
	SSI	-.500	.594	-2.355	1.355

SEI sentences were noticeably more difficult than SYI, SSC, and even SSI sentences for beginners to comprehend. These differences were found statistically significant; however, no significant difference was reported between SEI and GP sentences.

Table 7

Comparing the Performance of Intermediate EFL Learners for Different Sentence Types

| | | **Mean Difference** | **Sig.** | **95% Confidence Interval** | |
				Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**
SYI	SEI	5.266	.000[*]	3.763	6.770
	SSC	.100	.896	-1.403	1.603
	SSI	3.866	.000[*]	2.363	5.370
	GP	2.966	.000[*]	1.463	4.470
SEI	SYI	-5.266	.000[*]	-6.770	-3.763
	SSC	-5.166	.000[*]	-6.670	-3.663
	SSI	-1.400	.068	-2.903	.103
	GP	-2.300	.003	-3.803	-.796
SSC	SYI	-.100	.896	-1.603	1.403
	SEI	5.166	.000[*]	3.663	6.670
	SSI	3.766	.000[*]	2.263	5.270
	GP	2.866	.000[*]	1.363	4.370
SSI	SYI	-3.866	.000[*]	-5.370	-2.363
	SEI	1.400	.068	-.103	2.903
	SSC	-3.766	.000[*]	-5.270	-2.263
	GP	-.900	.239	-2.403	.603
GP	SYI	-2.966	.000[*]	-4.470	-1.463
	SEI	2.300	.003[*]	.796	3.803
	SSC	-2.866	.000[*]	-4.370	-1.363
	SSI	.900	.239	-.603	2.403

Comprehension of SYI sentences was significantly undemanding compared with SEL, SSI, and GP sentences for intermediate EFL learners. This was certified by the statistical significance of the mean score differences. Considering the mean scores, SEI similar to SSI sentences were the most challenging types of sentences even tougher than GP ones. GP sentences have been easier than SEI sentences to comprehend; however, they were more difficult than SYI and SSC sentences to perceive. For intermediate EFL learners, SSC and SYI sentences were the most unproblematic sentences to comprehend, respectively.

Table 8

Comparing the Performance of Advanced EFL Learners for Different Sentence Types

		Mean Difference	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
SYI	SEI	6.520	.000*	5.527	7.512
	SSC	-.880	.082	-1.877	.112
	SSI	3.400	.000*	2.407	4.392
	GP	4.960	.000*	3.967	5.952
SEI	SYI	-6.520	.000*	-7.512	-5.527
	SSC	-7.400	.000*	-8.392	-6.407
	SSI	-3.120	.000*	-4.112	-2.127
	GP	-1.560	.002*	-2.554	-.567
SSC	SYI	.880	.082	-.112	1.872
	SEI	7.400	.000*	6.407	8.392
	SSI	4.280	.000*	3.287	5.272
	GP	5.840	.000*	4.847	6.832
SSI	SYI	-3.400	.000*	-4.392	-2.407
	SEI	3.120	.000*	2.127	4.112
	SSC	-4.280	.000*	-5.272	-3.287
	GP	1.560	.002*	.567	2.552
GP	SYI	-4.960	.000*	-5.952	-3.967
	SEI	1.560	.002*	.567	2.552
	SSC	-5.840	.000*	-6.832	-4.847
	SSI	-1.560	.002*	-2.552	-.567

As Table 8 indicates, again the comprehension of SYI sentences was shown to be the least challenging along with SSC sentences for advanced EFL learners. Similar to the beginner and the intermediate participants, the advanced learners' most difficult job was on SEI sentences even tougher than those of GP and SSI sentences which were more difficult than SYI and SSC sentences to comprehend. GP sentences were the second most challenging type of sentence. The findings suggest that as the level of proficiency raises, the comprehension of all types of sentences improves; however, still the challenge exists for SEI and GP sentences. Interestingly, the comprehension of SYI and SSC sentences was very close for the advanced learners implying that for the more proficient EFL learners the role of syntactic awareness shrinks to minimum for comprehension tasks while the semantic proficiency still plays a noticeable role. Figure 3 illustrates the comprehension of the participants of three levels of proficiency for different sentence types of the study schematically.

Figure 3

Comprehension of the Participants of Three Levels of Proficiency for Different Sentence Types
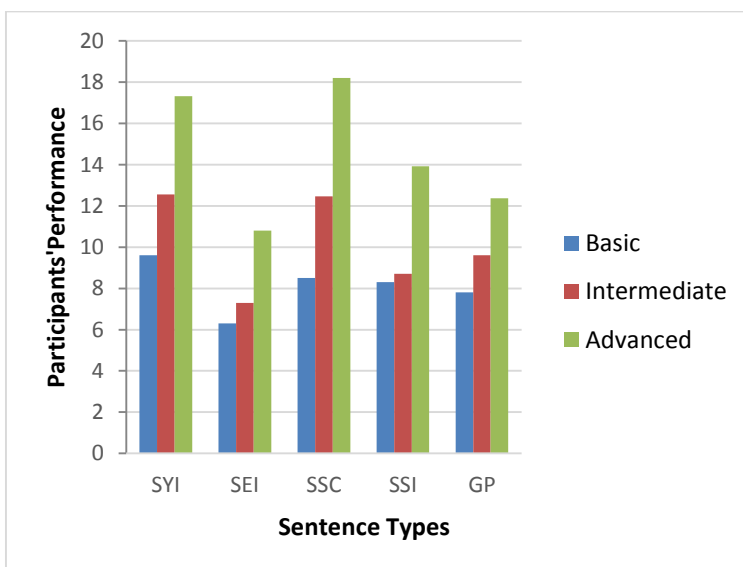
Discussion

The first research question addressed the issue that which one of syntactic or semantic awareness is more contributive to English sentence comprehension for EFL learners of different proficiency levels. It was concluded that SYI sentences

had been the least challenging for the participants of the three proficiency levels who were able to comprehend these sentences despite their syntactic errors. It was also concluded that SEI sentences had been the most difficult to comprehend which accounts for the importance of semantic knowledge in sentence comprehension. SSI and GP sentences were the second and the third most troublesome sentences for the participants while SSC and SYI were the easiest.

The findings were inconsistent with Traxler (2014) who argued that syntax is the most important factor helping to comprehension. Omaki and Lidz (2015) also proposed that the ability to comprehend complicated sentences in a foreign / second language contributes to one's efficient syntactic awareness of that language. Brimo et al. (2017) also concluded that syntactic awareness has a significant contribution to sentence comprehension among the adolescent learners. The results were also in disagreement with Friederici and Kotz's (2003) study which supported the supremacy of syntax for comprehension, the opposite was concluded to be the case in this study. Afhami and Khaghaninejad (2021) also documented that presence of explicit syntactic markers (ESMs) and consequently syntactic awareness affected the sentence comprehension of EFL learners remarkably. Nonetheless, the results of the study are in line with Morgan et al. (2020) who found that comprehending sentences with semantic support were much easier for the participants comparing to semantically neutral sentences. They also provided preliminary evidence for the availability of some semantic processes prior to the full developmental emergence of syntax. Also, it is consistent with the study conducted by Kim and Osterhout (2005) which revealed that interpretation can be influenced by semantic processing in a way that it might be controlled by these processes even in the face of unambiguous syntactic cues.

Regarding the second question of the study which dealt with the reaction-time for different sentence types' comprehension, it was revealed that the comprehension of SEI, SSI, and GP sentences required more time than SYI and SSC sentences regardless of the learners' proficiency levels. This implies that sentences with semantic ambiguities are more challenging to perceive for EFL learners of different proficiency levels. This is in line with the findings of Clahsen and Felser (2006, p. 45) who argued that since the syntactic awareness is "shallower" than the semantic knowledge, L2 learners have to rely on lexical information to be able to process and comprehend L2 sentences. According to Friederici and Hahne (2001) and Tamimy et al. (2022), difficulty in comprehension for L2 learners can also be due to the low speed of the lexical and semantic information retrieval.

The third question of this study dealt with how EFL learners' language proficiency level affected the comprehension of semantically or syntactically incorrect sentences; consequently, the success rates of different sentence types were compared across different proficiency levels. SEI sentences were found to be the most demanding sentences for all three proficiency levels to comprehend. GP and SSI sentences were also challenging for all the participants in the next row. However, SYI sentences were the least challenging specially for advanced learners whose comprehension of these sentences was very close to the comprehension of SSC statements. As stated by Hopp (2016), L2 learners theoretically were able to

utilize the syntactic information; however, in practice, it was limited by various factors such as lack of automaticity in applying linguistic information, lower reading speed, etc. As a result, to compensate for these deficiencies, they relied more on lexical information to understand the sentences better. Therefore, in case of semantic ambiguities or errors, it became more difficult for L2 learners to comprehend new sentences. This finding would certify what Briscoe (2020) and Chwilla (2022) claimed about the supremacy of semantic knowledge over the syntactic awareness for the sentence comprehension of proficient readers.

The findings also revealed that semantic awareness played a more determining role in sentence comprehension in line with Huang et al. (2021). The more proficient learners relied on semantic proficiency more than the beginners; hence, they were usually capable of coping with SYI sentences more successfully. The findings were in agreement with what Hopp (2016) documented; this reliance was intensified as the language proficiency level rose. This reliance was even traceable in perception of Garden-Path sentences whose complexity was the outcome of structural mismatch at the first sight but as Pozzan and Trueswell (2016) put it, this was the semantic ambiguity not the syntactic confusion which necessitated for another attempt for logical comprehension.

In a very recent study, a close relationship was witnessed by Deniz et al. (2023) between the EFL learners' semantic knowledge (but not lexical phonology) and both regular and irregular word recognition. They concluded that during the early stages of learning to read, semantic knowledge might support word reading irrespective of regularity and contextual support particularly benefitted reading of irregular words. These findings implied that semantic treatment but not phonological awareness should be realized in almost all class activities from the early stages of instruction to improve sentence comprehension and production.

In the same vein, Keenan and Betjemann (2008) claimed that the semantically proficient readers were more autonomous and relied less on the contextual clues during the reading comprehension tasks than their peers. They also empirically documented that the semantic working memory predicted reading comprehension performance better than the orthographic or syntactic memories. They also suggested that the language network might be generally more strongly concerned with meaning than syntactic form. However, Washington and Wiley (2023) reported evidence that semantic awareness contributed to word identification, but significantly less than the syntax and only in syntactically grammatical sentences; this effect was moderated by EFL learners' language proficiency, further constraining the conditions under which the shared cross-linguistic representations were rapidly accessed in the bilingual mind.

In a comprehensive study, Massol et al. (2021) found a significant, collaborative interaction between the semantic and the syntactic awareness on sentence comprehension tasks. This interaction was greater with semantically regular sentences compared with semantically anomalous sentences. They concluded that sentence-level semantic information could constrain word identities under parallel word processing, albeit with less impact than that exerted by syntax.

Although many studies documented the dominance of either semantics or syntax for sentence comprehension, the interaction between the two proficiencies was not negligible.

Conclusion

This study verified the dominance of semantic over syntactic awareness for comprehension of L2 sentences for the participants of different levels of English proficiency. Moreover, the findings suggested that the dependence on the semantic proficiency increased as the level of L2 proficiency rose. Semantic knowledge seemed to be a more determining factor as far as comprehension accuracy and speed were concerned. According to Clahsen and Felser (2006), during parsing, adult learners have been guided by lexical-semantic cues much more than syntactic information. Additionally, this reliance on semantic knowledge was cross-lingual as Artetxe and Schwenk (2019) claimed. Tan et al. (2017) also found that the learners' reaction time for perceiving sentences was highly dependent to their semantic knowledge regardless of their syntactic proficiency.

Inspired by the findings of this research, teachers and instructors would be asked to draw the attention of EFL learners to a more semantically-based approach of teaching of the materials. Consequently, the focus could be shifted towards building a more comprehensive vocabulary bank for the learners without which instructors and even learners might devote unnecessary additional time to materials which were not going to be as helpful as they are expected. Associative strategies of vocabulary instruction (i.e., context-based instruction, morphemic analysis, concept mapping etc.) would be helpful techniques for developing the learners' lexicon eloquently and making them aware of lexical items' interrelationships.

More importantly, books and teaching materials could be designed in a way that learners would encounter various phrases and expressions helpful for developing their communicative competence. In this way, they would use their lexical repertoire to make informed guesses when encountering structurally erroneous expressions. In the realm of reading comprehension, instructors would draw learners' attention explicitly to some semantic information, thus making them more equipped to make use of various cues to decode a text. However, the interconnection of semantic and syntactic proficiencies should not be downgraded (Demberg & Keller, 2019).

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A Comparative Study of the Impact of Explicit Instruction, Input Enhancement, and Guided Discovery on Iranian EFL Learners' Passive Voice Production: A Computer-Assisted Language Learning Approach

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Abstract

It is commonly agreed that grammar is so important that it should not be ignored. The English passive voice can be a challenging aspect of grammar learning for Iranian EFL learners. The aim of this study was to comparatively and empirically investigate the effect of the Input Enhancement Technique (IET), Guided Discovery Approach (GDA), and Explicit Instruction Method (EIM) on Iranian EFL learners' passive voice production. It sought to determine the individual effectiveness of these methods and identify the most efficient one. To this end, 70 Iranian EFL learners from the Payam Nour University of Tabriz were chosen and divided into three groups, including GDA (N = 22), IET (N = 25), and EIM (N = 23). The research data were obtained based on three validated, researcher-designed computerized activities. Pretest and posttest were used to elicit information on the learners' production of passive voice. The results of the data analysis revealed that both IET and GDA had significant effects on the production of passive voice. However, EIM did not significantly influence the production of passive voice. Meanwhile, GDA was found to be the most efficient teaching technique compared with the other methods. This study has some important implications for teachers, students, and syllabus designers.

Keywords: CALL, explicit instruction, guided discovery, input enhancement, passive voice production

Introduction

Attaining grammatical competence is a crucial aspect of communicative competence, and it is often prioritized in effective classroom practice (Yufrizal, 2017). Language teaching history is replete with arguments describing the pros and cons of grammar instruction (Zhang, 2009); however, an agreement is far from reach, and contradictory results have been obtained that require further investigation in this field. Whether to teach grammar explicitly or acquire it naturally has been a controversial issue in the realm of second language learning (Ellis, 2008).

Although the rise of the communicative approach deemphasized the minute presentation of rules of language usage, it has been observed later that only a small number of learners are capable of picking up accurate linguistic forms solely through exposure to the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2014). Sheen (2007) argued that explicit teaching methods help learners analyze information through comprehension practice and might be more efficient than the models that entail producing language too early. Proponents of the traditional method of language teaching mainly utilize explicit grammar teaching; however, those who assume that covert grammar instruction suffices may use the implicit way.

Meanwhile, the emergence of Long's Focus on Form (FonF) in 1991, in response to the constraints of forms-focused and meaning-based styles, opened a new window into the realm of grammar instruction. Among different approaches to FonF instruction, one that drew researchers' attention is "Input Enhancement", which is described as learning resulting from providing learners with enriched or enhanced L2 input, including a target grammar structure (Hulstijn, 2003). The distinguishing characteristic of input enhancement is the noticing of input. Schmidt's (1994) "Noticing Hypothesis" asserts that directing L2 learners' attention to intended language forms can aid the students in recognizing any distinctions between the second language and their existing interlanguage.

In a similar vein, some people take the middle ground and are pleased with a balanced combination of implicit and explicit techniques. As Ellis (1995) believes, learners who are provided with a combination of explicit and implicit grammar teaching probably perform better. In this regard, the Guided Discovery Approach (GDA) is a solution for those who consider implicit versus explicit instruction as a continuum. Having roots in Bruner's (1961) discovery learning and constructivism, guided inquiry is a valuable but often overlooked option in educational discourse (Castillo, 2008). Guided discovery is an updated inductive strategy where language exposure comes first, then the inference is used, and rules are explicitly practiced at the end (Saumell, 2012).

Besides, recent technological advancements have encouraged some researchers to study the influence of using computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programs in different aspects of foreign and second language teaching and learning (Pawlak & Kruk, 2022). The implementation of the CALL has been found to raise students' motivation, enhance learning efficiency, foster innovation, and alter traditional student-teacher roles (Lim & Aryadoust, 2022). Students are no longer passive receivers of knowledge from an expert but rather active participants

interacting with a facilitator or guide. The frequent development of CALL technologies also affects the area of grammar teaching (Bahari & Gholami, 2022). Grammar is often perceived as the most tedious aspect of language learning, particularly among students who have been exposed to conventional teaching methods (Sakhaei et al., 2023). Accurately, the old chalk-and-board approach, which is extensively used in Iranian schools and colleges, is no longer the only way of teaching grammar, nor is it favored by language learners. Moreover, teachers have to constantly evaluate the educational environment to create learning innovations that are diverse, effective, and well-suited to the students' needs and interests (Nazli & Yahya, 2023). Thus, enabling CALL in language classrooms is one possible option that could help them reach their pedagogical goals (Ebadijalal & Moradkhani, 2023).

In this study, the English passive voice was chosen to be investigated under different treatments since the passive structure in Persian is widely disputed among scholars and there is no consensus around its presence in Persian yet (Abdollahi-Guilani & Tan, 2016; Hadian et al., 2013). In addition, the materials given to EFL students in the classroom context do not typically include this structure. One of the principles of VanPatten's (2004) "input processing model", the first noun principle, is a substantial additional justification for selecting the passive voice. According to this theory, most second language learners tend to process the first noun or pronoun in a phrase as the agent, regardless of the student's mother tongue. As a consequence, EFL students would have difficulty understanding the English passive voice, wherever the initial noun or pronoun must be processed as the patient (Qin, 2008). Further, learning the accurate form of the verb tenses is troublesome for EFL learners, specifically when there is no correspondence between the tenses in their native and foreign languages (Nourdad & Tim Aghayi, 2014). In this regard, it could be very demanding for Iranian English language teachers to investigate various techniques that can simplify the instruction of passive voice. Therefore, given the numerous benefits that technology can offer to the learning environment and in light of the ongoing search for an optimal method of grammar instruction in the continuum of explicit versus implicit methods, this study seeks to determine the effect of different CALL-based instructional instruments, including explicit instruction method (EIM), input enhancement technique (IET), and guided discovery approach (GDA), on the production of passive voice.

Literature Review

The Historical Background of the Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) Model

Throughout the period of the shift between communicative language teaching (CLT) and situational language teaching (SLT) in England, the three-stage model of PPP was devised by Byrne (1976). According to Anderson (2016), contrary to views that assume PPP originates from audiolingual (Harmer, 2007) or behaviorist (Willis, 1994) methods of language teaching, this is not the case. He demonstrates this fact about the last stage of PPP and asserts that it is in harmony with the "weak version" of CLT due to the freedom it allows in the production stage (Rixon & Smith, 2012).

Although the PPP model has provoked many criticisms (Tomlinson et al., 2001), it continues in its revised form to be used to date (Mamatkulova, 2023). Evans (1999) argued that PPP has developed over time, absorbing the most attractive components of other methods and integrating them into its original form. PPP can be regarded as an advantageous model because it conforms to the simple psychological theory that practice makes perfect (Carless, 2009). In short, the three Ps approach is fit for beginning teachers and low-achieving students (Maftoon & Sarem, 2015). It permits the instructor to control the pace and content of the lesson (Thornbury, 1999). It provides the novice teacher with a complete set of successive stages to be followed in the class (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Textual Input Enhancement

Different variables affect SLA. An external factor crucial to language acquisition is the input that language learners receive (Bahrani & Nekoueizadeh, 2014). The role and significance of language input are supported by several language learning theories such as interactionism, mentalism, and behaviorism (Ellis, 2008). It can be argued that SLA is not achieved in the absence of target language input (Mackey & Gass, 2015). "Input enhancement", according to Smith (1993), is defined as any attempt to direct students' attention to the grammatical structures while leading them to consider their meaning. According to Schmidt (2012), people understand the things that they attend to and do not get much information about the things they do not pay attention to.

Various techniques like typographical modifications via underlining, boldfacing, italicizing, or capitalizing are utilized to enhance input or add to the saliency of certain target structures (Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2013). The aim is to enhance the target structures' saliency in the source material and increase the possibility of noticing the forms simultaneously (Luquin & Garciamayo, 2023).

Guided Discovery Approach

Guided discovery is considered a constructivist instructional model that incorporates principles of cognitive pedagogy and a discovery learning approach (Sulistiani & Agustini, 2022). Amid the two approaches of reception / expository learning and discovery instruction lies "guided discovery", which selects the best of each (Henson, 1980). In this model, the instructor primarily makes illustrative materials available, and then key questions are posed to stimulate critical thinking and help learners draw conclusions using scientific processes (Nwagbo, 1999). De Jong (2021) regarded guided discovery as a cognitive procedure. He asserted that, in general, effective discovery learning is associated with reasoning from hypotheses, employing a planned and systematic discovery process, and using good-quality explorations for investigation. Similarly, Westwood (2008) supposed that guided discovery is mostly considered an inspiring technique that is appreciated by students. This approach offers students the chance to make creative and appropriate decisions about the objective of the exploration (Zahara, 2017). Convergent thinking is the hallmark of guided discovery (Abdulfatai, 2018).

Empirical Studies

Various studies compared Explicit and implicit methods of instruction in terms of grammar success (Andrews, 2007; Bakhshandeh & Jafari, 2018; Darakhani & Rajabi, 2022; Lynch, 2005; Nazari, 2013; Safdari, 2019). For example, Bakhshandeh and Jafari (2018) studied the effects of input enhancement and explicit instruction on improving Iranian EFL learners' explicit knowledge of simple past and simple present passive voice. The results showed that explicit training is superior for developing passive voice explicit knowledge. Also, in a recent study, Darakhani and Rajabi (2022) aimed to explore the relationship between GDA and the speaking confidence of Iranian English language learners. The study concluded that the guided discovery led to a more realistic classroom with an atmosphere like everyday life.

The related literature review shows contradictory results concerning the influence of input enhancement on grammar acquisition. While several studies have indicated the effectiveness of this method (Abadikhah & Shahriyarpour, 2012; Kalanzadeh et al., 2018; Mohamadian & Shabestari, 2017; Nourdad & Tim Aghayi, 2014), some others have not found it has any substantial effect on the development of grammatical structures (Al-Hejin, 2004; Basturkmen, 2018; Han et al., 2008; Izumi, 2002; Wong, 2003). In addition, the guided discovery has drawn the attention of scholars and has been the subject of recent investigations (Alcaraz & Isabel, 2018; Alfieri et al., 2011; Pratiwil et al., 2021; Simamora et al., 2019; Sulistiani & Agustini, 2022).

Moreover, considering the implementation of computerized systems, most empirical studies of CALL have been limited to presenting computer-aided teaching methods to provide comprehensible input and are too narrow in scope (Bahari & Gholami, 2022). Meanwhile, the effect of CALL-based methods on the grammar acquisition of EFL students has not been addressed comprehensively (Weng & Chiu, 2023).

The studies mentioned are noteworthy as a foundation for upcoming research that compares guided discovery learning with explicit and implicit language teaching techniques. However, our research provides further contributions to the literature. First, despite the abundance of comparative research on CALL in other fields of study like reading and the increasing body of research on methods of grammar teaching, the literature review reveals that only a limited number of studies have explored the integration of passive voice as a demanding grammatical structure into computer-assisted grammar lessons using different teaching techniques.

Second, the present study investigates the effect of different techniques on the production aspect of grammar knowledge; in most previous research, L2 learning is assessed in general terms without considering the fact that, according to the "Output Hypothesis", for successful language learning to take place, it is necessary to move from a comprehension only process that is confined to "semantic processing" to a language production that entails more "syntactic processing".

Third, to the best of our knowledge, to date, few studies have focused on modern approaches to EFL grammar instruction such as input enhancement or guided discovery as opposed to explicit instruction, and the cumulative effect of these strategies on the grammatical proficiency of language learners has not been investigated in the Iranian context.

Therefore, as a novel scientific experiment, the aim of the present study was to empirically and comparatively investigate the effect of the Input Enhancement Technique (IET), Guided Discovery Approach (GDA), and Explicit Instruction Method (EIM) on Iranian EFL learners' production of passive voice through computerized techniques. It sought to determine the individual effectiveness of these methods and identify the most efficient one.

To accomplish the goals of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent does the guided discovery approach affect Iranian EFL learners' production of passive voice?

2. To what extent does the input enhancement technique affect Iranian EFL learners' production of passive voice?

3. To what extent does the explicit instruction method affect Iranian EFL learners' production of passive voice?

4. Is there a significant difference among the groups receiving explicit instruction method, input enhancement technique, and guided discovery approach on the production of English passive voice?

Methodology

Design of the Study

The pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design was used in this study. Although the researcher chose participants from intact classes, she randomly assigned them to distinct groups.

Participants

The initial pool of participants in this study was composed of 100 Iranian EFL learners majoring in English Language Translation and English Language Literature who were chosen on the basis of the convenience sampling method. The participants were both female and male students, with an age range of 19 to 38 years old. They were bilingual EFL learners, native speakers of Turkish whose second language was Persian. They attended the English Grammar Course in the academic year 2021-2022, at Payam Nour University of Tabriz.

The Preliminary English Test (PET) was used to confirm the homogeneity of the students. Based on the results of this test, 70 intermediate EFL learners whose scores fell one standard deviation below and above the mean were chosen, and the outliers were excluded from extra analyses. Since it was practically impossible to disrupt the schedules of the university, three classes were randomly assigned to

GDA (N = 22; 4 males and 18 females; mean age = 24 years old), IET (N = 25; 11 males and 14 females; mean age = 27 years old), and EIM (N = 23; 7 males and 16 females; mean age = 28 years old), respectively. An overview of the information on the study participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information About Participants

Participants	Sex		Age (mean)	Experience of learning (years)	Total
	Male	**Female**			
IET	11	14	27	4	25
GDA	4	18	24	3	22
EIM	7	16	28	3	23
Total	22	48			70

Instruments

PET

The reading, writing, and listening sections of PET were administered as a standardized test to ensure students' homogeneity in language skills. The speaking section was eliminated because of practical problems. There were 68 questions that students answered in 125 minutes.

Pretest and Posttest

After choosing the participants, their previous knowledge of the passive voice in English was assessed through a validated teacher-made pretest prepared to test the participants' ability to use the target structure through picture description and fill-in-the-blanks. The demographic information on the content of the pretest and posttest is tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2

Content and Structure of the Pretest and Posttest

Focus	Item type	Number of items
Production	Picture description	20
	Fill in the blank	20

As a last phase of the treatment, the posttest was administered to identify the differences in the three groups' production of the target structure. The posttest was similar to the pretest in terms of format and difficulty level. The content validity of both tests was approved by three experienced EFL teachers and the reliability of them was checked through Cronbach's Alpha.

Computerized Program for EIM Group

The study data were collected through a collaboratively created computerized grammar training program designed by software programmers and

researchers to teach passive voice. The program's content has been thoroughly reviewed and validated by a team of experts in TEFL and curriculum design.

Table 3

Three Stages of EIM

First stage	Presenting the form	English Explanation
		Persian Explanation
		Examples within a text
Second stage	Practicing the form	Gap fill exercise
		Substitution drill
		Sentence transformation
		Reordering sentence
Third stage	producing the form	Give your idea
		Discuss with a peer
		Involve your teacher

The explicit Instruction Method was taught using the PPP model. The treatment involved a three-steps computerized program that carried out the presentation, practice, and production steps with the participation of the teacher and students. In the first stage, which primarily focused on the presentation step, all the rules of a specific passive voice were explained in both Persian and English. Just as stated by Nassaji and Fotos (2011), in presenting a form stage, a new grammatical rule is introduced through a story, a dialogue, or a text that contains the structure. Moreover, some examples of the rule were given to clarify the structure. The second part of the treatment focused on the practice aspect of the model, where learners were faced with different types of drills and exercises such as substitution drills, filling-the-gap exercises, reordering sentences, matching a picture to a sentence, or sentence transformations. At this stage, the focus was on grammar structure, and learners were actively controlled so that the new structure of passive voice was precisely practiced. In the final stage, learners had the opportunity to chat and generate ideas while discussing a topic. In other words, students communicated about a given topic using the chat system of the program. The last stage involved both cooperation and collaboration between students and the teacher. The blueprint of the three stages of the program is given in Table 3.

Computerized Program for IET Group

The computerized program, which was mainly designed and prepared for the IET group, consisted of four stages. The first stage focused on presenting the new form within a text that is optionally underlined, boldfaced, italicized, capitalized, and color-coded. The students were free to choose the type of enhanced input to get familiar with the new passive voice. The second stage provided an opportunity for the students to discuss the new issues that had already been emphasized within the text. This stage was also accompanied by teachers' monitoring of students' negotiations of metalanguage. This research group also faced a third stage devised with different form-focused tasks. Last but not least was the production stage, where the students received feedback on their problems and errors (See Table 4 below).

Table 4

Four Stages of IET

First stage	Presenting a new form within modified input	Underlined examples in a text
		Boldfaced examples in a text
		Color-coded examples in a text
		Capitalized examples in a text
Second stage	Negotiations of metalanguage	Teachers' monitoring
		Students' discussion
Third stage	Practicing the form	Contextualized tasks
		Cloze tasks
		Editing tasks
Fourth stage	Producing the form	Give your idea
		Discuss with a peer
		Receive teacher feedback

Computerized Program for GDA Group

The treatment that was utilized for this group included four stages. As a first stage, the GDA was operationalized through a brief context-setting activity in the form of a short reading text of an appropriate level rich with examples of the target form. It is recommended to choose a text containing a mix of plural and singular subjects and / or a variety of tenses (Caprario, 2013). In the second stage, some questions were observed; notably, the questions focused on both form and meaning. The aim was to assist learners in discovering the new structure themselves. The explanation of the new structure and its examples were given in the third stage. Finally, the last stage was designed based on a communicative purpose, where the participants were required to produce the new structure with other members of the group. This program was based on a grammar worksheet prepared to help learners achieve the grammatical objective through the guided discovery of the meaning and form (adopted from Caprario, 2013). To be compatible with the Think Pair Share model of Caprario (2013) at all stages of the GDA model, before going to the next section, students were asked to stop to check their answers in a small group or with a partner using the chat system of the program. In addition, the program had the capability of presenting correct answers to the participants by clicking on the view answers button. The blueprint of the program is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Four Stages of GDA

First stage	Exposure to the new rule
	Reading passages containing examples of target structure
Second stage	Discovery of target structure
	Form-focused tasks
	Meaning-focused tasks
Third stage	Explaining the form
	Explanation
	Examples
Fourth stage	Producing the form
	Dealing with tasks related to passive voice
	Discuss with a peer
	Discuss with the teacher

Procedure

The data collection procedure of this study began with the introduction of the methods and procedures for performing the activities in the system. The instructor was responsible for collecting the data during the 12 treatment sessions held for passive voice training at three tense levels as part of the weekly teaching syllabus. Every session of instruction was held in the computer lab of the Payam Nour University of Tabriz, which was equipped with so many computers. The treatment sessions were conducted separately for each group. Learners were taught to work with the program and were reminded that the study results would be part of their midterm examination. In addition, the learners were given a special user name to remain anonymous in the system. For instance, one lesson from the GDA session is described in this section. The participants started the lesson by logging in to the program. See Figure 1 below:

Figure 1

The Lead-in Section of the GDA Program
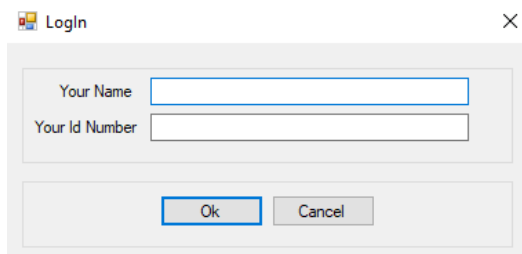
To generate interest in the topic and context and activate schemata, the program was designed to elicit the term airport using jumbled letters. This was done to encourage participants to activate their knowledge of the context (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Schema Building in the GDA Program
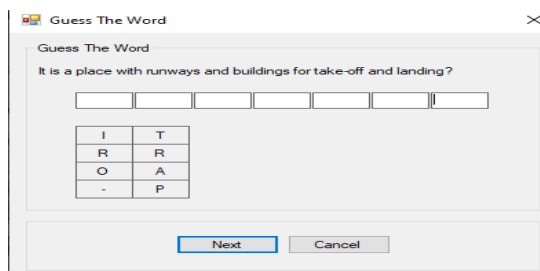
Then the exposure stage of the lesson started. To establish a guided discovery lesson, the passive voice was introduced through a reading passage that contained several instances of the target form. Indeed, the participants were required

to read for the gist and answer the next two questions. Figure 3 shows how the participants had to deal with the reading passage to be guided to passive voice.

Figure 3

The First Stage of the GDA Program
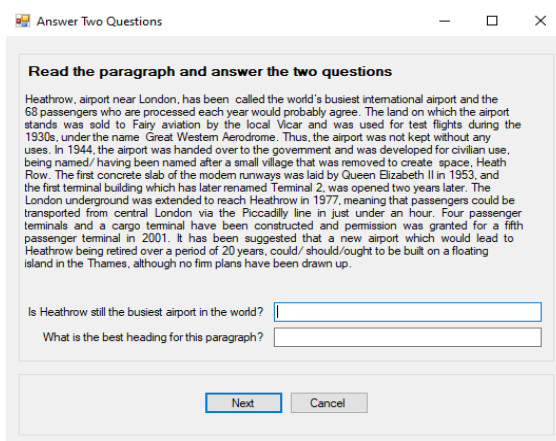
Next, to highlight the target structure, that is, simple past passive voice, the program was designed to elicit all the verbs with was or were. This was purposefully done to encourage learners to notice the target structure and assist them in discovering the new structure (See Figure 4).

Figure 4

The Second Stage of the GDA Program
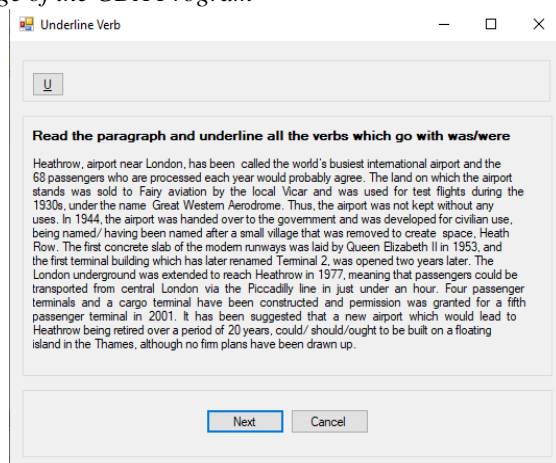
Also, to clarify the target language meaning and highlight the target form, some comprehension check questions were asked. At this stage, the students were

asked to answer questions about the sentences taken from the passage. This stage of GDA is demonstrated in Figure 5. The main reason for designing this meaning-focused activity was to highlight the learners' need for cooperation with their teacher and peers. At this stage, through their discussions, students may support one another in critical thinking and problem-solving, along with lexical choices and form noticing (Caprario, 2013).

Figure 5

The Meaning-Focused Activity Related to the Second Stage of the GDA Program

In the next stage, to consolidate the preceding sections into a formula and enhance the students' consciousness of the meaning and form of the target structure, an explanation of the form was delivered through a gap-fill exercise (See Figure 6).

Figure 6

The Third Stage of the GDA Program

Finally, to provide controlled practice of the target structure, the last stage of the program provided the participants with some tasks related to passive voice production (See Figure 7).

Figure 7

The Fourth Stage of the GDA Program
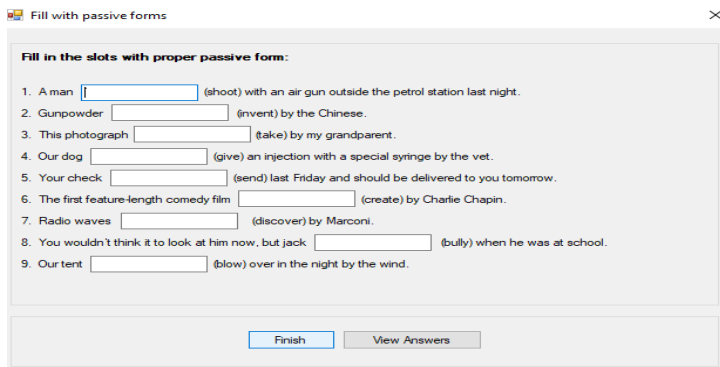
Data Analysis

A paired sample t-test was performed to answer research questions 1 to 3. To answer the last research question based on normality assumptions, the researcher used an ANOVA. Moreover, to determine how much the groups under different teaching instructions were different from each other, post-hoc analysis was utilized. All analyses were conducted using SPSS 26.

Results

To address research questions 1 to 3, which are concerned with the extent of effectiveness of GDA, IET, and EIM instructions in the production of passive voice, the mean scores of the pretests and posttests are compared. Hence, in this section, first, the descriptive statistics of the three groups in the pretests and the posttests are presented. Then, to answer the fourth research question, the most efficient teaching technique for improving the production of the passive voice is determined using inferential statistics.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of GDA, IET, and EIM Groups in the Pretest and the Posttest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
GDA pretest	22	6.00	21.00	13.1818	3.88693
GDA posttest	22	14.00	34.00	25.5909	5.61171
IET pretest	25	3.00	29.00	11.6400	5.14684
IET posttest	25	10.00	33.00	18.8000	4.45346
EIM pretest	23	6.00	20.00	12.5217	4.33663
EIM posttest	23	7.00	24.00	13.6522	4.83932

As is shown in Table 6, the means of the three groups in the pretests are similar, showing that the students in the three groups were equivalent before the study. However, a one-way ANOVA was used to identify the homogeneity of the participants in the pretest. The preliminary assumptions of the normality of the data distribution and the homogeneity of the variances were checked before conducting ANOVA (see Appendix).

The fact that the mean scores in three experimental groups went up from the pretests to the posttests showed that the treatments in these groups worked to improve the use of the passive voice. Hence, the paired sample t-test was used for comparing the means of the pretests and the posttests and testing the statistical differences between them.

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine the lack of pre-existing differences between the means of the GDA, IET, and EIM groups in terms of the production of the passive voice in the pretest (Table 7).

Table 7

ANOVA Test for the Pretest Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.214	2	14.107	.692	.504
Within Groups	1366.772	67	20.400		
Total	1394.986	69			

Because the p-values of the ANOVA test are higher than 0.05 (p > 0.05), the means of the three groups of GDA, IET, and EIM are not significantly different. In other words, the participants were homogeneous in terms of their knowledge of the production of the passive voice. This shows that the groups were comparable before the treatment.

Table 8

Paired Sample T-Test for Comparing Pretest and Posttest Scores of Production of Passive Voice in the Three Groups

Pairs	Std. Error Mean	Paired Differences 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Lower	Upper			
GDA pretest - GDA posttest	1.12558	-14.74986	-10.06833	-11.025	21	.000
IET pretest - IET posttest	.59632	-8.39075	-5.92925	-12.007	24	.000
EIM pretest - EIM posttest	.88756	-2.97112	.71025	-1.274	22	.216

To determine the effectiveness of GDA, IET, and EIM instruction in terms of the production of passive voice, a paired sample t-test was performed to identify

the mean differences between the pretests and the posttests. The results of this test are presented in Table 8.

As shown in Table 8, there were significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores of the participants in the GDA and IET groups ($p < 0.05$). This shows that GDA and IET instructions have significantly improved the production ability of the passive voice of Iranian EFL learners. With these explanations, the answers to the first and second research questions regarding the effectiveness of GDA and IET in improving the production knowledge of passive voice become clear.

Because the p-value of the EIM group between the pretest and the posttest was higher than 0.05, the EIM instruction did not have any significant effect on improving the production of the passive voice by Iranian EFL learners at a 95% confidence level. By doing so, the answer to the third research question becomes clear.

To address the fourth research question, a one-way ANOVA was used to determine the significant differences between the means of the three groups in the posttest.

Table 9

ANOVA Results for the Posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1610.336	2	805.168	32.645	.000
Within Groups	1652.536	67	24.665		
Total	3262.871	69			

The ANOVA test in Table 9 indicated that there were significant differences in the production of passive voice among the means of the three groups at a 95% confidence level. In other words, the effectiveness of the three groups in improving the production of the passive voice was completely different. A Tukey post-hoc test was conducted to do a pairwise comparison among the means of the GDA, IET, and EIM groups (Table 10).

Table 10

Tukey Post-Hoc Test Results for GDA, IET, and EIM Groups

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
1.00	2.00	6.79091*	1.45180	.000	3.3111	10.2707
	3.00	11.93874*	1.48105	.000	8.3888	15.4886
2.00	1.00	-6.79091*	1.45180	.000	-10.2707	-3.3111
	3.00	5.14783*	1.43491	.002	1.7085	8.5871
3.00	1.00	-11.93874*	1.48105	.000	-15.4886	-8.3888
	2.00	-5.14783*	1.43491	.002	-8.5871	-1.7085

As the p-values for Tukey post-hoc were lower than 0.05, the pair of means of the three groups were significantly different. GDA was significantly effective in improving Iranian intermediate EFL learners' production of the passive voice. Meanwhile, the IET group performed better than EIM. Because the means of the GDA group in Table 6 were higher than those of the other groups, GDA instruction was the most efficient teaching technique when compared with the other methods. Moreover, the means of the EIM group were the lowest among the three groups (Table 6). This shows that the EIM group was the least effective in improving knowledge of the production of the passive voice.

Discussion

According to the questions raised in this study, the results showed that for the selected grammar point, students who were taught under GDA conditions generally performed better than those who were exposed to the implicit representation of the grammar structure and the explicit teaching method. The findings of the first and second research questions indicated that both IET and GDA had significant effects on students' production of passive voice. Findings from the input enhancement technique contribute to Schmidt's (1994) theory of the "Noticing Hypothesis". In the present study, textual enhancement promoted the students' noticing of the form and improved their target structure use. Accordingly, as Schmidt states, noticing an item is an essential condition for the acquisition of that item. The findings of this part of the study are in line with those of (Abadikhah & Shahriyarpour, 2012; Kalanzadeh et al., 2018; Nourdad & Tim Aghayi, 2014). Conversely, the findings were in contrast with the studies that do not support input enhancement as an effective technique in developing learners' acquisition of English passive structure (Al-Hejin, 2004; Basturkmen, 2018; Han et al., 2008; Izumi, 2002; Wong, 2003).

The results of the data analysis on the third research question indicated that the production of passive voice in EIM was not significantly different on the pretest and the posttest. This part of the results was in contrast with studies such as Lynch (2005), Andrews (2007), and Nazari (2013). Since both IET and GDA improved substantially more than EIM, the outcome favors the use of more implicit methods that are closely associated with Krashens' (1982) "Natural Approach" theory. It is founded on the notion of incorporating naturalistic language acquisition into the classroom. Also, the fact that instructing target language structures in a meaningful way was more efficient than the presentation of isolated linguistic structures puts the "FonF" instructional techniques at an advantage over the "FonFs" (Long, 1991).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to answer the last research question, and the results indicated that the production of passive voice was significantly different as a result of different instructional techniques. The findings showed that GDA could lead to a better and more efficient contribution compared to two other instructional techniques.

There might be several reasons for the superior performance of the learners in the GDA group. Since the students participating in this study had been trained

using traditional teaching methods for years, presenting grammar structures through GDA as a new method, implemented using computer programs, seemed very attractive to them. Therefore, the learners performed all the steps presented in this method with great interest and precision. Another reason that can explain the outperformance of the GDA group is the grammatical structure chosen for this study. Understanding the passive voice of L2 verb tenses in English is regarded as one of the most problematic grammatical challenges for EFL students. As Andrews (2007) displayed in his study, a simpler grammatical structure could result in a different outcome. Also, the success of this method can be attributed to the optimal combination of both explicit and implicit teaching methods at different stages of its implementation. In addition, this method can lead to an active and deeper understanding of educational materials by taking advantage of Bruner's (1961) "Discovery Learning Method". The effective support of the teacher through the guidance component might be another important issue that can be explained according to Vygotsky's (19ᵛ8) "Scaffolding Theory". In cases of learning problems, scaffolding can help students learn material that they would not have been able to process on their own. As a result, GDA can be considered a complete educational package that meets students' expectations of a teaching method and responds appropriately to their educational needs. Regarding the findings of the study that investigated the effectiveness of guided discovery learning, the results are in line with (Alcaraz & Isabel, 2018; Alfieri et al., 2011; Pratiwil et al., 2021; Simamora et al., 2019).

The results of this study showed that CALL-based instructional methods may provide indirect support for an increase in learner language production due to the advantages attested to their use. The software program could have a positive effect on students' motivation through the provision of increased practice opportunities and immediate and non-judgmental feedback (Ebadijalal & Moradkhani, 2023). The present study found empirical support for those who attempted to indicate that technology-enhanced instruction could be utilized at the service of teaching language skills and sub-skills like grammar (Bahari & Gholami, 2022; Lim & Aryadoust, 2022; Nazli & Yahya, 2023; Weng & Chiu, 2023).

Regarding the various advantages attributed to GDM and CALL, one can infer that computer-assisted guided discovery can be a proper approach to all scientific inquiries (Lim & Aryadoust, 2022; Pratiwil et al., 2021). A combination of the characteristics of the discovery learning method and technology-based instruction has made it a preferred option in the fields of pragmatics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics (Pawlak & Kruk, 2022). However, the idea is not exclusively confined to the realm of language instruction. Such a collective method is applicable to any field of study that requires scientific discovery to be presented in an engaging manner, like mathematics, chemistry, and biology, to name a few (Sulistiani & Agustini, 2022).

Conclusion

As syntactic awareness is an important aspect of English language teaching, how to teach grammar successfully is considered an essential issue. There may

never be a clear answer to the best approach to education, but any effort to address this issue should be valued as it can lead to improvements in the overall quality of education. In this study, the production of passive voice was explored through CALL-based grammar teaching methods. IET and GDA were identified as useful techniques for creating valuable contexts for improving the production of passive voice. Nevertheless, like many other teaching techniques, EIM presented some negative results when learners were to practice the production of passive voice. Also, GDA was found to be the most efficient teaching technique when compared to two other methods.

The study results have some pedagogical implications that can improve teaching grammar in an Iranian EFL context. First, teachers may attend teacher training courses to learn how to use guided discovery to teach grammar. Second, coursebook writers are required to create some instructional materials that strengthen analytical thinking and problem-solving skills. Third, EFL educators and students must enhance their technology skills as the first step toward implementing CALL-based practices. Fourth, syllabus designers are advised to integrate new technologies into the syllabus to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. Finally, because of the importance of CALL, the Ministry of Education in Iran has to equip schools with computer laboratories so that students and teachers can benefit from the supplementary resources that technology provides.

The present research, like any applied linguistics study, suffered a number of limitations and delimitations. Firstly, for the restricting rules of the target university, the number of sessions allocated to data collection was limited. Secondly, not having access to many university students at the intermediate level, the researcher observed the classes which were accessible. Hence, interested researchers are recommended to opt for learners at a random sampling base and provide them with an adequate number of treatment sessions. Also, a main delimitation of this study was the focus on the three types of grammar teaching techniques while there were a large number of techniques that could be selected. Therefore, it is possible to triangulate more techniques to generate more fruitful results.

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Appendix
Results Related to Assumption Testing

Table A1: *Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for the Normality of the Data Distribution in the Pretests and the Posttests*

	Statistic	df	Sig.
GDA pretest	.155	22	.183
GDA posttest	.116	22	.200
IET pretest	.173	22	.084
IET posttest	.161	22	.143
EIM pretest	.119	22	.200
EIM posttest	.122	22	.200

Table A2: *Levene's Test for Identifying the Homogeneity of the Variances in the Pretests and the Posttests*

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre	.484	2	67	.618
Post	1.406	2	67	.252

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The Inhabitants of the Camp: *Homo Sacer* and Biopolitical Regimes in V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*

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Abstract

Politicization, in general, and biopoliticization, in particular, of human beings' lives, especially those the state deems expendable, is what informs the heart of the present study. Exploring the subtle ways in which the state renders its subjects docile and at the same time divested of any subjectivity, agency, identity and human rights remarkably helps in better understanding the covert mechanisms of the biopolitical regimes operating within the ideologically-informed, discursive nexus of the sociopolitical fabric of the society. Studying Giorgio Agamben's (1995) seminal text Homo Sacer (1995), and his theoretical reworking of Michel Foucault's concept of "biopower" alongside Carl Schmitt's notion of "the state of exception" casts an illuminating light on how such biopolitical regimes and exclusionary states of exception operate within the narrative of V. S. Naipaul's A House for Mr. Biswas (1961). Attempts at biopoliticizing and governmentalizing Mohun Biswas, the fiction's central character, play out in different contexts and manifest themselves within the fabric of both the microcosmic family and macrocosmic society wherein Biswas inhabits, not as a decent member, but as a subjugated inhabitant of a biopolitical camp. Having been biopolitically interpellated and reduced to an Agambenian homo sacer, Biswas is deemed outside of and beneath the law, life and citizenship, and therefore, within a sacrificial order, his life means nothing to the biopolitical state. However, some counter-discursive, counter-biopolitical spaces that Biswas uses to rally against the prevailing sovereignty of the biopolitical regimes of the state should be explored to further buttress or undermine the discursive and ontological potentiality of resistance against biopolitical oppressions of any sort.

Keywords: biopolitics, state of exception, the camp, sovereignty, ideology, human rights

Introduction

West Indian fiction is famous for its serious concern with a sociopolitical consciousness. V. S. Naipaul, as a representative novelist from the West Indies faced and experienced a society whose values had never been acknowledged and defined before. He therefore found it incumbent upon himself to fashion and refashion unique values and standards against which West Indian experiences could be judged (Rohlehr, 2002), while at the same time trying to bring to light the cumbersome task of the West Indians to define themselves against the discursive sociopolitical normative values imposed by the state. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* seems, at first glance, a novel whose narrative is marked by utmost simplicity and straightforwardness of presentation, far from obliquity and tortuousness, to fulfil an unmistakable effect of directness and precision (Ormerod, 1967). Nevertheless, it should be noted that Naipaul's economical unvarnishedness is far from accidental as he tries to attain many of the novel's remarkable effects through using a consistent structure of imagery and symbolism operating at the surface of the novel (Ormerod, 1967) to cast light on the infrastructural counter-ideological significations inherent in this narrative. The images and symbolisms associated with the house, family and the society in which the protagonist of the novel, Biswas, is entrapped, are central to the understanding of how an inescapable sense of social frustration, identity crisis, excommunication and ennui haunts him as a result of being victimized by an overarching and sovereign system. This novel, which is set in colonial Trinidad, is an agonizingly humorous account of a man's epic quest for the resurrection of his bruised ego, lost autonomy and fractured identity; it dramatizes the sociohistorical and sociopolitical effects of colonialism in Trinidad and the plight of an Indo-Caribbean man as he undergoes arduous trials and tribulations to redeem his individual agency robbed by the state (Ceraso & Connolly, 2009). As Naipaul (1961) once said, "the politics of a country can only be an extension of its ideas of human relationships" (Ceraso & Connolly, 2009, p. 109), whose intersections with "race, class, ethnicity and nation" (Ceraso & Connolly) and implications for their undeniable complicity with an oppressive regime of truths could be studied within a larger framework of sovereignty and biopolitics.

Literature Review

This section offers various critical perspectives on V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, encapsulating some of the most important studies previously done on this novel and how they have shed light on different aspects of the novel and its themes: Stephen Casmier's (1995) "Black Narcissus: Representation, Reproduction, Repetition and Seeing Yourself in Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Enigma of Arrival*" thematically draws upon and inverts the myth of Narcissus so as to show that just as it is accepted that Narcissus falls in love with his own reflection (representation) in the stream, it should also be accepted that in not seeing himself, Mr. Biswas experiences the very opposite emotion—being one of inconspicuousness and self-denigration. GMT Emezue's (2006) "Failed Heroes, Failed Memory: Between the Alternatives of (V. S. Naipaul's) Biswas and (Mongo Beti's) Medza" explores how most of the contemporary critical opinion about the West Indies is

inextricably connected with the colonial attitude toward Africa and has accordingly suffered the throes similar to those of postcolonial African States. Emezue (2006) therefore studies how Naipaul, as the representative West Indian novelist and Beti, as the representative African novelist, critically respond to the ramifications of the colonial encounters of their people through the traumatic memories of their characters.

Keith Garebian's "The Grotesque Satire of *A House for Mr. Biswas*" finds problems with and deficiency in viewing this novel as either a tragic Caribbean epic about a doomed man or a comic epic about a man whose vision is farcically incommensurate with the realities of the world he inhabits. Garebian rather sees Naipaul's novel as a deterministic tragicomedy, whose protagonist is included into and excluded from the society, being forced to choose an identity and denied the opportunity to do so, at the same time. Bhoendradatt Tewarie's (2002) "*A House for Mr. Biswas* Revisted: Ethnicity, Culture, Geography and Beyond" delves into how Biswas manages to win an independence for himself, his wife and children after having survived a tragic period of rootlessness and restiveness to reestablish their roots anew. Tewarie (2002) refers to the new house a symbol of new identity and autonomy, offering new possibilities and self-actualization.

Ram Prasad Rai's (2017) "Displacement as a Diasporic Experience in V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*" investigates the theme of displacement and its representation as a diasporic experience in Naipaul's narrative. The article delves into the ways in which the character of Mr. Biswas grapples with the challenges of cultural dislocation, identity crisis, and the quest for a sense of belonging. It studies Naipaul's depiction of displacement, the complexities of diasporic identity, and the impact of colonialism and postcolonial dynamics on the characters' experiences. B. P. Giri's (2015) "Colonial Displacement and Subjectivity in V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*" analyzes the ways in which the characters in the novel, particularly Mr. Biswas, experience displacement as a result of colonialism and its legacy. It analyzes the ways in which colonial power dynamics mold and inform the characters' identities and sense of self. The article explores how Naipaul depicts the complexities of colonial displacement and its traumatizing effects on subjectivity, illuminating the broader themes of postcolonialism and identity in Naipaul's narrative.

William Ghosh's (2017) "The Formalist Genesis of 'Postcolonial' Reading: Brathwaite, Bhabha, and *A House for Mr. Biswas*" explores the formalist approach to postcolonial reading through the works of Kamau Brathwaite, Homi Bhabha, and V.S. Naipaul's A House for Mr. Biswas. The author examines how these theorists and the novel engage with formalist elements such as language, structure, and narrative techniques to address postcolonial themes and representations. The article highlights the significance of formalist analysis in understanding the complexities of postcolonial literature and its relationship with literary traditions and conventions. However, none of the above-mentioned studies done on this novel, among many others, seems to have benefited from the novelty that the present study does in its perspicuous analysis of Naipaul's narrative in light of an amalgamation of Foucault's Biopolitics and other anti-(neo)liberal theories of the recent decades. By

combining these frameworks, this study aims to shed new light on the novel's themes and enrich the existing scholarly discourse on *A House for Mr. Biswas*.

Theoretical Framework: Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer* and Biopolitical Regimes

Giorgio Agamben (b. 1942), an influential Italian thinker, whose paradigmatic work, *Homo Sacer* (1995), was published before the tumultuous events of 9/11 and the ensuing "war on terror," astutely addresses the multilayered incarnations of the mechanics and paradigms of state sovereignty and political power in the contemporary society, focused his reflections and erudition on the constitution of social, ethical and political assumptions regarding the state of society today and the position of an individual within its very fabric. Borrowing from and building on Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics and Carl Schmitt's theorization of "the state of exception," Agamben (1995) investigates with great range, precision, and perceptiveness the covert or implicit presence of biopolitical regimes within the history of traditional political theory, shedding light on the intricate political and legal discursive structures of the modern societies and nation-states. His groundbreaking contribution is to teasing out the ways in which biopolitical regimes of power, exercising control and exclusion, differentiate between, on the one hand, those whose lives are worth being protected, and when the occasion arises, sacrificed, and those who should be robbed of all basic human rights, even the right to live, on the other (Ojakangas, 2005).

Agamben (1995) also alludes to Aristotle's concept of man as a political animal, extends his analysis to the discussion of the history of Western sociopolitical philosophy vis-à-vis sovereignty and the state, and finally concludes that all throughout the scrutinized historical annals and treatises, the conception and materialization of sovereignty as the exertion of power over "life" has always been covert and implicit. This covertness, according to Agamben's arguments, has to do with the inseparable relationship between sovereignty and the sacred, or the state of sanctity. Agamben draws on Carl Schmitt's "state of exception" to refer to the exceptional and discriminatory status of the ruler as an exception to the discursive structures and all the rules he wantonly imposes on others and later excludes the ones he deems deviant and noncompliant from the sphere of social privileges and prerogatives (Reynolds, 2014).

Agamben's (1995) seminal text, *Homo Sacer*, is a good manifestation of the deployment and appropriation of Foucault's notion of biopower; however, while Foucault is interested in the nonstate, diffusive and multi-loci power exercised by and through the various bodies within the discursive web of the society, Agamben pays particular attention to the ways in which the biopolitical regimes of the sovereign state embark upon deploying the power at their disposal to reduce and (bio)politicize the life of a certain group of its subjects towards a disdained and animalistic politics of subject-life formation (Vaughan-Williams, 2012).

There is an unmistakable sense of ambivalence with regard to the conception of *homo sacer* in Agamben's (1995) theoretical lexicon: he employs

'sacer,' meaning sacred in a negative light, connoting a sense of dirtiness. It means something highly esteemed and imbued with inviolable sanctity inasmuch to designate someone whom one should not come into any contact with, and someone who is ostracized from the society and all of its discursive circles. In other words, he brings into light the indissociable relationship between the sacred and the taboo: the sacred is one who can be paradoxically killed but not sacrificed. This strange inverse exaltation of the sacred means first seeing it as a being a necessary part of the system; counterintuitively however, he or she can be taken out of that system via killing without repercussions and with full impunity as such beings have been reduced to life only creatures (Cain et al, 2018). He views this inherent paradox as the crux of the discursive mechanisms through which modern individuals are shaped and do operate within the fabric of the sovereign society that imposes biopolitical control over the naked lives of the *homo sacers*.

To further elucidate what he specifically means by 'life' in his appropriation of Foucauldian biopolitics and conceptualization of *homo sacer*, Agamben (1995) makes references to Aristotle's *Politics* so as to draw a fine distinction between the two different, yet relevant conceptions of life: one is *zoe*, which refers to the physical and fleshly life of the body and its corporeal materiality, also called "bare life" or "naked life" by Agamben (1995). The other is *bios*, which refers to the life fashioned by an individual as a result of his or her cumulative discursive interactions with other individuals and discourses (Gratton, 2011). The "threshold to modernity" is reached precisely when bare life (denoted by the Greek zoe) enters politics, at which point the "state of exception comes more and more to the foreground as the fundamental political structure and ultimately begins to become the rule" (Gratton, 2011, p. 602). The employment and appropriation of power in the name of proliferation, productivity, generativity and ultimately life, materialized in biopower wielded and exercised by the biopolitical regimes of the modern sovereignty, is how the state manages to control and proliferate individuals' lives (Cain et al, 2018).

Agamben's (1995) percipient observation about the state of individuals within the biopolitical regimes is marked by his insistence on the exclusion of the ostracized, bare-life *homo sacers* so as to formulate and define the life of other worthier citizens. This exclusionary 'state of exception' paradigm, according to Agamben, operates through various layers of the biopolitical society, wherein protections, rights and privileges are monopolized for some and proscribed for others. The privileged individuals benefit from a *bios* version of life, protected by the state and the law; the excluded *homo sacers* however, are divested of all their basic rights, robbed of citizenship, and ultimately ousted from the legal, social and political sphere of the society and banished to the extraterritorial 'camps' of the biopolitical regime. The camp, as opposed to prison, is the space that abides by to the originary structures and basic tents of the law. This can be demonstrated by the fact that "while prison law only constitutes a particular sphere of penal law and is not outside the normal order, the juridical constellation that guides the camp is martial law and the state of siege" (Agamben, 1995, p. 20).

Introducing some into the biopolitical camps poses a serious threat to their human rights and citizenship, depriving them of the right to a live a full life. The biopolitical power wielded by the state of exception and imposed onto the inhabitants of the camp—*homo sacers*—is state-approved, yet extraterritorial (Cain et al., 2018). That is, this biopolitical regime of power can do almost anything to harm and denude the inhabitants of the camp as this power is given the carte blanche by the state to operate in whatever way it sees fit, and is, in the meantime, situated outside the common legislated jurisdictional territory established by the law—meaning that it is accorded the leeway to execute whatever atrocities it deems necessary to keep the inhabitants in place and is constantly exonerated from punitive mandates of the law (Cain et al. 2018).

Taking the modern *homo sacers* as the inhabitants of the extraterritorial camps of the biopolitical regime, some analogies can be made between Agamben and Hannah Arendt's theories with regard to totalitarian regimes and the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis against the German Jews: just as the Jews were stripped of their most basic human rights before being sentenced to the horrendous concentration camps, so too are the *homo sacers* inhabiting the biopolitical state (Peters, 2014). Accordingly, Agamben (1995) draws the following conclusions: 1- "The original political relation is the ban (the state of exception as zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exclusion and inclusion). 2- The fundamental activity of sovereign power is the production of bare life as originary political element and as threshold of articulation between nature and culture, *zoe* and *bios*. 3- Today it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West" (Peters, 2014).

In the modern era, according to Agamben (1995), the prevalence and permeation of the discourse of rights and the rise of biopolitical power has played a significant role in legitimizing the wanton atrocities of the political regimes in that the concept of rights serves a dual function, like a two-prong sword (Cain et al, 2018). "The paradox of sovereignty" and the rights it grants consists in the fact the "sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the juridical order" (Agamben, 1995). On the face of it, rights can be viewed as a liberating agent; however, within a biopolitical regime, argues Agamben, rights place the recipient of those rights within the legal manacles of the system and therefore make that subject accountable to the juridical-legal mandates of the state. The fact that there is almost no real life outside the premises of the biopolitical rights is undisputable, but at the same time, entitlement to and entrapment in the rights, more often than not, perpetuates and bolsters the sovereign regime rather than undermine it (Agamben, 1995).

An interesting point of contention raised by Agamben (1995) is that the very essence of rights within the biopolitical regimes is contradictory and does not make sense, no matter from what perspective it is looked at. The biopolitical regimes of the tyrannical state are the granters and enforcers of the very same rights that are meant to protect people from the same state that has given them those rights (Cain et al, 2018). This seems preposterous and insensible, argues Agamben. That is also why the rights one is being accorded as a result of being a citizen are accompanied by other more fundamental rights one is able to avail oneself of as a

result of being a human. In this light, the supposedly human rights bestowed and upheld by the state for citizens are no longer efficacious in protecting those *homo sacers* the state excludes from the premises of its lawful jurisdiction (Cain et al, 2018).

Discussion and Analysis

Biswas: A *Homo Sacer*
Biswas's Family as a Biopolitical Camp

V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, a "fictive biography" (Ramchand, 1969, p. 60), depicts Biswas as a man born of a poor, laboring-class parentage in a small town. From the very beginning, his way of life is dictatorially predetermined; that is, being a member of an underprivileged, lower-class family who has to lead an impoverished existence, working tirelessly and doing backbreaking labors to ultimately build the very house that symbolizes "status and stability" that he desires (Sinfield, 2004, p. 148). This unescapable exclusionary state of exception enforced by the locus of the family is always present with Biswas. This biopolitical narrative is given forceful expression in the laborious lifetime of hard labor that Biswas has to go through as an overworked apprentice in the business of sign-writing or working as a journalist. Significantly, all these inferior, toiling positions play crucial roles in shaping Biswas's ultimate destiny. For example, during the time he was serving the sign-writing business he met his future wife or it was during the time he was working as journalist that he became able to find residence and set up household appliances for himself.

From the moment Biswas was born, the idea of family as an inescapable biopolitical camp significantly influences his life's path. Yet it is notable that in spite of showing that overarching power dominates Mr. Biswas, the narrative is at times critical of his character. In the words of Alan Sinfield (2004), "the presentation of Mr. Biswas is a strange mixture of sympathy and satire, inwardness and distance," making the narrative voice appear "split between identification with Mr. Biswas and near-contempt for him" (148-9). The narrative voice, in various parts of the novel, emphasizes that Biswas was born into this world in a family wherein everything is predetermined and great expectations are held. These expectations influence every single aspect of Biswas's life, such as the course of life he should conform to and even his physical appearance. However, these illegitimate expectations are quickly defied by Biswas's abnormal physique, causing many troubles for the newborn baby as he is rendered unworthy of life:

> "What is it?" the old man asked. "Boy or girl?"
>
> "Boy, boy," the midwife cried. "But what sort of boy? Six-fingered, and born in the wrong way."
>
> The old man groaned and Bissoondaye said, "I knew it. There is no luck for me." (Naipaul, 1961, p. 5)

From the very moment he makes his entrance into this world as a human being, an oppressive space apart from the legal and political realm is inviolably

written and determined for Biswas: a boy "born in the wrong way" and a boy who brings "no luck." This embryonic space gradually develops into a fully-fledged biopolitical camp that begins to impact almost all facets of Biswas's troubled life. The allegations made by a pundit who greatly strengthens the belief that Biswas's ill-fated birth is an all-afflicting plague contributes to the intensification of this politicization of life in the form of the exclusionary practices of a state of exception. When the abnormality of Biswas's hand is concerned, the pundit refers to other features of his physical deformity:

> At last, he said, "First of all, the features of this unfortunate boy. He will have good teeth but they will be rather wide, and there will be spaces between them. I suppose you know what that means. The boy will be a lecher and a spendthrift. Possibly a liar as well. It is hard to be sure about those gaps between the teeth. They might mean only one of those things or they might mean all three." (Naipaul, 1961, p. 5)

Accordingly, behind-the-scene shenanigans takes centerstage in Biswas's family under the guise of a so-called pundit. The pundit's comments on and interpretations about Biswas's appearance are all shallow in insight and bereft of any meaningful essence; his predictions about the newborn's future are all marked by imprecision and intended to shade the truth. Given the pundit's authoritative stature and ideological power among the native residents, his ominous prophecies are naively accepted by Biswas's parents and, as a consequence, these irrational prophecies grow into and act as a forceful biopolitical agent, negatively shaping and denigrating Biswas's future life, stripping him of all his rights and privileges. Noteworthy and astonishing in the pundit's claims is the fact that his prophecies and interpretive comments are founded upon mere speculation about the future growth of Biswas's teeth: "He will have good teeth but they will be rather wide, and there will be spaces between them" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 4). This comment clearly shows that his prophecies and interpretations are obviously not based upon even the most basic tenets of sane observations, putting a stamp of affirmation on the superstitious nature of the pundit's allegations.

Unfortunately, however, the pundit's unfounded allegations are blindly accepted by Biswas's family, who represent a microcosmic space for the larger biopolitical camp, legitimizing the overarching religious and political regime. The pundit's unquestioning authority among people is itself illustrative of the presence of a kind of biopolitical camp within the fabric and setting of the society Naipaul wisely critiques. Such a position is perceptibly at work in composing and constructing an account of life for an infant named Mohun Biswas. With the authorial license accorded to pundits, it is no surprise that the pundit is not only accepted as accountable and trustworthy by Biswas's parents, but is also requested to make more prophecies and prescriptions about the infant and his ominous future, shaping and dictating his reduced-to-bare-life existence:

> "What about the six fingers, pundit?"

> "That's a shocking sign, of course. The only thing I can advise is to keep him away from trees and water. Particularly water."

"Never bath him?"

"I don't mean exactly that." He raised his right hand, bunched the fingers and, with his head on one side, said slowly, "One has to interpret what the book says." He tapped the wobbly almanac with his left hand. "And when the book says water, I think it means water in its natural form."

"Natural form."

"Natural form," the pundit repeated, but uncertainly. "I mean," he said quickly, and with some annoyance, "keep him away from rivers and ponds. And of course, the sea. And another thing," He added with satisfaction. "He will have an unlucky sneeze." He began to pack the long leaves of his almanac. "Much of the evil this boy will undoubtedly bring will be mitigated if his father is forbidden to see him for twenty-one days." (Naipaul, 1961, p. 6)

The pundit's prophecies about Biswas's life poignantly result in the devastation of the entire family. A few years later, Mohun takes a neighbor's calf to meadowland, and accidentally approaches a stream. Because of the pundit's inhibition, the boy has never come close to a stream or any watercourse "in its natural form"; for that reason, he becomes confused and leaves loose the rein of the calf and it goes away. Subsequently, fearing the prospects of having to suffer the severe punishments of his father, Mohun goes into hiding. At this point, given the feelings of fatal danger, Mohun's father presumes that his son is in imminent danger of being drowned into the stream. In his abortive attempt to rescue Mohun from drowning, the father is drowned himself, partially fulfilling the pundit's superstitious and fallacious prophecies. At the end of this tragic accident, the family is permanently crippled and emotionally bankrupt, sabotaging the lives of its members. The leading biopolitical role that the pundit plays in creating docile and governable *homo sacers* and members of the camp instead of citizens accorded legal and juridical rights finds a symbolic expression in the mirror that he recommends to Mohun's father. In instructing him in ways in which to treat and rear the abnormal boy, the pundit encourages using a mirror, an act which implies the sheer repetition of stupidity:

"On the twenty-first day the father *must* see the boy. But not in the flesh."

"In a mirror, pundit?"

"I would consider that ill-advised. Use a brass plate. Scour it well."

"Of course." (Naipaul, 1961, p. 6)

As a matter of fact, "a brass plate" can be taken to implicitly account for the employment of mirror. Although Mohun's father advocates using mirror, the pundit objects and suggests a more backhanded way of using mirror. This is probably suggestive of the fact that the process through which a bare-life homo sacer is produced ought to be regulated more unconsciously. By virtue of the communication of Mohun and his father through mirror, he unconsciously comes to the realization that he should unselectively obey the regulations and biopolitical

regime set forth by the father. This compliance is later brought to light more evidently when the adult Mohun decides to serve a pundit's apprenticeship. However, given his disobedient nature that tends to defy authority to have his own individual voice, Mohun is soon excommunicated from the circle on bad terms. A crucial fact that denotes the substantial role the pundit performs in the society is that it is he who decides on the name for the newborn. Mohun's father is enthralled by the pundit's presence; he begs the pundit to pick a name for his son. When the pundit proposes that "a perfectly safe prefix would be *Mo*," they ultimately choose Mohun. V. S. Naipaul describes the circumstances in this way:

> The pundit was surprised and genuinely pleased. "But that is excellent. Excellent. *Mohun*. I couldn't have chosen better myself. For Mohun, as you know, means the beloved, and was the name given by the milkmaids to Lord Krishna." His eyes softened at the thought of the legend and for a moment he appeared to forget Bissoondaye and Mr. Biswas. (Naipaul, 1961, p. 7)

The above extract clearly draws attention to the fact that the authority the pundit has derives largely from his adherence to and engagement with religion as a domineering discourse, by virtue of which he can easily exert influence on all negotiations and exchanges. The reasoning that the influential pundit employs to justify his deeds and statements in this situation as well as his constant allusions to "the long leaves of his almanac" all serve as vibrant denotations of how instrumental a project religion is in the society that Naipaul tries to portray. Though Biswas shows reaction against the domineering discourses in his adulthood through especial manners and styles of life he assumes, his conducts show a sort of artificiality, or what Keith Garebian (1984) calls "dandyism" (495), which is the result of his inability to develop a true, solid sense of self because of the presence of instrumental discourses that dominated him all through his life. Though the dandyism in question is aimed to be "rebellion of sorts," it turns out to be "foolish because the display isolates Biswas as a self-caricature" (Garebian, 1984, p. 495).

Biswas's Society as a Biopolitical Camp

In the previous part, the determinative role family played in composing a biopolitical camp for Mohun Biswas in a local setting was discussed. It was clearly shown how the dominant presence of the pundit impacted and controlled the thoughts, feelings and ultimately the decisions of Biswas's family and how such a supreme authority is deeply ingrained in a wider discursive web of biopolitical power. Finally, it was reasonably concluded that from the very early days of his life, Biswas was troubled by the unescapable omnipresence of tyrannical biopolitical camps which were intended to rob him of his distinctive voice and individuality with the aims of shaping a *homo sacer*, not an entitled citizen, out of him. These examinations imply that the biopolitical power adopted by the society exert their massive impact on every single facet of society including even domestic settings such as family. This might portray the relationship between society's biopolitical oppressive regimes and domestic settings; however, there are other examples which

can cast light on the issue. To better understand the relationship in which the existence of society's normative conventions is more tangibly felt in imposing prefabricated identity to people and in viewing them as subservient *homo sacers* instead of decent citizens, one should take note of the time when the narrator makes references to the way in which Tara, an affluent aunt, treats Biswas in two contradictory ways. Since Biswas has the role of Brahmin, he is given a variety of identities at different points:

> As for Dehuti, he hardly saw her, though she lived close, at Tara's. He seldom went there except when Tara's husband, prompted by Tara, held a religious ceremony and needed Brahmins to feed. Then Mr. Biswas was treated with honour; stripped of his ragged trousers and shirt, and in a clean dhoti, he became a different person, and he never thought it unseemly that the person who served him so deferentially with food should be his own sister. In Tara's house he was respected as a Brahmin and pampered; yet as soon as the ceremony was over and he had taken his gift of money and cloth and left, he became once more only a labourer's child –*father's occupation*: *labourer was the entry in the birth certificate F* . Z. Ghany had sent–living with a penniless mother in one room of a mud hut. And throughout life his position was like that. (Naipaul, 1961, p. 21)

In this part, Naipaul gives a remarkable description of the two opposing identities given to Biswas in two different circumstances. Although Biswas is normally a manual worker, he assumes the role of Brahmin. Thus, he is well treated and well nourished. This decency and position actually derive from his compliance with an institutional and traditional code of conduct which is made sacred by the unimpeachable biopolitical regimes of the society. In "religious ceremony," Biswas is co-opted as a part and parcel of a project that the society in question approves of. As a result, he is generously offered decent clothes, sufficient food and good place to be seated. It is worth highlighting that in this participation Biswas is well familiar with and aware of the ritualistic spirit of ceremonies and does not take them for granted. The narrator remarks on this crucial point very evidently: "Mr. Biswas had never questioned the deference shown him when he had gone to Tara's to be fed as a Brahmin and on his rounds with Pundit Jairam. But he had never taken it seriously; he had thought of it as one of the rules of a game that was only occasionally played" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 31). It is this perception that instigates his severance and estrangement from Pundit Jairam and abandonment of religious commitments. The following excerpt clearly indicates the fiercely rebellious temperaments of Mr. Biswas in this regard:

> The assumption of the Brahmin identity is superficial, false and fleeting, and Biswas has to return to the reality of his life, a reality which is in marked contrast to the superficial, honorary existence. Biswas's rejection of his understudying to Pundit Jairam is symbolic of his rejection of the superficial life. The incident marks the beginning of his psychological problems, for he is not only physically but also religiously constipated. (Naipaul, 1961, p. 46)

Biswas is a rebel and nonconformist in nature who boldly rejects the artificial and frivolous life that the tyrannical biopolitical regimes he is troubled by have created for him. Although Biswas might have benefitted from his shallow and nominal role, he rejects them all. The reason behind this non-compliance and bold rejection is that he is more interested in becoming a true, distinctive citizen, not a biopolitically-informed *homo sacer*. It is in effect this characteristic feature in Biswas which fashions him to serve as a representative figure for the counter-discursivity of dominant discourses rather than a mindless devotee of society's biopolitical regimes. The three things that he believes he must achieve, namely a house to be owned, a son to be acknowledged, and a self-consciousness to be achieved through writing, are "things that set him apart from those around him" (Ten Kortenaar, 2011, p. 111), disentangling him from the tyrannical biopolitical regimes.

Another distinctive point at which society's biopolitical regimes in the novel come to a conspicuous fore is the school where Biswas goes to. This site which serves educational purposes actually typifies and resembles the misguided modernizing project that the imperial power has incorporated in its colonizing and exploitative biopolitics to exert as much tacit coercion and control over subjects as possible. Significant as a figure in this center is Lai, a teacher who accurately typifies the exploitative, yet productive project of the educational biopolitical regime of the school as a camp. Naipaul informs his readers of the fact that Lai originally comes "from a low Hindu caste" who "converted to Presbyterianism" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 17). The profoundly important implication of this is that Lai has subjected himself to the changes and manipulations that the pervasive imperial hegemony desires to bring about. While he disregarded his Indian origin, he has now been given the critical enterprise of enforcing the new religious biopolitical tyranny in the form of education and indoctrination from an early age of students. Consequently, the readers realize the ways in which Lai "held all unconverted Hindus in contempt" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 17). Lai's attempts can be interpreted in the way the ruling power looks at "the structure of the Hindu community in Trinidad" and in the way such a power makes every effort to compel them to falsely assimilate the concocted notion "that they are inferior and without history" (p. 31). The following lines bring to light the ways in which Lai as a representative figure of the domineering biopolitical regime in the Canadian Mission school endeavors to enforce the rules:

> As part of this contempt, he spoke to them in broken English. "Tomorrow, I want you to bring your buth certificate. You hear?"
>
> "Buth suttificate?" Bipti echoed the English words. "I don't have any."
>
> "Don't have any, eh?" Lai said the next day. "You people don't even know how to born, it look like." (Naipaul, 1961, p. 18)

As the above extract vividly shows, Lai is a figure whose role transcends the simplicities of just a teacher; he can also be taken to be a figure who represents the dominant power and thus imparts and publicizes the colonization and modernization project of that hegemonic biopolitical system. The ways Lai behaves toward Biswas and fellow "unconverted" students unambiguously indicate that he is

assigned to perform some ideologically biopolitical roles in the school as an integral part of the hegemonic and colonial enterprise. In effect, he constantly remarks on and alludes to the matters which are very crucial for the colonial project of the hegemonic system. By being scornful of students' religion and race, which are now minor voices of the society, Lai strives to encourage them to join into the dominant and hegemonic biopolitical regimes that the new colonial system has inhumanely formulated.

Such an exhortative action leaped into by Lai, which is also carried out in larger scale by the dominant biopolitics of the system, is clearly indicative of the fact that in the colonization and modernization project of the political system there is no chance for the minority to survive. The narrator provides a vivid description of the wanton annihilation of the social standing and hierarchy of Hindus in the colonized Trinidad. As a consequence of such a sinister and abusive project, some people are obligated to consign their religion, faith, custom, tradition and mother tongue to oblivion and unselectively internalize the systematic and ideological belief that those who are by any means affiliated with the past are barbarically primitive and uncivilized in nature. As referred to by the narrator in the novel, since the underprivileged students are not able to fully grasp the colonial "broken English," Lai, as the authoritative and officious voice, is given full authority to condemn them "don't even know how to born" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 18). Regarding the matter of certificate as touched upon by Lai, the colonial biopolitical system aims at concocting and conceptualizing "a new ranking based on individualism which values the free initiative of individuals" (p. 31). Mohammad's argument might be true to a point; however, the individualism in question seems to be an affectation and, in the end, it is principally concerned with the purposes of rendering individuals docile by compelling all the people in the society to bow to the colonial decree. This unquestioning obedience is exacted from people in return for giving them birth certificates. As a matter of fact, it is a biopolitical, colonial project that decrees if anyone desires to live as a normal part of this society, they must get a birth certificate, the prerequisite of which is absolute and unthinking conformity to the hegemonic decree. This also serves as an implied caution: if Biswas wants an opportunity to pursue his studies, he must fully abide by the regulations of the colonially biopolitical regime and obtain a birth certificate.

The rites carried out in schools exhibit the propensity to incorporate students into the reigning system's biopolitical camps to reduce them to *homo sacers*. Take, for instance, Naipaul's depiction of the scene in which students ceremoniously chant a song: "The chanting of the children pleased Lai. He believed in thoroughness, discipline and what he delighted to call stick-to-it-iveness, virtues he felt unconverted Hindus particularly lacked" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 19). This ceremonial chanting in the Mission School is intended to instill a sense of order, compliance and discipline into the so-called "unconverted Hindus." The far-reaching implication of this is that biopolitical regimes plainly demonstrate themselves in different ways to fashion their controllable and educable inhabitants of the camp who are rendered subservient. This method proves more effective when the narrator

states that the song is later reserved in the banks of Biswas's unconscious mind and he continuously chants the lines:

> In the snowy and the blowy,
>
> In the blowy and the snowy.
>
> Words and tune were based, remotely, on *Roaming in the Gloaming*, which the choir at Lai's school had once sung to entertain important visitors from the Canadian Mission. (Naipaul, 1961, p. 60)

This indelible and disproportionate impact upon Biswas indicates that the biopolitical enterprise and colonial project of the colonial land is so si

nister and insidiously powerful that it adversely affects Biswas who, on the face of it, is a defiant character. In addition to song and music, there are numerous other instances within the novel which account for the biopolitical project of colonial powers to mold characters and fashion submissive nonpersons who are deprived of their individuality to do anything of their own volition. For instance, in a very decisive section of the narrative, Lai teaches students mathematics in a very severe and punitive way. The lines that follow very clearly show the barbaric way he teaches them through outward expression of bitterness and resentment:

> "Stop!" Lai cried, waving his tamarind rod. "Biswas, ought twos are how much?"
>
> "Two."
>
> "Come up here. You, Ramguli, ought twos are how much?"
>
> "Ought."
>
> "Come up. That boy with a shirt that looks like one of his mother bodice. How much?"
>
> "Four." (Naipaul, 1961, p. 19)

In the above extract, Lai allegorically teaches something mathematical which is innately associated with orderliness and question and answer. During his teaching, he employs "tamarind rod" and belittles the students. He recurrently asks the question "ought twos are how much?" It is very crucial to note that such misdemeanors are towards the supposed "unconverted" students. These all indicate that Lai is there at school to serve the purposes of an agent to transform minor discourse into the predominantly ideological and biopolitical apparatuses to perpetuate the abusive cycle of discipline and punishment. To this end, Lai is even authorized to mete out corporal punishment and commit physical harassment: "He caught hold of Mr. Biswas, pulled his trousers tight across his bottom, and began to apply the tamarind rod, saying as he beat, "Ought twos are ought. Ought oughts are ought. *One* twos are two" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 19). Moreover, Lai arrogantly advises and requires students to impart his teaching to their families. At the same time as conversing with one of the students about his sister-in-law, "Lai seized the boy and started to use the tamarind rod–'I want you to tell her that ought twos don't make

four. I want you to tell her that ought oughts are ought, ought twos are ought, one twos are two, and *two* twos are four'" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 20).

Lai's determined persistence can be interpreted as a trait transcending pedagogical responsibilities. In an indirect way, he strives to make the "unconverted" students realize that within the biopolitical discursive web of the sovereign system's ideological power "one twos are two" and nothing else. He even requires them to pass on this biopolitical ideology to their families. The presence and agency of Lai are principally aimed at serving the sociopolitical and ideological agendas of the colonial-biopolitical project; this ideological presence of Lai's is later revealed more blatantly by the colonial materials the school tries to teach: "Mr. Biswas was taught other things. He learned to say the Lord's Prayer in Hindi from the *King George V Hindi Reader,* and he learned many English poems by heart from the *Royal Reader* (Naipaul, 1961). All these materials are the brainchildren and derivatives of the biopolitical tyranny which desperately tries to force its oppressive ideology upon its *homo sacers*.

Biswas's Minor Status: A Defiance of Biopolitical Tyranny

In the previous part, the ways in which the biopolitical system and its hegemonic discursive web of ideological power of the reigning system react to and oppress Biswas and other "unconverted" students were shown and discussed. These Hindu people are tangible and representative instances of the presence of minor voices in the novel that are inhumanely deemed inappropriate and insufficient through the prejudiced lens of the biopolitical regime. At this point, the issue that grows in significance and merits further attention is the extent to which these biopolitical camps and exclusionary states of exception have succeeded in supplanting and discarding the minor discourse. Notably, the narrator subtly refers to this matter. As touched upon before, when Biswas was invited to attend religious rites as a Brahmin, "he had never taken it seriously; he had thought of it as one of the rules of a game that was only occasionally played" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 31). Furthermore, when the narrator touches upon Biswas's involvement in and contribution to Mission school, he lastly declares, "At Lai's dictation he made copious notes, which he never seriously believed, about geysers, rift valleys, watersheds, currents, the Gulf Stream, and a number of deserts ... The history Lai taught he regarded as simply a school subject, a discipline, as unreal as the geography" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 20). The remarks made by the narrator intimate that Biswas remains a secluded and aloof figure all throughout the novel's narrative.

Contrary to Lai, who succumbed and fell prey to the ideological snares of the biopolitical system and became an inhabitant of the camp, Biswas flouts the authority and endeavors to preserve his native identity in that he preferred his native individuality to the biopolitical subjectivity. So, the implication runs, Biswas is a shrewd character who counters propagandas and biopolitical agendas of the states of exception. This line of reasoning is substantiated by the narrator when he expresses that "And now Mr. Biswas began to make fresh calculations, working out over and over" (Naipaul, 1961, p. 254). The same touch of counter-biopolitical and counter-

discursive sentiment can also be detected in Biswas's classmates. The narrator puts the readers in the picture about the fact that "They tore off their shirt buttons, exchanged them for marbles and with these Alec won more, struggling continually to repair the depredations of Lai, who considered the game low and had forbidden it in the school grounds" (Naipaul, *A House for Mr Biswas* 21). Students strive to rally against the politicization of their lives and stand up for their native manners which were suppressed and pushed to the margins by the biopolitical regime, an act which is indicative of the students' tireless struggles to preserve their local heritages.

Regarding the matter of minor status, the narrator informs the readers of the fact that Biswas's family origins can be traced back to Hindus and that they belong to Brahmin social caste. The ideologically oppressive narrative created and promoted by system's discursive web of biopolitical discourses causes their Brahmin social caste to be supplanted by a tyrannical ideology. Such a dramatic social transformation acutely impacts the identity of Biswas and other fellow people. Undergoing such a transformative transition for Brahmins means a transition from ideological narratives of the biopolitical regime to minor status. Since the emergent ruling class scornfully belittles Brahmin as a peripheral class, Biswas has to suffer the agony of bare life and non-personhood within the confines of a biopolitical camp. Unsurprisingly, Biswas is not deemed an outsider or an expelled character in his own native land. The transformative transition in question also leaves its most lasting impacts upon the homes the newly minor people reside in. In a very florid gesture, the narrator describes the ways in which Mr. Biswas passes by and in the meantime depicts the setting his fellow men dwell in:

> His way lay along the County Road and the Eastern Main Road. Both were lined for stretches with houses that were ambitious, incomplete, unpainted, often skeletal, with wooden frames that had grown grey and mildewed while their owners lived in one or two imperfectly enclosed rooms. Through unfinished partitions, patched up with box-boards, tin and canvas, the family clothing could be seen hanging on lengths of string stretched across the inhabited rooms like bunting; no beds were to be seen, only a table and chair perhaps, and many boxes. Twice a day he cycled past these houses, but that evening he saw them as for the first time. From such failure, which until only that morning awaited him, he had by one stroke made himself exempt. (Naipaul, 1961, p. 21)

The narrator's descriptive words are saturated with an unmistakable sense of estrangement and unfulfilled aspirations. What the narrator gives verbal portrayal to is actually the condition of people reduced to *homo sacers* with bare life only, for whom there is no legally and socially habitable space in the discursive and hegemonic enterprise of the reigning hegemony, except for the biopolitical camp. This exclusionary state of exception, marked by deprivation and seclusion, is given symbolic representation in the "incomplete" and "unfinished" building that Biswas sees while cycling. Though Mr. Biswas is a member of minority, he resolutely persists in his struggle and makes every effort to have his own voice and thereby define and assert his individual identity. This counter-biopolitical quest for identity and individuality finds its symbolic resonances within Mr. Biswas's quest to have a

house for himself, an act which is indicative of his attempts to stand up for and stake out a claim on the retrieval of his rights from the discursive web of biopolitical power that downplayed and disparaged his existence. According to Bruce King (1974), Biswas can be regarded as an emblem of the *bio-politicized* colony which tries to restore its independence but is subjugated because of the anarchic and tumultuous atmosphere which the tyrannical biopolitical regime has established in the island.

The biopolitical state of exception in the island depersonalizes Biswas and his fellow men, strips them of their citizenship and reduces them to bare life in that it views them as rootless and without history, thereby preparing them to be banished to the biopolitical camps. To challenge this biased conception, Biswas begins a journalistic career to find and secure for himself a distinctive history, identity and a dissenting voice so as to lend them to the promotion of confrontationist and anticolonial and counter-biopolitical causes of his people. Since Biswas is denied any legal and territorial place within the proper jurisdictional realm of the state and is expelled from the biopolitical citizenship-granting project of the oppressive regime, he is financially crippled, *biopolitically* dislocated and has a fragile status and identity. His introduction into the Tulsi family does not only bring identity and economic advantages for Biswas, but also courts terrible disasters, one of the most remarkable of which is the fact that his offspring have to carry Tusli names. This is a clear indication of the refutation of Biswas's identity as a representative of minor voice. Biswas tirelessly struggles to restore his identity as a counter-biopolitical gesture; to this end, he contemplates leaving Tulsis behind. Nevertheless, given the lack of support for the provision of his family with decent appliances and shelter, his idea of abandoning the Tulsis fails. Through transformation of social standing—the transition from rural life to the urban life—the way is paved for Biswas to have his own house so as to retain and express his individuality and dissenting voice, thereby emancipating himself from the biopolitical camp of the regime. In his *Philosophy in the West Indian Novel*, Earl McKenzie (2009) contends that the novel is a narrative that recounts the life of subaltern people of no fixed abode who feel out of place and thus make a great effort to turn the West Indies into their home. These dispossessed, *biopolitically* oppressed nonpersons are reduced to minimalist conditions of *homo sacers*, but are in constant search of home and identity.

Biswas's biopolitical encampment and non-personhood within the prevailing discursive web of biopolitical power structure of his time results in the formation of a fragile and erratic identity for him. His hostile reaction is defiance, nonconformity and callous insensitivity to the decrees of the reigning system and his antiquated past. His journalistic undertaking is a good instance of the expression of such an insensitivity. Important to note, Biswas never succeeds in asserting and exercising his independence through the possession of a house until the *biopoliticizing* and *homo sacers'* encampment project of the sovereign system undergoes a shift of paradigm. This proves the powerful and compelling nature of the biopolitical epistemic violence by which Biswas and his fellow people are afflicted. It is the shift of paradigm from feudalism to capitalism that aids Biswas in

retaining his autonomy; it is this shift in effect, rather than Biswas's single-handed efforts, that earns respect for a becoming voice.

Conclusion

Giorgio Agamben's (1995) study of *Homo Sacer* and biopolitical regimes scrutinizes the ways in which (bio-) political power is imposed and exercised on bodies and life. Agamben argues that modern societies have developed into biopolitical regimes and exclusionary states of exception that govern and police populations through oppressive and nonhumane mechanisms such as surveillance, discipline, and exclusion. These regimes *biopoliticize* lives, turning life itself into an object subject to biopolitical control. Agamben's critical background provides a framework to analyze the ways in which power operates within societies, specifically in relation to the regulation and *biopoliticization* of human lives. It poses thought-provoking questions about the nature of sovereignty, the boundaries of the biopolitical, and the implications of biopolitical regimes for individual freedoms and rights. It helps unmask the oppressive mechanisms of surveillance, discipline, and exclusion that govern populations. By analyzing the ways in which power operates within societies, one can gain a deeper understanding of the regulation and *biopoliticization* of human lives.

Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* portrays a figure, named Mohun Biswas, for whom defiance is a trademark. Although his rebelliousness goes counter to the prevailing temper, he does not waver in his cause. This resisting figure strives to emancipate himself from the shackles of the biopolitical camps of the sovereign state that have imprisoned him since his birth. The first biopolitical camp which he is compelled to inhabit comes from a domestic setting and is enforced by his parents and local fraudulent pundits. Ill-founded superstitions play a key role in the questionable decisions that his parents and pundits make in shaping Biswas's ultimate destiny in a very anomalous and unwise way. Biswas has to constantly confront such inescapable camps concocted by biopolitical regimes and further buttressed by the colonial power both at school and in society. In the face of all these unjust treatments, however, Biswas adds his own critical and dissenting voice to the suppression of the growth and perpetuation of ideological biopolitics that render free individuals as *homo sacers*: inhabitants of the biopolitical camps. All such evidence supports the argument that Biswas serves as a catalyst for challenging the oppressive nature of biopolitical ideologies. His refusal to succumb to the role of a *homo sacer* within the biopolitical camps demonstrates the transformative power of resistance and the potential for emancipatory counter-biopolitical movements. Once more, Biswas's life displays the biopolitical incommensurability of minor voice in the colonial Trinidad. It is ultimately a shift of paradigm in society from feudalism to capitalism that earns some respect and attention for the underprivileged *homo sacers*, who are unsympathetically cast adrift in the biopolitical camps. Biswas is eventually able to have his own fixed, autonomous home, which secures for him a symbolic sense of liberty and individuality, albeit minimal and ephemeral, to relish anew.

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The Red-Haired Woman: An Ecofeminist Analysis

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Abstract

This article analyzes Orhan Pamuk's *The Red-Haired Woman* (2017) (hereafter *RHW*) from Alicia Helda Puleo's ecofeminist perspective. It discusses Gülcihan's character in *RHW* as a cultural figure who, standing beyond the essentialist division of culture / nature, develops a constructive interaction with the masculine world of the novel, prefiguring the reestablishment of life. The novel reviews the process of modernization in Türkiye through detailing the confrontation of the old and new via references to the mythological stories of Oedipus Rex, and Rostam and Sohrab. The references highlight the notions of patricide and filicide, pointing to rising tension between Eastern and Western aspects of Turkish cultural identity. This investigation challenges the dominant reviews of the references as pessimistic illustrations of the disappearance of historical Türkiye along with her environment and argues that *RHW* offers an alternative vision of modernization via Gülcihan's narration as an optimistic stand toward industrial formation through enhancing self-awareness and intercultural understanding.

Keywords: Alicia Helda Puleo, Orhan Pamuk, industrialization, self-awareness, interculturalism

Introduction

Pamuk is referred to as "Istanbul writer." That is to say, all of his works are about Istanbul. He has always maneuvered on the rich cultural-historical background of Istanbul as the multicultural backbone of Turkish identity. Almost, always he has represented this multicultural aspect as empowering and defining Istanbul as a condensed, symbolic illustration of Turkish sense of being. *The Red-Haired Woman* (2017) apparently opposes this. Yet, casting a deeper look into the novel, it emerges as an enlightening type that familiarizes people with the consequences of rapid industrialization enacted at the expense of sociocultural heritage, and through an essentialized sexist-gendered dichotomy. *RHW* offers a sustainable vision of this industrial development. This is done by challenging the notion of death via the illustration of a balanced interaction of culture / nature through characterizing a woman who, resisting the objectification imposed on her, brings these dichotomies into a kind of agreement.

The dichotomies of *RHW* are represented in the interactions of the three groups of man versus man, including son versus father and father versus son, and man versus woman. They are discussed in the three parts of the novel. The first part narrates young Cem Çelik's struggle to financially support his nuclear family, consisting of him and his mother, in the absence of his father. The father, a leftist activist who used to run a pharmacy, was arrested after the military coup in 1980. After being released, he refused to return to his family and pharmacy and started living with another woman. Young Cem struggled against his absence by working as a well-digger outside *Öngören* (meaning foresight), an imaginary suburb of Istanbul, under Master Mahmut's supervision and developed a father-son relationship with him. One day, by accident, he dropped a bucket into the well where Master Mahmut was working and, scared of having killed him, escaped to Istanbul. During that time, he had fallen in love and had sexual intercourse with Gülcihan, an actress who performed in a traveling leftist theater group in the city. The actress was almost twice his age and the night that they met, she let Cem know that Master Mahmut had come to their tent to watch their performance, which represented the tragedy of Rostam and Sohrab.

The second part narrates Cem's growing up, his graduation from university, marriage, and establishment of a construction company which he named after Sohrab to satisfy his desire to have a son − he and his wife Ayşe were childless. All through these years, he had suffered from the hidden guilt of killing Master Mahmut. Finally, he understands that he has a son from Gülcihan, named Enver (meaning enlightened), and decides to meet him. The place of their meeting is the very well he was digging in *Öngören* in his youth. He discovers that Master Mahmut has survived the accident, and in the middle of the tension that rises between him and his son, he accidentally falls into the well and dies.

The third part is narrated by Gülcihan. In this part, she represents herself as a strong woman who succeeds in establishing herself as a free self and saves her son from the charge of patricide. The chapter reflects her mindset as a woman who resists the masculine world that is trying to objectify and restrict her within

stereotypical feminine roles. This is clear in Gülcihan's constructive cooperation with Cem's widow after she and Enver inherit two-thirds stock of Cem's company. This embodies a feminine understanding of "sisterhood" beyond restrictive, separatist masculine visions (Hampson, 1991, p. 34). She also asks her son to write the very story which unfolds as *RHW*.

Literature Review

As the story unfolds, Gülcihan emerges as a figure who connects the masculine and feminine worlds of the novel. Yet, this function is missing in the reviews written on *RHW*. These reviews notably have cultural, political, and psychological perspectives through which the patriarchal culture of Turkish society is discussed via references to Western and Eastern narrations of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex and Firdowsi's Rostam and Sohrab. Considerably, the reviews believe that the novel bitterly narrates the failure of the process of modernization in Türkiye by highlighting the lack of harmony between past and present that is textually illustrated by fraught father-son relationship and related to the faulty cultural interaction of East and West in the context of the country. Almost all of these criticisms, except to Hughes (2017), who believes Gülcihan is the only figure who has the sense of self in the novel, discuss her as being trapped within the country's masculinist culture despite the all attempts for uplifting women's position in Türkiye.

Göknar (2017) discusses Gülcihan as the reflection of top-down sociopolitical and cultural democratic renovations in Türkiye, which remain defeated before the dominant father-centered culture. This culture is echoed through repeated references to the stories of Rostam and Sohrab as well as Oedipus Rex in the novel. In the first one, Shorab loses his life to a father who symbolizes tradition and determination for the preservation of the dominant culture and status quo. The second one similarly highlights patriarchy by depicting the negative effect of a father's absence on his son's life. The two stories are used to enframe Cem's sterile life in relation to his absent father and his own son to whom he has been absent as well. Absence here connotes the notion of an imbalanced life, where true human interactions are missing. As a country with feet on two continents, Türkiye has inherited from both Eastern and Western traditions whose interactions have shaped Turkish culture. Göknar believes *RHW* illustrates the imbalance imposed on this interaction. The way Enver, a rightist religious Muslim, unintentionally causes his father's death, signifies the strengthening of typical patriarchal figures in recent Türkiye. This new generation endangers the country's entire democratic achievements initiated by *Ata Türk* as the founding father of the Republic of Türkiye.

Mathew (2017) has a similar political perspective. He discusses the rise of young Muslim conservatives, represented by Enver, who confront Türkiye's Western modernization. This scientific modernization has not offered an "organic combination of East and West" (para. 1) as unique to Turkish culture. It has created a gap that has led to the rise of rightist religious groups who struggle to revive a kind of religious patriarchy through figures like Erdoğan.

Günay-Erkol (2019) and Vanwesenbeeck (2017) discuss the very idea through the notion of traumatized identity. Trauma, according to Günay-Erkol, is a continuous process that afflicts several generations of Turkish citizens, disturbing natural life practices. She believes the traumatized identity in modern Türkiye is the direct result of military coups which were justified – by the conductors and leaders of the coups, as protective father figures – as safeguarding *Ata Türk's* achievements. As such, the strengthening of the father-centered culture is the nub of the problem dramatized in *RHW.*

For Vanwesenbeeck (2017) the trauma is associated with the notion of forgetfulness. Traumatized, Cem is afflicted with fate and, forgetting his youthful aspirations for becoming a writer, follows his father's path. Despite being illustrated on the cover of the book, Gülcihan cannot escape this traumatization as well and "is no more than a subject of desire" (para. 3).

Offering a feminist reading of *RHW* through focusing on Gülcihan's characterization as a strong Lilith figure,[1] Karaca (2019) similarly concludes that Gülcihan's sense of being depends on her association with other men as husband or son. She discusses two categories of angelic and diabolic women that are alternatively applied to submissive, objectified, and strong, subjective women by the masculine world. She believes, while struggling to write her life through being a decision-maker and, therefore, not an angelic one, Gülcihan cannot escape the controlling ties determined by the masculine world.

Likewise, Brooks (2017) discusses the masculine world of *RHW* through repetitive references to Eastern and Western mythologies of filicide and patricide. She criticizes the rapid unfolding of the story and unconvincing characterization along with the diction associated with characters. She argues that even if Cem's narrative voice is acceptable as the true reflection of "authentic adolescent voice," the same "inelegant expression" attributed to the red-haired woman, as the central mature figure of the novel, renders her characterization unconvincing. According to her, the "second and third sections of the novel become nothing more than clunky melodrama laced with ever-greater implausibility and snarled in repetitive references to the two classic stories of patricide and filicide until the foreshadowing becomes positively penumbral" (para. 7). She believes, in this novel, Pamuk's sensitivity toward Istanbul's unsustainable development is clear, yet he does not delve into it:

> Cem . . . is able to enrich himself on the back of Istanbul's expansion. . . . Pamuk flits like a barn swallow over fascinating issues of contemporary Turkish life, but never alights long enough to offer interesting insights or even substantially enrich the story. (para. 8)

Bettany Hughes (2017) similarly talks about Pamuk's consciousness about Istanbul's urban development wrapped in a psychological description of "a journey into adulthood" and self-recognition in the cases of Cem and Gülcihan, alternatively. This review lightly touches political aspect as standing on the side of the rich class, facilitating its cheese-knifing of landscape and "traditional communities" for "more roads," and stealing "others' water" (para. 7). As is clear, this review recognizes Pamuk's ecological sensitivity and points to the feminine influential power through

Gülcihan, yet being a short review, the writer does not explain how these aspects are totally developed and elaborated on in the novel.

According to this sample literature, *RHW* has been the subject of consideration through mythical, psychoanalytic, feminist, and sociocultural, and political perspectives. The current research investigates the interaction of these forces through a feminist environmental viewpoint to elaborate on the sustainable vision of existence reflected in the novel through the recognition of the constructive interaction between past, traditional understanding and the modern one. This is done by focusing on the reflection of ecological destruction as well as Gülcihan's characterization. The current research takes this central female figure as the embodiment of Turkish society's sociocultural wisdom that, aware of the significance of sustainable development, addresses the gap resulting from imbalanced industrialization.

Theoretical Framework

This analysis is based on Puleo's "critical ecofeminist" perspective. It is a nonessentialist one, conscious of the significance of Modernist heritage for feminist movement in the case of equality. Yet, she criticizes anthropocentric, androcentric perspective of Modernism which, she believes, endangers the possibility of sustainable life on this planet, producing "new forms of exploitation and inequality" (Puleo, 2017a, p. 75) based on competition. As such, she argues for an enlightened form of Modernism that goes beyond the fixed hierarchical understanding that categorizes particular features and individuals as the representation of "universal entities" (2012a, p. 349). In this way, she criticizes the master / slave relationship that has traditionally determined human being's treatment of the nonhuman world. On the other hand, it challenges the stereotypical gendered relationships in human societies that have debased women's rights, as secondary citizens, before men.

In the first case, she discusses the disadvantages of rapid, uncontrolled industrialization one of which aspects is urbanization. This includes the expansion of urban areas at the expense of the desertification of rural ones because of the depletion of their ecological heritage which, in itself, results in migration from villages (Puleo, 2012b). This reflects an anthropocentric understanding that does not assume any tenable function for the nonhuman world save to serve human one.

The second case points to a deep androcentric vision within anthropocentric understanding. Relying on a dominant background that viewed men as human societies' civilizing agents, who tamed nature and established human culture, this androcentric vision associated women with nature (Puleo, 2012b) as a primitive stage of human life. Naturally, by the beginning of Industrial Revolution, women and nature were considered secondary before the masculine civilization, which actualized techno-scientific progress by giving priority to reason in the binary of reason / emotion. Being associated with nature and emotion, women were, at best, assumed as protective caregivers whose only duty and ability were giving birth to children and nursing the family - its extended form that included whoever related to the family. An unavoidable consequence of this understanding was the sacralization of life that denied women's subjective, self-conscious role as free decision-makers

in choosing to be mothers. Indirectly, this denied women's capacity for critical-scientific reasoning (Puleo, 2017a). Puleo challenges this understanding by discussing the universal concept of care beyond family ties, and demanding the acknowledgment of self-care, with ecological consciousness of course, for women, as they are among the first ones whose bodies are affected by toxic ecological changes that damage their reproductive health. Accordingly, she emphasizes innovations in the light of human rights, which include the right to live in a healthy environment, and respect for biodiversity (Puleo, 2017a), which guarantees the continuation of the chain of life.

She reviews Donna Haraway's theory of cyborg to highlight the notion of gender as a sociocultural construction that debases the essentialist vision on womanhood by stressing the notion of equality despite difference. This equality is not limited to the human world of course; it connects the human and nonhuman worlds in a way that does not prescribe a prioritized position to human beings. This nonhuman element can be either part of the natural world or a techno-scientific construction.

At the human level, she discusses racial and classist aspects that, beside sexist perspective, shape a dominant materialist stand. This "capitalist development model, based on technology and economics, insatiably drives us towards competitiveness and the search for unrestrained riches" that, according to her, "stems from the old desire for patriarchal power" (Puleo, 2017b, p. 27). Before this model, she introduces a critical stand that highlights the notion of "Human Right" with ecological sensitivity. It emphasizes self-awareness shall be actualized in relation to the Other to guarantee the preservation of biodiversity and leave it as "inheritance . . . for future generation" (Puleo, 2012b, pp. 87-88). This is along with the knowledge obtained from different sources about the vulnerability of the woman's body before "toxic chemical substances used in the agro-business" (Puleo, 2012b, p. 85) that can expose human society to annihilation. As such, she emphasizes women should recognize the necessity of deep scientific-technological knowledge and be equipped with it to improve the quality of human life, including women's lives. This stand goes against the essentialist ecofeminist vision that, repeating patriarchal sexist-gendered division, associates women with nature before men who represent culture (Puleo and Young, 2013), and frowns at whatever associated with this masculine world, including the technological, industrial life.

Puleo's ecofeminist model entails significant aspects. Beside the management of "non-renewable resources" (Puleo, 2012b, p. 78), she argues for an "intercultural" perspective that recognizes, and benefits from, the precious environmental experiences of women from different cultures to enlighten others about the criticality of ecological conditions. It is because the majority of these women come from areas that are terribly affected by climate change and desertification. Because of this, they are actively involved in supplying family needs through nature and, due to this, have valuable experiences in sustainable management of nature, which can work to shape an ecological culture of equality. As such, women emerge as cultural agents who debase the essentialized dichotomy of nature / culture. Fulfilling this role, women's capacity to educate human beings to

develop environment-friendly attitudes will be acknowledged. This is easily achievable as a positive aspect of urbanization, which is the expansion of education. With the rise of the middle class that is well aware of its rights, it is now easier to establish an ecological culture of equality that recognizes the rights of all for a sustainable system of life. As Puleo affirms: "ecofeminist theory and praxis maintain the enlightenment tradition of condemning oppressive doctrines and practices" (2012b, p. 81).

Self-Awareness, Intercultural Understanding, and Sustainable Life

RHW illustrates the overlap of masculine and feminine worlds in a way that reflects Puleo's nonessentialist ecofeminist stand. At first view, the novel suggests the clash of these worlds through Gülcihan's confrontation with the patriarchal world surrounding her. Yet, considering her characterization, her cultural activities along with her social dedication introduce her as a strong caregiver whose nursing activities are not limited to stereotypical feminine duties that define a woman's task as "taking care of the most vulnerable (children, the elderly, and the sick) and maintaining the domestic material infrastructure" (Puleo, 2017b, p. 27). This mirrors a process of self-awareness that, recognizant of personal rights, does not actualize them through separating Self from the Other.

While acknowledging that Pamuk's characters suffer from the "depression that runs somewhere down in Turkish social articulation and stays slippery toward the West," Ali Murshed (2020) emphasizes they "are fighting suppression, sorrow, disloyalty and a hurting for something they don't anticipate to discover" (p. 7). This aspect is observable in the masculine / feminine worlds that *RHW* creates. At first view, the masculine side brings to the fore the characters who are not fully developed men; the father-son relationship in the world of the novel is totally disturbed throughout generations (Vanwesenbeeck, 2017; Mathew, 2017; Hughes, 2017; Fischer, 2017; Azzam, 2017; Hoffman, 2017; & Genç, 2017). It embodies an abnormal situation where the running principles are competition for financial well-being and survival, which are ironically made fun of by highlighting the notions of insomnia and childlessness. Brooks (2017) even believes that, despite going through the process of growing up, the main male character of the novel has not developed a grown-up man's mental abilities. These all are framed within a geographical description that represents the disappearance of historical Istanbul and the emergence of a new one. Openly pointing to the notion of uneven urbanization, it parallels references to the stories of Oedipus, and Rostam and Sohrab, where both father and son disappear due to the lack of true understanding of the interconnectivity of past, present, and future: the young generation who does not know past history and sacrifices it for new order and system, while the fault is with the very old generation who has ignored or denied the young one as a source of power usurpation threat.

On the other side, the central female figure of the story struggles for a more human world by tackling the passive definitions of true womanhood, and suppression consequently, and developing a more inclusive interaction with the masculine world. The close relationship she has with her son and the way she tries to

bring him up as a man conscious of all his capabilities, and nurture them, testify to this (Pamuk, 2017). It is interesting that, while personally she enjoys the social freedom given to her based on a Western model of individual rights, she does not bring her son up as a Westernized one. It seems that because of her intercultural understanding, resulting from her involvement with Eastern and Western dramatic texts as an actress, she has developed consciousness over the vitality of avoiding stubborn dedication to a particular ideology or stand. In the world of the novel, this renders her and Enver symbols of hope. In the third chapter of the novel, Enver, being acquitted of the charge of patricide, in cooperation with his mother, saves the collapsing business empire of his father by bringing all factors together, while writing *RHW*. Opposed to the masculinist hierarchical understanding that acts based on differentiation, separation, and control, this embodies a horizontal form of organization and management. As such, Enver represents the opposite of his father and grandfather who left family and work; he has a more developed character. Being an educated one, he shares his mother's artistic interests, while conscious of and devoted to his society's traditional, Islamic teachings despite his grandfather's Marxist and his father's Western inclinations. It means there is a balance among past, present, and future in his life. He does not erect borders among these and is more inclusive toward the Other. Naturally, the mentality reduces stress and tension in social interactions and lessens the isolation which, in itself, can lead to the feeling of loneliness, as Cem is emphatically represented as being afflicted with. Based on this, Enver and his mother embody the alternative pattern opposite to the depression and destruction illustrated in the first two chapters of the novel.

The two masculine and feminine worlds of the novel revolve around Cem and Gülcihan. The first two chapters of the novel cover Cem's life and how he is bereft of a natural one. Karaca (2019) writes: "[i]n the *Red Haired Woman* father's d[y]sfunction and mother's fatal personality lead the son to a tragic end" (p. 127). On the one hand, the father's absence has left Cem bewildered in his journey toward adulthood. He has not received the support and protection that a son normally receives from his father. Even the supportive, emotional relationship he seeks in his surrogate father Mahmut "comes to an abrupt and tragic end" (Vanwesenbeeck, 2017, para. 2). It brings to mind the image of a plant that, removed from the embedding soil and left rootless, is not rhizomatically attached to any other supporting host plant. He is a victim of child labor, and from a very young age is obsessed with the notion of competition for survival. This is exacerbated by having a very passive mother who, embodying Karaca's (2019) angelic woman, has left the responsibility of life maintenance on her 16-year-old son's shoulder. These two show that an important constituting block is missing in Cem's life, which is the balance between the two worlds. It reflects the priority given to a masculine world that does not function properly.

In the early part of the first chapter, Cem and Master Mahmut have closer ties with nature. They are living outside of Öngören, surrounded by the natural scenery, and are digging a well in a traditional, and not industrial, way for the establishment of a washing-and-dyeing factory. It shows that their reliance on nature as a source of supply at this stage is somehow controlled and away from depletion.

The description of the nonhuman world in this section reflects a kind of unity between the human and nonhuman ones. For example, digging the well, Cem hears the hooting of an owl, and sleeps outside of the tent when it is not raining, watching the stars (Pamuk, 2017). This is along with the description of the infatuation of both Cem and Master Mahmut with Gülcihan, which symbolically shows that they are emotionally connected to the soft part of their heart. The literal meaning of Gülcihan explains the connection of these two aspects. Gülcihan consists of two parts: *Gül* is a Persian word that is popular in Türkiye and means flower, and Cihan means the world. Therefore, the name symbolically connotes the world of nature. So, the infatuation of Cem and Mahmut with Gülcihan means that this surrogate father and son have a more environment-friendly way of life. However, as the chapter gets closer to its end, this mildness and connection with the natural world give way to rivalry and competition, noticeably illustrated in Cem's jealousy against Master Mahmut over Gülcihan: "My inside churned with ungovernable rage and suspicion" (p. 95). In itself, this represents the masculine temptation to possess whatever desired. Reaffirming Günay-Erkol's (2019) argument, in this stage "the 'progress' in masculinity is clearly visible and it is in line with the expectations of the society" (p. 177). What are society's expectations from a grown-up man? Success in establishing a sustainable married and financial life. Growing up, Cem represses whatever associated with the natural, soft aspect of his life. This is directly referred to at the beginning of the novel when Cem remembers the woman he left as well as his ignored aspirations to be a writer (Pamuk, 2017, p. 3). The reference depicts a process of growing up at the expense of the natural internal world which still surfaces during his adulthood through his mania for reading books and watching films, mostly about Oedipus, and Rostam and Sohrab. At the same time, he internalizes the understanding that whole life is the repetition of the very stories and, due to this, develops a kind of bitterness highlighted by his affliction with insomnia. This bitterness reflects the suffering associated with distancing oneself from the world of innocence and entering the realm of experience as connoting culture and civilization.

The second chapter represents the development of the state of culture. Considering the novel as the story of Human Life in general, it depicts the cycle of life by beginning with the stage of nature and, then, proceeding to culture.[2] It narrates Cem's establishment of himself as a successful man in a construction activity that is blooming at the back of Istanbul's expansion. Along with references to insomnia and childlessness, references to his successful business show that the developments in his personal life, paralleling Istanbul's development, are not based on a constructive, sustainable pattern. As the first two chapters of the novel unfold, Cem emerges as a secular, Westernized freethinker who distances from the traditional, religious values he was brought up with. This is highlighted as he teases Master Mahmut when he alludes to some Quranic stories like Jacob and Joseph (Pamuk, 2017). It points to the father-son relationship, ironically highlighting the contrast between the relationship in this story and the one reflected in the hostility of Modern, industrial Türkiye toward the old, Ottoman Empire. Unlike Joseph whose consciousness of the lessons learned in the past, despite the absence of his father, leads to sustainable civilizational management that saves Egypt from annihilation,

Cem's distancing from the established sociocultural heritage of his native country, while moving in the one-way road of material social progress, ends in his annihilation. According to Mathew (2017), "Pamuk has long given voice to anxieties about the modernization and Westernization of [Türkiye] in his fiction" (para. 2); Cem's life is the embodiment of the very anxiety. The introduction of Gülcihan and Enver, who embody the mother-son relationship, is the substitute that Pamuk offers as a trace of hope to recreate harmony between masculine and feminine worlds; this mother-son relationship remains away from competition for survival and superiority at the expense of the Other.

The question is in what ways does Patriarchy threaten harmonious life? According to ecofeminist argument, based on inequality, the androcentric ideology, incessantly working through economic, sociocultural, and psychological aspects of human life, with a focus on technological and scientific progress at any expense, is violently depleting the biological life associated with Earth, endangering the continuation of life on the planet.[3] The symbolic representations of fatherlessness and childlessness in *RHW* explain this. Psychologically unable to tackle the negative effect of his father's absence, Cem employs the dominant pattern of exercising power via social, financial, and industrial success. Cem's father leaves him and his mother, and Gem leaves Master Mahmut dying at the bottom of the well. Following this, he leaves the woman he loves; unaware of the child she has conceived from him. Actually, these depict an unsustainable family life, connoting the notion of unsustainable life on the whole. As the story unfolds, in his married life, Cem unsuccessfully struggles to have a child while finally, and accidentally, he is killed by the very child whom he did not know till the last minutes of his life, and where? At the bottom of the very well where he left Master Mahmut dying. Master Mahmut, on the other hand, survives the damage befallen him and, marrying very late around his forties, remains childless and accepts the custody of his wife's child (Pamuk, 2017, p. 235). The motif of well tells a lot here. Falling into this well may signal "heading towards an abyss without return" (Puleo and Young, 2013, p. 60); a symbol of the future of human life if the overexploitation of natural resources is not controlled. Both Mahmut and Cem depend on Earth for their life. Mahmut totally symbolizes the traditional way of interaction with nature that is disappearing before the modern industrial one, symbolized by Cem's adult life that ends in a well because of the absence of a harmonious interaction with nature.

Life is frozen in the changing Türkiye of the novel. The situation brings to the fore Puleo's warning about the pernicious effect of unsustainable industrialization on fertility through "Multiple Chemical Sensitivity . . . chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia and increase in breast cancer" (Puleo, 2017b, p. 31) done by "hunting . . . alterations due to climate change . . . toxic chemical substances" (Puleo 2012b, pp. 84-85). There are scenes in the novel that point to disappearing natural scenery. Almost all of these are represented in relation to the notion of fertility: "We were getting older, we still had no children, and meanwhile the farmlands between Öngören and Istanbul were filling up with industrial plants, warehouses, and factories, all of them dull and black as coal from the air" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 130). Here, aging, which denotes the gradual arrival of death, is associated with

childlessness, and both are accompanied by a dark environmental description that reflects the death of nature through "industrial plants" and black and polluted air. Clearly, the imagery depicts "the unsustainability of the techno-economic development model . . . that compromises the future of humankind" (Puleo 2017b, p. 28) by mirroring a violation of the right to live in a healthy environment.

Childlessness tortures Cem. He knows that his life ends nowhere and, to suppress his bitter feelings, expands his construction activities: "I felt like a sultan trying to forget his lack of an heir by annexing new provinces to his empire" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 161). This confession reflects a connection between sociocultural and environmental aspects. For example, in the funeral of Cem's father, Sirri Siyahoğlu, one of Cem's employees in Öngören, informs him about the way his construction company exploits the natural scenery and resources of the town (Pamuk, 2017). This is along with references to Cem's growing consciousness over the cultural dryness that obsession with industrial life has created in his life. For instance, his searching for classic manuscripts and paintings in museums all over the world to have a better understanding of the very stories of Oedipus, and Rostam and Sohrab (pp.154-158) embodies his desire for meaning and deep-laid connections, like extended family and children, beyond material life. Same, it shows, in his heart, he is yearning for something beyond the hierarchical order and civilization. That is why he names his company after Sohrab. In a way, historical Sohrab is the victim of hierarchical understanding where the father exercises his power over his son to dictate his power on all; the son is the commander of the enemy army, that is to say, the Other. Beside the depiction of Master Mahmut's rescue from the bottom of the well, the naming of the company after Sohrab buttresses the very trace of hope in the novel, paralleling Gülcihan's artistic performances based on the stories.

Representing Tahmineh at the moment she receives the news of her son's death, Gülcihan does not characterize a submissive woman who patiently accepts what the masculine side does or decides for her: "the Red-Haired woman spoke angrily of men, and what they'd put her through" (Pamuk, 2017, p.83). The very scene, Cem already acknowledges, is imprinted on his mind forever (Pamuk, 2017). Cem in his adulthood is still under Gülcihan's influence by remembering this scene and going beyond hierarchical codes. However, he does not change the way of his life to a psychologically more prosperous, satisfying one because he does not dare to distance himself from his materially successful life. When his son reveals his identity to him, instead of accepting him, Cem treats him as a source of extortion and, confronting him, falls to the well and dies (Pamuk, 2017). This contrasts with Master Mahmut's falling into the well. Master Mahmut is saved by Gülcihan. Interestingly, she is the one who, seeing Cem's escape from the town, gets dubious because she is sure Cem will revisit her. Alerted, she informs her group about the probability of an accident and saves Master Mahmut (p. 236). This is later followed by Master Mahmut's success in hitting water. Highlighting the priority of life over death, the two scenes prefigure the turning of the storyline from a death-stricken one − with a blind dedication to industrialization − toward a more balanced form in the third chapter.

The turn offered in the third chapter of *RHW* replaces the motif of barren life with a productive, fertile one. It renarrates the cycle of nature-culture from Gülcihan's perspective where these two are juxtaposed in a nonhierarchical order. In this chapter, she emerges as Karaca's (2019) diabolic woman. Symbolically, she is not barren and gives birth to Enver. In the first place, her personal life and very decision to be a mother out of marriage exemplify Puleo's discussion of subjectivity in choosing motherhood. This, along with her upbringing of Enver as a person loyal to past traditions and enthusiastic for art and a better, developed future single her out as a woman who goes beyond the essentialist ecofeminist division of culture / nature and reason / emotion. She is an educated, cultural activist whose symbolic occupation as an actress fills the gap between nature and culture. Not only does she subjectively fulfill her instinctual, natural desire to be a mother, but she also nurtures the very result of this decision, Enver, as a cultural figure who does not refuse the natural side. She is the one who encourages her son to be a writer, the very desire that Cem had but never practiced. It is under her influence that Enver, a religious person, is fond of poetry, art, and acting. For instance, elaborating on his religious view, Enver refuses his father's chronological and secular understanding of God-Human relationship by arguing: "God is everywhere . . . Above and below, north and south. . . . Allah the Almighty, Creator of the universe. . . . Westernized Turks . . . . set on secularism so that they can dress up their wickedness as modernity" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 217). This is continued by emphasizing:

> I don't have anything against anyone! . . . I won't have my enemies define me, and I won't be caught in false dichotomies like left and right, or godly and modern . . . I avoid people and concentrate on my poetry. (p.218)

The saying shows that he is not type of a rightist Islamist to impose his ideas on others. Later, explaining how she spent time with her son, Gülcihan emphasizes: "I picked speeches from Rumi's *Masnavi* and old Sufi stories and fables, as well as . . . tales like 'Farhad and Shirin' or *Asli and Karam*" (p. 231); or elsewhere: "I would take him by the hand and show him . . . streets, houses, paintings, parks" (p. 238). These openly contrast with the dominant religious understandings in modern Türkiye where religious people frowned at art and poetry and the secular state, proud of cultural Westernization, looked at religion as a primitive state of human life, that is to say, nature.[4]

Ecosymbolically speaking, the first two chapters of *RHW* narrate the imbalanced interaction of nature / culture through the disconnection of old and new. The missing father represents the vanishing root or historical, traditional sense of Turkish life. The modernization of the state has been a blind type which has dried the traditional ways and cultural heritage of Ottoman era. While, no doubt, this modernization has had its positive aspects, it was a unilateral developmental model that disregarded the past. Employing Western technological development and social reconstruction model, this modernization was initiated and continued, very rapidly, after World War I. The afterworld debris and lack of resources rendered the looting of nature to cover the material necessities unavoidable. On the other hand, the religious context of Turkish society was resistive before Westernized cultural reconstruction. This left no option for the founding fathers other than forceful

administration of this reconstruction. All through these decades, the tension has resisted subsiding. Recently, a young generation of Islamist politicians has come to power that confronts the achievements of the secular system. It emerges as a patriarchal perspective that, according to Gūnay-Erkol (2019), like a dictatorial father does not tolerate his children's opposing voices. Enver, at first, seems to represent this Islamist vision, but he emerges as a young religious man who distances himself from prejudiced religious understanding. He embodies the multicultural Islamic stand of Ottoman dynasty as the backbone of Turkish religious identity (Mohammadi Achachelooei, 2023).

It seems Enver embodies a more perfect human vision. For example, in agreement with his mother, he continues cooperation with Ayşe. That is to say, he keeps Ayşe within the family. This reflects the preservation of a full connection with the emotional side. In fact, he does not repeat the same vicious cycle of his grandfather and father who left their wife and son. Being united with Cem, Ayşe had become part of this cycle. But, then, in a horizontal, rhizomatic model of attachment,[5] she is relocated to a more inclusive setting and perspective. The fact that the mother and son decided to share stakes and interest with Ayşe signifies that they are not after rapid, short-term benefits, and long-term prosperity and development of the firm, away from fighting for and against lawsuits, highly matters for them: "neither of us had any intention of dismantling the construction empire . . . much less of leaving its hundreds of employees out ... we wanted Sohrab to reach even greater heights" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 247). It means that their view of the expansion of the firm is not kind of competitive one, prioritizing financial supremacy at the expense of the Other. As such, Ayşe becomes part of Gülcihan, and, working together, they reflect a fuller version of femininity that encompasses two diabolic and angelic aspects. It explains why Göknar believes *RHW* is "a woman's story" (2017, para. 1), and agrees with Pamuk's elaboration on *RHW* as a realistic feministic novel (Derakhshani, 2017, para. 13).

The title of the novel points to Golchin's decisive role in centralizing the notion of sustainable life as well. The red color of her hair signifies Puleo's discussion of woman's struggle against the "socialisation of determined tasks and attitudes" (2017b, p. 27) to ascertain an independent subjective role. It stands for life enthusiasm, energy, and liveliness. During her professional life, she decides to dye her hair red, which hue is strange and, somehow, irritating to the traditional people of that time; the people whose understanding of life, its disciplines, and its ends are shaped by a confusing amalgam of superficial modernization on the one hand, and conservative traditionalism on the other hand. This traditionalism is losing its touchstone sociocultural heritage, substituting it with a superficial Modernism that judges everything at surface value. In this way, Gülcihan's preferred hair color, as opposed to the blonde one offered by her hairdresser (Pamuk, 2017, p. 230), reflects her mental perspective. According to Karaca (2019), "[b]londe hair symbolizes a submissive woman who establishes her existence through body" (p. 128). Resisting the suggestion for blonde hair, Gülcihan refuses to idealize herself as an object of desire before social, sexist standards. Experiencing the frustration of married life by, firstly, marrying a politically left-wing activist, who has dedicated himself to the

ideology at the expense of self-destruction, and marrying his brother after his death, who has the same political perspectives and practices (Pamuk, 2017, p. 177), Gülcihan comes to the understanding that she shall live herself away from dedication to masculine goals. *RHW* "is above all a book of ideas," writes Hughes (2017, para. 8); it narrates the evolution of a woman who decides to live her own priorities and wishes, conscious of her responsibilities. In feministic terms, this highlights a form of self-awareness. Seeing Cem, Gülcihan comes to the conclusion that she has the right to develop a physical relationship with the man she likes. As referred to earlier, this matches Puleo's argument about women's right to personally decide on their bodies; this is a practice of "equality and self-empowerment" that "involves promoting sexual and reproductive rights" (2017b, p. 30).

The third chapter of *RHW* is short. Pamuk could have developed his perspective of change by direct or indirect references to the environment-friendly procedure of construction activities after Cem's death. He prefigures it by pointing to promising signals of change through Gülcihan and Ever, but leaves it for the reader to imagine the alternative world. As such, maybe he highlights all human beings' responsibility for making a better future.

Conclusion

Pamuk has incessantly written about Istanbul - and the whole Türkiye extendedly - all through his life. Interestingly, modern urbanization is the theme that is repeated in all these works. The research done on Pamuk's oeuvre has pointed to his sensitivity toward the superficiality of this modernization. Majorly, it has been reflected as "a battle between the . . . European Westernized Istanbul and its historical Islamist past" (Hashemipour, 2017, P. 71). However, the research has not paid attention to the ecological aspect of this modernization. The current study investigated the reflection of ecological anxiety associated with the uneven modernization of Istanbul in *RHW* from Puleo's feministic perspective. It examined the illustration of Türkiye's rapid industrialization in the novel through the trope of faulty father-son relationship, symbolizing the rising tension between East and West in the country's context. The argument was that, while the whole novel revolves around a masculine world of destructive, industrial progress, Gülcihan's characterization prefigures hope for bringing these conflicting aspects together, away from the masculine pattern of competition. It prefigures a promising perspective of change where self-awareness along with intercultural awareness offers a bed for exercising a sustainable model of life through the recognition of difference. And how does the storyline highlight this? In fact, describing beautiful natural scenery that is disappearing under the pressure of rapid industrialization that is careless of biological diversity, this story narrates Puleo's warning that "[h]uman beings are hosts that must obtain the self-awareness of belonging to a fabric of multiple life and life forms of the planet we live in, and that its destruction is in the short or long term, our own" (Puleo, 2012b, p. 87). The illustration of the effect of this carelessness through the concept of barrenness in the novel brings to the fore a person who stands opposed to the trend by giving birth to a son who reconciles confronting ideologies and perspectives in himself. It is, in a way, distancing from the notion of superiority over the Other, which is also signified through the depiction

of the centralized male character's death. Being trapped in the self-fabricated cycle of filicide and patricide, he symbolizes hierarchical understanding and its collapse.

Offering an ecofeminist analysis of *RHW*, this research came to the conclusion that the investigation of the environmental aspects of industrialization in Pamuk's other works will contribute to Pamukean studies. Interestingly, it can be done by applying a religious (Islamic) ecological perspective. While Pamuk is a secular writer who does not limit himself to an Islamic perspective, he has revealed his awareness of the role of Islam in shaping Turkish identity in most of his works.[6] Accordingly, his oeuvre can be studied based on Islamic ecological views which, no doubt, will result in interesting findings.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

[1] In Judeo-Christian mythology is Adam's first wife who refuses to be submissive before Adam and leaves him. United with Satan, she turns to a diabolic figure with red hair which is reminiscent of fire.

[2] Refer to:

Chapouthier, G. (2018). *From Nature to "Culture" In The Mosaic Theory of Natural Complexity: A scientific and philosophical approach.* La Plaine-Saint-Denis: Éditions des maisons des sciences de l'homme associées.

Hobbes, T. (1651). *Leviathan*. Edwin Curley (Ed.) 1994. Hackett Publishing.

[3] Refer to:

Vandana, S. (1989). *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. Zed Books.

Gebara, I. (1999). *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation*. Fortress Press.

[4] Refer to:

Titrek, O. & William W. C. (2010). Valuing Science: A Turkish–American comparison. *International Journal of Science Education*, 33 (3), 401-421. doi: 10.1080/09500691003628379.

[5] For more information on the notion of Rhizomatic interaction refer to:

Kornberger, M., Rhodes, C. & Bos, R. (2006). The Others of Hierarchy: Rhizomatics of Organizing. In M. Fuglsang & B. M. Sorensen (Eds.), *Deleuze and the Social* (pp.58–74). Edinburgh University Press.

[6] References to Ottoman Empire and detailing Ottoman civilization in some of his novels like *My Name Is Red (2001)*, *New Life (1997)*, and *The white Castle* (1990) testify for this.

Author's Biography

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Effect of Hierarchies on the Corporeal Alternations in the Novel *Under the Skin*

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Abstract

In this essay, I analyze the complex role capitalism plays in the formation and transformation of bodies within its system, using the novel *Under the Skin* by Michel Faber as a case study. As multidisciplinary research, this essay will use disability studies as a theoretical foundation with which the main arguments will be underscored. In order to do so, I focus on four dimensions: first, the distinction between normality and deviance as manifested in the bodies of the alien protagonist and the Vess corporation heir Amlis; second, the impact of different hierarchies in the novel; elites, workers, and human prey (vodsel); on the bodies of the group according to their position in each level of the pyramid; third, the role of disability and how it affects individuals under capitalism; fourth, how (de)prostheticization changes the way readers perceive and interpret the novel by shifting the perspective from the normative one to an alternative one that challenges the dominant assumptions of normalcy. This essay will argue that: capitalism use, misuse, and abuse society's view of normalcy to take full advantage for its own hegemonic purposes.

Keywords: capitalism, hierarchies, disability, normate, prosthesis

> *"A human being who is first of all an invalid is all body, therein lies his inhumanity and hid debasement. In most cases he is a little better than carcass—."*
>
> Thomas Mann, *Magic Mountain*

Introduction

Under the Skin (2000) is a novel by Michel Faber that exposes the reader to the many problems that plague modern society. It features a female protagonist who struggles with self-identity, gender stereotypes, and male violence. It critiques the mass killings of animals in the meat industry. It depicts a planet almost ruined by centuries of capitalist and technological exploitation. It explores corporeal alterity and strict hierarchies that divide the protagonist and vodsel races respectively. Faber's work appeals to those who are interested in gender studies, posthumanism, animal studies, ecocriticism, veganism, and more.

The novel's protagonist, Isserley, is an alien whom the novel curiously calls "Human" in the text. She hunts muscular male vodsel hitchhikers, injects them with a special needle called the "icpathua" that paralyzes them, and delivers them to their "farm" where they are processed into a delicacy called "voddissin" for the rich in her planet. Language in this novel plays a significant role, for example Sarah Dillion has analyzed how the novel plays with language in its epistemological and ontological aspects. She shows that the novel challenges the distinction between the human and nonhuman by "renaming human beings" as "vodsel" and "giving them an animal-like species name" (Dillon, 2011, p. 1). Similarly, scholars such as Marion Gymnich and Alexandre Segao Costa argue that in the "Isserley's view of the world, human beings have the status of cattle, and the way the men caught by Isserley are treated by the aliens can be read as a cultural-critical metadiscourse [on] the way human beings treat animals in the meat industry "(Gymnich & Costa, 2006, p. 85). Thus, language is evidently one of the tools and commodities that Faber employs to critique society's flaws and it is precisely because of this invented language that makes alienation of other species possible so that they could be discriminated against. The two authors are correct in examining the role of the language and the said consequence of that "renaming". However, what they fail to notice in Faber's novel is the clever debunking of centuries of carefully planned discourses that gave man the much-needed primacy over all other beings to solidify its own existence.

Unlike these scholars, who focus on the linguistic and cultural aspects of the novel, I will examine how it portrays disability and normalcy in relation to hierarchies and capitalism. Furthermore, I will build on the current disability studies and show how it can be extended in viewing the hierarchization of humans and the vodsels. Therefore, moving away from the other literary methodologies mentioned above, I am more interested in the novel in two contexts: what role literature can have on disability, and how hierarchies affect bodies. As Davis observes, disability is not a trivial issue that pertains to a minority member of a society, but "part of a

historically constructed discourse" wherein an ideology of thinking pertinent to the body under different historical events takes place (Davis, 1995, p. 2).

The postindustrial age is one such historical circumstance, where the concept of containing, controlling, and regulating the body emerged. This was loosely influenced by the "Eugenics movement", which was based on Darwin's idea of "survival of the fittest" and aimed to eliminate those who deviated from the uniformity of society (Davis, 1995, p. 30). This also led to the creation of the term "the average man", which contrasted with the earlier notion of the ideal—"mytho-poetic body that is linked to the Gods" that prevailed in the preindustrial age (Davis, 1995, p. 24). It is important to note that words like "norm", "normal", "average", "normality" all acquired their modern meaning during the onset of the industrial age (Davis, 1995, p. 24). Thus, in this era where body and mind were constantly measured and medicalized, they were ultimately divided into the two absolute categories of the able and disabled.

Therefore, I will examine how the *Under the Skin* depicts the role of hierarchies, which capitalism helps create, in disabling different characters in the novel. To do so, I will: first, demonstrate how Faber's novel constructs the hierarchies between the elite, the worker, and the vodsel; second, introduce three ways wherein hierarchies can affect bodies in the novel and compare the perfect body of Amlis to the imperfect body of Isserley; third, show how the rigid class division affects the bodies of the individuals at the lowest level of the pyramid—the worker and the vodsel—to the point of their bodies getting distorted and even de-humanized. Extending this point further, I will also argue how Faber's deconstruction of the social hierarchies, by deprostheticization, help us understand the extent to which the hegemony of normalcy is operative within our societies. By analyzing these aspects, I will show how *Under the Skin* challenges and exposes capitalism by revealing its creation of different classes of the two races found in the novel, and how by granting different bodily status—perfect, ideal, or disabled—to each member of this created hierarchy by the normate, the author is successful in his critique.

Disability: Disposability and Prostheticization

Throughout history, "marginalization" has been used as a tool of fear, used by the infamous normate (coined by Garland-Thompson in *Extraordinary Bodies*) to separate those who have "political and social relevance and those who do not", to shape and control reality as the only voice that is permitted to tell history by linking events and their meanings as historical objects (Mansouri, 2021, p. 257). Thus, in this manner, the history that is written and preserved by the normate's hegemonic agenda is whatever they choose to present and keep, and thus it becomes the sole version of reality. The normate has the ability to bind the elements together, albeit doing so in a "hegemonic and totalitarian" way, weaving a Heideggerian *account* that connects "social and political realities" in an ultra-anthropocentric "rendition of history" (Mansouri, 2021, p. 257).

To bring about a sense of national unity and a semblance of social equality, the normate exiles the traditional and much-celebrated ideal bodies of Greco-Roman

deities and instead idolizes a new figure as the average citizen, namely, a "non-heroic", even a "proletariat individual" who extols normalcy as virtue and confirms social wholeness and unity as herd efficiency (Quayson, 2007, p. 19). This newfound social wholeness for the newly made idol: the average citizen, translates to an unprecedented level of participation and inclusion within the constructed society. This new celebration and advertisement of wholeness, which requires "an individual to overcome their fears and anxieties if they want national and historical inclusion", invites the individual to either hide their differences and disabilities or follow the hegemonic trend, resulting in a mere "simulacrum of wholeness, where only a semblance of wholeness lies within this complex matrix of social unity, treating multiplicity as a sign of difference, deviance, and non-belonging" (Mansouri, 2021, p. 257).

To understand the primacy of the normate's hegemony over the absolute category of able/disable, Sylvia Wynter's categorization of being human would become useful. According to her, "this category is the Western bourgeois conception of the human—Man—that is overrepresenting itself as if it were the human *per se*; as 'the ostensibly only normal human'" (Wynter, 2003, p. 265). "In accounting for this 'overrepresentation of man as human', Wynter traces the social and historical appearance of what she terms Man1—Renaissance man, *homo politicus*—and Man2—late nineteenth century liberal evolutionary man, *homo oeconomicus*" (Goodley, 2023, p. 172). *Homo politicus* according to Dan Goodley (2023, p. 172), closely resembles Michael Foucault's sovereign self, embodied by the rational political subject of the civilized European male. In other words, this is the colonizer with the already discussed over-represented opinion of himself as normally human. By the late nineteenth century, indebted to science, *homo oeconomicus* is born "biologically and evolutionarily developed, innately pristine, and phylogenetically selected to survive and flourish" (Goodley. 2023, p. 172). It is in this moment of collapsing man-human-normal that this "constitution of humanness" resonates with the hegemonic tendencies of the normate. Thus, he contends that "in modern Western European secular societies, the figure of the normate dominates humanist conceptions of man/human", which perhaps is "personified best by Da Vinci's image of Vitruvian Man" and other detectable materials found in the modern contemporary representations (Goodley, 2023, p. 172). Steyn and Mpofu (2021) note that the "grand construction of Euro-modernity was founded on unhappy circumstances and for tragic purposes. Those which were designated and categorized as non-human became things, reduced to resources, usable and disposable by unapologetic humans" (p. 1). One such fateful occasion, according to Razack (2016) "relates to disposability; the transformation of some human beings into waste" (Goodley, 2023, p. 173). In a similar vein, as it shall soon be illuminated, Faber's characters employ this tactic against the vodsels to convince others that these creatures are primitive and even commit acts of violence against their own less fortunate kinsman.

This tactic of dehumanizing the other is closely related to the concept of prostheticizing effect in a literary text. An acute understanding of how disability and its prostheticizing function work can shed light on how exactly it has been used as a

normalizing tool by the normate. The way it is used has already been mapped by Mitchell and Snyder (2000) in their book *Narrative Prosthesis*. According to them, narratives establish an aberrant—or in this case a disabled character—and behave in the same way that a compensation for that limitation begins in real life, which is done by restoring that which was lost, for example using a prosthetic device for a missing leg. Similarly, in this approach, the narrative identifies the lost object as the thing that stands out—a thing that deviates from the norm. And it is precisely here that the explanatory process begins: "literary narratives begin a process of explanatory compensation wherein perceived aberrancies can be rescued from ignorance, neglect, or misunderstanding for their readerships" (Mitchell & Snyder, 2000, p. 53). In a similar vein, Michel de Certeau (1986) also notes about "the movement of all narratives" in his seminal essay "*The Savage I*", which analyzes the travel narratives of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A narrative is initiated by the search for the strange, which is presumed different from the place assigned to it by the discourse of the culture from which it originates (Certeau, 1986, p. 69). The very thing that has gone wrong within this known world now begs for a story to comprehend that which has caused the anomaly. What David Wills calls the "prostheticizing" effect is, therefore, "a deviance marked as improper to a social context" that is corrected by an author using a textual prosthesis, in order to restore a false semblance of unity to the text (Mitchell & Snyder, 2000, p 53). In a simplistic way it is possible to define the prostheticizing effect in the novel by using the already discussed mapping. The narrative first establishes Isserley as a centerpiece character, however, in order to make her character truly stand out, she is given an altered body. Then the narrative proceeds to explain where this aberrant body originates from, which is due to surgery. After this comes the three usual solutions for a disabled character according to Mitchell and Snyder, either her disability gets cured, or a compensation for her disability is given or she is removed from the plot altogether. From what we know of the novel, the second solution may be applied to Isserley. While Faber did not give Isserley any physical compensation for the said lack, he indeed gave her a mental one in a physical form: her car. Isserley's car bears significant importance as it is a subtle doorway to what her current state of mind is, for instance, when she is hesitant about her role in the farm, her car gets broken, but more importantly when she decides to stop working in the farm and stop abducting vodsels, her car crashes, thus signifying that her death is imminent. However, this is a plain reading of what Mitchell and Snyder attested in their book *Narrative Prosthesis*, and that the author's portrayal of the disabled character is much more nuanced and complicated than what this brief reading suggests.

As a result of the process of prostheticizing, disability or as Ato Quayson names it a "marker of sharp otherness", begins to defy the descriptive national historiography. The normate—empowered by their new hegemonic idol of "average citizen"—has the capacity to curate history however it pleases, to the extent that it can "justify and vindicate, chastise", objectify, or even dispose of those who fall into the deviant side in the category of the binary able/disabled (Mansouri, 2021, p. 257). It is precisely in this moment that a false account is prostheticized in order for the correct (heavily modified) account to be replaced by it. However, what this paper will present is that the prosthetic feature that sometimes accompanies disability need

not always be corrective in nature to the point of fixing abnormalities in favor of the normate's worldview. It can also be used as a (de)prostheticizing tool to deconstruct the already established hegemony of normalcy and give way for a new account that is less invested in realizing normal accounts championed by the *average perceiver* and more on the *othered perceiver* that is rooted in a reality that reflects the flaws of the dominant construct.

Capitalism: The Hierarchy and the Body

Capitalism "romanticizes the individual" hero who goes out all alone in pursuit of economic success, which of course is not an easy task, and it involves risks that not many are eager to undertake (Tyson, 2014, p. 57). One example that Lois Tyson gives is the rush of gold and silver in the American frontier, which claimed many lives. In today's world, this risk now involves undertaking high-risk businesses, in which the individual risks losing all their assets. While running a business seems admirable, by referring to a Marxist perspective on how ideology operates, this system promotes a mindset in people which compels them to be more driven by their "self-interest", "above the need or even survival of other people" (Tyson, 2014, p. 57). This "rugged individualism" as Tyson names it, insists on "me" rather than "us", and "works against the well-being of a society as a whole and of the unprivileged in particular" (Tyson, 2014, p. 57). Furthermore, it gives the illusion to the people that they are making the decisions without being influenced by any ideologies, which of course is not true, because "we are influenced by various ideologies all the time, whether we realize it or not" (Tyson, 2014, p. 57).

In the novel, Faber showcases the existence of rigid hierarchies that divide each member into its respective division. The human world is governed by the elites who have formed an oligarchy, similar to the Italian merchant republics (such as Pisa, Genoa, or Venice), where a select few rule the many poor. The oligarchical system is further enforced by the presence of capitalism, which drives the elite's sense of self-interest and disregard for their fellow humans and their planet. Normally, capitalism is the private ownership of the means of production and the exchange of goods and services in the markets that are further enhanced with technological advancements. However, in the New Estates, the unfair distribution of income and wealth among the different groups has created a drastic shift in power dynamics in favor of the elite class, where the workers simply do not have the means to negotiate or advance. This lack of opportunity or prospects to climb the social ladder has created an extreme pyramid of power where those who possess capital and wealth firmly stand atop everyone else who are not as affluent as they are. The result of this is, of course, discrimination, and the harsh living and working environment imposed on the working class. Although, the motivation of the elites for this never-ending accumulation of wealth is not mentioned directly in the novel, by their actions it can be guessed that they are a greedy and selfish bunch who will stop at nothing to further enrich their own pockets without any sort of regard for their own kin or even their own planet. After all, it should not be forgotten that this is the very same culture that has no equivalent meaning for the vodsel word: "mercy", as it was "a concept that just didn't exist" (Faber, 2000, p. 160). Therefore,

it is not surprising that the elites are both cruel and ruthless in their monetary gains and ambitions.

The human home world called the New Estates is itself divided into two levels: the higher level, where the wealthy reside, and the lower level, where everyone else lives. Faber offers very few details about the human home world and no details about the upper levels, but Isserley uses words like "monstrously ugly", "claustrophobic", "subterranean blackness" and "nauseous" to describe her world (Faber, 2000, p. 81). The underground where the poor and unfortunate people live and work, houses various mining complexes and provides oxygen for the higher level. According to Isserley the lower level is a place that "decay and disfigurement" would soon follow due to shortages of pretty much everything. It is a place full of "ugliness" for the "Estate trash", "losers" and "low-lifes" referring to the lower-level denizens (Faber, 2000, p. 81).

Under the Skin also illustrates the importance of hierarchies by depicting the separation of the human classes from another species: the vodsels. The vodsels are nothing but food for the humans, who hunt them down on Earth using agents like Isserley. Isserley is a worker who has undergone a drastic surgery to look like a female vodsel in order to lure unsuspecting male vodsels into her car. She does this because this was her only choice between staying behind on her own planet with the rest of the "maggots" or fleeing this horror. However, she soon realizes that her sacrifice has not paid off, and that she is still trapped in a system that continues to exploit her body and her labor.

In such an inflexible society where the workers' condition in the underground is quite horrific, much like those who work in the coal mines, their only chance to escape is to flee the said nightmare by volunteering to work on the Earth's farm. Like Isserley, those who worked with her underground in the New Estates, are being put to work in places such as: a moisture-filtration plant or an oxygen factory, toiling in filth like "a maggot among other maggots" (Faber, 2000, p. 62). Ironically, for the workers on Earth, the working conditions remain the very same, because excluding Isserley and Esswis, who due to their surgical change can remain on the surface, every other worker must remain underground, where they sleep, eat, and work. Furthermore, the lowest level within this farm is where the vodsels are processed, in a place ironically called "cradle", which is a clear indication of their status as mere food. The surface of this farm is blessed with a surreal scenery "To her right, trillions of litres of water surged between Ablach's beach and an invisible Norway beyond the horizon. To her left, steep gorse-encrusted hills led up to the farm" (Faber, 2000, p. 59). While underneath the very same farm is an eerie, bleak, and grim place full of the smell of "sweat, cleaning agents and paint" (Faber, 2000, p. 55). The place is divided into many levels such as the "kitchen and recreation hall, living quarters" for the workers, the process hall, and the pens, all of which are accessible via an elevator (Faber, 2000, p. 104). In hindsight, nothing has really changed for these workers, for even on another planet—Earth that is—the hierarchical system still has its grip on these workers' lives by splitting them into those who can be at the top and those who must be underground, perhaps the only difference now is that vodsels are being kept below

the workers. But they are still toiling away like "maggots" with other "maggots", much like everyone else back on their own planet.

Bodies in Tatters

This system of exploitation not only dramatically affects the vodsels by taking away their individuality, such as by cutting their tongues and castrating them, but also affects the humans whose bodies undergo gradual alteration. Isserley is not alone in paying the ultimate price, because as she herself notes, Esswis is the first human whose appearance has undergone a major transformation. In fact, he appears to be in much more pain than she is, observed by her when he was having such difficulties in helping her capture the fleeing monthlings or when they got back to the farm, he left the car where it was so that he could hurry home faster due to his extreme pain. Esswis is mainly in charge of keeping up an appearance in public and keeping vodsels away from the farm so that the workers could work in peace. It is interesting to note that despite their shared experience of bodily mutilations, they feel the same burden, but they avoid each other as much as they avoid the other workers.

Nevertheless, the corporeal differences between the elites and the workers, due to the cruel exploitation by the elites, can be found in the novel in three different forms. First, a soft change that includes limited alteration of bodies, which can be found in most of the working class, both working on the alien planet and those who work on Earth; second, a hard change which is a dramatic alteration of the entire body, the kind of which Isserley and Esswis have gone through; the third, and the final of these is the extreme alteration of the captured vodsels by Isserley who as mentioned earlier, lose their subjecthood. On the other side, opposite of these bodies, lurks a definitive body that differs from the ones mentioned above, and that is the body of the elites, represented by an "elite" member of the alien race, the scion of Vess group Amlis Vess which I will talk about after introducing the second corporeal variety that focuses on Isserley first.

The second bodily change, which I termed as a hard change is Isserley's own body, which has been surgically altered to resemble a female vodsel. This change is both a disguise and a form of oppression, which enables her to lure oblivious male vodsels into her car, where she drugs them and takes them to a farm, where they are processed into meat. But, in order to keep her appearance as the said species, she also must shave her fur regularly and wear clothes to keep a visual resemblance to that of a vodsel, and wear shoes that are specifically made for her. From what we can gather, her disability is not hereditary, but the direct result of human (alien) interventionism that specifically (re)shaped her body to prepare her for her new work environment. Isserley's body modification is also a form of oppression, which forces her to conform to the human (vodsel) standards of beauty and sexuality. Isserley's body is not her own, but a tool for her job, which she hates but cannot escape.

Earlier it was mentioned that behind all these "deviant" bodies there exists a normal or even ideal body that can be compared with an imperfect body. A brief comparison of the perfect body next to an imperfect body is needed to shed some light on the dichotomy between the human standard of normal and deviant. The

former, belongs to an "elite" member of the alien race; Amlis Vess, while the latter belongs to the marginalized "worker" group, the protagonist Isserley. Starting with Isserley, in order to escape the many miseries of her planet, she decides to flee to Earth, however, for her to blend in with Earth's vodsels she must pay a hefty price, surgical alteration of her entire body. This surgery includes the removal of her tail and insertion of a metal rod in her spine so that she would be able to walk using her two legs, removal of her sixth finger on each hand, and replacement of her teats with false enlarged breasts fashioned on those of a glamour model. Isserley did all this to escape a horrible fate that awaited her back home, and instead she agreed to something far more terrible, with an unimaginable outcome for her both morally and physically.

In the novel we can grasp a sense of what this physical consequence entails for her and for Esswis as there are several instances where we can see the ways they are both dealing with their new customized alien bodies. In order to soothe her excruciating pain Isserley needs to shower regularly and massage her surgical spots, while taking small comfort in her implanted breasts, that blocks her from seeing what has been done to her lower body parts. Also, because of the pain, she can no longer sleep in the same manner as members of her own race, and like a vodsel she must sleep in a bed, although, even in bed she cannot sleep for long because of "her contorted back muscles" (Faber, 2000, p. 48). Meanwhile, Esswis appears to be in more severe pain than Isserley. In the novel, she mentions that Esswis is the first "human" who has undergone the surgery, and that she feels less pain than he did because the doctors who operated on him now know exactly what they were doing when they operated on her.

In stark contrast to these mutilated bodies, to these imperfections, we catch a glimpse of a body, whose possessor is none other than Amlis, an "elite" human who not only can be considered normal but may even be ideal:

His limbs exactly equal in length, all of them equally nimble…. His breast tapered seamlessly into a long neck, on which his head was positioned like a trophy. It came to three points: his long spearhead ears and his vulpine snout. His large eyes were perfectly round, positioned on the front of his face, which was covered in soft fur, like the rest of his body. In all these things he was a normal, standard-issue human being… (Faber, 2000, p. 105)

Amlis by all accounts possesses an ultimate body, an ideal figure, which can never be attained by an 'average worker'. Because for those who have had both a soft or hard change, the damage is irreversible, moreover, it does not matter whether they are humans on Earth or back at their own planet, the unfair system which has been discussed earlier, is leaving its mark both figuratively and literally upon those who are not at the top of the pyramid. Although, it is interesting to note that the victims of Isserley all have one thing in common; it is that they are all muscular.

The first bodily change or the soft change is that of the bodies of Isserley's co-workers, who live and work underground on the alien planet. Isserley's relation to these workers is not good because she is uncomfortable around them as they look "different" and stare at her body and "chiseled face" whenever they think she is not paying any attention (Faber, 2000, p. 55). These workers are also aliens, but they

have not undergone the same body modification as Isserley. They are the ones who process the vodsels into meat and send them back to their home planet, where they are consumed by the rich and powerful aliens. These workers are also exploited and oppressed by the system, which treats them as disposable and replaceable objects. They live in poor conditions, with little oxygen, food, or medical care. They suffer from various physical and mental ailments, for instance, Ensel's "teeth weren't so good, and he knew it" whenever he smiled at her (Faber, 2000, p. 86), Yns, the engineer who is introduced as "a swarthy old salt of ugliness, bared his strained teeth" (Faber, 2000, p. 107). One of the workers whose name she forgets is introduced another way: "He was stupid looking, fat and squat – a full head shorter than Amlis Vess…He had some sort of disgusting skin ailment that made half his face look like mouldy fruit (Faber, 2000, p. 148), and Unser the chief processor who repeats the "uhr-rhum" to clear his throat which indicates his throat problem (Faber, 2000, p. 195).

Opportunism, coupled with the privileges acquired from the elite status, seems to determine the condition of one's body in the novel wherein it directly brings about the soft or hard change. After all, as mentioned above, it is not fate or divine decree that transforms the bodies of characters like Isserley or Esswis in the novel. They either change by the intentional "human" intent whose primary motivation behind this abrupt alteration is to simply meet the supply and demand quota, or by the harsh working conditions imposed on the "workers" both at home and abroad thereby affecting bodies to decay and bringing along hard change with it. As Isserley observes, the "elite" members of her species are beautiful with the usual characteristics that mark them as such—the kind that we saw in Amlis earlier— while the unfortunate "worker" class seem to have some sort of ailments accompanying them due to prolonged habitation: "decay and disfigurement were obviously the same course down there. Maybe it was the overcrowding, or the bad food or the bad air or the lack of medical care, or just the inevitable result of living underground" (Faber, 2000, p. 61). Isserley further attests that those who are left behind on her planet vowed that they would remain beautiful and unchanged, as she once was, but now they are "transformed into a beast, with hunched back, scarred flesh, crumbling teeth, missing fingers, cropped hair. But that's how they all ended up" (Faber, 2000, p. 62). Would she be any different if she had stayed on her planet? "of course, not" for she did end up like the worst estate "trash". Thus, why would the elites not be average or even beautiful, when none of their members suffer from the same ecological or food shortages or lack of medical care as the workers.

The fact that these workers are suffering from physical or mental ailments is not surprising, because historically mass industrialization caused many incidents that resulted in permanent damage to the workers, especially in coal mines. Similarly, according to Isserley's account, her co-workers who live and work underground struggle with their working environment. The parodying of the same condition, where the workers are deep below the surface, seldom bask in the presence of the Sun, and have a poor diet, is not without its intention and purpose. In the novel, Faber does not directly comment on the bodily afflictions of Isserley's co-workers, but rather it is Isserley herself who informs us of these by observing things around her.

There are two reasons as to why the workers' bodies are gradually decaying. First, as mentioned earlier, there is the obvious environmental factor: only the rich get to live on the surface where there is plenty of oxygen thanks to the workers, while the rest who live underground seldom get it. And the underground, both on their planet and on Earth, is not exactly an immaculate place. These two factors affect the speed of bodily deterioration. Second, there is the food consumption: in the novel we know that vodsel meat is a delicacy, but we also know that the workers are only given the useless parts of the meat. Therefore, all they eat is the cheap "mussanta paste" which is made from the undesired parts of the processed vodsels, or potatoes fried in animal fat. The combination of these two factors affects the gradual diminishing of the bodies of the working-class humans depicted in the novel, such as Ensel's rotten teeth, Yns' ugliness, or Unser's throat problem.

The third and final bodily change, which I dubbed as extreme earlier, is the one that affects the vodsels, who are the actual human beings that Isserley hunts and captures. These vodsels are exploited and oppressed by the system, which treats them as nothing but food for the aliens. They are dehumanized and deindividualized by the language and the process that transforms them into meat. They are given names like 'vodsel' or 'voddissin', which strip them of their identity and dignity. They are subjected to brutal procedures that remove their hair, skin, genitals, and vocal cords. They are kept in cages and fed with artificial food until they are slaughtered. Unlike Isserley and Esswis, who retain some traces of their former selves after their surgeries, the processed vodsels are completely altered in their physiology. They have no voice or agency in their fate.

Hence, the worst victims of corporate greed are not those who undergo either of the two corporeal changes mentioned thus far. The most horrifying victims in this chain of never-ending cruelty are the vodsels who are literally reduced to just meat, food for the rich aliens. And the main culprit behind this chain, that in fact victimizes both the vodsels and the humans alike, is capitalism, which commodifies and dehumanizes being into objects. Commodification in the novel is shown by the use of language and class division. Using terms like 'vodsel' or 'voddissin', that reduce a vodsel to a named commodity that has a substantial value for the wealthy. The product line of meat processing of the vodsels, due to the high demand on the alien planet, leads to the third and final bodily change found in the novel.

Earlier a surface reading of what the normate is capable of by weaving a Heideggerian account that continually is getting prostheticized by its agents for the hegemonic purposes was offered in the earlier sections. It is established that "to prostheticize" means "correction" - fixing that which is deviant from what the norm dictates. Thanks to this hegemonic account, according to Wynter's mapping of Man1 and Man2 this hegemony of normalcy first got created and then became fiercely entrenched. Consequently, literary texts would imprison these characters with certain limited roles or as Thompson notes: "on the margins of fiction as uncomplicated figures or exotic aliens whose bodily configurations operates as spectacles, eliciting responses from other characters or producing rhetorical effects that depends on disability's cultural resonance" (Thomson, 2017, p. 9). Had this novel been written in the nineteenth century, Isserley's character would have been somehow trivialized and removed from the plot by death, but in this novel Faber

makes extreme changes in the usual conventions as if to disable normality itself. It is now a disabled female that hunts, and it is muscular men who are prey, it is now her gaze that would determine the fate of those who she looks upon. This simple act of transference of perception from the average perceiver to the othered perceiver has created a unique situation where a new account is made, wherein making (de)prostheticiation of the normate's hegemonic account a possibility. This shift of perception creates a new paradigm of power which brings forth a new account that opposes the original account in its roots. The critique of capitalism and the reversal of roles from the disabled to abled are the major threads for this weaving of the newer account.

Usually, disability in a novel represents the said loss, whatever that may be, but also serves as a metaphorical artifact that attaches political, social, and cultural layers of meanings to the said loss. In other words, in Faber's novel the displayed lack serves as an indictment of a society that is so consumed and driven by its selfish interest that it is even willing to mutilate bodies in order to get what it wants and turn a blind eye to those who are victimized by the very system responsible for their suffering in the first place. On the surface capitalism seems to promote equality of opportunity and individualism, but after reading Faber's novel, the ugly sides of it start to emerge: the sides that make monsters.

Faber's work shows the creation of monstrosity by reversing the roles of the hunter and the hunted: the disabled and the able-bodied. In some novels, the disabled are preyed upon by society's ill treatment, such as the poor children in a boarding school who suffer under its tyrannical headmaster in Charles Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby. Or Benjy in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, who is castrated and isolated from society by the fences around his home. But in this novel, we see a different pattern: an alien woman who was once beautiful but becomes horribly deformed by corporate greed and her own desire to escape the "filth" and "maggots" who work in the Estates. She now hunts "brawny" and "muscular" men, sparing those who are skinny and have no muscle mass. She drives her car and looks for hitchhikers who are suitable for processing. Davis argues that disability occurs in the "realm of the senses", which means that a disabled person is labeled as such only when they are seen by a non-disabled person (Davis, 1995, p. 13). For instance, this moment of seeing does not happen for two people chatting online. Disability only becomes disability when the lack becomes visible. The novel differs from what Davis explains in his book in this aspect: although the process of seeing is the same, the roles are reversed. The disabled person determines the fate of those she sees, while the non-disabled ones are observed and victimized.

Moreover, as mentioned above, the novel mimics the working environment of the Industrial Age workers, which serves as a reminder of the harsh working conditions and questions the hegemonic account by those who are enforcing it. The rewriting of this account is made possible by a deprostheticization, that seeks to embrace difference and deviance, by shifting the narrative from the average perceiver to the othered perceiver. Such dramatic change in perception no longer falls within what Mitchell and Snyder call "to prostheticize", because on the contrary this novel, as mentioned earlier, is not attempting to fix a new account for it to conform with the old one but questions the old accounts/discourses that have led humanity up to its current egoistic anthropocentric phase. And this questioning is

done through three ways: first, with language that functions as an objectifying tool to rationalize the atrocity done to the vodsels; second, with reversal and primacy of an animalistic alien race over humans that ironically echoes Wynter's colonial rationale; third, with disposability of the disabled for both humans and vodsels, who are regarded as tools and food by their betters.

Conclusion

Under the Skin offers an interesting critique of capitalism through exploration of different themes such as language, hierarchization of social classes, and disabilities. By showing how hierarchization of classes and races, excluding the elites, generates different patterns of disabilities, the novel challenges the ideology behind exploitation of the workers and products. It exposes the horror and hypocrisy of the false promise of equality of opportunity, gradual diminishing of the bodies of the workers, and inhumane treatment of the products (animals) by reversing the conventions of predator as the disabled and prey as the able-bodied, male, and female, and human and animal. Hierarchy defines the status of one's body in the novel, the lower the person falls into the pyramid, the more the body can be transformed into something that can no longer be recognized as what once it was. Similarly, the higher the person stands at the top, the more definitive the body becomes, that is both comely and normal. Through the use of hierarchies, the novel depicts a utilitarian world dominated by strict class divisions where the people's lives are no longer controlled by morality or law, but by a select few patrician families who possess the most riches of the entire planet without any regard or remorse as to what happens to the planet they live on, their fellow humans and the source of the expensive food they eat.

Acknowledgements

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Ethical Recuperation vs. Ontological Trauma in Bessie Head's *A Question of Power*

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Abstract

Bessie Head's *A Question of Power* intricately weaves existential philosophy into the tapestry of its narrative, so that the novel becomes a suitable venue to apply Emmanuel Lévinas' philosophy of Self-Other relationship. The novel unfolds against the tumultuous backdrop of apartheid-era South Africa, with Elizabeth's journey serving as a poignant exploration of Lévinasian concepts. Lévinas, a philosopher of profound influence, posited that true ethical growth arises from direct encounters with the Other. This exploration dissects crucial aspects of Lévinasian philosophy mirrored in Elizabeth's trajectory across interconnected parts. One part contrasts Lévinasian ethics with Kantian and Hegelian philosophies, emphasizing the transformative power of encounters with the Other, evoking a "traumatism of astonishment" and calling for the embrace of otherness. The other section delves into Elizabeth's ethical journey, scrutinizing her struggles and moments of growth through the lens of Lévinas' concept of transcendence. Finally, the last part explores Elizabeth's transformative journey to Botswana, examining her encounters with the face of the Other and the symbolic dismantling of oppressive binaries within the Lévinasian framework. This analysis unravels how Head's narrative can mirror Lévinasian philosophy, unveiling the philosophical intricacies interwoven with the novel's literary fabric. As we embark on this journey through philosophy and literature, we peel back the layers of Elizabeth's narrative to reveal how it is possible to apply Lévinasian ethics on identity, connection, and the pursuit of transcendent wisdom to her painful interpersonal maturity in a world marked by division and inequality.

Keywords: A Question of Power, Bessie Head, ethical recuperation, Lévinas, negative ontological trauma, positive intersubjectivity

Introduction

In *A Question of Power*, Bessie Head masterfully weaves together the complexities of identity, trauma, and ethical encounters, explaining why the novel's analysis in the light of a Lévinasian framework can be quite rewarding. Elizabeth's journey from internal turmoil to ethical engagement mirrors the transformative potential of Lévinas' philosophy. As Elizabeth navigates the intricacies of apartheid-era South Africa and finds solace and redemption within the Botswanan community, the novel echoes Lévinas' call for ethical transcendence that rises above hierarchical structures and fosters interconnectedness. Through Elizabeth's evolution, we can claim that the novel reflects the profound implications of Lévinas' philosophy—a philosophy that invites us to recognize the face of the Other, embrace vulnerability, and work towards creating a more just and empathetic world. In *A Question of Power*, the interplay between self-discovery and ethical engagement reveals the power of encounters to reshape individual identities and forge communal bonds—a testament to the enduring relevance of Lévinas' ethical insights in the realm of literature and beyond.

A Question of Power traverses the intricate realm of identity, responsibility, and transformation of the protagonist's unique exploration of grappling with negative subjectivity, confronting her preconceptions to forge authentic connections with others. This paper delves into the narrative's evolution from a Hegelian perspective of otherness to a Lévinasian philosophy of ethical transcendence, illuminating the protagonist's journey towards interconnectedness, acceptance, and self-discovery.

Literature Review

As *A Question of Power* is a multilayered novel to be approached from different perspectives. The novel has garnered significant attention from literary scholars and critics since its publication in 1974. The book explores themes of race, gender, power dynamics, and mental illness through the story of a mixed-race South African woman named Elizabeth. Numerous essays and books have been written on *A Question of Power*, offering various interpretations and analyses of the novel. One notable work is "Bessie Head: Subversive Identities in *A Question of Power*" by Louise Yelin. Yelin examines the ways in which Head challenges societal norms and explores the complexities of identity through her protagonist.

Another influential essay is "The Politics of Madness: Bessie Head's *A Question of Power"* by Dorothy Driver. Driver delves into the portrayal of mental illness in the novel, arguing that it serves as a metaphor for the oppressive social conditions faced by black women during apartheid. In "Bessie Head: Writing Against Silence," Jane Wilkinson explores how A *Question of Power* reflects Head's personal experiences as an outsider in both South Africa and Botswana. Wilkinson argues that the novel can be read as a critique of colonialism and racism.

Additionally, several books have been published on Bessie Head's works as a whole, including *A Question of Power*. One such book is *Bessie Head: Thunder Behind Her Ears* by Gillian Stead Eilersen. This comprehensive study provides an

overview of Head's life and works. Overall, the literature on Bessie Head's *A Question of Power* offers diverse perspectives on its themes and significance. Scholars and critics have explored the novel's exploration of race, gender, power dynamics, and mental illness, shedding light on Head's personal experiences and her broader social and political commentary. Although Hegel's ideas have been dealt with in a number of studies on Head, such as "The Cape Gooseberry Also Grows in Botswana: Alienation and Commitment in the Writings of Bessie Head," "Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Hell: The Rhetoric of Universality in Bessie Head," and even a brief reference has also been made to Lévinas in the following book chapter: *Between Minds and Bodies—The Location of Pain and Racial Trauma in Works by Bessie Head and JM Coetzee*, the present study, we argue, is novel in its in-depth reading and paralleling Elizabeth's intermental evolution and Lévinasian ethical appreciation of the Other.

Theoretical Framework: Negative Intersubjectivity: Hegel and Kant vs. Lévinas

> [T]he other is in no way another myself, participating with me in a common existence. The relationship with the other is not an idyllic and harmonious relationship of communion, or a sympathy through which we put ourselves in the other's place; we recognize the other as resembling us, but exterior to us; the relationship with the other is a relationship with a Mystery. (Lévinas, 1969)

The ideas which prevailed in the Enlightenment are still of moment in our world. Separation of subject and object with the self-sufficiency of the former has had numerous implications whereby colonialism, patriarchy, and violation of the Other's rights have always been justified. Despite the appearance of some cynical if not pessimistic movements like postmodernism, deconstructionism, and poststructuralism which believe in the impossibility of prioritizing one over the other in binary oppositions and inaccessibility of final truth, in practice, modern societies are completely stratified. Kantian and, later on, Hegelian division of subject and object—with the latter's emphasis on the mediation through negation and the former's calls for a reductionist transcendental and metaphysical worldview, reducing the Other to a mere object of recognition—has paved the way for hierarchical relations between I and non-I, which in turn have contributed to subjugation, oppression, classification and in-exclusion. Later on, existentialism, especially ontological phenomenology, with its belief in the loneliness of human beings emphasized loneliness and even despair of the modern man.

In the face of issues like these, Lévinas can be considered as a post-secular writer whose philosophy can explain the human aspiration for a better future. Lévinasian ethics offers a profound critique of traditional Western philosophy's focus on individuality and cognition. It calls for a shift towards an ethics of encounter and responsibility towards the Other, emphasizing empathy, vulnerability, and dialogue as key components of ethical relationships. Lévinasian ethics also emphasizes the importance of language and communication in ethical encounters as language allows us to recognize and acknowledge the Other as a separate individual

with their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences to begin to understand and empathize with the Other's perspective.

Furthermore, Lévinasian ethics challenges traditional notions of autonomy and individuality. Instead of viewing ourselves as isolated individuals seeking self-fulfillment, Lévinas argues that our identity is shaped by our relationships with others. Our ethical responsibility towards the Other is what gives meaning to our existence. His philosophy, thus, offers hope for a more inclusive and compassionate society. Lévinas rejects the idea of "metaphysical divisions"[1] that claim to provide absolute and abstract knowledge. For him, the Other cannot be fully known or understood because of their uniqueness and distance from the Self. However, the Self is capable of learning from the Other *without this knowledge being inherent to itself.*

Lévinas contrasts his perspective with Enlightenment philosophy, existentialism, and ontological hermeneutics, which focus primarily on the individual's existence in the world; he critiques their focus on the Self or "egology". In contrast, he emphasizes the importance of social life and highlights concepts such as responsibility, mercy, and uniqueness. He criticizes Western philosophy for justifying oppression, slavery, and exploitation as necessary stages in historical development; instead, he emphasizes the importance of human relationships and argues that every individual deserves respect and recognition and is worthy of protection and love. In this framework, face-to-face encounters without preconceived judgments or conceptualizations can be fulfilling and beneficial for communities.

In contrast, Kantian I-It binary opposition, where "it" is the object of the knowledge of the "transcendental" and metaphysical "I" has made it / Other less human and reduced it to a mere object of cognition. "I" as a knowing subject tries to grasp "the thing-in-itself." The concept of *disinterestedness* in Kantian philosophy is distinct from the Lévinasian notion of *distance*. The Lévinasian Other is an incomprehensible being whose very incomprehensibility reveals the weaknesses of the Self. Knowledge for the Self arises from a face-to-face encounter or physical interaction with the Other and is born out of a "traumatism of astonishment" (Lévinas, 1969, p. 66). This knowledge is external to the Self but has a transformative effect on it. It leads to a sense of responsibility, reduced violence, and increased mercy towards the vulnerable yet unique Other. This is how Lévinas calls for the embrace of otherness through humiliation.

Lévinas introduces the concept of *substitution* to emphasize the responsibility and *factuality* present in direct encounters with strangers. Substitution does not mean identification or pity, but rather taking on the responsibilities of the Other and putting oneself in their place. It involves unsettling one's own sense of self for the sake of understanding and protecting the Other. Lévinas rejects allegorical treatment of non-I and transcendence beyond immediate experience, but he uses the allegory of family to explain how one should take on a protective role towards others. This means humbling oneself and allowing oneself to be affected by others, rather than maintaining a detached perspective.

Hegel's Self-Other dialectic is less radical than Kant as he affirms that in binary oppositions "the subject becomes objectified and the object becomes subjectified" (Kellner & Lewis, 2007, p. 407) and gives a historical dimension to this dialectic, in his philosophy also; nevertheless, it is an internal synthesis through negation that leads the subject to final truth. Lévinas does not believe in metaphysical divisions as such which claim to lead the subject to absolute and abstract knowledge. For him, the Other cannot be the object of our knowledge because of its uniqueness and subsequent distance but he is vulnerable to the Self's violence towards what is non-I; simultaneously though, the subject can learn from the Other without, and this learning is not inherent to the Self—unlike the transcendental Self of the Enlightenment, or the solipsistic Self of existentialism or ontological hermeneutics which are only concerned with "the question of being-in-the-world" (Selden, 1995, p. 262)—but external to it. It is due to this indebtedness to an Other beyond our apprehension that we have to acknowledge our responsibility towards him; in contrast, western philosophy, for instance "Hegel's," usually justifies "oppression as well as slavery and exploitation as necessary stages in historical development" (Kellner & Lewis, 2007, p. 407), or emphasizes perfection through negative intersubjectivity. Lévinas, however, emphasizes the importance the social life of human brings along. For him, philosophy in this way can support and exalt the deprived. This very knowledge is external, unsettling but constructive so that the subject feels less violent and even more merciful towards the vulnerable but unique Other.

A Question of Power: **Elizabeth's Dual Journey**

Bessie Head's novel follows the life of Elizabeth, a colored orphan who is born in an asylum, who later discovers her parentage in a mission school. Her white mother has an affair with an African man, resulting in Elizabeth's birth. However, her mother is locked up as insane and eventually commits suicide. Elizabeth grows up in apartheid South Africa as a member of a "shame family." She eventually leaves her husband after discovering his sexual perversions. In search of a new life, she responds to a newspaper advertisement about teaching opportunities and decides to leave South Africa with her son, Shorty, and live in Botswana.

In the small village of Motabeng, Elizabeth's life becomes divided into two parts. During the day, she experiences the everyday life of the outer world. However, when night falls and she is alone in her bedroom, she is haunted by nightmares from her inner world. In these nightmares, she encounters a soul personality named "Sello the Monk," who initially appears as an African man dressed in a white robe with highly spiritual characteristics. As time goes on, Sello transforms into a torturer and becomes "Sello of the Brown Suit." He is accompanied by another soul personality named Medusa, who is described as a wild-eyed woman. Together, they torment Elizabeth for her perceived shortcomings and feelings of inferiority. These nightmares are intertwined with Elizabeth's memories of her past life in South Africa.

Elizabeth's mental health deteriorates over time. She meets Eugene man, a white South African who takes her to an asylum and cares for her son while she

receives treatment. After being discharged from the hospital, Elizabeth gives up her teaching career. Eugene introduces Elizabeth to the "garden group," which provides temporary comfort for her. The first part of the novel ends with the symbolic death of Sello and offers some respite for Elizabeth's troubled mind. In the second part, in her real life, Elizabeth sees Tom (a carefree American man), Kenosi (the silent Botswana), Small Boy (a Botswana boy), Camilla (the Danish woman), and the other members of garden group. In her dream world, she comes across Dan Molemo the "millionaire nationalist" who is a friend of Sello. In her bedroom, Dan (another soul personality), his "seventy-one-nice-time girls" (Head, 1974, p. 164), and Medusa torture her incessantly through sexual and racial images: "we don't want you here" (Head, 1974, p. 37), "you are inferior" (Head, 1974, p. 47). Though Elizabeth is hospitalized once more in an insane asylum, at last, she decides to build a garden. In this way, she not only helps the poor economy of Motabeng, but also (re / de)constructs her shattered identity in *direct contact with common people*. In the end, she partly gains her mental stability and feels belonging to her land: "As she fell asleep, she placed one soft hand over her land. It was a gesture of belonging" (Head, 1974, p. 206).

Being or Becoming: Moving from Trauma to Traumatic Astonishment

Head's portrayal of Elizabeth in *A Question of Power* aligns with a Lévinasian perspective by emphasizing the importance of recognizing the individuality and worthiness of others. The novel explores themes of relational intersubjectivity, empathy, mercy, love, and self-transcendence within the context of Elizabeth's character development and experiences. It also explores both constructive and destructive encounters with otherness while highlighting the transformative power of human relationships.

In *A Question of Power*, Bessie Head portrays Elizabeth's mental and physical journey as she seeks initiation, endures suffering, and experiences ethical disillusionment. As an *initiant*[2], Elizabeth must challenge the generalizations and stereotypes imposed on her and embark on a quest to find ordinariness and recognize the grandeur of the Other, who can uplift and heal her. This portrayal of Elizabeth's suffering and transformation as well as her experiences in her garden and in Botswana serve as spaces for distant yet constructive encounters with otherness although admittedly the novel also includes prevalent moments of destructive encounters. Elizabeth's suffering stems from her obsession with dualities such as heaven and hell, man and woman, good and bad, even God and man, making her entangled in the paralyzing and destructive hierarchies.

The "symptomatic reading"[3] of the novel can shed light onto how Elizabeth undergoes a painful journey to discard her Hegelian worldview and accept vulnerability and difference of the Other. The novel presents two different images of Elizabeth: Elizabeth the educated teacher from South Africa and Elizabeth the suffering gardener, who can finally partially belong in a community. These two *faces* represent different approaches towards those living in her neighborhood. In the novel, Elizabeth is constantly faced with the task of choosing, comparing, and studying others. This goes against Lévinas' idea of pre-conscious encountering of the

Other, where one is supposed to accept the Other without judgment or analysis. Elizabeth's struggles can be seen as a representation of a lonely and suppressed colored woman trying to break free from the strictly dualistic worldview she was born into.

Interestingly, one of the recurrent motifs in the novel is love, an important ethical concept, which is apparently absent from Elizabeth's incubuses where proper names are almost absent and people have been reduced to labels and titles, an indicator of Elizabeth's inability to see and understand the ordinary life and real people in her vicinity. While for Lévinas, love for the Other is an important ethical concept, it is a concept which is totally missing in Elizabeth's dreams, where personalities are extremely violent, heartless, and simultaneously stereotypical. Despite her apparently subdued personality, influenced by the apartheid State allegorically presented in her dream world, Elizabeth sees the Other (others) as mere flat and reduced objects of her early judgmental ego. Her search for transcendence through religious or supernatural beings prevents her from overcoming the trauma of her birth and race. Instead of experiencing "traumatic astonishment" [4] that could lead to the transcendence of the Other, hence ethical growth, she is burdened by memories that hinder ethical openness in her interactions with different people.

The origin of such behavior can be traced back to the conditions Elizabeth was born into, which provide the Self with certain "conceptualizations" or images which can stop the process of "sensibility and affection" towards certain non-Is.[5] She is forced to *learn* to predict and master the Other unconsciously even when she is in search of common man and love. Growing up in a society plagued by apartheid and nationalism, she is constantly reminded of her mixed-race heritage and the prejudices associated with it.

This hierarchical Self-Other relationship and the claim for total knowability of the Other is so prevalent in her life since childhood that the principal at her school tells her she will become insane like her mother because she is the child of a white woman and a native stable *boy*[6]: "The principal said: 'We have a full *docket* on you. Your mother was insane […] you'll get insane just like your mother. Your mother was a white woman. She had a child by a stable *boy*, who was a native" (Head, 1974, p. 16).

These experiences gradually shape Elizabeth's worldview and contribute to her lack of tolerance, not only towards the white world but also within the black community to which she belongs. Even, nonwhite movements, such as the Black Consciousness Movement, arising as a response to apartheid, promote a sense of fraternity among black individuals but often excludes those who do not fit their specific criteria:

> 'They said: Never think along lines of I and mine. It is death.' But they said it prettily, under the shade of Bodhi trees. It may have no impact on mankind in general. It was for an exclusive circle of followers. Black people learnt that lesson brutally because they were the living victims of the greed inspired by I and mine and to hell with you, dog. (Head, 1974, p. 134)

Thus, as long as Elizabeth is living in apartheid South Africa, she is doomed to negative subjectivity incapable of empathy and understanding the Other. This mindset hinders her ability to form genuine connections with others; nevertheless, throughout the novel, though slowly, Elizabeth undergoes backbreaking tortures to complete her quest towards Otherness.

To delve deeper into Elizabeth's transition, it is worthwhile to notice Lévinas' concept of "substitution", a term which highlights the "facticality" and "responsibility" present in direct and *unmediated* encounter with the *stranger*. "Substitution does not mean identification or Substitution is not the psychological event of pity or compassion, but a putting oneself in the place of the other by taking responsibility for their responsibilities" (Critchley & Bernasconi, 2002, p. 240). To substitute an Other for the Self means to humiliate and unsettle the "I" for myself with the "I" for the Other and to have the Other "in-one's-skin" (Lévinas, 1991, p. 14). Thus "the subject" plays a "protective role" towards the Other. Lévinas further uses the allegory of the family—although he strictly rejects the idea of allegorical treatment of the non-I. For him, the relational intersubjectivity is analogous to father-son dyad and, later on, ethical "maternity" (Lévinas, 1991, p. 78) in which parents feel responsible towards the child but do not expect him to compensate for their sacrifice in return. Elizabeth, despite mothering a child in reality, under the mounting pressure exerted by Medusa is accused of being a woman without a vagina and a womb while Medusa herself is presented as a woman with "seven thousand vaginas in one" (Head, 1974, p. 64). Although this lack can be interpreted based on psychology, feminism, or even body politics, in terms of Lévinasian ethics, however, it implies Elizabeth has not been a sympathetic character and is still an egoistic figure. This symbolic lack may mean lack of mercy not biological ability to mother someone because she is a biological mother. As Burggraeve observes, "there is a close parallel in Hebrew between rekhem (womb) and rakham (mercy) […] Rekhem denotes brotherly or motherly feeling, while rakham signifies steadfast love." "Hence," he concludes, "to have the Other in one's skin, is to be merciful to them" (Mkhwanazi, 2013, pp. 140-141).

When Elizabeth is suffering from negative subjectivity, her ideas about the non-Is are analogous to "the Hegelian dialectic of otherness," where "the other always falls victim in the encounter, where the mastering self has an appropriative movement towards the other" (Mischke, 2013, p. 330). This exclusionary mindset is evident in Elizabeth's internal dialogue, where she categorizes certain groups of people as surmountable blameworthy generalities; she refers to them as "soul personalities," "seventy-one-nice-time girls," "masses of poor people," and even mythical figures like Medusa (Head, 1974, p. 164). This condescending attitude flatters Elizabeth to separate herself from society:

> It was a Saturday morning when she arrived at the loony bin […] She was a big surprise. It was strictly for *poor and illiterate Botswana*, who were *treated like animals*. They seemed to be the only people who went insane in Botswana. (Head, 1974, p. 184)

By dehumanizing these individuals, Elizabeth separates herself from society and reinforces her own superiority.

Thus, Elizabeth's early thoughts resonates metaphysical existentialism, ontological hermeneutics, and phenomenological "egology" since in terms of man's relationship with others, she unconsciously adheres to the idea that "the subject" is "for-itself," while she should acknowledge that every individual, irrespective of their circumstances, deserves respect and recognition, and is worthy of protection and love. In this framework, face-to-face encounters without preconceived judgments or conceptualizations can be both individually fulfilling and communally beneficial. Likewise, as the story gradually unfolds, multifaceted modifications are surfaced: Elizabeth, her garden, and Botswana (located on the edge of the Kalahari Desert) turn out to be a zone for *distanced* contact of constructive otherness.

Since the onset of the novel, the reader is exposed to a text where rigid thought frames are introduced to emphasize the distance—not a Lévinasian exalting and transcending *distance*—between I and the non-I, whereby a version of alterity similar to Hegelian dialectic is introduced. This subjectivity is merely an internal projection used to justify what is unjust. The tortures Elizabeth has to undergo in her nightmares exhort her to believe in what is beyond everyday reality, what is induced through trauma, hierarchy, and exclusion defined by white / black institutions like Colonialism, Christianity, institutional religions, the Black Consciousness Movement, Black Fraternity, and even Nationalism. In terms of Lévinasian ethics, Elizabeth seems to be unable to redeem herself from the State and its rules she has been born into or go beyond traumatic unsettlement as the first step in encountering with an Other.

Ethics for Lévinas is struggle, a kind of moving forward or transcendence which does not take place in a vacuum or generalization but in direct encounters with other people. It is both against self-sufficiency and generalization of the individuals. As Zunshine (2010) rightly mentions: "Hegemonic 'universals' [...] are not, ultimately, claims of universal commonality. Rather, they are claims of group difference made to appear as universals" (p. 39). Generalization also implies a process of reductive codification and can imprison the person in a timeless present and here. To proceed in her quest, Elizabeth should return to the world of proper names and real people and get herself rid of abstractions. Unlike those who people her dream world, women like Kenosi and Camilla whom she is acquainted with are all active and unique breadwinners. They are human beings with all their complexities and incomprehensibilities. Where they are is a realm of "future fecundity" and productiveness (Bergo, 2015, p. 11). They are neither *mother earths*, nor *yellow women*, nor raped *mother countries*.[7] They are human beings capable of mistakes and goodness.

Elizabeth's main problem on her way to meet ethical grandeur is her failure to acknowledge "the unbridgeable distance between myself and the other," and the "he-ness" or "Illeity" (Bergo, 2015, p. 15) of "the poor," "the Ku Klux Klan," and "the nice-time girls" (Head, 1974, p. 205). Unless she is willing to have a direct encounter with the Other who gives the Self an opportunity to sympathize with the

non-I without identifying with him, she resorts to generalizations about him and acts as a self-proclaimed spokesperson of the one about whom she has no knowledge. Generalizations, rules, and stereotypes are more likely to shatter in direct and everyday encounters while transcendence and grandeur of each individual is more possible to be guaranteed.

The intended Lévinasian "transcendence" follows a five-step process starting with "the onset of the other [and] 'me''s openness 'to goodness,' the self's 'engage[ment in] the first act of dialogue,' creation of 'discourse,' 'unfolding of discourse [,] ethical investiture and self-accounting,' and finally 'conversation and teaching'"(Bergo, 2015, p. 12). The question raised here is whether Elizabeth reaches this transcendence. Head's heroine should go through these steps, commencing with her exile from the strictly segregated "State" of South Africa and her examination of what has been agonizing her for so long. She should not believe in allegorical treatment of the Other, but accept everyday existences. As "soul personalities" (Head, 1974, p. 9) do not stand for their real counterparts, the traumatic encounter with them is not fruitful and does not lead Elizabeth to recuperation. For Lévinas, "transcendence is the intersubjective quality of sensibility" (Bergo, 2015, p. 20). Elizabeth should *learn* that believing in the "immediacy" and "existence" of all the human beings can liberate the oppressed. She should respect anthropology more than ontology: "The everyday facticity of face-to-face encounter destabilizes transcendental versus pragmatic distinctions. Transcendental is anthropological, a human affair or nothing" (Bergo, 2015, p. 12). Thus, upon acknowledging ordinariness and sublunary transcendence, she has to *learn* that it is not possible to claim transcendence as a monopoly of power, the way it is absorbed and appropriated by the rhetoric of political institutions; otherwise it will be another *repressive apparatus*. So on the manner of Lévinasian ethics what she should appreciate is immediacy not conceptualization.

In *A Question of Power*, Elizabeth's main concerns is initially to be a god or a "prophet of mankind" to judge between white and black, heaven and hell, man and woman, and even mind and womb. In her dreams, despite all her tortures, it is "the other [that] always falls victim in the encounter, where the mastering self has an appropriative movement towards the other" (Mischke, 2013, p. 330). The "soul personalities" can be viewed as the lingering effects of segregation and apartheid that have deeply traumatized her. In her everyday life, however, the real male counterparts she encounters are distinct from her dream visions. For instance, Elizabeth learns from a doctor that Sello, one of the male personalities "had eight children. In case she did not believe him, he brought them all to the hospital one Saturday morning and introduced them to her […] He was so proud of children" (Head, 1974, p. 185). As the novel proceeds, Elizabeth is drawn to concrete encounters with other fellow beings in Motabeng. If in her dream world and, later on, in the asylum, she has to suffer from traumas with their roots in pre-written dockets and fates, in this new community, she starts to see inchoate signs of life and goodness among ordinary people of different races and origins. As Bergo further theorizes,

"Transcendence is, above all, relational: it is a human affair […] An event that can be characterized as a force that introduces a decisive break into the historical *status quo* and redirects it in function of its own magnitude." While "history of the State" tries to generalize and overlook "particulars' alternative history," personal encounters are able to "inflect" it and leave their momentary "traces." "But this is not history found in the textbooks. It is more like a history of isolated acts or human ideals (justice, equity, critique, self-sacrifice)." (Bergo, 2015, p. 12)

Elizabeth's journey towards ethical transcendence encapsulates the paradoxical nature of humility and recovery. Lévinas argues that humiliation, borne from the recognition of one's inadequacy in the face of the Other's uniqueness, is a catalyst for genuine ethical growth. Elizabeth's gradual acknowledgment of her limitations fosters a process of recovery from her solipsistic tendencies, leading to a heightened sensitivity to the experiences and needs of others. This journey mirrors Lévinas' assertion that "only beings capable of war can rise to peace" (Lévinas, 1969, p. 222) underscoring the transformative potential of embracing vulnerability and recognizing the profound interdependence of human existence.

As performance, rather than pure reason or utilitarian philosophy, is what ultimately captures the essence of the State's history, Elizabeth finally realizes that she cannot find fulfillment through teaching and instead turns to gardening as a means of seeking transcendence in everyday life. Elizabeth painfully, yet gradually, comes to learn that what momentarily wins over pure reason and the utilitarian philosophy behind the State's history is performance. Ergo, she cannot recuperate through teaching and should embark on gardening instead. Lévinasian transcendence in everyday life is what Elizabeth is looking for; she is aware of insufficiency of "solipsistic" existence. Thus, physical encounters should not be focused on control and mastery, as exemplified by institutionalized education,[8] but rather on a more distant coexistence that allows for differences and progress. Accordingly, her struggle for recognition in Hegelian philosophy can gradually be replaced by a struggle for transcendence through appreciating differences and embracing particularity, a kind of distanced coexistence that can pave the way for more strife and ethical encounter of a subject with another subject not with an object. The struggle for transcendence and maturity through appreciating differences and particularity is presented in the form of the garden group which is multicultural and suffused with an attitude of acceptance and inclusion. The gardening venture is egalitarian and celebrates the humble and the ordinary:

> [T]he Eugene man totally blurred the dividing line between the elite who had the means for education and the illiterate who had none. Education was for all. The gardening project counteracts the racial elitism of the two most exploitative figures in the book, Dan and Medusa. (Young, 2010, p. 236)

Lévinas' rejection of conceptualization and his emphasis on the immediacy of ethical encounters find resonance in Elizabeth's evolving interactions. The novel positions the garden as an arena for lived experience, where the tactile, sensory aspects of encounters override abstract intellectual constructs. Elizabeth's

engagement in laborious activities within the garden dismantles the artificial barriers that reductive conceptualizations impose. Her immersion in the immediacy of nurturing life echoes Lévinas' call to embrace the "wisdom of love" rather than the distancing effects of abstract knowledge. In doing so, she embraces a form of transcendence grounded in the here-and-now.

In addition, the novel dexterously depicts a movement from hatred towards brotherhood (fraternity) and *Illeity* (the quality of being an individual). This movement is accompanied by Elizabeth's continual evaluation turning into unsettling disillusionment and astonishment. Analogous to Lévinasian transcendence, Elizabeth realizes that love and justice can only be achieved through direct encounters with fellow human beings rather than abstract concepts like an elusive and abstract Reason.[9] Elizabeth shifts roles from a teacher to a learner as in ethical intersubjectivity the focus is on learning and the *wisdom of love*. She should acknowledge her limitations in evaluating and judging others, and embrace a sense of humility that goes beyond her own ethics, humanity, and selfhood. This perspective suggests that Elizabeth, as a teacher, should also embody the qualities of a gardener. The idea here is that she should move away from a tendency to unify and generalize traumatic experiences. Instead, she should embrace a mindset of "traumatic astonishment" that recognizes the unknowable and unique nature of each individual. This shift aligns with her spiritual as well as physical journey from focusing on superficial aspects of people to engaging with concrete and everyday reality, and from school / South Africa to garden / Botswana. Obviously, the movement from science towards wisdom concurs with Elizabeth's departure from "soul personalities" (Head, 1974, p. 9) and "surface realities" (Head, 1974, p. 64) and her moving towards concrete and quotidian reality. This transformation is best embodied in the novel commencing with themes of death and abyss, symbolizing the challenges and limitations of human existence and culminating in transcendence as Elizabeth reads Shorty's poem about flying in the sky. This moment signifies a move towards wisdom and a departure from scientific understanding alone:

> *The man / Can fly about the sky, Sky butterflies can fly, / Bees can make honey, / And what else can fly? / Sky birds, sky aeroplanes, sky helicopters, / A fairy man and a fairy boy / Can fly about the sky.* (Head, 1974, p. 205)

The South Africa Elizabeth vs. The South Africa-Botswana Elizabeth: Asymmetry and Embracing Traumatic Astonishment

Elizabeth's sojourn to Botswana becomes the crucible of her transformative journey, offering a parallel narrative of ethical transcendence guided by the philosophies of Emmanuel Lévinas. As she steps onto foreign soil, the novel metamorphoses into an intricate exploration of human encounters that mirror Lévinas' concept of transcendence. Botswana's landscape, its people, and their relationships serve as the canvas upon which Elizabeth's metamorphosis unfolds. The dynamics of Botswana's society, replete with third-party presences, form the foundation upon which Lévinas' philosophy is actualized. In this process, the profound implications of face-to-face encounters become manifest, underscoring the

potential of genuine human connections in dissolving preconceptions, dismantling stereotypes, and nurturing authentic empathy.

Lévinas' emphasis on "traumatic astonishment" finds expression in Elizabeth's journey of self-discovery. The encounter with the Other often elicits feelings of vulnerability and humility, challenging the Self's preconceived notions and certainties. Elizabeth's confrontations with "soul personalities" (Head, 1974, p. 9) and her eventual immersion in the garden group mirror this transformative process. Trauma, rather than obstructing ethical growth, becomes a catalyst for reevaluation and connection. Through the "face of the other," Elizabeth confronts her own limitations, paving the way for a more inclusive and empathetic perspective.

While the concept of "infinite responsibility" (Lévinas, 1969, p. 17) is proposed in relation to the Other and acknowledging the domination of the Other over oneself, the presence of third parties and neighbors in society helps maintain a balance between individuals. These third parties do not mediate relationships but serve as reminders that everyone is an ordinary person deserving respect and sympathy. As long as Elizabeth has entangled herself in the binaries exerted so rigorously in the apartheid era, she cannot release herself from presuppositions and categorizations. The result of this balance and reminder is love and justice (itself a byproduct of love). When responsibility and love are emphasized and promoted in society, ethical relationships are ensured. Living in Botswana provides Elizabeth to be aware of third parties (physical, geographical, and racial) and hence, of her *unique* ordinariness:

> It was quite the opposite in Africa. There was no direct push against those rigid, false social systems of class and caste. [In Motabeng,] she had fallen from the very beginning into the warm embrace of the *brotherhood of man*, because when a people wanted to be *ordinary* it was just another way of saying man *loved* man. (Head, 1974, p. 206)

Notably, Elizabeth's lack of a distinct face in her interactions with Sello shows that she has not yet achieved this level of understanding. Thus, Head continues to say Elizabeth "seemed to have no *distinct face* of her *own*, her face was always turned towards Sello, whom she had adored" (1974, p. 25). According to Lévinas, the face of the Other is expressive and powerful, evoking emotions and interrupting our everyday language. The faceless Elizabeth is, accordingly, incapable of freeing herself from baseless beliefs, in her encounter with others, nor can she cause the other Selves to respect her uniqueness and "*facticity*," nor is she able to genuinely love and respect the non-I. "The face of the other is firstly expressiveness. It could be compared to a force. We must, of course, use everyday language to translate these affective interruptions" (Bergo, 2015, p. 4). It is through this encounter with the Other's face that she can develop a sense of empathy and respect for people's "*facticity*," embodied in the frequency of proper names in the novel.

Bessie Head may have driven Elizabeth into exile in order to teach her that these new connections can teach her to love and be loved without prejudice or

evaluation. For Lévinas, also, ethics must have a "precognitive core" based on "emotion" and "sentience" than cognition to contribute to "sensibility and affectivity" (Bergo, 2015, p. 4). As soon as Elizabeth learns to love and respect, and emotionally respond to the Other's face, she can develop sensitivity and affectivity towards them. If Elizabeth can recognize herself as a human being and be recognized by others, not only will she be awed by others, she can elicit a sense of awe in the Other. This awe arises when Elizabeth realizes that the expression resulting from physical encounter in real contexts is greater than she can comprehend. As Lévinas suggests,

> [T]he Subject may understand, and even treat itself as being equal to all others. As one among equals, the Subject has the right and privilege to be at the receiving end of responsibility or love. The Subject becomes one of the many, who are neighbours to the Other. (Mkhwanazi, 2013, p. 143)

By recognizing her neighbors, colleagues and friends as Others, she finally fosters a sense of common love, which gradually assists her to move from Kantian autonomy to Lévinasian heteronomy, realizing that the Other is not her enemy or a limit to her freedom, nor are they the nightmarish intruders putting her mental and physical well-being at stake: "[T]he other" is not "my potential enemy, or [...] a limit to my freedom" (Tangyin, 2008, p. 163).

In *A Question of Power*, Elizabeth's experience of othering is a result of her hybrid identity, which makes it difficult for her to be classified as either a subject or an object. This othering is intensified by exclusion, racism, exile, and homelessness. However, Elizabeth's elusive and interracial origin also allows her to disrupt the white / black binary and impose humiliation on the oppressor. "Dismissing the father," according to Lewis (1996), "Head forges a determined orientation toward a mother figure silenced by master narratives of apartheid, psychiatrics reports, and the prejudice of her family" (p. 73). Elizabeth's dismissal of the father figure represents a rejection of the State or institutional authority. Instead, she turns towards a silenced mother figure who represents humanity as a whole. This can be seen as a metaphorical shift from reason to emotion, from the realm of the State to the realm of human connection. In this interpretation, living "for" others in a state of sisterhood and brotherhood replaces living "with" others in the State or institutional family. The idea is that an ethical community can be formed where individuals take on a mother-like role for each other, nurturing and caring for one another. This third party acts as an unmediated but responsible Other who can help put an end to the asymmetrical power dynamics.

Transcending Conceptualization: A Garden in Nowhere

The Hegelian dialectic of master and slave, where the Other becomes a mere object of domination, is shattered within the framework of Lévinasian ethics. Elizabeth's journey from South Africa to Botswana represents a symbolic departure from the Hegelian paradigm. Her immersion in the Botswanan community, characterized by mutual support and acceptance, signifies a dismantling of oppressive binaries. The garden group, which transcends racial and social divisions,

serves as a tangible enactment of Lévinas' vision of ethical encounters that surpass the confines of dialectical struggle. Elizabeth's newfound sense of belonging stems from her willingness to engage with others beyond the constraints of mastery and appropriation.

Lévinas' emphasis on the face-to-face encounter as the locus of ethical transformation finds resonance in Elizabeth's evolving relationships in Botswana. The concept of the "face" takes on a metaphorical significance, symbolizing not only the physical countenance but also the depth of individuality inherent in every person. Elizabeth's recognition of the "face" of the Other, unburdened by preconceived notions, becomes a pivotal juncture in her journey towards ethical transcendence. Her interactions with Sello, the doctor, and various members of the gardening group, illustrate the progression from the initial fascination with metaphysical profundity to the profound wisdom gleaned from ordinary human interactions. Through her engagement with the gardening group, Elizabeth navigates an egalitarian space that defies the hierarchical structures she has known. The collective endeavors, the nurturing of the garden, and the shared responsibilities mirror Lévinas' concept of ethical transcendence as an outcome of shared labor, mutual recognition, and a profound sense of responsibility for the well-being of the Other.

Lévinas' "fecundity" as a result of ethical encounters resonates with the portrayal of the garden as a site of growth and interconnectedness. Elizabeth's participation in the garden group exemplifies how ethical engagement yields productive and transformative outcomes. Her interactions with others become a catalyst for personal and communal growth, echoing Lévinas' assertion that transcendence occurs through mutual openness and shared responsibility. The garden's representation as an egalitarian space exemplifies the ideal Lévinasian ethical community. Lévinas' assertion that ethics is intrinsically tied to community-building resonates throughout the novel. The garden group becomes a microcosm of Lévinasian ethical ideals—a space where individuals collaborate, support each other, and recognize their shared humanity. This community-building is not confined to geographical or social boundaries; rather, it embodies the interconnectedness of all humanity.

The gardening project in the book is described as multicultural and inclusive, celebrating humility and ordinariness. It is seen as a counteraction to racial elitism represented by exploitative figures like Dan and Medusa. The garden and its impossible location (on the edge of the desert) can be an example of the encounter between Self, Other, and Other's Other. This can make the garden into a locus of progressive fertility and dynamism and of becoming than being. It can also be the site where ordinariness, fraternity and *performance* can lead to sensibility and "affectivity," a place where action, labor and emotion can win over reason, pure thought, and self-interest. As Bergo explains,

> Lévinas […] reframes labor, less as mastery and humanization of nature, and more as the creation of a store of goods with which an other can be welcomed. Thanks to his joy in living and his creation of a home, the

human being is able to give and to receive the other into his space. (Bergo, 2015, p. 9).

Accordingly, it seems that the main objective for this community is to cooperate and work for each other because even though hospitalized, Elizabeth was still a member of the group and it was the responsibility of other Others to compensate for her absence.

Conclusion

The exploration of philosophical perspectives, particularly in the comparative analysis of Kantian, Hegelian, and Lévinasian frameworks, reveals fundamental differences in their approaches to subjectivity, the Other, and ethical responsibility. While Kantian philosophy tends to objectify the Other in the pursuit of abstract knowledge, Hegelian dialectics internalize the Other through historical synthesis. Lévinas, in stark contrast, introduces the concept of "traumatic astonishment," emphasizing the transformative and ethical nature of direct encounters with the Other. His philosophy rejects metaphysical divisions and calls for an acknowledgment of responsibility toward the incomprehensible and unique Other.

Transitioning to the realm of literature, Bessie Head's novel, *A Question of Power*, provides a narrative illustration of these philosophical concepts through the character of Elizabeth. Her dual journey, both in the external world of Motabeng / Botswana and in the internal world of her nightmares, exemplifies the complexities of identity, trauma, and the quest for belonging. Elizabeth's struggle with her own demons, represented by soul personalities like Sello and Medusa, mirrors the broader philosophical discourse on the Self and the Other. As Elizabeth grapples with her mental health, the novel becomes a poignant exploration of the impact of societal constructs, apartheid, and personal trauma on an individual's psyche. Her eventual decision to build a garden in Motabeng becomes a symbolic act of (re / de)constructing her shattered identity, embracing the ordinary and finding belonging in her immediate community.

Thus, the application of the theories (ideas) of Kant, Hegel, and Lévinas to the narrative of *A Question of Power* demonstrates profound intersections between theory and lived experience. The novel becomes a canvas where the abstract notions of hierarchical intersubjective philosophy manifest in the intricate tapestry of human emotions, societal structures, and the pursuit of identity. Elizabeth's journey becomes a testament to the transformative power of encountering the Other, resonating with Lévinas' call for an ethical embrace of otherness through humility and responsibility.

In the multifaceted journey of Elizabeth, the narrative unfolds as a testament to Lévinasian ethics and the transformative power of genuine encounters with the Other. The ethical struggle, according to Lévinas, is not an abstract ideal but a lived experience that transcends self-sufficiency and resists the generalization of individuals. Elizabeth's initial struggle lies in her failure to recognize the unbridgeable distance between herself and the Other, leading to a reliance on

generalizations and stereotypes. Lévinasian transcendence, as a relational and human affair, demands a direct encounter with the Other to break historical status quos and redirect them toward ethical magnitudes.

Elizabeth's journey through Lévinasian transcendence commences with openness to goodness and is engaged in the first act of dialogue. Her exile from the segregated State of South Africa prompts an examination of her agonizing past, challenging allegorical treatments of the Other and emphasizing the importance of everyday existence. The novel captures Elizabeth's evolving understanding as she navigates through trauma, the nightmare, and the societal construct. The residues of segregation and apartheid in her dreams symbolize the trauma, while her interactions in Motabeng reveal signs of life and goodness among ordinary people. The garden, in its egalitarian and inclusive nature, becomes a symbol of Lévinasian transcendence in everyday life, embracing differences and particularity. Besides, Elizabeth's shift from a teacher to a learner mirrors Lévinasian intersubjectivity, emphasizing learning and the wisdom of love. The rejection of conceptualization and the emphasis on immediate, tactile encounters find resonance in her engagement with the garden, dismantling artificial barriers imposed by abstract constructs. Her journey from hatred towards brotherhood and Illeity reflects Lévinas'call to embrace the wisdom of love and justice through direct encounters. Elizabeth's sojourn to Botswana becomes a crucible for her transformative journey, echoing Lévinasian philosophy through intricate explorations of human encounters. Lévinas' "traumatic astonishment" finds expression in Elizabeth's self-discovery, where encounters with the Other elicit vulnerability and humility. Her confrontations with "soul personalities" and her immersion in the garden group reflect this transformative process. Trauma, far from obstructing ethical growth, becomes a catalyst for reevaluation and connection. Through the "face of the other," Elizabeth confronts her limitations, fostering a more inclusive and empathetic perspective. Thus, the presence of third parties in Botswana maintains a balance between individuals, serving as reminders that everyone deserves respect and sympathy. Elizabeth's entanglement in apartheid-era binaries dissolves as she becomes aware of third parties—physical, geographical, and racial.

The garden project represents a dismantling of oppressive binaries, reflecting Lévinas' assertion that ethics is tied to community-building. The garden group becomes a microcosm of Lévinasian ethical ideals—a space where individuals collaborate, supporting each other in their shared humanity. This community-building embodies the interconnectedness of all humanity, transcending geographical and social boundaries.

In conclusion, *A Question of Power* intricately weaves Lévinasian philosophical concepts into Elizabeth's narrative, offering a profound exploration of identity, trauma, and the transformative power of ethical encounters. The novel becomes a powerful canvas where philosophy and literature converge, creating a rich tapestry of lived experiences that resonate with the call for ethical responsibility and the embrace of otherness. The garden emerges as a symbol of hope, where the seeds of genuine connection are sown and nurtured in the fertile soil of shared humanity.

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Notes

[1] The idea of "metaphysical divisions" was introduced by Emanuel Kant. In his work *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1781, Kant argued that there are fundamental divisions or categories that structure our understanding of reality. These divisions include space and time, as well as concepts such as substance, and possibility.

[2] The term "initiant" in a quest refers to the person who is initiating or beginning the quest. This term was first used by Joseph Campbell (2012) in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In this book, Campbell explores the concept of the hero's journey and the various stages that a hero goes through in their quest. The initiant is the hero who sets out on their journey and faces various challenges and trials along the way.

[3] The term was first used by French philosopher and literary critic Roland Barthes in his book *S/Z*, published in 1970. In this book, Barthes (1990) analyzes a short story by Honoré de Balzac using a symptomatic reading approach, revealing the underlying cultural and psychological implications of the text. This method has since been influential in literary theory and cultural studies.

[4] The term was discussed in *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. It refers to the moment when one is confronted with the radical alterity and infinite responsibility that comes with encountering another person.

[5] This is in line with Kantian "schematism." In his philosophy, schematism is the process by which categories are applied to sensory intuition to form meaningful representations.

[6] Colonizers' tendency to call male adult Africans is itself a blatant example of such hierarchical and condescending attitude.

[7] The labels nationalists and colonizers usually give women robbing them of their actual and factual identities and selves. The concept of "yellow woman" is often associated with the writings of Leslie Marmon Silko (1996), a Native American writer of Laguna Pueblo and Mexican-American heritage. In her book *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today*, Silko explores the complexities of identity and cultural heritage, using the figure of "yellow woman" as a symbol for blending of Native American and Euro-American cultures.

[8] Althusser's idea about ISAs—interestingly school is among these ideological State apparatus—and RSAs can be relevant.

[9] Levinasian ethics draws parallel between Levinas and Buber's ideas on encounter. Both philosophers emphasize the importance of direct face-to-face encounters in transcending the Self. Buber's concept of I-Thou (Man and Man) is mentioned as a replacement for I-It relationships, highlighting the significance of openness to the otherness of others. This openness allows for recognition of God's address or summons coming through others: "Betweenness, according to Buber, is the site of openness to the otherness of the other and to the signs of God's address or summons coming through the other" (Ludwig, 2009, p. 228).

Author's Biography

Sayyede Maryam Hosseini received her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in English Language and Literature from Kurdistan University, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, and the University of Isfahan, respectively. She has been a lecturer on Literary Criticism, Short Stories and English Novels at the University of Isfahan and Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz. She has had essays on ethical studies, postcolonial studies, and African Literature.

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Object Relations Theory in Morrison's *God Help the Child:* A Psychoanalytic Reading

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Abstract

The aim of this paper, in Morrison's fictional novel, *God Help the Child* (2015), is to examine the detrimental impact of the hostile and violent mistreatment of a light-skinned mother who restrains from nurturing her Black daughter. Nancy Chodorow's (1978) Object Relations Theory helps us determine how patterns of gendered-parenting and early-childhood development contribute to the reproduction of traditional sex roles. Her theory includes three basic "affects", namely attachment, frustration, and rejection, in which the female identity is chiefly based on the inextricable attachment to the mother, and the status of women in culture is defined by the tie between the mother and daughter. These "affects" are universal emotions that are vital for infantile identity formation. Drawing upon her Psychoanalytic theory, the overarching argument of this paper is that the mother is the initial object for the infant to gratify its desires; however, from Freud's (1926) standpoint, her breast, as the source of nurturance, is the first object. For our purposes, traditional theory of Freudian Oedipus Complex is not the primary concern of this paper and Chodorow's (1978) contemporary Object Relations Theory is applied, for Psychoanalytic Feminism contributes to examining the ambivalent nature of motherhood. Our findings indicate that Chodorow elucidates the essence of motherhood in terms of the social constructions in lieu of biological ones. Given both Chodorow's and Freud's (1926) viewpoints, the inextricable maternal bond between Sweetness and Bride, the mother and daughter of the novel, is traumatically distorted once the mother deprives her infant of the maternal milk.

Keywords: object relations, attachment, frustration, rejection, *God Help the Child*

Introduction

Toni Morrison is one of the most eminent Nobel-Prize-Winning Black female authors who had received many awards for her novels, including Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved* (1987) and Nobel Prize for literature. The concept of mothering is a core issue for the Feminist theory, and motherhood has a persistent presence in Morrison's masterpieces. Ghasemi (2010) opines that Morrison's preoccupation with the idea of "motherhood" represents the significance of "maternity" as a pivotal element of a female's existence (p. 243). Motherhood plays a pivotal role in a child's life. It can construct or shatter a child's future if it is of constructive or destructive relations with the children, respectively. Morrison, in her own fiction, prioritizes motherhood and makes it an influential idea in order to give weight to the identity of the Black mothers that furnish the children with sensation and realization of their independent personality. Motherhood is an intricate state in which the Black mothers oscillate between blending feelings of love and hatred towards their children under the dominance of the patriarchy.

In Toni Morrison's fiction, *God Help the Child* (2015), motherhood is a sacred passion, which is unique in nature. Not only does a mother nurture her child but also she gives the child the confidence that stays with it throughout its life. One can provide the child with food and shelter; however, the agony and true sentiments of the child can properly be comprehended by the mother. The Black mother sacrifices herself for the welfare and prosperity of the child and hopes to see the child successful and cheerful throughout its life. Morrison's major fiction, namely *God Help the Child* (2015), is a proof to the sacrifices that the Black mothers make for the prosperity of their children, since the Black mothers had to resort to the hostile mistreatment of their children to apparently save them from the violent White world. The vicissitudes in a child's life are dependent on the nature of the relation that a child has with its bearer. Besides, the stream of motherhood is dependent, to a great extent, on the environment in which a mother exists. Mothers, who live in stable and satisfactory conditions, nurture their children peacefully and wholeheartedly and entertain the basic necessities of their lives. Children are psychologically blessed if they possess nurturing mothers in their lives. Furthermore, their attitude towards life is constructive and meaningful, whereas the Black mothers who belong to slum regions, which are abundant of poverty, ignorance, and slavery, have various perspectives to deal with life. In order to cope with such intricate circumstances, the Black mothers empower their children on hard grounds in order to survive in the racist world, especially if they possess the Black skin. In the African-American context, Black motherhood differs from White motherhood due to the racial problems that the Black women experience. Motherhood has been subjected by patriarchy and the task of mothering is basically procreating new children that will promote patriarchy. Thus, a colored mother should do extra task as compared to the task of the White mother who is responsible for protecting and nurturing her child in order to enhance its identity.

Reinforcing Chodorow's (1978) influential work, namely *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Collins (1999), in "Shifting the Center", remarks, "the work of Chodorow . . . has been highly influential in framing the predominant themes in feminist discourse" (p. 387). As a psychoanalyst, Chodorow (1978) states, "Women's mothering is a central and defining feature of the social organization of gender and is implicated in the construction and reproduction of male dominance itself" (p. 9). Her object relations theory gives a psychoanalytical approach towards an individual's psyche. Chodorow (1978) opines, "psychic structure develops through experiences of anxiety and frustration" (p. 44). Menaces to the self-development create some major anxiety in the psyche and the image of fear that would be repressed in "unconscious" mind. Chodorow (1978) proceeds, "an infant who experiences this anxiety develops instead a 'false self' based on reactions to intrusion" (p. 60). She emphasizes that whatever the infant experiences at its initial stage can construct or shatter its whole personality. If an infant encounters ignorance and abusive behavior, it will affect its adulthood. Her theory has originated from Freudian Oedipus Complex theory that helps us figure out how patterns of gendered-parenting and early-childhood development contribute to the reproduction of traditional sex roles. She elucidates the ideology of motherhood in the light of the social constructions in lieu of the biological ones.

God Help the Child (2015) emphasizes the role of colorism in the form of the mental and physical abuse which the parents inflict on their own children. As Bride, formerly known as Lula Ann Bridewell, becomes successful in her cosmetics business, her private life does not bring her emotional fulfillment. Bride's light-skinned parents are prejudiced against her "Sudanese Black" (p. 2) skin. Bride's father, Louis, even avoids staring at his infant due to his colorist viewpoint and abandons his wife, Sweetness, for cheating on him and leaves her to raise the child on her own. Sweetness is not only emotionally detached from her daughter, but also ashamed of Bride's Black skin. After leaving home, Bride falls in love with Booker, yet their relationship is shattered when he abruptly abandons her, writing in a note that she was not the woman he wanted. She ultimately finds Booker in the small town of Whiskey, CA, after a car crash during which she develops a hospitable relationship with a couple, Steve and Evelyn. Her reunion with Booker leads to forgiveness and her confession that she is pregnant.

Drawing upon Chodorow's (1978) Psychoanalytic Object Relations theory, the overarching argument of this paper is that the mother is the initial object for the infant to gratify its desires; however, from Freud's (1926) viewpoint, her breast, as the source of nurturance, is the first object to satisfy its desires. The objective of this paper is to scrutinize the deleterious impact of the hostile and vicious mistreatment of a light-skinned mother who refrains from nurturing her Black daughter as an ordinary figure. We try to respond to two fundamental questions, namely how can maternal bond between Sweetness and Bride be interpreted through Chodorow's (1978) concept of "object relations theory"? and second; in what manner, can the heterosexual bond between Bride, Booker, and Brooklyn be viewed as either

functional or dysfunctional through the notion of "heterosexual orientation" in *God Help the Child* (2015)?

Literature Review

There are two groups of critics that study the essence of motherhood either in terms of biological or social constructions in Morrison's selected novel, namely *God Help the Child* (2015). The first group pivots on the biological aspect of mothering. Critics, such as Balint and Balint (1965), and Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1994) are among those who belong to the first group. However, the second group pivots on the social aspect of mothering. Critics, such as Adrienne Rich (1976), Sara Ruddick (1989), and Barbara Katz Rothman (1994) fit in the second group.

From the psychoanalytic perspective, it is natural for women to fulfil the task of mothering due to the maternal instincts. In "Contribution to the Symposium on the Theory of the Parent-Infant Relationship", Balint and Balint (1965), belonging to the first group of the critics, for example, speak of a "need" or "drive" to mother succeeding the pregnancy, a "biological" and "instinctual" mother-infant mutuality, an "instinctive maternity" in which "what is libidinal satisfaction to one must be libidinal satisfying action to the other and the mother and child are equally satisfied in this condition" (as cited in Chodorow, 1965, p. 22). In better terms, the maternal bond provides satisfaction for both parties. Chodorow (1978) refers to Balint and Balint (1965) recommendation:

> the infant's lack of reality principle and its primary love toward its mother is reciprocated by the mother. . . . Just as the child does not recognize the separate identity of the mother, so the mother looks upon her child as a part of herself whose interests are identical with her own. (as cited in hodorow, 1965, p. 61)

Likewise, Glenn (1994), in *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*, contends that the ideology of mothering is viewed as "natural, universal, and unchanging" (p. 3). The ideology of motherhood is fundamentally a universal model which attributes the responsibility of mothering and nurturance specifically to the biological mother whose only task is the infant's prosperity and nurturance during the formative period. The racist mythology which cherishes biological motherhood traces back to the historical oppression of women. This concept speculates that women are naturally and instinctively equipped to be mothers, and once motherhood is bestowed on them, they are portrayed as caring creatures, whose identities blends with those of their children. The product of this identification of womanhood and motherhood is irrefutably gender oppression. Glenn (1994) further emphasizes the relationship between the idea of mothering and gender which she defines as the "socially constructed relationships and practices organized around perceived differences between the sexes" (p. 3). The creation of the ideology of motherhood which pinpoints self-sacrifice and submission of individuality is in harmony with the systematic oppression of women. The ideology of motherhood has been employed by the male-oriented social order to restrict women's active participation in the

government of society. Hence, by portraying motherhood as "natural, a patriarchal ideology of mothering locks women into biological reproduction and denies them identities and selfhood outside mothering" (Glenn, 1994, p. 9). Glenn (1994) remarks that ideology is an efficient device for "keeping people in their place, in part because it is so flexible" (p. 10).

In *Of Woman Born*, Rich (1976), belonging to the second group of critics, basically depicts women as the most oppressed party. Rich (1976) shares the idea of mutual bond between the child and the mother with Chodorow (1978). Rich (1976) remarks, "it's as if, in the mother's eyes, her smile, her stroking touch, the child first reads the message: You are there! And the mother, too, is discovering her own existence newly" (p. 36). Similar to Chodorow (1978), Rich (1976) believes, based on a false belief, the female's missions as nurturing children, and doing household chores are not regarded as significant tasks. Rich (1976) adds, "child and mother alike are depreciated, because only grown men and women in the paid labor force are supposed to be 'productive'" (p. 38). Rich (1976) postulates that motherhood in the current form has not equipped the Black mother with the effective requisites to perform her task. She states, "institutionalized motherhood demands of women maternal 'instinct' rather than intelligence, selflessness rather than self-realization, relation to others rather than the creation of self" (p. 42).

Naturally, in *Maternal Thinking*, Ruddick (1989) maintains that mothering involves "higher philosophical thought (as opposed to instinct)" (p. 4). This dimension of mothering assigns sophistication and humanity to the mission of nurturance and refutes the biological definitions of mothering, which, for the Black women, have been one of the avenues of suppression and dehumanization since the slavery era. All individuals, females, othermothers, or male caregivers can learn to become nurturers, since as Ruddick's (1989) notion of "maternal thinking" indicates, the interaction among reflection, judgment, and emotion leads to the performance of competent caregiving and nurturance (p. 5). Ruddick's (1989) definition of motherhood as a discipline which necessitates the philosophical thought, process of learning, and exchange of emotion. Ruddick (1989) highlights the constraints of biological motherhood. It is insufficient for a woman to physically bear a child to attain the goals of motherhood. The intricate experience of motherhood necessitates the process of maternal thinking, reflection, and emotional engagement.

Influenced by Ruddick's (1989) theory of "maternal thinking", Rothman (1994), in "Beyond Mothers and Fathers", opines that regarding mothering as "a way of thinking" and a gradual process of learning to nurture, "shifts our focus from who the mother is to what she is doing" (p. 55). One of the connotations of maternal thinking is that mothering is not gender-oriented. In better terms, an individual engaged "needs not to be a mother, needs not [to] be a woman" to be able to fulfill the efficient maternal care (p. 55).

The aforementioned critics, including both the first and the second group, have obviously portrayed the Black mothers as victimized or victimizer for the child either in terms of biological aspect of mothering, in line with the first group, or in terms of social aspect of mothering, in line with the second group; however, none of them have concentrated on the social aspect of mothering through Chodorow's object relations theory. In order to fill the existing gap, traditional theory of Freudian Oedipus Complex is not the primary concern of this paper and we will apply Chodorow's contemporary Object Relations Theory, for the combination of Psychoanalysis and Feminism are the effective contributions for examining both motherhood and womanhood. Our position, in this paper, is closer to the second group, who employed social dimension of mothering. At the same time, we limit our research to the relationship between the mother parent and her children, especially with the daughters. Toni Morrison, who has written *God Help the Child* (2015), is an African-American writer. Thus, this paper will primarily be applicable to the African-American culture.

Discussion

Object Relations Theory

In *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Nancy Chodorow (1978) provides a psychoanalytic theory of the female identity and the maternal bond derived from the Freudian Oedipus Complex, though she primarily depends on object relations theory, as a psychoanalytic touchstone, which rests upon the perspective that each individual's psychological life is created through personal relationships with others. Chodorow (1978) remarks that female identity is chiefly based on the inextricable attachment and closeness to the mother and the position of women in culture is defined by the tie between mother and daughter. The object relations theory is a psychoanalytic one, which emphasizes a social view of psychological development. The term was coined by Ronald Fairbairn (1952) in his book entitled *Psychoanalytical Studies of the Personality*. Its fundamental idea is that individuals are eager to maintain successful relationship with each other and failure to do so will cause serious problems in life later. As the infant does not possess any "ego" capacities, it depends on its mother. In this regard, the mother operates as an "external ego" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 62) for the infant. Fairbairn (1952) calls this early period as "infantile dependence" (as cited in Chodorow, 1952, p. 59), in which the infant prevents its separation from the mother. Sigmund Freud (1914) originally employed the term "object" to mean the ways in which an infant directs instinctual drives toward gratification (as cited in Chodorow, 1914, p. 45). Freud (1914) asserted that there were two sorts of drives, sexual and aggressive ones. Chodorow (1978) states:

> The interpretation of psychic structure that stresses the mental personality as object rather than subject is fundamental to the development of psychoanalytic ego psychology, the school that has come to dominate the American psychoanalytic tradition. Ego psychology begins with an acceptance of Freud's drive theory, the notion that behavior and

development are determined by inborn aggressive and libidinal drives seeking gratification. (as cited in Chodorow, 1914, p. 45)

Social Object Relations that are related to the libidinal level developments are essential. As a result, the infant's initial social and physical relationship with the world is through suckling its mother's breast, which is an oral stage. At birth, the infant depends on its mother and it also does not differentiate between itself and the objects around it. In better terms, the infant feels a sort of "oneness" with the whole world and particularly with the mother. In this regard, the mother functions as the child's "external ego" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 62). While Freud (1926) opines that "heterosexual orientation" and genital primacy are commonly normal in women's biological destiny, Chodorow (1978) highlights the importance of a girl's relation with her own mother throughout the Oedipal phase. In Chodorow's (1978) viewpoint, it is not the identification with the opposite sex parents that modifies the child's ego, "rather the ego in its internal object-relation situation changes . . . differently for boys and girls" (p. 114). Chodorow (1978), as cited in Glenn (1994), contends that the girls undergo identity formation "through continuous attachment and identification with the mother" (p. 4), whereas the boys identify themselves by a gradual detachment and enhancing an independent self-sense from the mother. Accordingly, daughters and sons are differently treated. The daughter who shares "a core female identity with her mother was encouraged to imitate her, while the son was expected to be separate and autonomous" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 151). Furthermore, Chodorow (1978) states, "the boy identifies with his father because he can then gain the benefits of being the one who gives punishment, of being masculine and superior" (p. 113). In Freud's (1914) account of the Oedipus Complex, women solely are subordinate to men, and as a result, lacking a penis is a sign of vulnerability and powerlessness. In his account of the "penis envy", Freud's (1914) overemphasis on the penis is sensible in the context of the social privilege enjoyed by men (as cited in Goulimari, 2015, p. 132). These object relation differences illuminate the difference between male and female personality formation better than the traditional one. Object Relations Theory include three basic "affects", namely attachment, frustration, and rejection, which can exist between the self-object, or mother, and the other-object. These "affects" are universal emotions, which are vital for the identity formation of an infant during its childhood.

Attachment, Frustration, and Rejection

Chodorow (1978) pivots on John Bowlby's (1969) "attachment" theory. According to Bowlby (1969), attachment relies on the maternal bond through the maintenance of a large portion of physical proximity and contact to her infant. Attachment enhances in association with a particular figure who has provided the strongest and most intensive bond with the infant. The primary affectional attachment object is virtually the mother, the child's primary caretaker, with whom the infant interacts in an intense and a strong way. Bowlby (1969) differentiates between "attachment" and "dependence". An infant is dependent on whomever is providing the fleeting care, whereas attachment grows in reaction to the quality of the interaction in which the primary physiological demands have not been met. Those mothers who are frequently available but are unresponsive or unsociable with

their children might become more "attached" to their fathers, who are constantly unavailable but strongly and intensively interact with their infants when they are available (Chodorow, 1978, pp. 71-72).

Influenced by Bowlby's (1969) "attachment" theory, Chodorow (1978) stresses that attachment refers to the desire of the "ego" to sustain in a tranquil and stable relationship with people or things which they identify with. Individuals of this category have trouble with attachments that are profoundly held with people, conditions, or environments that are working for them. Some individuals are motivated to change their self-image to become more acceptable and appreciated by others. Other individuals learn to become attached to a comfort site which they associate with independence and freedom. Freud's (1914) idea of "libidinal attachment", in this case, is not that of an infant to mother, but of sexual instincts to ego instincts which he calls an "anaclitic" type of object-relationship, which literally means "leaning-on" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 64).

Individuals of the "frustration" phase, as Chodorow (1978) states, feel that their comfort and desires are not sufficiently taken care of. "The self" is depicted as hungry and there are traits, such as being "uncomfortable" or "dissatisfied" of not being taken care of or being paid proper attention to. These feelings are the product of profoundly conditioned patterns during an individual's childhood. Some individuals of this group are "aggressive", because their parents have not properly guided them and involuntarily anticipate others to "defend" and "nurture" them (pp. 69-70).

In the "rejection" group, as Chodorow (1978) asserts, the self is considered weak and possibly rejected or victimized by others as inferiors and outsiders, whereas others are regarded as powerful and abusive. Individuals of this phase anticipate to be rejected anytime and, as a result, they secure themselves in various ways. They often conceal their own actual desires and vulnerabilities, utilizing abilities or resources to defend themselves against further rejection. Once the infant enters the reality principle, it distinguishes itself as separated from the mother. Chodorow (1978) remarks, "It is at this point that the rule of the reality sense starts in the emotional life of man" (p. 69). The infant apparently views this separation as the mother's rejection and arouses the feeling of vulnerability within it. Fairbairn (1952), as cited in Chodorow (1978), portrays this situation in this way, "the infant does not simply reject early bad objects but internalizes them in order to both hate and control them" (p. 69). They are repressed, since they seem unendurable and intolerable.

The Signs of "Attachment", "Frustration", and "Rejection" in Bride

Morrison's novel, namely *God Help the Child* (2015), begins with the guilt and regret of Bride's mother, Sweetness, who defends herself, "It's not my fault. So you can't blame me. I didn't do it and have no idea how it happened" (p. 2). Sweetness, who is a light-skinned woman, is blessed with an unwanted dark Black infant that frightens her. She states, "She [Bride] was so black, she scared me" (p. 2). The signs of "frustration" can be observed in Bride as she is starved for the

maternal care, affection, and attention. The negligence of Sweetness is chiefly portrayed through the little girl's burning desire to be slapped in order to be touched by her mother. Bride recalls, "I used to pray she would slap my face or spank me just to feel her touch" (p. 14). She felt that she was invisible in her childhood. Chodorow (1978) traces Balint and Balint's (1965) idea of "being empty of oneself". Pinpointing the idea of "being empty of oneself", Alice Balint claims, "women who feel empty of themselves feel that they are not being accorded a separate reality nor the agency to interpret the world in their own way. This feeling has its origins in the early mother-daughter relationship" (as cited in Chodorow, 1978, p. 100). Bride was so "empty of herself" that she had to live in a void. Her feeling of "emptiness" and guilt blend together owing to her accusing an innocent woman and her childhood repressions gradually appear in her adulthood. As soon as Sofia Huxley is released from the prison, Bride, who still feels guilty of convicting an innocent teacher fifteen years ago, yearns to soothe her conscience or "superego" by offering the pecuniary assistance to Sofia. In her confrontation with Sofia in her house, Bride narrates:

> 'Look what I brought you.' I can't resist and place the bag on the bed. I reach inside and on top of the gift package of YOU, GIRL I lay two envelops—the slim one with the airline gift certificate then the fat one with five thousand dollars. About two hundred dollars for each year if she had served her full sentence. (p. 8)

Yet, Sofia brutally beats Bride, for she strives to give her a gift and akin to freedom "nothing [in life] is free" (p. 8) and throws her gifts. She either retaliates for Bride's testimony which put her behind bars or solely releases her pent-up rage and fear that she had concealed for the fifteen years in the prison. Although Bride is physically damaged, with her vicious attack and the release of the repressed anger, Sofia is spiritually shattered. Sofia is crying for the first time after fifteen years. The therapeutic value of crying makes her purify herself, as Sofia narrates:

> . . . black girl did do me a favor. Not the foolish one she had in mind, not the money she offered, but the gift that neither of us planned: the release of tears unshed for fifteen years. No more bottling up. No more filth. Now I am clean and able. (p. 28)

It is beneficial for us to apply the "affects" of Chodorow's (1978) Object Relations theory, namely "attachment", "frustration", and "rejection", to Bride, who does not experience the emotional "attachment" to her mother, Sweetness. She strives to become attached to her mother; however, Sweetness rejects and neglects her all the time and leads Bride to tell a big lie, accusing her teacher of molesting some students solely to be touched by her mother. Sofia Huxley spends fifteen years in the jail without committing any crime. Bride, who witnessed against the harassment of her teacher, narrates:

> Outside the courtroom all the mothers smiled at me, and two actually touched and hugged me. Fathers gave me thumbs-up. Best of all was

Sweetness. As we walked down the courthouse steps she held my hand. . . .
She never did that before and it surprised me as much as it pleased   me
because I always knew she didn't like touching me. I could tell. Distaste
was all over her face when I was little and she had to bathe me. (pp. 13-14)

Only after that incident, for the first time, does Bride receive the timely adoration and appreciation of her mother. Sweetness feels so cheerful, and they walk the streets hand in hand. As a gift, Sweetness "had her ears pierced and bought her a pair of earrings—tiny gold hoops" (p. 17). Bride strives to attract the attention of others by her beauty, fashionable appearance, and self-image in order to become more acceptable and appreciated by others to compensate her lack of "attachment" which she had already experienced in her childhood with her own mother. Likewise, a prominent critic like Robert Allen Papinchak (1992) examines the issue of "Untouchability" in Sherwood Anderson's (1916) "Hands" in which "Hands" are the origin of a schoolteacher's "virtuous reputation" when he, as a dexterous field laborer, uses them to pick strawberries, and the principal reason of his "scandal" when he uses them to "caress" his students (pp. 8-9). To Papinchak (1992), Anderson was one of the pioneering American authors to experiment "Untouchability". Reinforcing Papinchak's (1992) viewpoint on "Untouchability", Zare Zadeh and Mehrvand (2022) postulates that there exists a remarkable similarity between *God Help the Child* (2015) and "Hands" (1916), in which an innocent gifted schoolteacher, namely Adolph Myers, who inspired his students to learn, and who freely showed love and affection for them, akin to the White-skinned school teacher, Sofia Huxley, is charged with being a pederast, whose "touching", rubbing the boys' shoulders and ruffling their hair made the parents of his students react in "anger", resulting in "rejection", and "fear" leading to "frustration" for twenty years (pp. 94-95). Myers, akin to Sofia Huxley, feels no guilt or shame in his relationship with the schoolboys; nonetheless, he realizes that their parents find something evil and shameful in his "hands". When a "halfwitted boy", who became enamored of Myers, imagines his "touches" for carnal advances, his father, namely Henry Bradford, becomes "frustrated" and severely beats Myers. Shockingly, there is no account of Myers's pain or shock, which is similar to the case of Sofia Huxley, who did not cry for fifteen years (Zare Zadeh & Mehrvand, 2022, pp. 94-95).

After the birth of Bride, Sweetness is increasingly "frustrated" with nurturing her, owing to the Black color of her skin, and feeding her becomes too insulting for her. Sweetness is the only person to whom Bride becomes attached, yet the triangular Oedipus Complex breaks down for Bride when Sweetness does not even feed her forsaken daughter for once. According to Chodorow's (1978) Object Relations theory, the mother is the first object that the infant experiences. However, Freud (1914) holds that, not the mother, but her breast which is the origin of nurturance is the first object for the infant (as cited in Chodorow, 1978, p. 63). Given both Chodorow's (1978) and Freud's (1914) viewpoints, the maternal bond is traumatically shattered after Sweetness defies breast-feeding her own child, Bride. Breast-feeding is the basic right of the infant, yet Sweetness deprives Bride of the

maternal milk, which signifies the maternal existence and enduring love. Sweetness narrates, "All I know is that for me, nursing her was like having a pickaninny sucking my teat. I went to bottle-feeding soon as I got home" (Morrison, 2015, p. 2).

Bride is akin to Galatea in the Greek mythology. Bride is portrayed as "A midnight Galatea [Bride] always and already alive. . . . When the music stopped, his Galatea turned to face him and surrender to him the reckless smile he'd always imagined" (p. 53). Galatea was a sea nymph, who fell in love with a handsome Sicilian youth named, Acis. She was pursued by the Cyclops Polyphemus, who chanted the ludicrous songs in order to court her. When Galatea rejected Polyphemus, he murdered Acis by crushing him under a rock. Galatea fled by diving into the sea and transformed her lover, Acis, into a stream. The allusion to the Greek mythology portrays that loving Bride can lead to Booker's excruciating misery. The feeling of "anxiety" or "frustration" grows in Bride after Booker suddenly "abandons" or rejects her without clarifying his reasons and solely echoing six words, "You not the woman I want" (p. 4). Booker's absence ignites a fear of "abandonment" or "rejection" in Bride. Chodorow (1978) postulates, "the preoccupation with issues of intimacy and merging, however, can also lead to avoidance. Fear of fusion may overwhelm the attraction to it, and fear of loss of a love object may make the experience of love too risky" (p. 79). Bride was gratified with her job, beauty, and possessions, yet she did not feel the same in her "unconscious" psyche. Bride narrates:

> What is happening to me? My life is falling down. . . . What's going on? I'm young; I'm successful and pretty. Really pretty, so there! Sweetness. So why am I so miserable? Because he left me? I have what I've worked for and am good at it. I'm proud of myself, I really am, but it's the Vicodin and the hangover that make me keep remembering some not-so-proud junk in the past. (Morrison, 2015, p. 53)

Salván (2018) views Bride's deep depression results in the loss of her womanly features, including "her pubic and armpit hair, her pierced ears, and her breasts" (p. 615). The more she emotionally acts like an infant, the more her body begins to have a childlike appearance, which embodies her transformation from the confident charming woman into the frightened needy infant (Salván, 2018, p. 615). Bride has eventually grown into a mature woman, leaving the scared little daughter behind to stimulate her power as a Black woman. She is also pregnant, signifying the return of her adulthood capabilities, such as "menstruation" and "lactation" (Salván, 2018, p. 62)

Maternal Love as "Primary Love"

"Attachment affect" contributes to "primary love" theory, which was coined by Balint and Balint (1965). The hypothesis of "primary love" opines, "infants have a primary need for human contact for itself. Attempts to fulfill this need play a fundamental role in any person's development and eventual psychic makeup" (as cited in Chodorow, 1978, p. 64). Balint and Balint (1965), as cited in

Chodorow (1978), remarks the infant's ultimate goal is "to be [unconditionally] loved and satisfied, without being under any obligation to give anything in return" (p. 65). The "primary love" between an infant and its mother has a psychological impact on the future life of that individual as an adult. Those individuals who experience the "primary love" in their childhood yearn to recreate this experience. Balint and Balint (1965) recommends that adult-love relationships are an attempt to reconstruct primary intimacy. Furthermore, the inextricable intimacy can contribute to the fear of "abandonment / rejection" or loss of a love object. Ronald Fairbairn (1952), as cited in Chodorow (1978), regards the relationship between the infant and its mother as "the foundation upon which all his future relationships with love objects are based" (p. 79). Besides, for possessing the potential to be appropriate parents, each individual requires to experience a proper maternal bond during childhood. The gratification of "primary love" offers "well-being and tranquility" and fulfills infantile anticipations, whereas failure to gratify it provides "a violent and intense reaction" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 84). Similar to Balint and Balint (1965), Chodorow (1978) states, "the mother-infant relationship provides gratification to mother as well as infant" (p. 85). Sweetness does not enjoy being with Bride nor does she allow her daughter to feel gratified and experience her mother as a "primary love". The "primary love" should be bestowed on the infant in order to pave the way for its happiness and tranquility and if it does not occur, it will cause a violent and intense reaction (Chodorow, 1978, p. 84). Bride internalizes the image of her own mother as a "rejecting" and "denying" gratification in her "unconscious" psyche and feels vulnerable, powerless, and defenseless in her bitter relationship with her mother. What disturbs Bride in her "unconscious" psyche leads to her unhappiness in her future life. As evident, the bitterness of Sweetness ironically causes her daughter to "abandon" or "reject" her as soon as possible.

Heterosexual Orientation: Bride, Booker, and Brooklyn

A pivotal phase in a girl's life, as Chodorow (1978) asserts, is the "heterosexual orientation", in which her father plays a crucial role. After her mother, the girl's next object-relation is her father. The girl seeks for other types of relationships, for more "power" than her father's "phallus" that can bring her and fulfill her desires (p. 118). Fathers, as the infant's second object of primary libidinal interest, play a pivotal role in the identity formation of both girls and boys. Chodorow (1978) postulates, "fathers generally sex-type their children more consciously than mothers along traditional gender-role lines, and that they do encourage feminine heterosexual behavior in their young daughters" (p. 118). Fathers should develop the masculine roles in their boys and heterosexual relationship in their girls. Yet, due to fathers' extra-familial involvements, they are not able to be in a constant contact with their children. Chodorow (1978) poses Marjorie Leonard's (1966) argument, "Fathers . . . must be able to make themselves available as a heterosexual love object and to offer affection without being seduced by their daughters' fantasies or seducing them with their own. Otherwise, . . . a girl will not develop proper heterosexuality" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 118). According to Chodorow (1978), there exist two components of girls' heterosexual orientation. The

first one is the girls' motivation to seek other relationships, different from what they experienced with their mothers, and the second one is the girls' motivation to seek power that their fathers possess and can lend them as a sexual asset (Chodorow, 1978, p. 118). The fathers' role is to interact with their daughters in a way that encourages them to shape a heterosexual or feminine attachment with them. Fathers' excessive absence or constant rejection and negligence lead to the unhealthy development of their children and doubles maternal responsibilities and unendurable pressures of mothering.

It is really useful for us to examine Bride's affair with Booker through the heterosexual orientation. Due to the fact that Bride did not experience the father-daughter bond and her heterosexual demands were not fulfilled by her absent father, she was motivated to maintain other kinds of relationships in adulthood which strengthen her and become a substitute for her father. Thus, Bride replaces Booker with her absent father. Fairbairn (1952), pivots on "the way the mother remains as an important inner object throughout her growing infant's life" (as cited in Chodorow, 1978, p. 79). For Bride, Booker is the second object of primary libidinal interest besides her mother. There exist two elements of the women's heterosexual orientation:

> One is that a girl's relation to her mother motivates her to look elsewhere for other kinds of relationships, and for the power which a [phallus] might bring her. Second, she is likely to be encouraged to look elsewhere to fulfill these generalized needs by her father, who also lends them a sexualized tone. . . . a father is supposed to make himself available to his daughter. (Chodorow, 1978, p. 118)

Bride does not have any expectations in her relationship with Booker. For Booker, "six months spend into the bliss of edible sex, free-style music, challenging books and the company of an easy undemanding Bride" (Morrison, 2015, p. 54). Bride solely wants him to be with her, which seems to be a substitute for an uncanny mother whom she did not have the opportunity to physically and psychologically touch throughout her childhood. The intimate physical and carnal affair between Bride and Booker can function as a bridge through which Bride re-experiences the body of her mother, Sweetness, as the initial body. Besides, Bride's sense of hospitality and affinity with her mother was solely restricted to the severe chastisement:

> I used to pray she would slap my face or spank me just to feel her touch. I made little mistakes deliberately, but she had ways to punish me without touching the skin she hated—bed without supper, lock me in my room—but her screaming at me was the worst. (p. 31)

According to Rich (1976), another relationship that fulfills one's emotional satisfaction is the tendency of girls or women to bond with other girls and women as their best friends. Rich (1976) opines that the relationship between the mothers and the daughters is a magical one, "Two alike bodies, one of which has spent nine

months inside the other" (p. 220). Similarly, Chodorow (1978) remarks that the girls commonly find a "best friend" with whom they can share their secrets (p. 137). According to Chodorow (1978), in the latency stage, a prepubertal girl familiarizes herself with the non-familial relational world. She becomes critical to her family and strives to become attached to anyone, except her mother. Chodorow (1978) explains, throughout latency, an adolescent girl stays away from her mother and is motivated to have inextricable relationship with other girls as her "best friend" (p. 137). Reinforcing Chodorow's (1978) recommendation, Deutsch (1944), as cited in Chodorow (1978), mentions that many prepubertal girls are motivated to find a "best friend" in order to "share all confidences about their heterosexual relationships" (p. 200). For Bride, Brooklyn is the best friend on whom she can trust. After breaking up with Booker and being beaten by Sofia Huxley, the only friend with whom Bride interacts is Brooklyn. Bride narrates, "Hammers of pain make it hard to get out my cellphone and dial Brooklyn, the person I can trust. Completely" (Morrison, 2015, p. 22). Chodorow (1978) adjusts Deutsch's (1944), as cited in Chodorow (1978), recommendation:

> Female relationships sometimes express a woman's psychological participation in the relational triangle. Some women . . . always need a woman rival in their relationship to a man; others need a best friend with whom they share all confidences about their heterosexual relationships. These relationships are one way of resolving and recreating the mother-daughter bond and are an expression of women's general relational capacities and definition of self in relationship. (p. 200)

Chodorow (1978) states that puberty for girls is a phase of "greater resolution in favor of heterosexuality" (p. 138). Resultantly, the father-absence ignites insecure feeling in girls towards other men and boys. Naturally, such girls depend more on other adult women. By the same token, from Rich's (1976) viewpoint, "the daughter seeking intimacy with her own mother, the woman seeking intimacy with another woman, not her mother but toward whom she turns those passionate longings" (p. 228). After puberty, the girl re-identifies with her mother. As an adult woman, she strives to fulfill her demands to be loved and re-experience the sense of dual unity she already had with her mother. Chodorow (1978) recommends that one procedure of gratifying this need by women is "through the creation and maintenance of important personal relations with other women" (p. 200). Deutsch (1944), as cited in Chodorow (1978), opines that the adult women are motivated to participate in a triangular relationship and always need a woman rival in their relationships with men (p. 200). In this regard, Brooklyn completes the relational triangle in which Bride had never situated herself and functions as a rival for her. Brooklyn psychologically regards Bride as her rival and strives to win the heart of Booker. Brooklyn echoes, "when the three of us were together [Bride] was different somehow. Confident, not so needy or constantly, obviously soliciting praise" (Morrison, 2015, p. 24). Brooklyn vividly confesses how she once strived to deceive Booker into loving him, "One day just for fun I flirted with him, tried to

seduce him. In [Bride's] own bedroom, mind you. . . . I whispered, 'Don't you want another flower in your garden?'" (p. 24). Likewise, in another similar case, Brooklyn, who unflatteringly compares Bride's eyes with alien eyes, is jealous of both Bride's gorgeous eyes and her influential power on the White men. Furthermore, she is jealous of Bride's success in her cosmetics job. Brooklyn narrates that Bride's position at Sylvia company might fall vacant and she might go bankrupt soon, because Brooklyn believes that Bride should not sell beauty products that she herself does not use to improve her own beauty.

At the end of *God Help the Child* (2015), Booker narrates that he left Bride, because he cannot apprehend why she tries to bring gifts to a child molester, like Sofia Huxley. Bride confesses that she lied to capture the attention and approval of Sweetness, who would be proud of her "as a peacock" (p. 16). Booker admits that he left Bride, for he had to be hospitable to pederasts, like Mr. Humboldt, who murdered his brother, Adam. After resolving his problems with Bride and finding out about her succeeding pregnancy, Booker's "heterosexual bond" with Bride turns out to be functional again.

Conclusion

In brief, both Freudian Oedipus Complex and Chodorow's (1978) social Object Relations theory indicated that there is a child who desires, a mother who displays an object of desire, and a father who displays an obstacle to that desire. According to Chodorow's (1978) Object Relations theory, the infant experiences the mother as the initial object to gratify its desires; however, Freud (1914) believes that, not the mother, but her breast, which is the source of nurturance, is the initial object for the child. Freud (1914) mentions, "the infant's ego (self-preservative) instincts direct it to the source of nurturance–the mother's breast–and then to the mother" (as cited in Chodorow, 1978, p. 63). Chodorow (1978), who elaborated on a new and positive account of feminine development, pivoted on a special and functional bond between the mother and the daughter, inaccessible to the male infant. Chodorow (1978) further maintained that mothers identified with the female infants; thus, they were motivated to view their daughters as the reflection of themselves, creating an eternal "attachment" and emotional bond that could make it difficult for girls to shape their "true identities" (as cited in Glenn, 1994, p. 46). Freud (1914) particularly focused on the psychosexual development in an infant's personality formation. Chodorow's (1978) Object Relations Theory, specifically Feminist, adopted Freudian Oedipus Complex. Unlike Freud (1914), who focused on instincts and libido, Chodorow (1978) emphasized the relational aspects of the psychic development. She claimed that girls would shape their gender identity by bonding with their mothers (as cited in Glenn, 1994, p. 4).

The maternal bond between Sweetness and Bride through Chodorow's (1978) concept of "Object Relations" theory was examined. After the birth of Bride, Sweetness was increasingly "frustrated" with nurturing her infant owing to the Black color of her skin and feeding her became too insulting for her. Sweetness was

the only person to whom Bride became attached, yet the triangular Oedipus Complex broke down for Bride when Sweetness did not even feed her forsaken daughter for once. Given both Chodorow's (1978) and Freud's (1914) viewpoints, the maternal bond was traumatically shattered after Sweetness defied breast-feeding her own child, Bride. Breast-feeding is the basic right of the infant, yet Sweetness deprived Bride of the maternal milk, which signified the maternal existence and enduring love. Bride's affair with Booker through the concept of "heterosexual orientation" was further examined. Since Bride did not experience the father-daughter bond and her heterosexual demands were not fulfilled by her absent father, she was motivated to maintain other kinds of relationships in adulthood which strengthened her and became a substitute for her father. For Bride, besides her mother, Booker was the second object of primary libidinal interest. Accordingly, Bride replaced her absent father with Booker. After breaking up with Booker, Brooklyn was the best friend whom Bride could trust. Brooklyn completed the relational triangle in which Bride had never situated herself, who functioned as a rival for her. Brooklyn psychologically regarded Bride as her rival and strived to win the heart of Booker by betraying Bride's trust and deceiving Booker into loving him. Thus, the "heterosexual bond" between Brooklyn and Booker was dysfunctional. Furthermore, Brooklyn was jealous of Bride's success in her cosmetics job and her influential power on the White men. The friendship between Bride and Brooklyn proved to be dysfunctional, whereas the "heterosexual bond" between Bride and Booker was functional till Booker abandoned Bride, which turned out to be a dysfunctional "heterosexual bond". After finding out about Bride's succeeding pregnancy, Booker's "heterosexual bond" with Bride turned out to be functional again.

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تحلیل بین‌فرهنگی پیکره‌محور از ارجاعات متنی در دو گروه نویسنده در دو محل انتشار: تفاوت‌های رشته‌ای

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سحر صالح

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چکیده

در دو دهه گذشته، ارجاعات درون متنی در انگلیسی با اهداف ویژه از اهمیت ویژه ای برخوردار شده است. هدف از تحقیق حاضر بررسی ارجاعات درون متنی در مقالات تحقیقی چاپ شده نویسندگان انگلیسی زبان و فارس زبان در مجلات معتبر انگلیسی زبان ایرانی و بین المللی در دو رشته اقتصاد و مهندسی صنایع بوده است. به همین منظور، چهار پیکره از مقالات تحقیقی در این دو رشته ساخته شد و از طبقه بندی تامسون و تریبل (۲۰۰۱) و چارچوب یی (۱۹۹۰) برای تحلیل ارجاعات درون متنی استفاده شد. از نرم افزار انتکانک برای تحلیل ۱۰۳۲ ارجاع متنی استفاده شد. نتایج تحلیل داده‌ها نشان می‌دهد که نویسندگان در رشته اقتصاد استفاده بیشتری از ارجاعات می‌کنند. نویسندگان در رشته اقتصاد بیشتر از نویسندگان رشته مهندسی صنایع از ارجاعات انتگرال استفاده می کنند. نتایج تحلیل داده‌ها همچنین نشان می‌دهد که انگلیسی زبان‌ها بیشتر از نویسندگان ایرانی از ارجاعات استفاده می‌کنند. نتایج مطالعه حاکی از آن است که علاوه بر پیشینه زبانی و ساختار رشته‌ها، محل انتشار مقالات نیز می‌تواند تاثیر شگرفی بر نحوه اجاعدهی متنی در مقالات داشته باشد.

واژگان کلیدی: ارجاعات درون متنی، مقاله تحقیقی، بخشی از مقاله، اقتصاد، مهندسی صنایع و مواد

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چکیده

در اوضاع و شرایط کنونی، سواد انتقادی تبدیل به حوزه‌ای شده است که بیش از هر زمان دیگری شتاب گرفته و در حکم « گوهر نامرئی» است، چرا که تقریباً بسیاری از سیستم‌های آموزشی کوشیده‌اند آن را در برنامه‌های درسی خود جای دهند. به منظور بررسی این مفهوم، این پژوهش بر آن است تا معضلات احتمالی، چالش‌ها، محدودیت‌ها، به ویژه محدودیت‌هایی را که معلمان زبان انگلیسی ایرانی در فرآیند اجرای سواد انتقادی در کلاس‌های آنلاین خود با آن مواجه هستند بررسی کند.این پژوهش کیفی در دو مرحله انجام شد. در مرحله نخست، پس از بررسی ادبیات تحقیق و سنجش دقیق پرسشنامه‌های موجود و جمع‌آوری داده‌ها از متخصصان این حوزه، مجموعه‌ای از پرسش‌های باز، تهیه و فهرست شد. سپس، داده های کیفی جمع آوری شده از ۲۹ معلم زبان انگلیسی از طریق پرسشنامه باز و مصاحبه، مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفت. چارچوب و داده های استخراج شده، به توسعه ۲۳ پرسش برای بخش مصاحبه رهنمون شد. بر این اساس، کلاس های آنلاین کلیه معلمان برای یک ترم کامل از سوی نگارنده مشاهده شد. با در نظر گرفتن یافته‌ها و دیگر موارد مطرح شده، می‌توان چنین نتیجه گرفت که بخشی از برنامه های درسی آموزش زبان در ایران باید به سواد انتقادی اختصاص یابد. این یافته‌ها به طور بالقوه به متولیان امر آموزش، از جمله سیاست‌گذاران زبان دوم/خارجی، مربی معلمان، مقامات مسئول جذب معلمان، و توسعه‌دهندگان مواد آموزشی کمک می‌کند تا اقدامات مناسبی برای افزایش سواد انتقادی معلمان زبان دوم/خارجی قبل و حین خدمت انجام دهند که در نتیجه، ترغیب اجرای این مفهوم کلیدی را در زمینه آموزشی به دنبال دارد.

واژگان کلیدی: سواد انتقادی، موانع، کلاس های آنلاین زبان انگلیسی، دانشجویان ایرانی

مقدمه نحوی: آیا محتوای معنایی مشترک یک الزام است؟

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چکیده

آمادگی ساختاری به عنوان یک سیستم کارآمد در مطالعه نمایه های ذهنی زبان پیشنهاد شده است. با این حال، برای کشف مکانیسم های زیربنایی این سیستم به تحقیق نیاز است. این مطالعه تلاشی برای بررسی اینکه آیا جملاتی که محتوای معنایی مشترک ندارند، اما ساختار نحوی مشابهی دارند می‌توانند یکدیگر را پرایم کنند یا خیر بود. ۹۰ نفر از دانشجویان دانشگاه تبریز در این مطالعه شرکت کردند و بر اساس عملکرد آزمون مهارت به دو گروه متوسط به بالا یا متوسط تقسیم شدند. هر دو گروه در مرحله پیش تست یک فیلم صامت را روایت کردند. در مرحله پرایمینگ، شرکت‌کنندگان با خواندن و امتیاز دهی به کتاب های حاوی تصاویری که جملاتی حاوی افعال حرکتی انها را دنبال میکرد بودند پرایم شدند. بلافاصله پس از آن، یک فیلم صامت دیگر را روایت کردند. فرض بر این بود که اگر ساختارهای غیرمرتبط معنایی بتوانند همدیگر را پرایم کنند، همانطور که توسط برخی از یافته‌های گزارش‌شده پشتیبانی می‌شود، پرایم کردن شرکت‌کنندگان با افعال عبارتی حرکتی، استفاده از افعال عبارتی غیرحرکتی را در مرحله بعد پسا تست افزایش می‌دهد. با این حال، نویسندگان نتوانستند تفاوت معنی‌داری بین عملکرد شرکت‌کنندگان در مرحله قبل از تست و مرحله بعد از تست پیدا کنند. یافته‌ها از این ادعا حمایت می‌کنند که شباهت نحوی برای شروع پرایمینگ ساختاری کافی نیست و به نظر می‌رسد که معنایی مشترک مورد نیاز باشد. یافته ها با توجه به نقش های معنایی و معنای ترکیبی در مقابل غیرترکیبی توجیه می شوند.

واژگان کلیدی: پرایم ساختاری، نحو، معناشناسی، تولید زبان دوم، نقش های معنایی

ادراکات و چالش‌های دانشجویان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی در یادگیری محتوای مشارکتی بر اساس جنسیت

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چکیده

این تحقیق ترکیبی، سهم یادگیری مشارکتی محتوا (CCL) را برای دانشجویان دختر و پسر ایرانی رشتهٔ آموزش زبان انگلیسی با تمرکز بر ادراک آنها، از نظر موفقیت‌های بالا و پایین، تفاوت‌های جنسیتی و چالش‌های آنها در یادگیری مشارکتی محتوا در نظر گرفت. برای دستیابی به اهداف این مطالعه، ۶۰ شرکت کننده مرد و زن که محدوده سنی آنها از ۲۳ تا ۳۵ سال در سطح کارشناسی ارشد بود، شرکت کردند. آنها بومی زبان‌های آذری، فارسی و کردی بودند. برای جمع‌آوری داده‌های مورد نیاز از پرسش‌نامه ادراک، نمرات امتحان نهایی برای تعیین رتبه‌های بالا و پایین و مصاحبه استفاده شد. یافته‌های این مطالعه نشان داد که بیش از نیمی از فراگیران بر این باور بودند که یادگیری مشارکتی محتوا در زمینه آموزش و یادگیری زبان انگلیسی مهم است و محتوای دروس زمانی که روی آن محتوا به طور مشترک کار می‌کنند برای آنها قابل درک‌تر است.علاوه بر این، نتایج نشان داد که بین ادراک دانشجویان پسر و دختر از حیث اثربخشی یادگیری مشارکتی محتوا از نظر آماری تفاوت معناداری وجود ندارد.در نهایت، تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌های بهدست‌آمده از مصاحبه‌ها نشان داد که فراگیران مرد در یادگیری مشارکتی محتوا دارای چالش‌های روش‌شناختی هستند، در حالی که فراگیران زن دارای چالش‌های ارتباطی هستند. یافته‌های پژوهش حاضر می‌تواند برای دانشجویان و معلمان پیامدهایی داشته باشد.

واژگان کلیدی: ادراکات، چالش ها، یادگیری مشارکتی محتوا، جنسیت

پایبندی عملی مدرسان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی به پسامتد و آموزش منتقدانه تعامل پویا بین تفکر انتقادی و راهبردهای یادگیری واژگان در زبان آموزان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی با نقش تعدیل کننده جنسیت

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چکیده

تفکر انتقادی به طور گسترده به عنوان یک مفهوم رایج در فرآیندهای آموزش و یادگیری در نظر گرفته می شود. بنابراین، این مقاله قصد دارد تا ارتباط بین قابلیت‌های تفکر انتقادی زبان‌آموزان و همچنین استراتژی‌های یادگیری واژگان آنها را در بین جنسیت بررسی کند. بدین منظور ۱۴۰ زبان‌آموز ایرانی دختر و پسر مقطع متوسطه شاغل به تحصیل در موسسه زبان ایران در ارومیه به صورت تصادفی انتخاب شدند. این مطالعه به صورت پیمایشی با داده‌های جمع‌آوری شده از طریق آزمون مقدماتی انگلیسی برای همگن‌سازی دانش‌آموزان، پرسش‌نامه ی استراتژی‌های یادگیری واژگان اشمیت برای شناسایی انواع استراتژی‌هایی به کار گرفته شده توسط دانش‌آموزان و همچنین آزمون تفکر انتقادی کرنل انیس برای تعیین قابلیت های تفکر انتقادی دانش آموزان انجام شد. داده ها با استفاده از همبستگی پیرسون مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفتند. نتایج یک همبستگی مثبت بین تفکر انتقادی و استراتژی‌های یادگیری واژگان را برجسته کردند. علاوه بر این، مشخص شد که شرکت کنندگان مرد سطح بالاتری از تفکر انتقادی را نشان دادند و تعداد بیشتری از استراتژی‌های یادگیری واژگان را در مقایسه با همتایان زن خود به کار گرفتند. اهمیت ادغام تفکر انتقادی و استراتژی‌های یادگیری واژگان در محیط های آموزشی زبان انگلیسی ممکن است با پیامدهای تحقیق حاضر بیشتر روشن شود.

واژگان کلیدی: تفکر انتقادی، زبان آموزان انگلیسی، راهبردهای یادگیری واژگان

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چکیده

این مطالعه با هدف مقایسه تأثیر دانش نحوی و دانش معناشناسی در فهم جملات انگلیسی توسط زبان‌آموزان ایرانی در سطوح مختلف انجام شده است. یکصد و نود زبان‌آموز ایرانی از طریق نمونه‌گیری آسان در سه گروه مبتدی، متوسط، و پیشرفته جهت این مطالعه به کار گرفته شدند. جهت انجام مقایسه بین تأثیرات احتمالی دانش نحوی و معناشناسی بین سطوح مختلف زبان آموزان، پنج دسته جمله ساخته شدند: ۲۰ جمله غلط به لحاظ دستوری و درست به لحاظ معنایی، ۲۰ جمله غلط به لحاظ معنایی و درست به لحاظ دستوری، ۲۰ جمله درست هم به لحاظ معنایی وهم به لحاظ دستوری، ۲۰ جمله غلط هم به لحاظ معنایی و هم به لحاظ دستوری، و ۲۰ جمله دیریاب. به منظور بررسی عملکرد شرکت‌کنندگان نرم افزارخاصی به کار گرفته شد که هم تعداد پاسخ‌های صحیح و هم مدت زمان پاسخگویی به سوالات را مشخص می‌کرد. پس از پردازش داده‌ها مشخص شد که جملاتی که به لحاظ معنایی غلط بودند برای شرکت‌کنندگان آزمون سخت‌تر از دیگر جملات بوده است. همچنین یافته‌ها حاکی از آن بود که درک جملات غلط به لحاظ معنایی نسبت به جملات دیریاب دشوارتر بوده است. همچنین نتایج نشان داد که جملات غلط به لحاظ دستوری و جملات درست به لحاظ معنایی و دستوری آسان‌ترین جملات برای درک شرکت کنندگان بوده‌اند. در نهایت با توجه به داده‌ها می‌توان نتیجه گرفت که جملات غلط به لحاظ معنایی برای زبان‌آموزان تمام سطوح سخت‌ترین نوع جملات هستند.

واژگان کلیدی: درک جملات انگلیسی، آگاهی دستوری، آگاهی معنایی، جملات دیریاب، سطح دانش زبان

بررسی تطبیقی تاثیر آموزش صریح، درونداد ارتقا یافته و روش اکتشافی هدایت شده در تولید افعال مجهول بین زبان آموزان ایرانی: رویکرد یادگیری زبان به کمک رایانه

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چکیده

امروزه همگان پذیرفته‌اند که دستور زبان آن‌قدر مهم است که نباید نادیده انگاشته شود. افعال مجهول انگلیسی می‌تواند به‌عنوان یک بخش گرامری دشوار برای زبان‌آموزان ایرانی به حساب آید. این مطالعه با هدف بررسی تطبیقی و تجربی تاثیر آموزش صریح، تکنیک درونداد ارتقا یافته و رویکرد اکتشافی هدایت شده بر تولید افعال مجهول بین زبان‌آموزان ایرانی انجام شد و به دنبال تعیین اثربخشی فردی این روش‌ها و شناسایی کارآمدترین آنها بود. بدین منظور ۷۰ نفر از دانشجویان دانشگاه پیام نور تبریز انتخاب و به سه گروه (N = 25) IET، (N = 22) GDA و (N = 23) EIM تقسیم شدند. داده‌های تحقیق بر اساس سه فعالیت کامپیوتری طراحی شده توسط محقق بهدست آمد. پیش‌آزمون و پس‌آزمون برای استخراج اطلاعات در مورد تولید افعال مجهول در سه گروه استفاده شد. نتایج تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها نشان داد که هر دو روش آموزشی درونداد ارتقا یافته و رویکرد اکتشافی هدایت شده تأثیر معناداری بر تولید افعال مجهول داشتند. با این حال، آموزش صریح تاثیر معناداری بر تولید افعال مجهول نداشت. در این میان، رویکرد اکتشافی هدایت شده به عنوان کارآمدترین تکنیک تدریس در مقایسه با سایر روش‌ها شناخته شد. این مطالعه پیامدهای مهمی برای معلمان، دانش آموزان و طراحان برنامه درسی دارد.

واژگان کلیدی: یادگیری زبان به کمک رایانه، آموزش صریح، رویکرد اکتشافی هدایت شده، درونداد ارتقا یافته، تولید افعال مجهول

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چکیده

این پژوهش اساساً به بررسی فرآیند سیاسی‌سازی و بیوسیاسی‌سازی زندگی انسان‌ها، بالاخص آنان که توسط حکومت بی‌ارزش و مصرف‌شدنی تلقی می‌شوند می‌پردازد. هدف این نوشتار مطالعه و واکاوی روش‌های نامحسوسی است که نظام حاکم با بهره‌گیری از آن‌ها سعی در بی‌هویت‌سازی و نهایتاً سرکوب و منکوب‌سازی مردم دارد. از طریق کاوش و فهم این روش‌ها می‌توان مکانیسم‌های پنهان رژیم حاکم را بهتر شناخت، مکانیسم‌هایی که از قلب نظام بیوسیاسی زاده شده، ایدیولوژیک-محور است و بافت گفتمانی سیاسی-اجتماعی جامعه را تشکیل می‌دهد. در این راستا، با مطالعه و بهره‌گیری از شاخص جئورجیو آگامبن *هومو ساکر* (۱۹۹۵) و بازتعریف وی از مفاهیمی چون «بیوقدرت» میشل فوکو و «طرد شدگی کارل اشمیت»، نوشتار پیش رو تلاش دارد ساختارهای بیوسیاسی ظالم و طردکننده ایدیولوژیک را در رمان شاخص وی. اس نایپل، *خانه‌ای برای آقای بیسواس* (۱۹۶۱) مطالعه کند. شخصیت محوری این رمان، یعنی ماهون بیسواس، در بافت‌ها و نظام‌های مختلفی چون، خانواده، جامعه و... به دام زنجیره‌ای درهم‌تنیده از دستگاه‌های ظالم بیوسیاسی می‌افتد که در نتیجه‌ی آن به آنچه آگامبن «هومو ساکر» می‌نامد بدل گردد. به زعم آگامبن، هوموساکر موجودی است بی‌هویت، بی‌اراده و فاقد قدرت که در نظام حاکم بیوسیاسی هیچ جایگاه و ارزشی ندارد، به حدی خوار و مطرود است که نظام او را حتی مستحق فدا شدن نیز نمی‌داند. باین حال، این مقاله هم‌چنین به واکاوی و جستجوی فضاهایی ضدگفتمان-محور،ضد ایدیولوژیک و ضدبیوسیاسی می‌پردازد که بیسواس مفلوک با استمداد از آن‌ها در تلاش است راه خود را به سوی رهایی و رستگاری بیابد.

واژگان کلیدی: بیوسیاست، طردشدگی، اردوگاه، حاکمیت، ایدیولوژی، حقوق بشر

«زن مو قرمز»: تحلیلی زیست‌محیطی بر اساس دیدگاه زنانه

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چکیده

این مقاله تحلیلی است زیست‌محیطی از رمان «زن مو قرمز» اثر اورهان پاموک (۲۰۱۷) بر اساس دیدگاه زنانه آلیشیا هیلدا پولئو. در این تحلیل، گل‌جهان به عنوان شخصیتی فرهنگی بحث می‌شود که با ایستادن بیرون تقسیم‌بندی ذات‌گرایانه فرهنگ / طبیعت، تعاملی سازنده با دنیای مردانه داستان برقرار می‌کند و بدین‌سان زندگی را به شهر تاریخی استانبول داستان که در حال محو شدن زیر فشار مدرن‌سازی است، برمی‌گرداند. رمان این فرآیند مدرن‌سازی را با نشان دادن مواجهه ابعاد شرقی و غربی فرهنگ ترکی، در قالب مواجهه گذشته و حال با اشاره به داستان‌های اسطوره‌ای رستم و سهراب و اودیپوس که مفاهیم فرزندکشی و پدرکشی را پررنگ می‌کنند، ارایه می‌کند. مقاله حاضر خوانش دیگری از مدرن‌سازی ارائه می‌کند که تحلیل‌های موجود از زن مو قرمز را به عنوان داستانی بدبینانه در مورد محو شدن ترکیه تاریخی همراه با تخریب محیط زیستی به چالش می‌کشد. «زن مو قرمز» به عنوان رمانی بحث می‌شود که روند خودآگاهی و فهم بینافرهنگی شخصیت گل‌جهان تلاشی خوش‌بینانه از باور به تغییری مثبت در صنعتی‌سازی مدرن را تداعی می‌کند.

واژگان کلیدی: آلیشیا هیلدا پولئو، اورهان پاموک، صنعتی‌سازی، خودآگاهی، فهم بینافرهنگی

تاثیر سلسله مراتب طبقاتی در تغییر اجسام افراد در رمان زیر پوست

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چکیده

در این مقاله من سعی در تحلیل نقش پیچیده سرمایه‌داری در شکل‌گیری و تحول جسم‌ها در میان سیستم خود با کمک و الهام از اثر میشل فابر به نام زیر پوست را دارم. بعد اول، تمایز بین عادی و نرمال بودن و فاصله گرفتن از آن به عنوان دو بدن در شخصیت‌های اصلی داستان به نام‌های اسرلی و آملیس. بعد دوم، تاثیر سلسله مراتب طبقاتی مختلف در داستان و چگونگی تاثیر آن در بین بخش‌ها و طبقات مختلف اجتماعی بعنوان نمونه ثروتمندان، تهی‌دستان و انسان‌ها (ودسل‌ها) و در بعد سوم، نقش معلولیت جسمی و عواقبش بر افرادی که به نوعی تحت سلطه نظام سرمایه داری هستند. بعد چهارم و آخر، چگونگی جایگزین کردن یا به عبارتی بهتر تغییر دادن نقش فرد در داستان از فرد متوسط به فرد دیگری که خود موجب اختلال در عادی‌سازی می شود. در این نوشتار بهره‌برداری ناروای نظام سرمایه‌داری از دیدگاه جامعه نسبت به مفهوم نرمال برای پیشبرد اهداف سلطه-گرایانه خود مورد بحث و تجزیه و تحلیل قرار می‌گیرد.

واژگان کلیدی: سرمایه‌داری، سلسله مراتب طبقاتی، معلولیت جسمی، صاحبان قدرت، جایگزینی

شفای اخلاقی در برابر ترومای هستی‌شناختی در کتاب «مسئله قدرت» بِسی هِد

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چکیده

کتاب «مسئله قدرت» اثر بسی هد به طرز پیچیده‌ای فلسفه وجودی را در لابه‌لای روایت خود می‌پیوندد، آنچنان که آن را موضوعی ایده‌آل برای بررسی به فلسفه رابطه خود-دیگری امانوئل لویناس می‌کند. رمان در پس‌زمینه پرفراز و نشیب آفریقای جنوبی در دوران آپارتاید می‌گذرد و سفر الیزابت به عنوان کاوشی تکان‌دهنده در مفاهیم لویناسی عمل می‌کند. لویناس معتقد است رشد اخلاقی واقعی از برخورد مستقیم با «دیگری» ناشی می‌شود. این کاوش جنبه‌های حیاتی فلسفه لویناس را که در مسیر الیزابت در بخش‌های به هم پیوسته منعکس شده است، تشریح می‌کند. بخش اول اخلاق لویناسی را با فلسفه‌های کانتی و هگلی در تضاد قرار می‌دهد و با تاکید بر «ترومای حیرت‌زدگی»، بر قدرت دگرگون‌کننده رویارویی با «دیگری» صحه گذاشته و بر پذیرش غیر دعوت می‌کند. قسمت دوم به سفر اخلاقی الیزابت می‌پردازد و مبارزات و لحظات رشد او را از دریچه مفهوم تعالی لویناس بررسی می‌کند. در نهایت، بخش پایانی سفر دگرگون‌کننده الیزابت به بوتسوانا را بررسی می‌کند و برخوردهای او با چهره «دیگری» و برچیدن نمادین دوگانه‌های ظالمانه را بررسی می‌کند. این تحلیل نشان می‌دهد چگونه روایت هد می‌تواند منعکس‌کننده فلسفه لویناسی باشد. در حالی که این سفر را در میان فلسفه و ادبیات آغاز می‌کنیم، لایه‌های روایت الیزابت را جدا می‌کنیم تا دریابیم چگونه می‌توان جنبه‌های اخلاق لویناسی را بر هویت، پیوند و جستجوی خرد متعالی بر بلوغ او در رابطه‌اش با غیر در جهانی که با تقسیم و نابرابری مشخص شده است، آشکار کنیم.

واژگان کلیدی: رمان «مسئله قدرت»، بسی هد، بازیابی اخلاقی،لویناس، ترومای هستی‌شناختی منفی، ذهنیت بین‌فردی مثبت

نظریه روابطِ اشیا در رمان «خدا به کودک کمک کند» اثرِ موریسون: خوانش روانشناختی

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چکیده

هدف این مقاله بررسی تأثیر مخرب رفتار خصومت‌آمیز و خشونت‌آمیز یک مادر روشن‌پوست -- که از تربیت دختر سیاه‌پوست خود اجتناب می‌کند -- در رمان تخیلی «خدا به کودک کمک کند» (۲۰۱۵) اثرِ تونی موریسون است. نظریه روابط اشیا نانسی چودروف به ما کمک می‌کند تا بفهمیم که چگونه الگوهای فرزندپروری جنسیتی و رشد دوران کودکی به بازتولید نقش‌های جنسیتی سنتی کمک می‌کنند. نظریه او شامل سه «عواطف اساسی» یعنی دلبستگی، ناامیدی، و مطرود شدن است که در آن هویت زنانه عمدتاً مبتنی بر دلبستگی جدانشدنی به مادر است و جایگاه فرهنگی زن با پیوند بین مادر و دختر تعریف می‌شود. این «عواطف»، احساساتی جهانی هستند که برای شکل‌گیری هویت کودکان حیاتی هستند. با تکیه بر نظریه روانکاوی چودروف، استدلال اصلی این مقاله حاکی از آن است که شیء اولیه کودک برای ارضای خواسته‌هایش مادر است، اما از دیدگاه فروید سینه مادر به عنوان منبع پرورش اولین شیء است. به منظور پرکردن این شکاف، اعمال نظریه سنتی عقده ادیپ فرویدی دغدغه اصلی این مقاله نیست؛ دغدغه این مقاله اعمال نظریه معاصر روابط اشیا چودروف است، زیرا فمینیسم روانکاوانه به بررسی ماهیت دوسوگرایانه مادری کمک می‌کند. یافته‌ها نشان می‌دهد که چودروف جوهر مادری را از نظر ساختارهای اجتماعی به جای ساختارهای بیولوژیکی تبیین می‌کند. با توجه به دیدگاه‌های چودورف و فروید، پیوند ناگسستنی مادری بین سوییتنس و براید، زمانی که سوییتنس نوزادش را از شیر مادری محروم می‌کند، به طور آسیب‌زایی مخدوش می‌گردد.

واژگان کلیدی: روابط اشیا، دلبستگی، ناامیدی، طرد شدن، «خدا به کودک کمک کند»