
LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 22:2 February 2022
ISSN 1930-2940

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The next issue (the issue of March 2022) will be uploaded by the fourth week of March 2022 or earlier.

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**Freeing the Self from the Burden of a “Paralyzing Misery”:
A Psychoanalytic Study of Abdulrazak Gurnah’s *Gravel Heart*
(2017)**

Sabri Mohammad

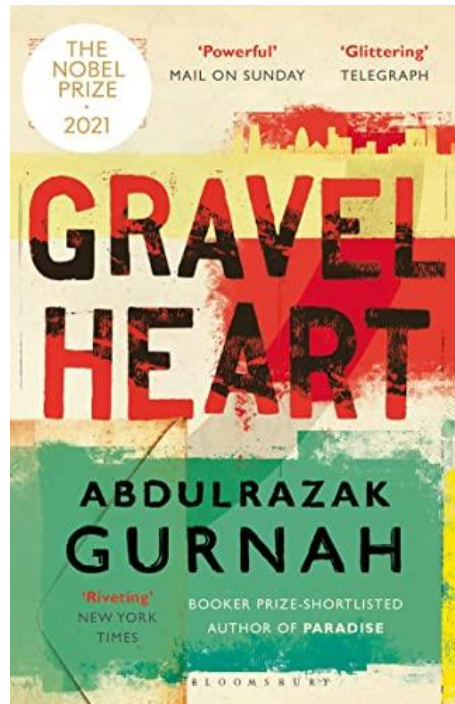
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Abstract

This paper focuses on analyzing the development of the psychological status of the self under harsh, paralyzing, and hurtful incidents in one's familial relationship and life. Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel, *Gravel Heart* (2017), will be the main fictional work of this study. It will depict the life of Salim, the main protagonist, who has gone through many hardships that has primarily affected his psychological and mental development as a child, teenager, and an adult. This is due to many uncertainties that occurred between his parents while he was growing up either at home in Zanzibar, or abroad during his studies in England. The psychological status of Salim will be analyzed depending on Sigmund Freud's lectures on Psychoanalysis. It will be utilized to discuss the mental processes that Salim went through when he was exposed to painful situations in his life.

Keywords: Abdulrazak Gurnah; *Gravel Heart*; Psychoanalysis; Sigmund Freud; The Unconscious; Symptoms; Trauma.

I. Introduction

Abdulrazak Gurnah, Tanzanian novelist, who has written many novels describing the diasporic lives of the immigrants and the displaced after the period of colonization. He is the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2021. Some of Gurnah's fiction are *Memory of Departure* (1987), *Pilgrims Way* (1988), *Paradise* (1994), *The Last Gift* (2011), *Gravel Heart* (2017), and *Afterlives* (2020). Although he has left his homeland at an early age, it was a source of inspiration for him to talk about various themes related to alienation and displacement in his fiction. His homeland, culture, and memories have been present in all of his writings. In his essay, "Writing Place (2004)," Gurnah expresses that "I was writing from memory, and how vivid and overwhelming that memory was...That strangeness intensified the sense of a life left behind, of people casually and thoughtlessly abandoned, a place and a way of being lost to me forever, as it seemed at the time. When I began to write, it was that lost life that I wrote about, the lost place and what I remembered of it" (26, 2004).

Gravel Heart (2017), Gurnah's ninth novel, will be the main novel to be discussed in this paper. This novel revolves around the life of Salim. Gurnah includes many incidents that has affected the psyche of Salim beginning from the familial problems between his parents to the dramatic changes that occurred in Zanzibar. He shows us how all of these hardships in Salim's life have affected his well-being and his connectedness to this world. The feeling of estrangement and displacement is accompanying him wherever he goes or settles. This is apparent in the protagonist's life either in Zanzibar or later in England. This novel reflects the human weakness in front of harsh and uncontrollable circumstances. As Gurnah puts it in a conversation about the theme he implies in his novel *Gravel Heart*: "I would have said that

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Gravel Heart was also, and in an important way, about power and its capacity to distort the intimate reaches of relationships” (Mohani 4, 2019). Gurnah transforms various historical and real incidents from Zanzibar into his fiction presenting to his reader a representation of the lives of the displaced and the alienated. Gurnah’s systematic way of writing fiction, where he includes the historical alongside with the fictional to introduce a representation of a dilemma, compels well with Stephen Greenblatt’s idea on the production of the aesthetic. Greenblatt, in his essay “Towards a Poetics of Culture,” intensifies on the idea that the “aesthetic is not an alternative realm but a way of intensifying the single realm we all inhabit” (6-7). Therefore, fiction is a vital tool in the representation of reality.

In this paper, the psychological development of the main protagonist, Salim, will be analyzed, taking into consideration the circumstances that he has faced in his childhood. This early period of his life is very important because it shaped his personality afterwards. His anxieties, fears, and worries made a neurotic person out of him; a person who is afraid and ashamed to face people, situations, life, etc. Sigmund Freud’s theories on symptoms and the fixations to a past trauma will be utilized to discuss the main argument. Salim will be treated as a neurotic patient who will slowly discover by time his psychological problems when he discovers the truth about hidden issues in his life. These hidden secrets were intentionally kept away from him by the members of his family. Sigmund Freud’s two lectures, “The Path to the Formation of Symptoms,” and “Fixation to Traumas – The Unconscious,” will be used as the main theoretical background. His theories on the formation of symptoms and its relation to the unconscious is the main domain of discussion. Therefore, this study will only present a psychological analysis to the novel apart from the postcolonial background or themes that might be included in it.

II. Salim’s Childhood: Memories as the Source of Sufferings

In his lecture, “The Path to the Formation of Symptoms,” Freud discussed the main points that lead to any formation of neurotic problems in the human psyche. In any human case, it is obvious that we may face various dilemmas that affect us emotionally and eventually might leave some residues in our psychology. As a result, this may affect our whole lives and decisions. But, it most important here to mention that familial problems will have huge effect on the psychological development of a child; the lack of something in a child’s life, especially if it is connected to one of the parents. Therefore, any parental conflict will, for sure, affect the development of their children’s psychological well-being.

To Freud, childhood is an important phase in the mental and psychological development of human beings because it is the period where he/she, the infantile, is exposed to new accidents and incidents in his life. Therefore, it must have an impact on shaping how they view the world.

Freud emphasizes this: “The significance of this period of childhood is twofold: on the one hand, during it the instinctual trends which the child has inherited with his innate disposition first become manifest, and secondly, others of his instincts are for the first time awakened and made active by external impressions and accidental experiences” (407, 1999). Moreover, if a child goes through a very painful incident that really affects his psychological development, he will start developing symptoms for neurosis. Freud mentions the negative effect of conflicts and their contribution in forming the symptoms to a neurotic being. Freud informs us that: “the significance of infantile experiences should not be totally neglected, as people like doing, in comparison with the experiences of the subject’s ancestors and of his own maturity; on the contrary, they call for particular consideration. They are all the more momentous because they occur in times of incomplete development and are for that very reason liable to have traumatic effects” (407-408, 1999).

In the novel, *Gravel Heart* (2017), Gurnah introduces Salim from the beginning as a tormented being who is suffering from something that happened in his childhood. As a consequence, it continues to unsteady the rest of his life after that. This incident is related to one of his parents as Masud, Salim’s father, left their house and abandoned them suddenly. At first, Salim could not understand why his father left because it was kept as a secret away from him by his mother and his uncle. Salim describes his inner feelings the day his father left as “turmoil”: “the moment of his leaving passed without my noticing at first. The everyday turmoil in my seven-year-old mind must have been absorbing and profound because it took me some time to understand that something important had happened to our lives” (33, 2017). Salim sensed that something was wrong in their life which has, for sure, affected his psyche. His mother, Saida, and his uncle, Amir, were hiding something very serious about his father. As he puts it: “It was the beginning of a series of important lies which my mother would tell me for the next many years, but when I was seven I had no reason to disbelieve her. It would have seemed to me like the usual comings and goings of the grown-ups, whose affairs were never completely comprehensible to me” (34, 2017).

It is after this incident that Salim starts to form his worries and anxieties about life. Throughout the novel, we can notice that Salim is either afraid of relationships, or ashamed of something related to his parents, or we see him in solitude. These symptoms are signs of becoming a neurotic patient who is lacking something and repressing his suffering deep in his unconscious. Therefore, the feeling of dissatisfaction that Salim forms later about everything related to his parents or life will become the source of his turmoil. Freud explains that: “Neurotic symptoms are the outcomes of a conflict which arouses over a new method of satisfying the libido” (404-405).

Salim justifies his disability in trying to understand what is going on in his family's life through his question to his mother. His feeling of dissatisfaction is apparent when he declares that: "But she would not say more about Baba and her and it went on for years like that. If I gave her direct factual questions, sometimes she answered those but not if I wanted details of how it was with them" (32, 2017).

According to Salim, the most significant period of his life was when he was still three years old when he still had his father living with them as a natural family. We discover this in the first chapter of the novel titled "A Stick of Candy Floss." Salim recalls some of his memories he had about his father which made him feel happy at that time. For example, he tells us about his memories of this incident: "On hot days when the door was left open, the slight breeze lifted the door-curtain in a lazy billow into the room. Sitting in the sun on that doorstep with my stick of candy floss meant my father and I would have had our feet on the road, assuming my legs were long enough to reach the ground, and we would have seen life trickling by" (13, 2017). He remembers how his father "was laughing in that breathless way of his as he looked at [him]" (10, 2017). It is to these memories that Salim goes back to recall happy moments with his father which he suddenly loses and lives in turmoil as consequence to it. Salim becomes depressed later on his life due to the loss of the figure of the father in his life.

Throughout the novel, his childhood memories that he shared with his father is the only source of happiness and satisfaction to him. Freud elaborates on how neurotic patients are fixed to some moments in their past because it gives them some kind of relief. He elaborates on this: "neurotics are anchored somewhere in their past we know now that it is at a period of their past in which their libido did not lack satisfaction, in which they were happy. They search about in the history of their life till they find a period of that sort, even if they have to go back as far as the time when they were infants in arms - as they remember it or as they imagine it from later hints" (412, 1999). Salim explains through his memories that he looks backwards to that time when he spent time with his father eating candy floss. He expresses his feeling: "So it was certain that I was about four when I sat there in the sun with my father Masud while he fed me candy floss. For years I felt in my flesh the fondness of that moment" (12, 2017). Salim returns back to these memories because it might give him some kind of satisfaction to what he has lost later in his life. Salim expresses this loss through his words: "That was the doorstep of the house I was born in, the house I spent all of my childhood in, the house I abandoned because I was left with little choice. In later years, in my banishment, I pictured the house inch by inch. I don't know if it was lying nostalgia or painful proper longing, but I paced its rooms and breathed its smells for years after I left" (12, 2017).

III. Salim's Repression: Acknowledgment of His Misery

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It is since the day that his father left them suddenly that his misery and grief controlled every part of his life. Although he kept asking his mother about the reason but he could not get any answers. The only thing he realized was his mother taking a basket of food every day to his father where he rented a room for his own. Salim describes that day as frightening: “In that confusion I did not realize the meaning of my father’s absence, until finally I began to understand that he was not living with us anymore. For several days the idea frightened me in a physical, heart-racing way, as if I had lost my grip on my father’s hand in a huge crowd of strange people some distance from home” (34, 2017). His fears and anxieties began to take over his thoughts; he cannot find satisfying answers to what was going on, or at least to be told by the grown-ups about the reason behind the absence of his father. He explains: “I was literal in my anxieties at that age and those were my recurring images of abandonment” (34, 2017).

This incident has enhanced feelings of anxiety, shame, and detachment in Salim’s psyche. All of these symptoms are directly related to neurosis. In his lecture, “From Fixation to Trauma – The Unconscious,” Freud explains that neurotics and traumatic illness are both related to “inability to deal with an experience whose affective coloring was excessively powerful” (315, 1999). His father’s absence and mother’s unhappiness were too heavy and powerful on him to take and deal with at his age. His life would stop at this moment where everything will be related to it afterwards. Even when he leaves Zanzibar to England, every detail of his life would be fixated to this painful incident related to his parents. As Freud puts it, “It may happen, too, that a person is brought so completely to a stop by a traumatic event which shatters the foundations of his life that he abandons all interest in the present and future and remains permanently absorbed in mental concentration upon the past” (316).

Salim, who may now be called a traumatic and a neurotic person, starts to repress this incident deep into his unconscious. He tries to live normally and adapt to the life of his single mother and his lonely father. He starts living up to complete his studies and taking the food basket every day to his father where he lives. Freud defines repression in the neurotic patient as “any powerful impulse or instinct which was embarrassing continued to operate in the realm of the unconscious where it retained its full “cathexis” or investment of energy. This instinct began to seek substitutive satisfaction by circuitous routes and would produce neurotic symptoms” (Rafey 574, 2005). Neurotic symptoms such as fear, shame and defeat were expressed by Salim whenever he met or encountered his father in the street. Shame was also apparent whenever he faced someone in his society. At the beginning, when he could not comprehend his father’s absence, he used to blame him for his misery.

Feeling ashamed due to the status of his father being lonely was apparent whenever he saw him in the street. Salim expresses his contempt deliberately: “He did not speak willingly and

walked through crowds with his head lowered and his eyes deliberately vacant, not wishing to see. I was ashamed of his abjectness and lethargy because even at the age of seven I knew how to be ashamed. I could not bear the way people looked at him” (35). At other times, his feelings towards his father were mixed between shame and fear. He told this to his mother when she asked him to deliver the food basket to him. He was afraid of his father because to him, an eleven-year-old boy, his father represented “detachment and defeat” (40). Salim recites this incident as follows:

So when my mother asked me if I would take the basket of food to him, I could not restrain my shameful tears and said that I did not want to because I was afraid of him. I expected my mother to get angry, to yelp at me with the unexpected fury that occasionally overcame her, but she did not. I saw that she was making an effort to control herself. She made me sit with her and she explained that I should never fear my Baba, because he was the only Baba I would ever have, and that when I had finished crying I was to dry my face and take the food to him and wish him good health. I did not really see how thinking that he was the only Baba I would ever have would make me less afraid but I appreciated the effort she was making and did my best to suppress my anxiety. (40, 2017).

His feeling of shame from his society was expressed by him when he realized that his mother is pregnant, and it could not be hidden from anybody. He came to a conclusion to what he calls “something shameful” (43, 2017). At that time of his age, he began to have a clear understanding of this family’s situation. He anxieties extended to his being in school even. He “expected to be mocked” (45, 2017) there by his fellow colleagues. Even in his neighborhood, a boy “made fun of a pair of shoes [his] mother had given [him], whisperingly asking if they were a gift from [his] mama’s friend.” (45, 2017) He continues to talk about this shameful incident which caused him pain and fear of facing anybody in his society. He says: “It had never occurred to me that the gift was from this man. The boy who said this was very big, almost an adult, and he said those words to me with a taunting grin, looking to goad me into a reaction so he could beat me up” (45, 2017). Salim’s situation is best elaborated in Freud’s explanation of neurotic patients who are “‘fixated’ to a particular portion of their past, as though they could not manage to free themselves from it” (314, 1999).

IV. Salim’s Escape from his Misery: The Journey to Discover the Truth

Salim was offered an escape from the painful situation that controls his life. His uncle, Amir, offered to take him to London to complete his studies there. Amir worked as a diplomat in London. Therefore, this journey will offer Salim the chance to discover hidden secrets about his parents. It will offer him an escape from his sorrows and shame which controlled his life back in

Zanzibar. Most important, he will discover the dark side related to his uncle and mother. He will understand why his father decided to leave them later; why he chose to live alone in silence.

This part of his life abroad begins with the chapter titled “I Will Write to You Every Day.” When he arrives to London, he lives with his uncle’s family in their home. His uncle wants him to study Business because it would make him a lot of money. But Salim was not interested in studying Business, he liked Literature. His interest in Literature came to him from his father, Masud. Back when he was a teenager, years before his coming to study in London, his father left some books at home that afterwards Salim became interested in reading all of them. His interest in reading literature is embodied as his longing for his father. These books were a substitute for his father’s absence back then. He was unconsciously driven into this because it represented the last remembrance of his absent father. Consequently, Salim is unconsciously driven to specialize in Literature. Unfortunately, he cannot express this to his uncle because he sponsored him at the time, and he had to agree with what he chose for him. He says, “It would have sounded cowardly to tell him that I should have preferred to study literature, and perhaps I did not know how much I did at the time. By the time I left for London, I had worked my way through most of my father’s books, had made good progress through the school library shelves, had borrowed and exchanged books with friends, and I thought of myself as someone with proven credentials as a future student of literature” (58-59, 2017). According to Freud, in his lecture “From Fixation to Trauma – The Unconscious,” when the neurotic patient is directly attached to something in the past either to a person or thing, in this case it becomes an obsessional action. The obsessional action, according to Freud is “the intention of correcting a distressing portion of the past” (317, 1999). Obsessional actions are symptoms which are related to the patient’s memory directly and are done sometimes unconsciously, or as Freud calls “senseless obsessional action” (317, 1999).

Salim resembles the situation of a female patient who had sudden psychological problems due to her unhappy wedding night. Due to this trauma, she became psychologically ill. Therefore, in her psychological rehabilitation, she carried senseless obsessional actions which were derived from the experience she had at her wedding night. These obsessional actions were not understood to her at that time. Freud discovered from her that they were related to her memory. Therefore, Freud reports that her intention was to put “her beloved husband in a better light. It took a fairly long time and called for much labour before she understood and admitted to me that such a motive alone could have been the driving force of her obsessional action” (317, 1999). In the same context, Salim’s wish to study Literature is seen as a senseless obsessional action done by him to do something good for his father because literature reminds him of Masud. It is a remembrance of something forgotten or lost. Later on, after two year of studying Business, Salim fails to get enough grades to continue his studies in Business. He tells his uncle that he

does not want to live with him anymore, and he will go and find what suits him better. It is proven after that, when Salim manages to get good grades to study literature, that he enrolls at the university to study this major. He started his own life where he found his solitude away from his uncle and his interference.

Studying Business and living with his uncle has obliged Salim to repress more and more of his suffering because he cannot express his inner thoughts deliberately. Therefore, we notice that he still suffers from symptoms of anxiety and fear. Salim begins to discover some bits of truth behind his uncle and his wife, Asha, which is for sure related to his family's misery. Freud approves on the idea that a neurotic patient begins to discover his inner pains when he/she is confronted by them in reality. He states that: "Symptoms are never constructed from conscious processes; as soon as the unconscious processes concerned have become conscious, the symptom must disappear" (320, 1999). For the first time, Salim discovers some parts of the truth which was hidden from him. It happened when he once had a chat with Asha, his uncle's wife, in the kitchen. She told him that his uncle is doing a favor for his mother and him in some way by bringing him to London and sponsoring him.

It was like an invitation and I could not resist. 'But you don't owe her anything,' I said. I expected her to see through my probing ruse and change the subject, but after a long considering silence, she made a decision. She came over to the table and said, 'Well, in a way, your uncle does owe her, I suppose. Do you remember, I told you about that time when we were almost in trouble, when we first got together?' 'Yes, I remember,' I said. 'Well, I don't think I told you that your uncle was detained for several days, did I?' 'No! You mean detained in jail? I've never heard that,' I said with overstated horror, although I really did not know that Uncle Amir had been detained. But this was the story coming, I thought. 'Yes, in jail,' Auntie Asha said. 'Your mother helped him then when he was in trouble. Do you know why he was held? It was to do with us, the two of us. We had just met then, and my brother Hakim, your uncle Hakim, did not approve of us being together.' She paused there and looked at me in a teasingly tantalising way, as if she was considering withholding the rest of her story after all. (73, 2017).

Asha continues to tell him afterwards that her brother, Hakim, fell in love with his mother and after that his uncle was released from jail. It is for this reason that his uncle owes his mother. This truth made Salim realize why his family has gone through their misery and pains in life, and which has resulted in his father's departure. Salim's realization of this truth for the first time changes his point of view towards his mother and uncle. He also comes to realize that his uncle despises his father; and this was the real unspoken truth. Salim's changing view towards his uncle is expressed in his letter to his mother when he writes: "I have now left Uncle Amir and Auntie Asha's home. They have asked me to leave, which was also what I wished. I could not be as they wanted me to be. I could not bear them in the end, and they could not bear me. Uncle

Amir expelled me with unnecessary hard-heartedness but it did not come as a complete surprise” (80, 2017).

Freud intensifies on the idea that a neurotic patient’s suffering and his symptoms may end when he discovers that truth behind them. He explains that: “Our therapy works by transforming what is unconscious into what is conscious, and it works only in so far as it is in a position to effect that transformation” (321,1999). He also discussed the importance of inquiry about the patient’s traumatic experience from his/her relatives. Freud continues: “One can make inquiries about these experiences from the patient’s relatives and they will often be able to recognize, which of them had a traumatic effect, and they can even sometimes report experiences of which the patient himself knows nothing because they occurred at a very early period of his life.” (321, 1999). Similarly, in Salim’s Traumatic experience, he discovers the truth through his relatives. He discovers the lies that were kept away from him when he was still a little boy back in Zanzibar.

It is only when leaves his uncle’s home, Salim finds some inner peace although he still suffers from anxiety, shame, and fear. His psychological rehabilitation begins when he starts expressing his inner feelings to his mother through a notebook that contains unsent letters to her. At this point, Salim begins a series of confessions about his life expressing sometimes anger, disgust, nostalgia, and melancholia. Joe Gill defines confessions as “not a means of expressing the irrepressible truth of prior lived experience, but a ritualized technique for producing truth” (4, 2006). Salim begins to write about all the hidden secrets in his life. Most of his unsent letters were repressed feelings related to his mother and father. Salim’s thoughts are released into the notebook of unsent letters; an example of it was when his mother wrote to him telling him that his uncle has told her that he said unkind things about her. He wrote: “Dear Mama, he lied. I did not say anything unkind about you. I asked if that man forced you. I left that page in my notebook” (82, 2017).

Salim discovers afterwards that his mother has sent him abroad in order to feel free to get married to Hakim, Asha’s bother. He expresses his true feelings about his mother. His changing point of view is seen when he calls his mother a “betrayer.” He wrote: “I know there is a thought I have been keeping at bay, which is that you are a betrayer, that you sent me here to be with Uncle Amir to get me out of your way, that you could think of no further use for me. I started again.” (89, 2017). Moreover, Salim even wrote imaginary letters to his father whom he starts to miss badly after discovering his father’s silence and pain. In one of the letters, he wrote about how he himself has chosen to become a silent being the same as his father, Masud. He wrote:

I live with a sense of dissembling. I do not know how to speak about the things that sadden me, about the feeling of loss that is with me at all times, the sense of wrong-doing. And perhaps no

one knows how to ask. Even those who might have done, don't know how to enquire into what troubles someone like me. Is that how it was for you? Perhaps no one knows another well enough to care, or does not want to presume, or cannot see any troubling thing to ask about. In any case, if anyone does ask I would not know where to begin: with my mother and what befell her, with you, with Uncle Amir, with my journey into this wilderness, with how much I loathe this life, this place, this cringing? (115, 2017).

It is through these unsent letters that Salim confesses about everything that tormented his life. Also, he mourned his past life which contained images of his lonely father. He once wrote: "I thought it would be something you would know about, how it feels to be silent and alone. Perhaps you don't have time for that any more in Kuala Lumpur with all your family around you" (100, 2017). Freud elaborates on the idea of mourning the past as a symptom of traumatic patients. He heavily intensifies that the patients mourn the past because they are fixated to it. Freud explains: "A perfect model of an affective fixation to something that is past is provided by mourning, which actually involves the most complete alienation from the present and the future" (316, 1999). All of Salim's concentration was on the past events of his life. He was restrained to it in which it affected even his relationships with others while he was in London.

V. Conclusion: Salim's Return

It was only when Salim knew that his mother passed away, and his father came back to live in Zanzibar that he decided to go back to his home. He went back to revisit his father because he sensed that his father still holds some love inside him. This is seen in the last unsent letter to his mother when he wrote "Dear Mama, He's come back for you. I don't know why he would do that after such unhappiness. If I ask him, do you think he'll tell me? He was not much of a talker when I knew him. You saw to that" (155, 2017). He went back to reconcile with his misery because it has been a long while since he went back to Zanzibar.

After he arrived, he wanted to see his father again and hear from him the whole hidden secret which he was not able to comprehend throughout his life. He wants to face the ugly truth to be able to release himself from this pain. Salim wants to know about all the small details that made his family's life miserable. It was through his father's retelling the story again to him which will heal him internally. The action of reconstructing what happened to Salim applies to what Freud calls the act to "fill up all the gaps in die patient's memory, to remove his amnesias" (323, 1999). This act of retelling the hidden or forgotten incidents will help Salim release what he has suffered from his whole life so far. This is what Masud describes as the action to "liberate" the self from a "paralysing misery" (233, 2017) which has taken over their family's life. Salim was told that his mother had to compensate with what Hakim want from her in order to free her brother from prison; which is to make herself available sexually for Hakim at his order. The process of gap filling is expressed in Salim's words: "When I heard the news of

Mama's passing away and that you were back, it made me want to come back too. I came to hear from you what Mama would never have been able to tell me. Once you left us, I don't suppose she had any choice but to see through what she had brought about, to wear that garment as if it was one she had chosen for herself" (237, 2017)

At the end of the novel, Masud tells Salim about him and his mother, their life back then, what really happened, and how he ended up living alone because his heart was broken by the woman he really loved. Salim knew all about his mother's unwilling choice to compensate with Hakim in order to release her brother from prison. His father could not live with that burden; as a consequence, he left them. This would be the completion to the story that Asha told Salim about back in London years before his return. He also knows that his mother married Hakim afterwards and divorced his father when he left for London to study. Finally, Salim manages to spend some good moments with his father in Zanzibar before Masud passed away immediately after Salim's departure to England again. Although Salim discovered the secrets that put his family apart, he could never come in good terms with his unconscious in order to have peace in his life or to start over with his father in the place they both had memories in. He chose to go back to London to preferring his solitude over the place that caused him psychological turmoil.

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:2 February 2022

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Freeing the Self from the Burden of a "Paralyzing Misery": A Psychoanalytic Study of Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Gravel Heart* (2017) 12

English Language Teachers' Perspectives on Utilizing Online Courses in Public Schools in Jordan

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Abstract

Teachers' interactions with students have changed due to the advantages of online classes in schools. This study is executed to determine the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the adoption of online courses as a crucial alternative to traditional learning. This study uses a quantitative approach, the method used is a questionnaire. 100 English language teachers participated to predict their points of view related to teaching EFL in an online setting. The results indicate that most of the teachers showed negative attitudes and appeared unprepared and unenthusiastic to teaching in such an environment. Second, teachers seemed to be unqualified in terms of having solid technical knowledge in computers, software, and the internet. Third, teachers reflected that they face difficulties which hinder their acceptance to applying for online courses. The study concluded with the recommendation that large-scale research needs done to have a thorough grasp of the current issue.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, online courses, teachers' perspective, e-learning, English language teachers, EFL, Public Schools in Jordan.

1. Introduction

Adopting online courses began in higher education, especially at universities and colleges. Online learning was adopted in a few schools and mainly focused on postsecondary education within the past decade. Online academic sessions forced teachers and students to work hard to absorb and understand it. However, the result appeared discouraging and somehow disappointing. According to Othman, et al online learning is employed in the higher education model (i.e., university) to: (1) raise university exposure, (2) expand educational suggestions, and (3) study "virtualization" (Othman et al., 2018:55).

According to (Oye et al., 2003), e-learning comprises many computer-assisted learning methods, many of which employ several technologies, including (i) digital library tools, (ii) knowledge representation tools, and (iii) curriculum tools. Furthermore, several software tools

such as Google Meet and Zoom have been widely used to conduct lectures and academic sessions for students. These software tools are considerably helpful and beneficial for both teachers and students and enable achieving the teaching goals during outbreaks (Pratama et al., 2020).

Through e-learning, students could learn whenever and wherever they wanted without physically contacting an instructor or lecturer (Heeger, 2010: 8). Likewise, it allowed graduate/postgraduate students to take similar plans simultaneously. Consequently, online courses can improve the efficiency of students' learning (Heeger, 2010: 12). In essence, these courses have evolved into a professionally developed method and technique for shaping the teaching, training, and development of teaching processes.

To achieve educational objectives, academic and training institutions collaborated to make significant advances in the use of more interactive online strategies that foster and improve the overall performance of students and their educators. Therefore, developed countries recognized the need of having academic institutions which employ interactive online courses (Soleymanpour et al., 2010).

The advantage of the huge advances in technology and the pedagogical shift in education worldwide have allowed providing online courses to become the norm. Teachers and students agree that such a shift catalyzes the whole learning process because it focuses on collaboration, interaction, and autonomous learning. As such, this interactive and collaborative approach enabled students and instructors to co-create a productive learning process. It is a method of self-improvement and active learning (Obringer, 2002). This aspect is a natural revolutionary strategy. It has come to counter the dominant traditional pedagogical approaches and trends. Formal training and learning approaches are challenged by e-learning, which offers innovative answers to difficulties. (Haverila & Barkhi, 2009). In the past, the learning process was mainly revolving around the teacher, whereas this online approach is student-centered. Instead of just passively absorbing information, students have become empowered, autonomous, and active learners.

Online techniques highlight the value of an interactive learning environment that encourages discussion among participants in the learning process, such as students and their teachers. It became imperative that both instructor and students adopt active roles. The role of the instructor narrowed down in that he became a facilitator who monitors and organizes the learning process. For example, teachers may shift from the importer of knowledge to the disseminator of knowledge. The teacher has become a facilitator who monitors and organizes the learning process (Haverila & Barkhi, 2009).

The reasons for choosing to attend online courses vary depending on the circumstances and the needs of the learners. For instance, the required courses are not available at the selected institution or living in remote locations. As a result, online classes offer a great alternative for

students who don't want to be limited by time or place. This aspect allows them to have permanent and unlimited access to instruction anytime from anywhere. Other learners work full-time, and these online courses provide them with crucial solutions to their busy lives. Finally, online classes work better for inhibited students who normally prefer to learn independently.

Traditional education appeared unfit and impractical. Therefore, online courses become a crucial and viable alternative in the face of such a challenge. Online courses are broadcast on national stations for all students. Private and public schools alike started to launch educational platforms where teachers endeavor to provide online classes and tests.

For a long time, the traditional teaching system has been a classroom, where teachers give lectures to students who listen and take notes. Because of the new implementation of online classes, it is necessary to investigate the success and practicality of this approach. A significant learning component in education has been highlighted as communication between teachers and students. Therefore, teachers' perspectives regarding online courses are considered a cornerstone in searching for a better understanding of this phenomenon.

Throughout a long career in education and association with students, it is found that the perspectives and appropriate use of educational developments do not necessarily lead to positive results. It is critical to perform prior studies to determine the attitudes of the target group and the trends and the capabilities to absorb the developments. When reviewing the literature available in the field of e-learning, there is a lack of information about the perspectives of English teachers in public high schools towards online courses.

1.1 Research Questions

In this sense, the problem of study focused on answering the following questions:

- I. To what extent do you find (as an English-language teacher) the e-learning is beneficial and useful for your students?
- II. To what degree were you able to deal with software tools to teach your students the English language during COVID-19 quarantine?
- III. What are the major challenges and critical difficulties you found during your English language teaching through e-learning used amidst the COVID-19 epidemic?
- IV. Were your students capable to understand and learn English language effectively using e-learning and software applications amidst COVID-19 pandemic?
- V. What are major steps and advantageous methods needed for enhancing your e-learning experience when similar emergency cases occur and require the distance learning implementation?

1.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research depends on analyzing the emergency cases (like COVID-19) and their impact on the students' and English language teachers' experience in e-learning. The aim of this analysis is to locate major difficulties and hurdles that limit the wide range implementation of e-learning. The theoretical framework of this study is presented in figure (1).

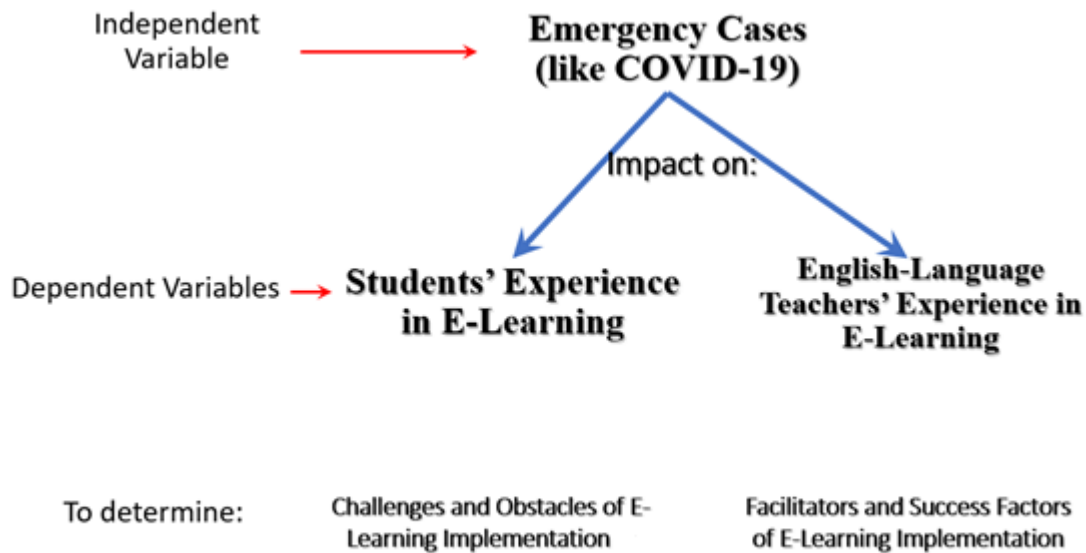


Fig. 1. Research conceptual framework.

2. Literature Review

Dhawan, S. (2020) conducted an analysis to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on education in India. Dhawan, S. reported that India used to give traditional lectures and education. The use of e-learning is new amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and several universities, colleges, and schools stuck with conventional learning approach. Dhawan, S. stated that global educational institutions had to depend completely on online learning and had no choice. Dhawan, S. made a literature review and found that students and teachers had lower level of preparedness to online teaching experience.

Teachers at Syrian English high schools' attitudes toward the internet and communication technologies are investigated (Albirini, 2006). The findings reflected teachers' positive attitudes towards the integration of technology within the learning process. Furthermore, (Othman et al., 2008) explored the impact of E-learning on student motivation in schools. The study's findings revealed that the e-learning experience could succeed if a proper and easy-to-use e-learning system is utilized in the learning process. Likewise, (Haverila & Barkhi, 2009) confirmed that online courses are important for quality education. Moreover, the results showed that technical knowledge proved to be a central competence for many teachers. (Pérezdel & Hernández ,2010) indicated that the advantage of educational technology causes online courses to gain increasing attention in education. Furthermore, their study revealed that

online courses are an important tool that teachers may utilize to boost student motivation and education. However, (Soleymanpour et al., 2010) explained that students do better than those who rely heavily on traditional communication and interact with their mentors.

Generally, (Holley 2012) indicated that online courses provide high-quality education, reflecting better academic performance. He added that the number of undergraduate students who undertake online courses increases over time and that traditional teaching methods are receding. Likewise, (Afolabi 2017) investigated the use of open online educational resources by the first-year university undergraduates and their effect on their achievement. The results indicated that students' understanding of online skills, acceptability, perception, and competencies are of paramount importance to assist them in comprehending and mastering challenging subjects. Additionally, the study revealed that students achieved better results because they had a positive perception of online learning.

Ahn & McEachin, 2017 found similar results when they investigated E-school enrollment trends and evaluated the influence of e-schools on students' learning by comparing e-school outcomes to those in traditional public schools. The findings revealed that low-income families choose public schools with conventional teaching methods, whereas white students prefer e-schools when they are low-income. Remarkably, the results showed that students in e-schools performed lower on standardized tests than their counterparts in traditional public schools.

Abdel-Maksoud, 2018 explored the impact of virtualization technology on student motivation and learning. One hundred sixteen undergraduate students enrolled in a computer networking course at Egypt's universities participated in a developed semi study. The findings indicated that students that employed virtualization technology had higher marks and better motivation. In addition, Adlof et al., 2019 investigated the viability of an online vocabulary learning application. The results of their study, which involved high school students, revealed that the program is implemented. However, usage was lower than expected. Based on the evaluation, the results were positive. Students appeared to learn more vocabulary items and that educators can use such applications to help increase teenage reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Aeiad & Meziane, 2019 described the implementation of an architecture for a personalized and adaptive e-Learning system (APELS), which aims to progress the area. The scheme intends to provide users with a customized and adaptive learning environment based on freely available online materials. The goal of this study was to see if this system (APELS) can provide appropriate learning materials that meet the learners' demands. The findings revealed that the system is of high quality and meets the learning objectives for teaching purposes.

Aljaser, 2019 conducted a study to determine the efficacy of an e-learning environment in improving academic achievement and attitudes toward learning English among 5th-grade primary students. The study concluded that the students who were assessed later had higher achievements than those tested previously. In the post-achievement exam and the English learning attitude scale, the results showed statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group.

The impact of gamification of web-based learning on academic achievement and creative thinking among primary school students is investigated by Aljraiwi, 2019. The predicted effects are discovered using a quasi-experimental approach. After utilizing gamification, the researchers observed a high degree of academic accomplishment and innovative thinking. The impact of employing an online platform as a virtual classroom on student achievement, motivation, and attitudes is investigated (Ahmad & Osman, 2020). The research is conducted on 42 students enrolled in Sultan Qaboos University's "Educational and Information Technology" course. The study's findings revealed that the students performed better and were more motivated because they were enrolled in the virtual classroom.

2.1 The Purpose of the Study

This study investigates the perspectives of English language teachers towards the E-learning and online courses during the spread of the pandemic (COVID-19). In addition, it aims to determine success factors and critical limitations of e-learning implementation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology

The study uses a quantitative approach. A pre-validated questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants about their personal data, computer skills, perceptions towards the benefits and drawbacks of e-learning, as well as recommended solutions for measures to improve the e-learning process.

3.2 Participants

The sample of the study was 100 male and female teachers of English from random public high schools in Amman the capital city of Jordan. The female participants were 57 and 43 male participants. All teachers were Jordanian. Most of the teachers live in Amman and others live in other cities. The teachers' mother tongue is Arabic language. The teachers were selected based on experience in that selected teachers' experience range was (10.6) years. A pre-validated questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants about their data, computer skills, perceptions towards the benefits and drawbacks of e-learning, and recommended solutions for measures to improve the e-learning process, which should all be clearly stated. Hence, the purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the participant's level of agreement and disagreement with pre-defined concepts.

3.3 Data Collection

The questionnaire is uploaded on an online website based on English language teachers' perspectives towards the e-learning and Online courses during the spread of the pandemic (COVID-19) (Zalat et al., 2021), (Koet & Aziz, 2021).

The questionnaire was self-administered. The participants were emailed a link to the questionnaire and a brief explanation of the study's goal and objectives. The sum of participants' acceptance or rejection responses (support or opposition) towards E-learning using computer software was measured. The total scores obtained by the participants on score sheets prepared by the researcher for this purpose were calculated to determine the participants' perspectives.

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the responses of the teachers showed that in general teachers were dissatisfied with adopting on-line courses in teaching English. Teachers' positive perceptions were also important determinants of the success or failure of on-line courses, according to the replies. However, the extensive evaluation of respondents' responses from this questionnaire assists in the development of generalizations, allowing specific difficulties to be addressed in ways that will improve acceptance of online education.

The analysis of the responses of the English teachers regarding their perspectives on on-line courses suggests three important themes: (1) the need for having technical literacy including a solid knowledge in computers, operating software, and on-line connection mechanism, (2) how beneficial on-line courses to students, and (3) the challenges and difficulties that face teachers and students alike in utilizing on-line courses in the learning process.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the responses of the teachers of English showed that, in general, teachers were dissatisfied with adopting online courses in teaching English. According to the replies, teachers' positive perceptions are also important determinants of the success or failure of online classes. However, the extensive evaluation of respondents' responses from this survey assists in the development of generalizations, allowing specific difficulties to be addressed in ways that will improve the acceptance of online education.

The analysis of the responses of the English teachers regarding their perspectives on online courses suggests three important themes: (1) the need for having technical literacy, including a solid knowledge in computers, operating software, and online connection mechanism, (2) how beneficial online courses to students, and (3) the challenges and difficulties that face teachers and students alike in utilizing online courses in the learning process.

4.1 Teachers' Perspectives on the Need for Having Technical Literacy

The analysis of the teachers' responses revealed that most of them believe that having a solid knowledge of technology is the cornerstone of online learning. The teachers' responses ranged between (agree and strongly agree) on this particular point. These results are similar to (Pérezdel & Hernández, 2010), who found that online courses are a vital tool that teachers may utilize to enhance student motivation and education. However, teachers reflected various opposing perspectives regarding their ability to use technology. The justification behind such variation is due to the variation in teachers' motivation, previous knowledge, and willingness to engage themselves in certain courses, which enable them to use such technology with easiness and professionalism. Some teachers even voiced their desire to have such knowledge and asked vehemently for the course in computer science, internet, and online approaches for teaching to polish their skills and familiarize them more about this issue of concern.

It is sensed that some teachers are against online education because they believe that traditional education is better than online learning. This motivation is concealed by their inability to cope with technological issues. Moreover, some teachers opposed the idea and stated that it is time-consuming and yields poor results without even practicing it.

During the second semester of the year 2020, and because of the repercussions of the widespread of COVID-19 across the globe in general, and private and public schools started to recognize the dire need for having online course platforms as a substitute for traditional teaching methods. Teachers in public schools appeared reluctant and rejected the idea because they believed in its inefficiency and impracticality. On the other hand, the private schools had a better experience in this regard. Teachers rushed into providing online lessons, which they broadcast via private online platforms. The important idea to get from the affairs of the two sides is that the motivation, technical knowledge, and rules applied to teachers on both sides can vary clearly. Teachers in public schools appeared less motivated, unwilling, and less educated in technological matters. Private school teachers reflected opposing views, nevertheless.

4.2 Perspectives on How Beneficial Online Courses are to Students

The total number of completed surveys received 100 responses from teachers. The number of teachers who responded and the diversity of their answers is typical of the entire teacher population. Moreover, the reactions of the teachers' perspectives appeared somehow positive and encouraging of the advantages online courses can yield. Around 60 % of the teachers believe that teaching with computers offers a real advantage over the traditional method of instruction. A similar percentage of teachers reflected that E-learning facilitates information delivery to students. Around 75% of the teachers' responses came to support the contention that online courses save time and effort for teachers and students alike. Many teachers also believe that online classes provide rich resources and massive education. Most of the 'advantages' reiterated by the respondents were mainly about motivation and interaction. Teachers' responses to the ability to obtain learning resources from anywhere emphasize the

power of online learning to overcome geographic barriers. The assumption that students become more motivated and interactive proved widespread across teachers' perceptions. Online learning's availability and breadth of resources, as well as the permanence of online discussions and the possibility to examine lectures and other face-to-face activities, were highlighted by respondents. Teachers also believe that online courses give a unique experience for them by accommodating a variety of learning styles and approaches.

4.3 Perspectives Regarding the Challenges and Difficulties Which Face Teachers and Students Alike in Utilizing Online Courses in the Learning Process

The results of this research indicate that there is little awareness and understanding of the nature of e-learning and the benefits it yields. For this reason, using online courses reflects some difficulties and challenges. Generally, teachers reflected negative attitudes by responding that the idea is doomed to failure because of the lack of seriousness from teachers and educational institutions, the poor technical infrastructure, the illiteracy of teachers in technical issues, and the lack of motivation. The salient viewpoint about online courses is that such courses are difficult to apply and incompetent. Most of the responses showed that online courses reduce teamwork and collaboration between students themselves and between students and teachers. However, a lower percentage of teachers believe that online courses are engaging in nature in that they allow inhibited and passive students to jump into the fore. Of the teachers, 70 percent of them believe that various technical issues hinder online learning. These results appeared to agree with (Haverila and Barkhi's, 2009) study that confirmed online courses are important tools for quality education. Technical knowledge has been proved to be a central competence for many teachers. Such issues include the inability of teachers to accommodate e-learning in their teaching methods because of the complex software. Second, some teachers appear illiterate concerning computers science. Third, the ability to log into the internet and surf the net seems very limited in that teachers prefer to do away with the whole e-learning process as a better alternative. The teachers require regular access to a computer and the internet. They also suggested a minimum standard for the computer system to allow efficient access to online student systems. However, some students do not have technology other than internet cafés, libraries, or friends' computers. Many who have a computer at home are likely to share it with partners. Many of the technical difficulties identified by respondents are aggravated if they do not have control of the software available on the computer they are using or have a slow or unreliable connection to the internet.

One of the highest-ranking disadvantages was the lack of interaction between teachers and students and between students themselves. Respondents cited interaction as the single most damaging factor. According to a more in-depth evaluation of the teachers' comments, respondents perceive a lack of commitment from teachers themselves to online communication and interaction. Because they believe online learning is inefficient, over half of the teachers (47%) expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of face-to-face contact in completely online courses, indicating a preference for traditional lectures and lessons. Another issue raised by teachers in their comments was the online submission of students' assignments. Some

technological problems may cause the system to stop, slow down, or even block administering tests or submitting assignments.

Although online courses are not as beneficial as in-person classes, they are preferable to none. Virtual academic groups are already allowing students to access lessons and exercises and engage with teachers in ways that would have been difficult even a decade or two ago if an outbreak had shuttered schools. So, while we may be cautious of online learning, now is the moment to embrace and develop it.

5. Conclusions

The research looked at how English language teachers thought about the practicality and feasibility of using online courses to substitute traditional face-to-face instruction. Despite the multiple benefits mentioned by respondents, the negative aspects considerably exceeded the favorable ones in general during the COVID-19 (Zalat et al., 2021; Koet & Aziz, 2021). Furthermore, results revealed that it is significant (depending on the teachers' points of view) to make appropriate preparations and adequate provision of laptops and internet connection (infrastructure) to implement and benefit from e-learning technology. Moreover, findings indicated that it is vital to improving awareness among educators and students to use online courses. Additionally, it is crucial to increase the number of workshops, training sessions, and education meetings for teachers and students to use several web applications related to e-learning flexibly and easily. In addition, results confirmed that during the COVID-19 global quarantine, not all students and teachers had sufficient internet connection, laptops, and technology experience to implement e-learning. Thus, it is necessary to adopt effective strategic technology plans at the national level to promote e-learning implementation and use among teachers and students.

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Machine Translation: The Question of Appropriate Use - The Students of the Hashemite University as a Case Study

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Abstract

Along with the technological developments taking place in the last decades, many aspects of our life has changed, thus we became more dependent on ways through which we can perform our tasks quickly and somehow efficiently making us, as a result, more technology – oriented. Translation and translating is not an exception indeed. Through the few last decades and up to this moment, we noticed many online sites and services that help users perform their tasks. Even though those sites are very popular, well known and available since long time, some people are unable to use them properly to obtain the result desired. This paper aims at investigating the way students use such sites in order to reveal if they do I the right way that gives them the best result.

Keywords: Machine translation (MT), *google translate*, technical translation course, The Hashemite University

Introduction

Machine translation is a new trend in translation industry that encompasses the use of technology in order to help translators do their job as quickly as possible. “MT is simply a translation performed either purely automatically by a computer or with human assistance which involves the preparation of the ST, i.e. pre-editing and/or product editing, i.e. post – editing” (A.B. As-safi 2011:26). For the most part, the use of these sites or online tools must be accompanied by human assistance which is needed to refine the product of such sites and tools.

This human supervision is truly vital especially if the two languages used are of remote origins such as Arabic and English, which are the languages investigated in this study. This study tries to examine students’ awareness of this fact which is highly significant in order to get the

accurate product of the translation process.

What is Machine Translation?

Machine translation is a relatively new trend in translation that appeared in the late twentieth century. There are several definitions for this new type of translation. For example, W. John Hutchins (1995) said that: “The term 'machine translation' (MT) refers to computerized systems responsible for the production of translations with or without human assistance.” Another definition is presented by Grace Hui-chin Lin (2009) who said: “Machine translation (MT) is a modern method of translation through computer assistance, which is a sub-field of computational linguistics.”.

Thus, the concept of machine translation incorporates the employment of technology by using a software to help the translator produce the required product i.e. the target text. The field of machine translation requires the cooperation between those who work in the translation industry and the specialists in computer sciences and IT in order to enable computer software to transfer a text from one language to another.

Machine Translation Tools/Sites and Their Development

The area of machine translation has passed through different waves of development since its foundation in early 1950s and a960. It was first used and was “an ideal to which no human translator can aspire, nor translations of literary texts, for the subtleties and nuances of poetry are beyond computational analysis, but translations of technical manuals, scientific documents, commercial prospectuses, administrative memoranda, medical reports” (Hutchins 1995). Thus, machine translation was suitable for texts which contain normal words with the denotative usage that did not require going deep in meaning.

Since its beginning until today, machine translation was done through many tools/sites that underwent and still undergo continuous development and enhancement. Through this paper, the light will be shed on three of them: Google translate, Bing Microsoft translator, and Modern MT.

Methodology and Data Collection

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a questionnaire conducted through google forms containing 8 questions related to the topic of the study sent to students taking two courses, technical translation, and applied English. The questions asked about some aspects that can reveal the way those students use such tools. The sample involved in the study comprised 43 students of different studying years and different specialties as both courses – technical translation and applied English- are elective courses offered to all students.

Data Analysis

As mentioned in the previous part, the survey that was conducted by google forms contains 8 questions reflecting the sides of students' strategies when using MT.

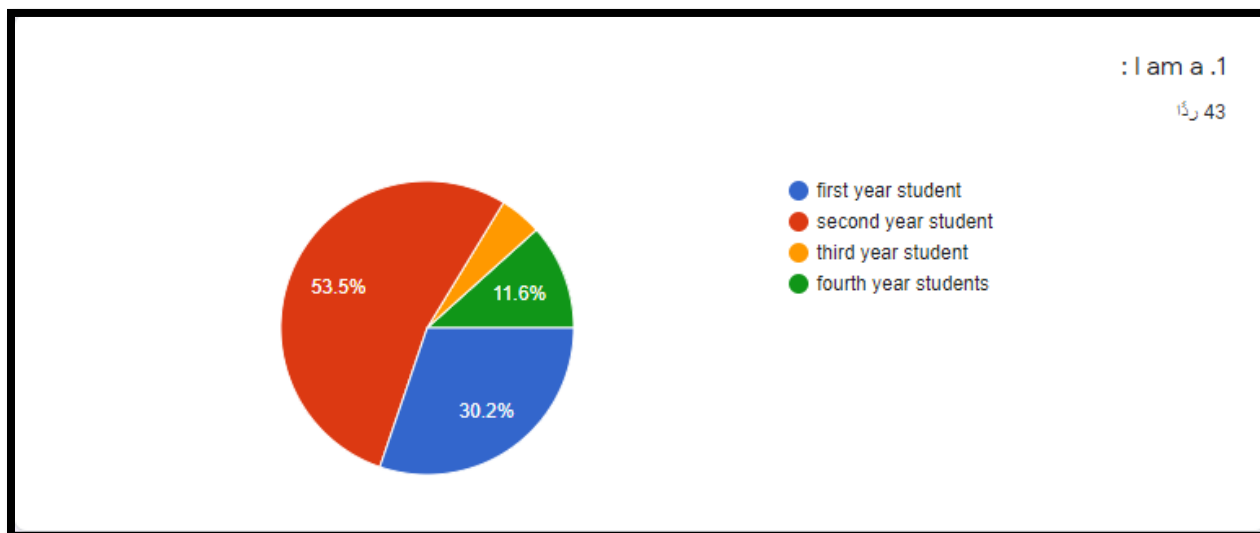


Figure 1: Question 1

The sample studied included 43 students distributed on the different studying years as can be seen in the above figure. Of these, 53.5 % (23 students) are second year students , 30.2% (13 students) are first year students, 11.6% (5 students) are fourth year students, and 2 students forming 4.7% are third year students.

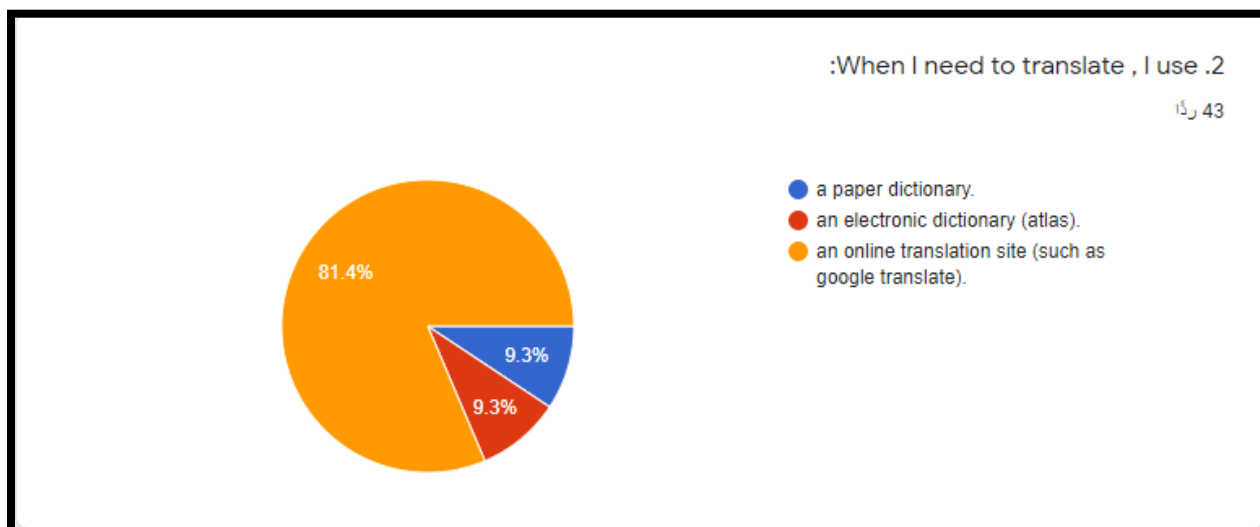


Figure 2: Question 2

The second question of the survey, asked the students about the tool they use usually when they want to translate a text. As shown in figure 2, 81.4% (35 students) said that they use an online site such as google translate while 4 students forming 4.9% of the sample chose the other options which were the traditional paper dictionary and the electronic dictionary. This answer is logical and comprehensible for many reasons, the first one is that the paper dictionary is tedious and requires time and effort to look up a word making it less practical. Though quick and easy to use, the electronic dictionary is also not a practical choice due to its high price in the market making it unaffordable for many students. On the other hand, sites like google translate are easy to use, accessible anytime and anywhere, and needing lesser time and effort the fact that makes such sites appealing for users.

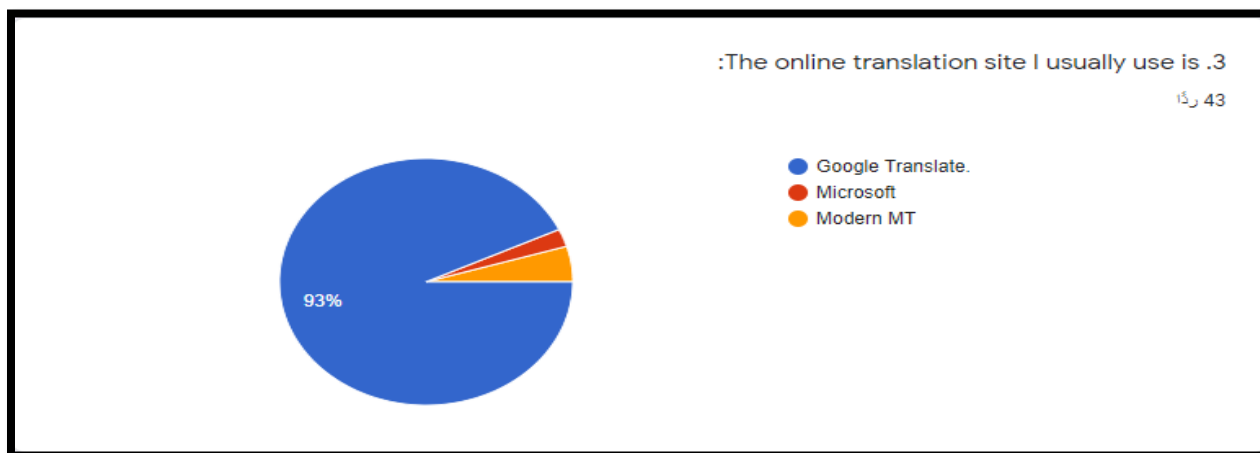


Figure 3: Question 3

Related to the previous question, the third question asked about which translation students normally use when they want to translate. It is no surprise that the majority (93% or 40 students) chose *google translate* as it is more popular and known than Microsoft translator (chosen by 1 student) and Modern MT (chosen by two students).

According to Wikipedia, *google translate* is “a multilingual neural machine translation service developed by Google to translate text, documents and websites from one language into another. “which started in 2006. In order to collect and gather data, this service used documents of the UN and the European Parliament. *Google translate* got great fame among people and students and it is in fact the first site coming in mind when thinking of machine translation.

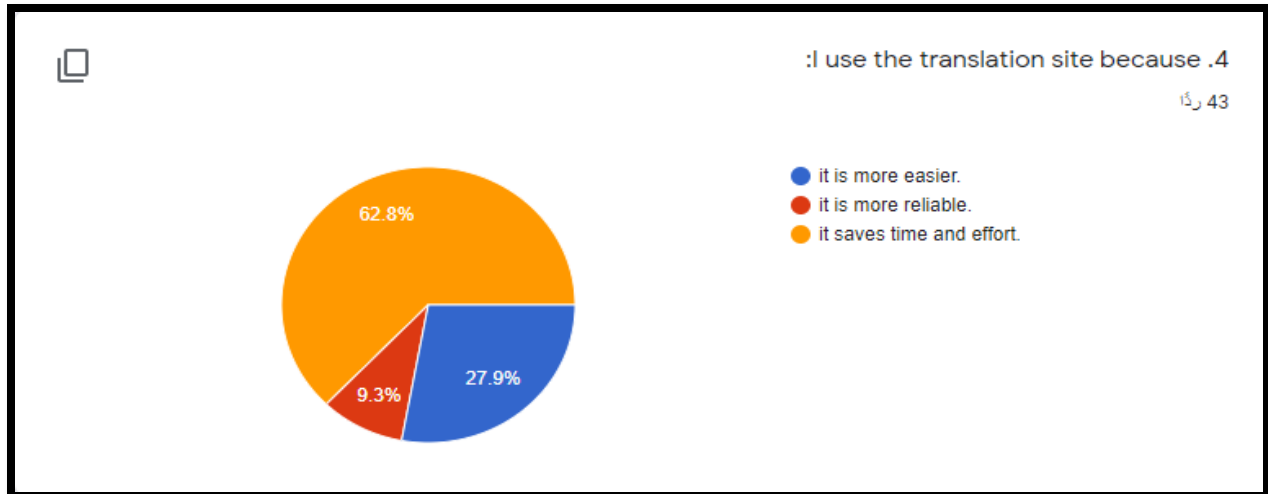


Figure 4: Question 4

The fourth question asked about the reason of opting for and using translation sites instead of the other options. 62.8% of the sample answered because such sites save time and effort while 27.9% said because it is easier, and the third option (because it is reliable) got the least percentage that did not exceed 10%. Students gave the priority to saving time and effort because they want something to help them in their studies, assignments, and research quickly and without taking much effort from them.

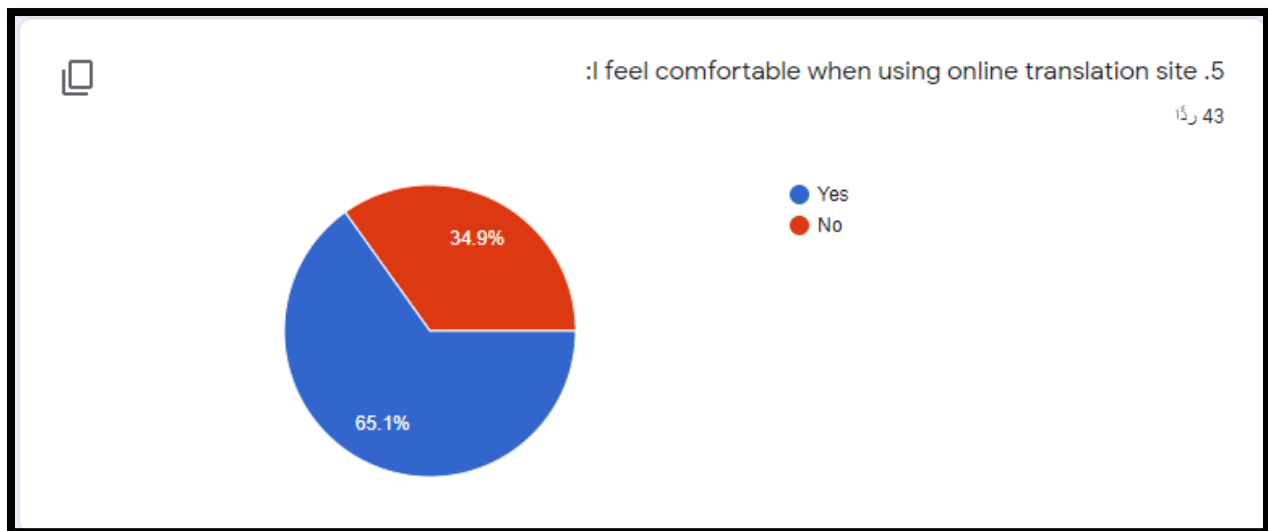


Figure 5: Question 5

The next question asked about whether the students are comfortable and satisfied when they use the translation site. 65.1 % answered positively as opposed to 34.9% answering negatively. The reason behind the positive attitude towards translation sites is students'

confidence in those sites as they are created by experts who put great knowledge and experience to build such sites. Moreover, since the service of these sites are easily accessible and requiring no effort or lots of time, it creates a feel of ease and comfort while it is used.

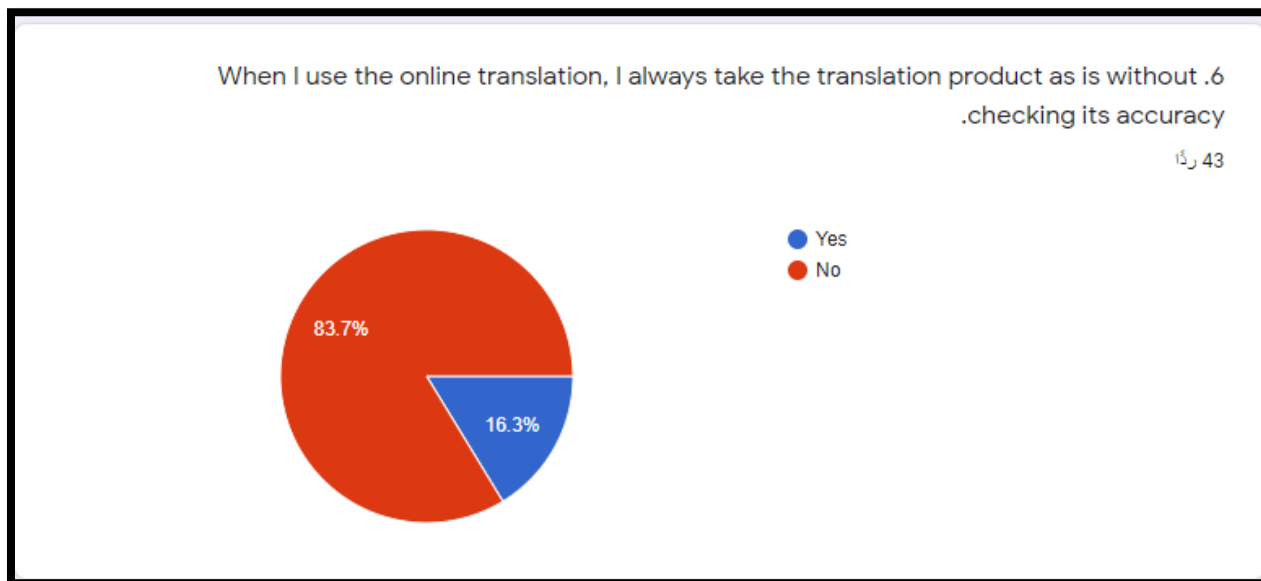


Figure 6: Question 6

Question number 6 asked about an important aspect that must be taken into consideration when dealing with machine translation which is the aspect of accuracy. According to <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>, accuracy is “1. freedom from mistake or error: CORRECTNESS .” It means that the TL produced should be free of errors whether grammatical, structural, spelling, or the information. This requires the careful proofreading and critical evaluation of the result produced and not taking it for granted or as it post editing process.

The importance of the post editing process reveals itself when the SL and the TL are of two significantly remote languages such as English (coming from the Germanic family) and Arabic (which is a Semitic language) with lots of differences, grammatical and structural, and lots of gaps that cannot be bridged but by post editing and careful revision.

Based on the replies received from the students, it seems that the students are aware of the fact that they should revise the product of the online translation site. This is clear as 83.7% of the sample answered negatively to the question asking if they take the product of the site as is without checking its accuracy while 16.3% answered that they take it without checking. In the second part of the question, they were asked about the reason and the answers were as the

following:

Those who answered positively that they take the product without checking it for accuracy said they do so because they are confident that sites like *google translate* are always accurate and correct, thus there is no need for any revision.

The majority who answered negatively and who checked the TLT produced, said that they revise the text because of many reasons:

- those sites may translate the text literally without taking any care of the mismatches or the difference between the languages involved thus giving a misleading and incorrect translation.
- those sites may give equivalents which are not appropriate to the text translated especially that those sites do not know the type of the text that we are translating.
- to check the clarity of the text produced.
- those sites generally give inaccurate translations for metaphors and scientific terms which need the appropriate equivalent to be given by a human translator.

Consequently, the major reason for the need of post editing is to make sure that the site used gave you the appropriate equivalent especially if we translate poetry including figurative language that requires the decision of a human translator rather than a site that may fail giving the natural rendition.

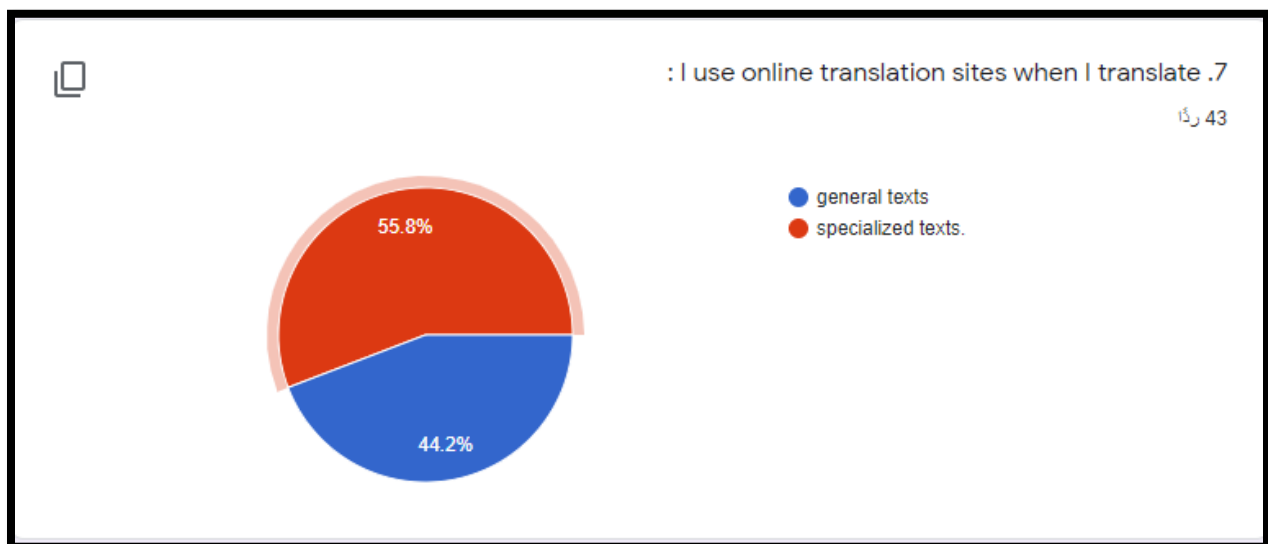


Figure 7: Question 7

In the seventh question, the students were asked about when they normally use the online translation sites. The majority (55.8%) answered they use it when they translate specialized texts. On the other hand, 44.2% of them answered they use it when they translate general (unspecialized) texts. This can be explained in that when translating general texts, we normally face texts that contains words and expressions that are common, and which can be easily translated without the need to go to a dictionary. On the other hand, specialized texts have specialized terms and jargon that may not be known or common for translators who find themselves in need to check the dictionary to look up such words and expressions.

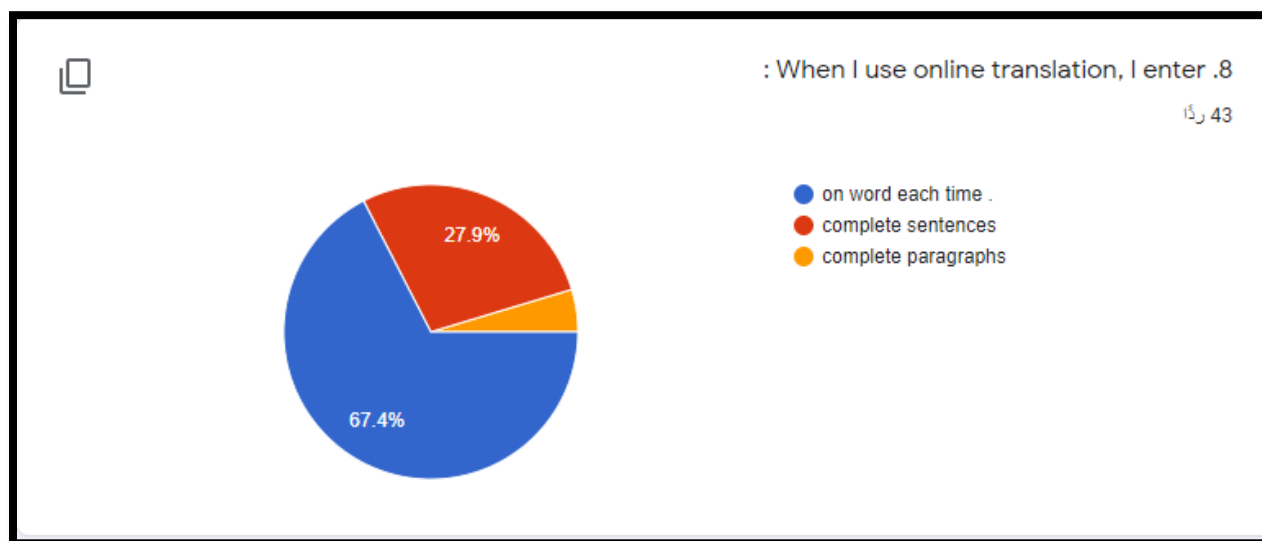


Figure 8: Question 8

This following question asked about an important point that users should take into consideration when using online translation sites which is the suitable input that gives the translator the appropriate and accurate output. The question asked what the suitable entity is to be entered in order to give the user the accurate equivalent. 67.4% of the sample answered the suitable option is entering one lexical item each time while 27.9% answered entering complete sentences and 4.7% chose entering complete paragraphs.

When taking Arabic and English as both SL and TL, the one word option is more plausible and helpful solution that gives the accurate equivalent. This is due to the fact that the two languages are of remote origins as mentioned earlier in this paper. This in fact makes entering complete sentences, in many cases, an unsuccessful option as it may result in unnatural renditions. This is also even more clear when it comes to whole paragraphs containing multiple sentences.

To clarify this point, let's have a look at the translation of this paragraph taken from Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comet>) into Arabic done by the three sites:

“A comet is an icy small Solar System body that heats up when passing close to the Sun displaying a visible atmosphere, and sometimes also a tail. These phenomena are due to the effects of solar radiation upon the nucleus of the comet. Comet nuclei range from a few hundred meters to tens of kilometers and are composed of collections of ice, dust, and small rocky particles.”

Using google translate, here is the translation offered:

“المذنب هو جسم جليدي صغير من النظام الشمسي يسخن عند المرور بالقرب من الشمس ويعرض الغلاف الجوي المرني ، وأحياناً الذيل أيضاً. تعود هذه الظواهر إلى تأثيرات الإشعاع الشمسي على نواة المذنب. تتراوح نوى المذنب من بضع مئات من الأمتار إلى عشرات الكيلومترات وتتكون من مجموعات من الجليد والغبار وجزيئات صخرية صغيرة.”

After reading the translation, we can see it has some problems, though minor, that need to be revised in order to make the TLT more accurate. For example, ويعرض الغلاف الجوي المرني which is the equivalent of (displaying a visible atmosphere) needs to be changed to مظهراً غلافاً جويّاً مرأياً .

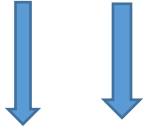
The word displaying is an adjective while the word يعرض is a verb which means (display). The accurate rendition should be مظهراً which means showing or displaying, thus giving the same meaning indicated in the SLT. Another problem which is grammatical, is the rendition of (a visible atmosphere) which is an indefinite noun to الغلاف الجوي المرني which is definite. In order to be correct, it should be translated as غلافاً جويّاً مرأياً by removing the Arabic definite article (ال) from the beginning of the noun الغلاف (atmosphere) and the two adjectives مرأياً and جويّاً (visible).

The translation offered by Modern MT is the following:

“المذنب هو جسم نظام شمسي صغير جليدي يسخن عندما يمر بالقرب من الشمس ويعرض جواً مرنياً ، وأحياناً أيضاً ذيلًا. ترجع هذه الظواهر إلى آثار الإشعاع الشمسي على نواة المذنب. تتراوح نوى المذنبات من بضع مئات من الأمتار إلى عشرات الكيلومترات وتتكون من مجموعات من الجليد والغبار والجسيمات الصخرية الصغيرة.”

Also this translation needs even more modification in order to be accurate. The first problem is with the structure and the order of the adjectives. In Arabic, unlike English, adjectives are post modifiers meaning that they modify the noun before them. For example, *Sally bought a big car* is translated into Arabic as:

اشترت سالي سيارة كبيرة



ADJ NOUN

As shown in the example, the Arabic adjective كبيرة (big) came after the noun سيارة (car). Applying this on the translation produced by Modern MT shows that it is confusing. The reason for the confusion resulted from the fact that both adjective صغير (small) and جليدي (icy) came after the noun نظام شمسي (solar system) which makes it seem that the two adjectives describe solar system rather than body. Thus, the translation should be revised to:

المذنب هو جسم صغير جليدي من النظام الشمسي.

by putting the two adjectives in the right place after the noun.

Bing Microsoft Translator offered the following translation:

"المذنب هو جسم النظام الشمسي الصغير الجليدي الذي يسخن عند المرور بالقرب من الشمس عرض الغلاف الجوي مرئية، وأحيانا أيضا ذيل. هذه الظواهر ترجع إلى آثار الإشعاع الشمسي على نواة المذنب. تتراوح نواة المذنب من بضع مئات من الأمتار إلى عشرات الكيلومترات وتتكون من مجموعات من الجليد والغبار والجسيمات الصخرية الصغيرة."

The third site (**Bing Microsoft Translator**) also produced a text that needs revision and Editing even more than the two previous TLTs. The first problem is the problem of the position of the adjectives, similar to the case found in Modern MT. A new problem appeared here is the use of a wrong part of speech in Arabic as an equivalent of the English lexical item. This is shown in translating the English adjective (displaying) to the Arabic noun عرض.

In English, the (ing) form of a verb or the present participle is either a part of the verb like in the continuous tense, and adjective when it comes without any form of verbs to Be, or a gerund functioning as a subject when it comes at the beginning of the sentence. Here in the SLT, the word (displaying) came as an adjective so it must be translated as مظهراً or عارضاً which are the adjectives, instead of (عرض) which is a noun, thus a wrong equivalent.

Another problem is gender agreement which is very wide and important in Arabic. In Arabic a noun must agree with the adjective modifying it. In this translation, the site translated (visible) into (مرئية) which is a feminine adjective though it modifies الغلاف الجوي which is a masculine noun. Consequently, the accurate translation must be مرئياً which is the masculine adjective.

Thus, we can see that whichever site we use, it needs post editing and revision as

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:2 February 2022

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there might be lots of problems that needs to be fixed. This process can be done by a human translator who must think of the right equivalent, the right form of a verb, or the right part of speech if the SLT lexical item may have many equivalents in the TL depending on its part of speech.

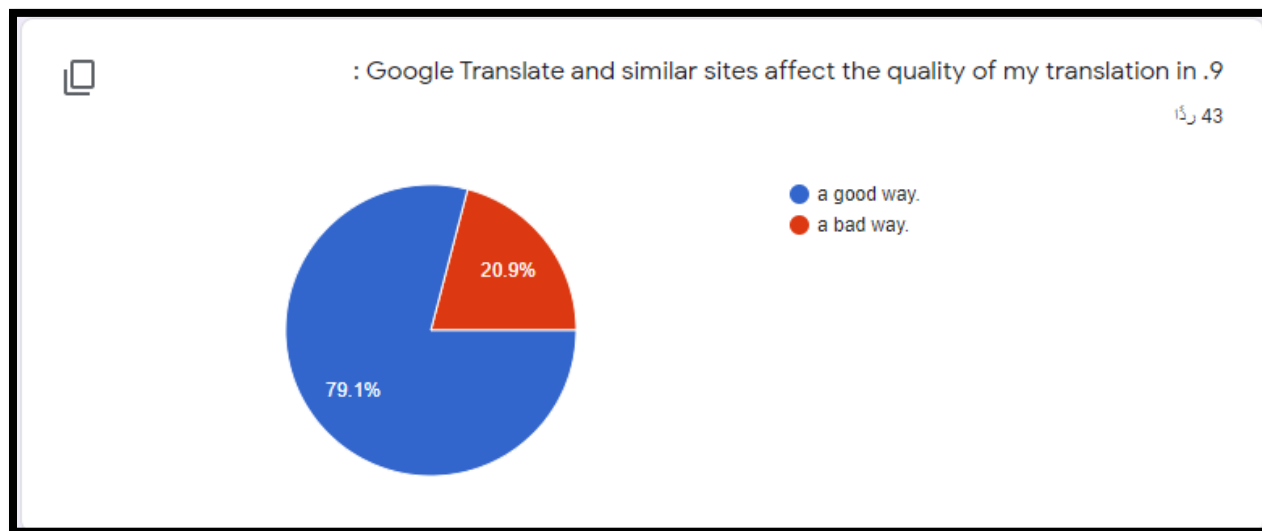


Figure 9: Question 9

The last question asked about the effect these sites may put on the product. 79.1% of the sample said that the effect is positive while the rest (20.9%) answered it is negative. This is justified because of the trust students put in these sites as they are prepared by scientists and experts in the field.

Conclusion

In conclusion, even though machine translation is made to facilitate the job of translators by helping them do their tasks quickly, its product needs to be evaluated and post edited. The reason behind this is that the process of translation is done by a computerized system that lacks the logic or the comprehension needed to translate some contexts, which is done only by the human mind. Moreover, due to the significant differences between the languages, especially those of remote origins, many grammatical and structural mismatches may appear. Those mismatches are discovered when revising the product which will enable the translator to correct them thus making the TLT more accurate and understandable.

As can be seen from the results of the survey conducted, majority of the students

who did the survey are aware of this fact believing that the product of machine translation is not sacred, or highly reliable as it may produce unnatural, and many errors of translation that require the interference of the human mind.

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 - <https://www.modernmt.com/translate/>
 - <https://translate.google.com/>
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Designing a Syllabus-Based Formal English Test for Non-English Major College Students in Vietnam

Ho Thi Lai, M.TESOL
Tran Nguyen Thi Nhat Vuong, M.TESOL

Abstract

This article describes the process of designing a syllabus-based formal English test for Information Technology major freshmen at a university in Vietnam. The following factors are taken into consideration by the test makers: (1) candidates and assessment context, (2) type and purpose of the assessment, (3) task-types, (4) marking scheme, (5) qualities of test usefulness, (6) backwash, and (7) communicative functions.

Keywords: Language assessment, Syllabus-based test, English test, Non-native English learner, Vietnam

Introduction

Language testing and assessment is a crucial part of language education as it can facilitate the tracking of learning progress and providing feedback to improve both learning and teaching (Michell & Davison, 2020; Poehner & Inbar-Lourie, 2020). In Vietnam, the English language has enjoyed its unrivaled and undisputed position as the first most important foreign language which has been taught at every level of education (Nguyen, 2017). Our primary concern is that not all Vietnamese EFL teachers adhere to international standards in test development and quality control. This paper, therefore, provides an example of essential aspects that EFL teachers should take into account when developing a syllabus-based formal English test.

1. Candidates and Assessment Context

A. Characteristics of Candidates

Personal Characteristics

The test takers are the first year Information Technology major students at a local university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. They are all Vietnamese citizens and non-native speakers of English, from eighteen to twenty-two years of age, and from variety of social classes and educational backgrounds. These learners have done different kinds of English tests (listening, speaking, reading, and writing tests).

Topical Knowledge

The test takers have relatively diverse topical knowledge due to their different social classes and educational backgrounds. In addition, the course has helped these students be versed in everyday situations and various topics such as school, social life, weather, food, travel, vehicles, work and leisure.

General Levels and Profiles of Language Knowledge of Test Takers

The test takers' levels of English proficiency range from Beginner/Elementary to Pre-Intermediate. Generally, these students have little knowledge of English. A great number of them spend more time learning vocabulary and grammar than practising the four basic skills. Most of them regard listening as the biggest challenge in mastering the target language.

Possible Affective Responses to Taking Test

The students will feel comfortable with the test since it is based on the textbook they have been using (New Interchange Book 1, from unit eight to unit sixteen). The contemporary topics introduced in these units are of high interest and relevance to both students and teachers (such as future plans, describing people, and computers). Furthermore, the students have been familiar with the types of similar test tasks in the first eight units in the coursebook.

B. Assessment Context

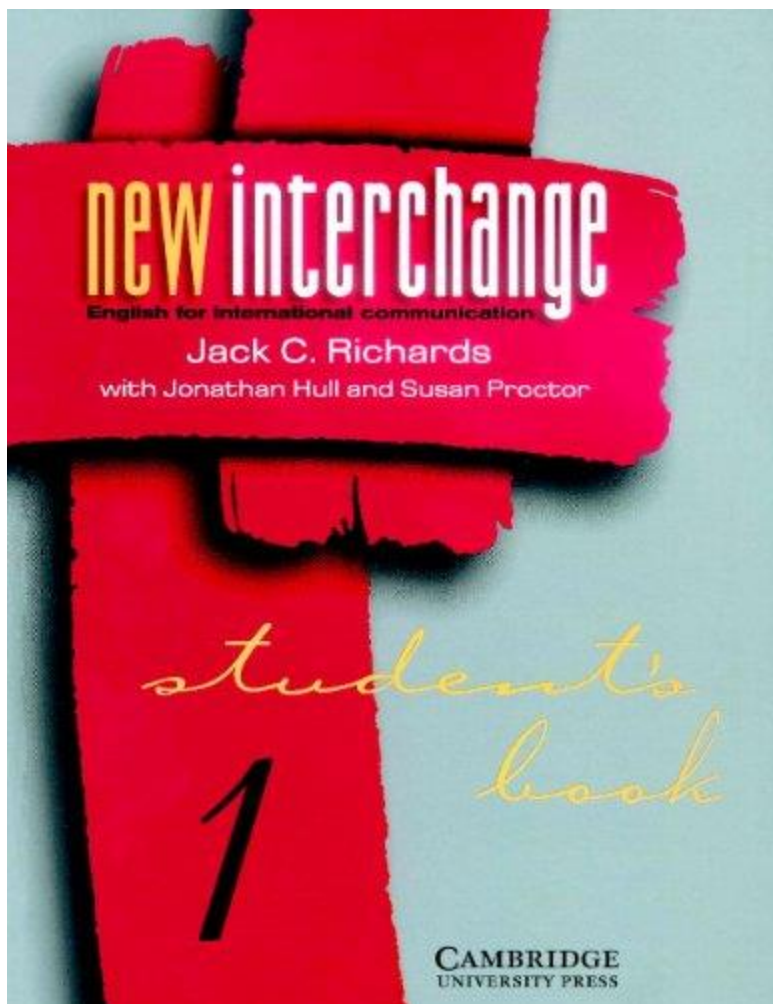
Institution and Syllabus

The syllabus has been carefully designed and revised by the faculty members including two foreign Assistant Professors and twenty Vietnamese lecturers, who had been trained in English language testing and evaluation. They also have hands-on experience in developing English tests. Only the Dean has authority to approve the syllabus and select good tests for final examinations at the end of each course.

The syllabus covers the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as well as improving pronunciation, grammar knowledge and building vocabulary. However, the focus is on listening and speaking, and other elements (reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary) provide support for this emphasis. Especially, the listening tasks in the syllabus enable learners to identify purposes for listening and bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world.

After every eight units, the teacher will evaluate the students' progress and decide if any areas need improvement by using tests developed by himself/herself. The teacher only tests what the students have actually learned and practiced in the set of eight units. In other words, only items actively presented and practiced in the textbook (New Interchange Book 1) are tested.

Each test lasts approximately 45-60 minutes, including listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary knowledge test items. The evaluation of students' oral and writing skills is separately conducted at another time.



Courtesy: <https://www.abebooks.com/>

Textbook

New Interchange Book 1 is the textbook on which the test is based. Generally, it is designed for students at pre-intermediate level. The book takes learners through all four English language skills (both productive and receptive ones). However, it emphasizes the Communicative Language Learning by providing a great number of listening and speaking activities. These activities aim to help the students feel confident with their English for use in different everyday situations.

2. Type and Purpose of the Assessment

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The type of the assessment we design is the *summative assessment* which takes place at the end of the course. The purpose is to help teachers (1) track their students' learning progress, (2) check on the mastery of what their students have been taught on specific areas of learning (listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary), and (3) find out the students' strengths and weaknesses as well. The teachers can use the information got from the evaluation to develop future lesson plans to help their students attain the desired outcomes as mentioned in the syllabus.

3. Task-types

Bachman and Palmer (1996) assert that the types of tasks that are included in language tests are very important. We are clearly aware that the way we test language ability affects how our students perform on language tests and hence the quality of the information obtained from our tests.

The test includes three main sections: listening, reading, and grammar and vocabulary. These sections are reported on separate scales so the score on each part is also reported separately. Different task-types based on the topics introduced in the textbook are included in the test.

The listening section lasts about 30 minutes, including time for pauses:

| Part | Task Type | No | Task format |
|------|--------------------------------------|----|--|
| A | True/False | 10 | Test-takers listen to the conversation about people's future plans and answer True/ False questions on the content. <u>Ex:</u> 1. Charlie doesn't want to make future plans. T/ F 2. Charlie wants to buy a new sports car. T/ F 3. Charlie doesn't like a Trans Am. T/F |
| B | Multiple choice statement completion | 5 | Test- takers listen to people talking about distance and measurements, and then answer multiple choice questions on the content by choosing the correct information. <u>Ex:</u> New Zealand has lots of _____. a. Deserts b. Farms and mountains c. Rivers and canals |
| C | Multiple choice questions | 5 | Test-takers listen to people describing 5 people, and then answer multiple-choice comprehension questions by selecting the best answer. |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | <p><u>Ex:</u> 1. What does Brian look like?</p> <p>a. Brian’s pretty tall with long brown hair and a moustache.</p> <p>b. Brian’s pretty tall with dark brown hair and a moustache.</p> <p>c. Brian’s pretty tall with dark gray hair and a moustache.</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

The listening tasks are played twice because the questions ask for details. The texts are clearly and carefully scripted. The recordings are also carefully prepared. There are 20 items/questions in the listening section, and there are only two or three responses to each question.

The second section of the test is reading. Students are asked to read a short text, and then complete sentences by answering multiple-choice items. The following example is taken from the reading section:

Below is an article with incomplete sentences. For each numbered blank space you will see four corresponding responses, marked a, b, c, and d. Choose the best answer to complete each sentence.

Computers are being used with a program (1) _____ to make better use of the Earth’s resources.

1. a. described b. designed c. fitted d. reviewed

This type of task is chosen because the topic “*computers*” is of great interest and relevance to the students. The article is adopted from an authentic material and the understanding of the text is crucial to the students majored in Information Technology.

The third section of the test is grammar and vocabulary. The multiple-choice grammar items are written in four different ways. (1) The first type is the incomplete statement. In this task type, each incomplete item is followed by four multiple-choice options. It is an efficient way to test grammar. The following example item is taken from the grammar section:

My brother is _____ his twenties.

a. at b. in c. on d. for

(2) The second task type is considered to be useful for testing short answers and responses.

What does your friend look like?

- a. No, he doesn't.
- b. Yes, he does.
- c. She's short.
- d. She likes cats.

(3) The third item type is to check the students' understanding of grammar rules. This task type requires knowledge of some particular syntax that is necessary for understanding of a sentence.

He began learning English 2 years ago.

- a. He had learned English for 2 years.
- b. He has learned English for 2 years.
- c. He has learned English since 2 years.
- d. He learned English for 2 years.

(4) The last task type is the multiple-choice vocabulary items. The students are expected to choose the best answer which has the most similar meaning to the underlined words or phrase.

“Where are you going? I'll give you a lift.”

- a. take you in my car
- b. follow you
- c. lift you up
- d. give you my car

4. Marking Scheme

As mentioned before, although the course covers all four skills, particular emphasis is placed on listening and speaking. Because speaking and writing tests are carried out separately, the assessment focuses on the listening skill. Other parts (reading, grammar and vocabulary) just support the listening section. Hence, the weight of each area is as follows - listening: 40%, reading: 20%, grammar: 20%, and vocabulary: 20%.

Marking is one of the most time-consuming parts of many teachers' jobs (Harris & McCann, 1994). To make the marking procedure less time-consuming but still objective and reliable, the test developers choose only two task types that are true/false items and multiple choice questions. The correct answers to these question types are unique.

The test makers do not take part in the marking procedure. All responses are scored by other teachers in the faculty after they are supplied with the marking keys by the test developers. This makes sure that the responses are scored consistently and reliably.

5. Qualities of Test Usefulness

Reliability

As mentioned before, the teachers also use the results of the language test to make decisions about individuals. However, these decisions have relatively minor impacts on the individuals or the program and can generally be reserved quite easily. Therefore, minimum acceptable level for reliability can be quite low.

Referring to reliability, the first thing to consider is the testing environment. It can be said that there will be no variation in setting. The time at which the test is administered is at the end of the eighth week of the course. All administrations of the tests are carried out in the same setting. Noise level is always very low. Temperature and humidity are comfortable. Seating conditions are individual chairs. Lighting is always well lit. Materials and equipment are familiar to students: pens, pencils, paper, and copy of test questions. Those who are involved in administering the test are not always familiar to the test takers and must be trained for proctoring. When carrying out the assessment, the proctors always make sure that the students can not copy or help each other, because the performance of each individual learner is being tested.

In addition, clear and explicit instructions are provided. The instructions are presented both in the target language (in written English) and in Vietnamese orally to insure that the students understand them thoroughly. The text is presented via a video tape player, so the instructions would be also presented on the tape. Because the test includes multiple parts, a set of both specific and general instructions is provided.

PART 1: LISTENING (40 marks)

- A. Listening to the conversation about people's future plans, and circle True (T) or False (F). (20 marks)
- B. Listen to people talking about distance and measurements. Check (✓) the correct information. (10 marks)
- C. Listen to people describing 5 people. Choose the best answer. (10 marks)

PART 2: READING (20 marks) Below is an article with incomplete sentences. For each numbered blank space you will see four corresponding responses, marked a, b, c, and d. Choose the best answer to complete each sentence.

PART 3: GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY (40 marks)

- A. Grammar** (20 marks) Circle the response of your choice.
- B. Vocabulary** (20 marks) Choose the best answer which has the most similar meaning to the underlined words or phrase.

The above instructions are efficient and effective because they are simple and short enough for test takers to understand and are sufficiently detailed for test takers to know exactly what they are expected to do.

In terms of structure, the test is well laid out and legible. The presented items are unambiguous. The most important thing is that the students have been familiar with the format and test techniques after taking the end-of-first-eight-units tests. Hughes (2002, p. 36) asserts that “the more items that you have on a test, the more reliable the test will be.” However, it is a fact that we can not cover all items. One thing to bear in mind is that there are three main parts in the test (listening, reading, and grammar-and-vocabulary), the additional items are independent of each other and each additional item represents a fresh start for the candidate. The amount time allotted for the entire test is forty-five minutes which is considered to be enough for them to do.

For high scorer reliability, detailed and carefully constructed scoring keys are provided. As mentioned before, we use items that permit an objective procedure. They are quick and easy to score. Moreover, they can be scored consistently and reliably. The responses are scored by some different markers who do not teach the test-takers. The scores then will be passed to the Dean to investigate their reliability. In addition, the identification of test-takers is only made through numbers and codes, which is of high reliability.

Validity

In terms of validity, the test has content validity in some aspects. First of all, the test development is based on a carefully designed TOS (Table of Specifications) or the task specifications. The language ability construct for this test is clearly and unambiguously defined and relevant to the purpose of the test. The construct definition constitutes a representative sample of the listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary test, in which it focuses on listening (the listening test score: 40% out of 100%; meanwhile, reading: 20%, grammar: 20%, and vocabulary: 20%).

As all the tasks are taken and edited from the course book, this test is obviously consistent with what the syllabus intends to cover. However, there are so many things for the specification of skills (that the syllabus intends to cover) to appear in such a test. Therefore, we should accept a fact that the designed test tasks may be short but complex enough to allow the test takers to demonstrate their language ability in some aspects, and the responses are likely to reveal areas ignored in teaching and learning. The most important thing is that main areas identified in the syllabus are presented in the test. Such a test is likely to have a beneficial backwash.

6. Backwash

Backwash is the effect that a test has on teaching and learning. This test is believed to cause a positive backwash effect on the students' learning. At the beginning of the course, we always tell our students how we are going to test them. It is also clear to them that the test would reflect what we are doing in the class. Moreover, the test would be used after every eight units and would assess students' learning listening and reading skills, as well as grammar and vocabulary.

This test also helps enhance learner autonomy. The students are encouraged to take charge of their own learning. The test helps them adjust their personal goals by identifying their strengths and weaknesses. For example, one student might note that he could have missed important grammar knowledge or productive vocabulary items through the test, and then he would know where he needs to improve.

In addition, the test helps the teachers specify their language teaching results, as well as their students' strengths and weaknesses. For example, through the test result analysis, we identify that many students have problems with not only their listening skills but also the use of articles, tenses (simple present, simple past and present perfect), and word-choice. Our future teaching and learning plan will tackle the genuine problems taken from the test results.

7. Communicative Functions

The main goal of the assessment is to test the students' communicative competence. Therefore, the test items reflect the target language use in communicative contexts rather than in isolation. Nevertheless, the assessment does not engage students in communicative activities in some measure.

As mentioned before, the primary goal of the course is to teach students how to use English in everyday situations and needs. Therefore, the designed test deals with contemporary topics which are of high interest and relevance to both students and teachers. The tasks related to *school*, *work*, *leisure*, and *social life* are designed to bridge the gap between the classroom and the real life.

Furthermore, tasks adapted from authentic sources are used to develop receptive skills (listening and reading). For example, the reading task about *computers*, which emphasizes the correct understanding of the context, is closely related to both the students' major and the testing of terminology.

The grammar and vocabulary points are also extracted in communicative situations. It means that the test generally tests the students' grammar and vocabulary knowledge in situations

where it is needed. However, it does not mean that the assessment tends to be completely communicative. The language assessment involves testing out hypotheses about how the language works. In testing these hypotheses, the students tend to rely more on grammatical and lexical explanations than others.

Conclusion

The test makers adhere to international standards in the test development and quality control. Hopefully, this paper is helpful for not only teachers of English in Vietnam but also other English teachers who need to design syllabus-based tests for their non-native English learners.

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:2 February 2022

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Designing a Syllabus-Based Formal English Test for Non-English Major College Students in Vietnam

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Developing Vocabulary Strategies for Freshman EFL Students in Afghanistan

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Abstract

This article explains learning strategies and classification of learning vocabulary strategies for freshman students which will be greatly useful in teaching English to freshmen students in Afghanistan. It also talks about effective vocabulary instruction which emphasizes in direct instruction. Teachers also use from word play to amplify the knowing of new words and create hunger for learning those new words. It highlights the points English as a foreign language learners (EFL) students need to know about new vocabulary. Furthermore, it clarifies the points EFL students need to know about learning new vocabulary especially they should know about the syntax and content of the new words. Moreover, it tries to show the ways in which vocabulary can be taught. The methodology of this research is library-oriented. I used information from different books and published articles. This article suggests some activities for teaching vocabulary which the teachers can use while teaching to facilitate learning of new words.

Keywords: Classification, EFL students, learning strategies, vocabulary, new words, teaching, teachers, freshmen, Afghanistan.

Introduction

Vocabulary is one of the essential elements of the language system, and it is known as the building blocks of learning a new language. Many scholars believe that lexical deficiency interferes with the daily communication. In addition, many second language learners believe that vocabulary is more important than grammar for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. They emphasized that vocabulary carries the best information they need to understand. However, vocabulary should not be overemphasized in learning a foreign language, since the teachers, researchers, and scholars who have devoted themselves to this field find that vocabulary is one of the most important elements for learning a new language. Although it is believed that without grammar very little can be conveyed, it is also true that without vocabulary nothing can be

conveyed. Therefore, more scholars express that for developing and promoting vocabulary we must be aware of learning strategies.

Definition of Learning Strategies

Yongwei (2017) defined that learning strategies are measures that the students take to study more efficiently. Also, he clarified as different actions and procedures that students take to learn and develop their English effectively.

Based on the above definitions, learning strategies can be determined as a sequence of techniques, tactics, and approaches which are used by students to ensure effective learning. It contains two aspects. First the purpose of using learning strategies is to use learning effectively; second, the essence of learning strategies is behavior, but not simply thoughts of learners.

Classification of Learning Strategies

After a lot of research, authors categorize learning strategies and report that there are different ways to define them. Therefore, vocabulary learning strategies are differently looked at. The following classifications are acceptable.

As Cohen, & Aphek, (2017) quoted and divided the learning strategies into language learning strategies and language using strategies. They also identified the material for learning, separating it from other material, making groups for learning to be easy, repeating the material, and formally committing the material to memory. They have also mentioned that “language using strategies include retrieval strategies, rehearsal strategies, cover strategies, and communication strategies”. This classification is very vivid and clear, and their aims are to improve the freshman learners’ vocabulary learning and using of a second language in different actions.

As there is a relationship between learning strategies and the target language learning, Oxford divided vocabulary learning strategies in two kinds: Direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. In opposite, indirect strategies provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, searching opportunities, controlling anxiety, and increasing cooperation.

Based on Yongwei (2017) learning strategies are divided into three types: Social strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. Social strategies work in a big grouping that involve either interaction with another person or ideational control. For example, an English language learning class in which the teacher talks non-stop while the students listen. This would be not just boring but also ineffective. The good news for you as a teacher of language is that the nature of your classes is perfect to apply social learning strategies in Afghan context. Cognitive

strategies are involved in specific learning jobs and use directly incoming information. Metacognitive strategies are higher executive skills than the other strategies. For freshmen students in Afghan EFL classes it is better to focus more on specific learning jobs.

Effective Vocabulary Instruction

According to Claire (2011), effective vocabulary instruction emphasizes direct instruction. For example, clarifying key words help English as a foreign language learners (EFLs) to understand difficult text and multiple meaning words. By using direct instruction teachers can incorporate related vocabulary in to before, during, and after reading stages of instruction.

If teachers want to help freshman students to remember new words, they may ask EFLs to use the new words with the objects that are familiar to them, or they may translate the words into students' native/first language. Teachers also use from word play to amplify the use of new words and create hunger for learning those new words. While freshman students learn new words by using them in their reading, teachers give EFLs the tools for understanding vocabulary by explicit instruction. For creating interest in learning new vocabulary, teachers can help students by clarifying the meaning of unknown words by synonyms, descriptions, explanations, and visual aids. Visual aids and synonyms in English and Afghan languages will help.

In addition, it is also needed to connect the new words into students' prior knowledge. For doing this, teachers involve EFLs in learning new words through many different strategies. For freshmen students in Afghanistan, actual objectives are useful to remember new words. For example, in teaching shapes the teacher can bring the object of shapes in the classroom. As Sibold (2011) explained using real objects, pictures, and photographs help EFLs make sense of new words. For creating a rich vocabulary environment, instructors also can use a word wall that involves words from different places, areas, word books, and make a reading room with books that teach and use new concepts. Word walls help students visually and engage them in activities that help them learn new words. This step will however demand a lot of work from the teachers. So, if the government department of education could provide such "walls" in print, Afghan freshmen students will benefit a lot in learning and remembering names of objects they see in the pictures. Finally, for effective learning teachers can integrate the new words with students' homework.

Strategies for Teaching Academic Vocabulary

Sibold (2011) mentioned that effective strategies help freshman students to learn new vocabulary explicitly. For example, association strategies, imagery, and graphic organizers. It is also mentionable that while introducing a new word, you have to avoid lexical definitions that do not make sense to the students. Instead, teachers can describe or explain the word or provide examples.

Furthermore, repetition is an important key to learn new vocabulary. First, ask the students to listen to the pronunciation of the new word and at the same time show the actual object or picture of that word. And ask them to repeat the word at least three times. Then ask them to use it in a sentence. For example, the teacher reads, “There are several geographic regions in Afghanistan.” After that the teacher explains and shows these regions on a map. Then students will be asked to work in pairs and use the words in sentences. This can be repeated for every key word.

While teaching academic vocabulary by using this repetition cycle, choose content-specific words from the textbook, which should be critical to students’ understanding of the main concept, topics, and subtopics. After doing the activities that make revelation to the words in context, then ask the students to practice the words. By using different strategies teachers can develop the students’ learning of new words. Until learning vocabulary through reading is not effective, direct teaching of vocabulary will enhance learning, and it is a great opportunity for academic success. This strategy is a lot of help to the EFL teachers as well as native languages in African schools and colleges.

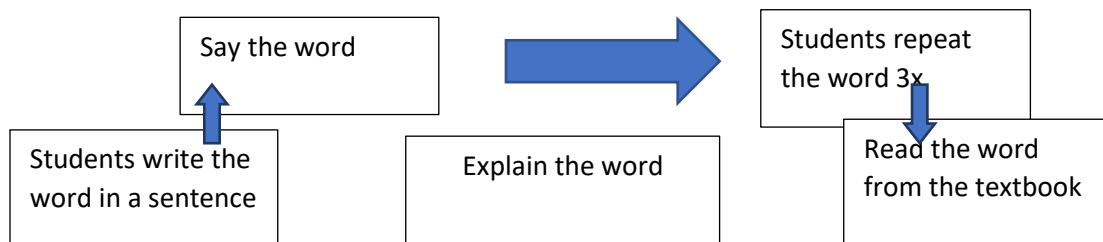


Figure 1
Sibold, (2011, p. 26)

The Points Freshman Students Need to Know about New Vocabulary

When freshman students want to understand a piece of text, they must be aware of a basic understanding of the meaning, the syntax, and the context in which it has been read. Mcbain (2011) quotes and explains that vocabulary must be given from authentic experiences in reading and listening, while students use words in different contexts of language. This method shows that students understand the exact words as they read them in a text, story, or sentence.

Contexts provide the grammar of sentences and the meanings of words in a paragraph, a whole essay, or other text. “Context is also taken to include the reader’s expectations and purposes for reading; various aspects if the location and situation in which the person is reading; and even the person’s culture and times-in short, the reader’s entire background of knowledge and experience” (Brown, 1997, p.3).

Kuhn & Stahl (2003) defined that there is no single way in theory that explains fluency accurately. Fluency means that a freshman student pronounces the word, use the correct intonation, and understand its meaning in context. In addition, it is also important to understand its spelling and if there is any cultural difference, like British and American, they have to know.

Nation (2002) stated that instructors must know the ways how to teach the words that can be easy for students to remember. It is also a good taught that if students relate the words to their own lives. Actually, it is not possible for all words but if it is possible, it is a good chance for students to personalize the word to their own live which makes it easier to understand. Furthermore, the students need to categorize the word and to distinguish if it is a noun, a verb, or an adjective, and also this helps them to understand syntax, and with which tense the writer is communicating.

One of the most important vocabulary acquisition strategy that Nation (2002) calls “noticing” is to see and recognize meta-cognitive skills a word to be learned. Also the teachers should help students to get the habit of noticing by saying in the class which item is the word, for example, passive, verb, adjective, phrase and so on. If the students want to study vocabulary efficiently and as self-regulated learners, the following points are needed.

- By clearly marking vocabulary lessons
- A focus on vocabulary practice and recall of past vocabulary
- Giving and studying lists of vocabulary words from context

The above steps are easy achieve, but we need some concentrated effort on our part as teachers.

In addition, Nation (2002) also added that a good way of developing the idea of noticing is structured vocabulary notebook exercises that are made to ask students to focus on a particular set of vocabulary words.

The Ways in Which Vocabulary Can Be Taught

According to McBain (2011), there are various theories to teach vocabulary from a lexical approach -- theme based, lexical phrase method, the grammar translation method, the audio lingual method and the communicative language method. Research shows that there is not only one way to teach vocabulary learning; it also means that teachers must change their traditional teaching approaches, or they can integrate it with all or as many different ways of teaching and the activities of teaching vocabulary to improve vocabulary acquisition. It is not a challenge for Afghan teachers. We have always received always used various methods and we have encouraged memorization. But in the context of EFL, “The full understanding of words at the beginning of the semester is procrastinated when students move on to new vocabulary in a new unit and sometimes a new book

and the process starts all over again” (McBain, 2011, p, 6). It shows the value of memorizing lists of vocabulary words for throughout the year to review with students what they have learned.

This is also an opportunity for teachers to use the vocabulary in different contexts throughout the year. Finally, different words in a text need different degrees of instructional focus in the class: some words may be attestation in teaching and others may be addressed with a short demonstration or explanation.

General Guidelines for Teaching Vocabulary

Keep in mind several general principles which facilitate learning of new words.

- Teach new words in the context of a meaningful subject-matter lesson and facilitate students’ discussion that need for them to use the new word. Textbook lessons help us in this and other following processes.
- Be sure that students can hear the correct pronunciation of the word and practice it by reading it aloud several times. It is also important that they can hear the syllable structure and stress pattern of the word to make it easy to remember. Stress pattern will demand better training for our teachers. While perfection may be hard to achieve, we need to learn and use as much as we can. In due course both students and teachers will achieve stress patterns that help comprehensibility.
- Teach the parts of the word; root words, base words, prefixes, and suffixes that students will meet frequently.
- Teach the words in related groups to help students to understand how words are related or interrelated.
- Clarify examples/applications which are related to the meaning of the new vocabulary.
- Ask the students to connect new words to something with which they are familiar.
- Offer the opportunity for students to paraphrase the definition of a new term until they can identify the main ideas.
- Create opportunities to learn new vocabulary in using different learning formats which actively engage them in the learning process (Williamsburg, 2015).

Activities for Teaching Vocabulary

While you selected new words for instruction and made good instructional goals for chosen terms, now it is better to choose instructional strategies that go with these goals. There are lots of activities to use in teaching vocabulary, but I am going to suggest you some of them to use while teaching new vocabulary.

Same Word, Different Subject

1. Every school subject contains of technical vocabulary words and specific words. Technical words are those words which have only one meaning.
2. Explain students that specific vocabulary words are those which are used in various subjects and may have various meanings in each subject.

Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy

1. Tell students to clarify two words related to a specific topic.
2. Ask students to write their words on the board.
3. Have students to explain their words to the group by defining them, ask the group why they should learn them, and tell where they found the word.

Semantic Feature Analysis

Semantic feature analysis helps students to know the relationship between words in categories. It clarifies how words are both similar and different and how it emphasizes the unity of each word.

Word Map

The word map method is useful for helping students to develop a general definition. It focuses on three questions, “What is it?”, “What is it like?”, and “What are some examples?”

Word Web

1. “Before reading the text, divide a list of words that students will encounter in their reading. Record these words in the center rectangles of word webs equal in number to the words on the list” (Williamsburg, 2015, p. 7).
2. Pronounce each word and ask the students to share what they think each word means.
3. They have to complete the word webs during reading. Students encounter a word and place it in the center of a word web, then record on one of the circles around each center. And circle the words and phrases which helps them to remember the meaning of the words.

Semantic Word Map

Semantic word map is a diagram that shows the relationship between concepts and related ideas. Most of a learner’s knowledge of words can be stored in word maps in the brain.

Words Alive

1. Ask students to write the vocabulary word above the first box.
2. Instruct students to answer the five given questions.
3. Have students to draw a picture that show the meaning of the word.
4. Direct students to write a caption that describes the picture and uses the vocabulary word.

Word

What do you think the word means?

What does the dictionary say the word means?

Write a definition of the word using your own words?

What are some other words that mean the same thing as the word?

What are some other words that mean the opposite of the word?

Sketch of Word

Picture Caption Using the Word

| | |
|---|---|
| What do you think the word means? | |
| What does the dictionary say the word means? | |
| Write a definition of the word using your own words? | |
| What are some other words that mean the same thing as the word? | What are some other words that mean the opposite of the word? |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Sketch of Word | |
| Picture Caption Using the Word | |

Figure 2
Burg, 2015, p. 10

Conclusion

English language students who want to learn academic vocabulary may have difficulty in comprehending reading materials and class instruction. The strategies which are explained in this article help EFL learners to expand their knowledge to understand how to achieve their goals while learning/teaching vocabulary. It is also important for teachers to make connections between the students' prior knowledge and the new vocabulary. In addition, by partnering with parents or others in the family of the students who have some command over English as a foreign language, teachers increase the opportunities for learners to help them in learning academic vocabulary. There are also some points to know about new vocabulary like fluency that an EFL student can pronounce the word, use the correct intonation, and understand its meaning in context. The way of teaching vocabulary is another important point that teachers have to pay attention while teaching. There are various theories to teach vocabulary -- a lexical approach, theme based, lexical phrase method, the grammar translation method, the audio lingual method and the communicative

language method. In conclusion, I realized through my research and teaching experience that the most important ways for teaching vocabulary is the activities which the teacher use. I mentioned some of those activities that teachers may use while teaching.

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Hostile Sexism in Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*

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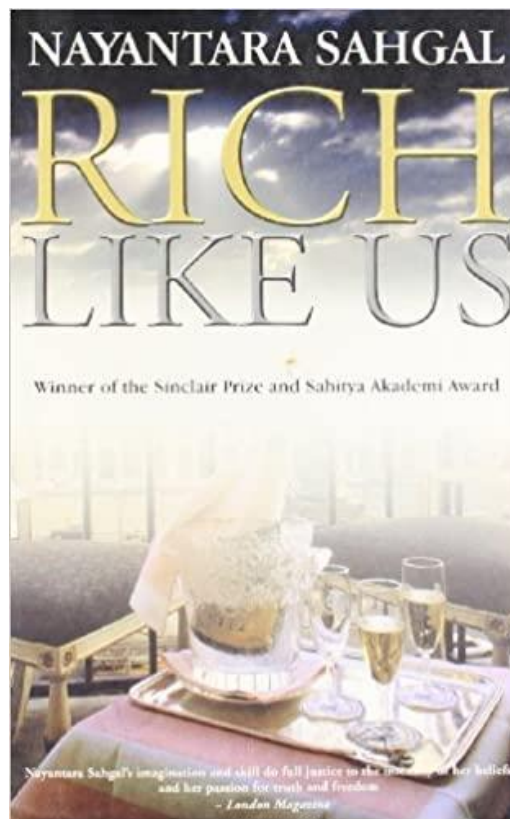
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Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Abstract

Nayantara Sahgal is a most notable feminist. Her active part for the emancipation of women is revealed through her novels. She has portrayed the real sufferings of women through her female characters. They have been tortured by the patriarchal society. But they never lose their identity. And they fight for their own freedom. *Hostile sexism* means insulting or degrading women directly. Their feelings are never considered. The novelist is the keen observer of the society even before independence. Because she was born in British India, she knew the sufferings for freedom. That's why she needs the same equality and freedom for women, because they are refused to have the same freedom as men have in the

society. They are treated as secondary beings. Women are always insisted to follow men in various roles. They don't have rights to question men because men are treated as superior beings. Later sometime, women are given a few rights like education, voting, job opportunities etc. However, women have been treated as sexual objects. In outward they are given all rights. The female characters of this novel have suffered a lot because of the dominative attitude of males. Rose is used by Ram and threw out by his son Dev. Above statement is proved by the women and female kids' harassments. Many laws are passed to safeguard female children from such cruel acts, like Pocso Act which was enacted in 2012. However, it does not reduce the crimes against females. So, the punishments should become more severe. Then only, crimes may reduce.

Keywords: *Rich Like Us*, Feminism, Hostile sexism, Patriarchal society, Gender Inequality, Liberation for women.

Introduction

Rich Like Us is a significant novel of Sahgal. The female characters of this novel Mona, Rose and Sonali represent the crucial position of Indian women. They are tormented by the male dominative society. Mona is the traditional housewife of a businessman Ram L. Surya. He handles his business in perfect manner. However, he fails in his happy life with Mona. She feels that herself is responsible for the bad things in her life. She never blames her husband. He has spent his time in search of sensual pleasures. But she felt sorry for her husband and who has been fasting for several reasons prays to God on behalf of her husband. Mona feels happy to convey the birth of their son. Meantime, he has been in London regarding a business. He does not feel that true bliss of becoming a father.

Mona is used by her husband as a home maker to his family and the child. He never worries about her feelings. Ram meets Rose in a chocolate shop in London forty-three years ago. He has fallen in love with her. She too loves him. She did not know about his previous life with Mona. "He was a man. He was rich. He was abroad. What more did she need to know?" (39). Rose fell in love with Ram and came with him to India. After the confirmation of her strong love, he casually reveals his first wife Mona and his newborn son. He never hesitates to speak. According to "Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us: A Thematic Analysis*",

Rose risks marrying Ram despite knowing that he is already married and comes to India with him. She saves Mona, Ram's first wife from suicide and in spite of their initial antagonism, soon develops friendly terms with her. The crippled beggar, completely neglected by the family is also helped by her. Her outspokenness and cockney bluntness make her unacceptable to her step-son Dev (Kaur 36).

Ram used to say that his religion allows him to marry several times. "And one afternoon he told her, in a natural everyday voice, that he had a wife and an infant child. Her

shock was so great she couldn't speak" (41-42). Sonali is the modern woman of Sahgal. She represents the pity of women and also political situation of that time. She is a civil servant and who never bends her head for others. Her father used to say that "Sonali, people like you, especially women like you, are going to Indianize India" (22).

Sonali is the friend of Rose, who is the English wife of Ram. Ram and Sonali's father are friends. Ram's son Dev through Mona wants to start a fizzy drink company called 'happyola'. He wants to start the company for his personal purpose. He wants to use it as a tool for the development of his business. Sonali does not give him permission for the factory. So, she is demoted to her own state. The political parties have played a lot in her life. Ravi Kachru replaces her from her post. But she does not lose her belief. Sonali's character is observed in "*Rich Like Us: A Note*" that,

Sonali, a sincere, senior civil servant, is pained to see the murder of democratic ideals. Her sudden apocalypse of her well-to-do grand parents', especially her grandmother's submission to sati-an evil social system- leaves her dumb- founded for some time (Arora 95).

Through Sonali many female deaths come into light because she has a chance to read her father's diary. That reveals the cruelty of male domination. Women are destroyed in the name of tradition. Dowry deaths happen only in the community of human beings. No animal kills another animal for its sophistication except human beings. The doctor of Sonali reveals his own life experience that,

The bride burnt to death by her in-laws not more than two miles from where I lived because her family could not satisfy their greedy demands for more dowry. She was one of three hundred such women burnt during one year in this our capital city (30).

Nothing is equal to life. But human beings fail to understand the fact. Women have been experiencing a living death everywhere in families, schools, working places and society. Women are always treated as secondary beings, and they are the dependent class to men in several roles.

Sonali's father happen to see his own mother's death. But he could not stop it. She had fallen into the fire. As a son, it had great impact in his life. He cannot tolerate the happenings around him. The relatives did not stop his mother. But they let her to die. The painful memory is rightly described in "Search into History: Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*" that,

The search into the past brings Sonali a painful memory of her great grandmother's sati act in her husband's funeral pyre. The event turns out as a revelation about her grand father who as a boy tried to save his mother from

the burning pyre. He dashes forward to the pyre, but he is stopped by two men. They boy wants to kill those men because they are murderers of his mother (Gaikwad 63).

A widow cannot remarry. It is an offensive thing. But a widower can marry several times as per his wish not minding about the feelings of women. To Rose, many years have passed in India with Ram. Now she is at the age of sixty-three. Suddenly, Ram had stroke and whose legs and hands were frozen. He remains bedridden. Without Ram, Rose is nothing in the house. She is childless. Her stepson Dev has already begun to take the money from the joint account of Ram and Rose. "I don't know what my legal rights are if anything happens to Ram" (51). Ram's family is a joint family. Rose does not have any peculiar rights on the family and the property.

Rose and Mona remained as good friends or sisters, once Rose has saved Mona from the fire accident. As women, each understands one another. Then after, they began to travel together in their life. But their husband's thirst is not stopped with Mona and Rose. When he feels bored with Rose finds another woman, that is his secretary.

This novel also deals with the important topic of child marriage and explores the plight of child widows. Both are cruel to explain. They do not know anything about marriage, but they are married. Child widows' fate is cruel one. The outward appearance of the child widow is with shaven headed, covered with grimy sarees. They are treated as bad omen.

The widows wait for the left-over food from the kitchen. These things have changed a little in the modern days. But they have not vanished. Even now remarriage of widows is questionable in the male dominant society. A woman should be a virgin and she has to control her feelings and emotions. She has no individual life other than husband and family. Women are always treated as dependent in the society. Even in the working places, the wages are different for men and women. Male kids are warmly welcomed by the parents than the female kids.

Mona is a silent sufferer through worshipping God. Ram spent his life with two wives, one on first floor and another on second floor. He does not worry about their feelings. He justifies his action. He explains about a man who has first wife and five children in the village and who lives with the second wife in town secretly. He said that "King Dasrath, Rama's father, had four wives," (63). Rose does not like to give birth to a child. Because herself has no proper identity and who does not like passing it to another generation. She hates to bear the name of miscarriage. Ram's thirst is not stopped with Mona and Rose. When he felt boredom with Rose, he finds Marcella is a altar. A woman is not an enemy for another woman. This statement comes true through the behaviour of Rose and Mona.

Mona has tried to kill herself. Rose has saved her. She doesn't let Mona to die. "She buried her face in her pillow blocking out the Jackals. Mona was only two years older than herself; she wouldn't die for years" (107). She wishes that three of them want to live long. Rose recollects her past. Her father has worked in a bottle factory. She has been engaged with Freddie. But her true love affair with Ram made her to come to India with him. Her parents opposed her love affair. But she sailed with him.

The act of suttee is an old practice in India. According to this, a wife has to throw herself in funeral fire of her husband. If she hesitates, the relatives will forcefully push her into death. Swamy Vivekananda considered that the burning of widows is considered the most barbarous thing in the world. Raja Ram Mohan Roy abolished it. Sonali is rightly described in "Cultural and Political in Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*" that "Sonali represents the "good" India and also modern Indian womanhood. She combines the best of Indian tradition and modernity. She is aware of the evil in traditional Hinduism because of sati of her great grandmother" (Paranjape 139). Sonali has read many real stories from the diary of her father. He described about the death of Sonali's great grand-mother. A brahmin lady was forced by her relatives to lose her life in the funeral pile of her husband. But she tried to escape from the fire. However, the relatives made her to fall into fire again and again. Later, she was sent to the hospital. However, she lost her life after twenty hours of the medical help. Later, he describes the story of his mother. She wakes up early in the morning and has cold water bath and then prays for the good health of her husband. "She was a good wife, I used to think. But now I believe all wives are good because they have little choice" (160). His father suddenly died of stroke. It was a joint family. His mother wanted to save her son with the will because her husband's brother would inherit all the property. She confirmed a will to her son and let herself to die in the fire. No one stopped her. As a young boy, he didn't know the reason for her actions. So, generally a woman is a sacrifice for her family.

The participation of Rose is explained in "Female Protagonist in Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*" that

Rose who appears to be quite emancipated is not really so and this becomes clear in her interaction with Ram, as well as with Dev, her stepson. Rose left her people, her country and even her self-respect at times for Ram, but she is far away from the experience of Government (Gayathri 25).

The friendship between Rose and Mona become stronger. They understand each other. Dev is grown up. Mona seeks for a daughter-in-law. She wants a beautiful, homely girl, with good social background. She represents the mindset of the people. Money determines many things in life. No one likes to find an equal partner but they need a slave to decorate their life. Ram runs towards Marcella. Rose is worried about Ram. She is not ready to lose her lover. "The only thing I couldn't bear in any circumstances would be a divorce" (245). Ram is now bedridden who cannot speak. Without Ram, Rose is nothing in the house.

Dev is totally against Rose. He begins to steal the amount from the joint account of Ram and Rose. She knows it but cannot do anything.

Dev shows violence on Rose. He said that “One of these days I’m going to break her neck.” (275) Rose shares her sufferings to her only friend Sonali. Rose helps a handless beggar. One day the body of Rose was found in the well. It is believed that Rose drank much in the party and became unsteady. And she has gone to the well in the dark, accidentally fell into the well. Dev set it as an accident. Her murder by her stepson Dev is a kind of act of Sati. Ram is in his death bed. He doesn’t know the happenings around him. Rose has left her parents for the love, but now she is dead.

Female is not against one another. Rose has saved Mona without selfishness. Mona too has accepted Rose as her sister. Mona prays to God for the welfare of her husband. Her fasting and prayers never changed her husband’s attitude. Ram behaves like a bee jumps from flower to flower. He jumps from Mona to Rose and then to Marcella. To him, a woman is a sexual object to please him and to take care of the family. His son Dev behaves harshly to his stepmother. Finally, he sets up a team to murder Rose. And he is not friendly to his wife Nishi. She belongs to the middle-class family. Even she cannot help her own father and family when they are in a problem. At that time Nishi’s father was arrested. There Rose accompanies Nishi to the prison to meet her father.

Dev is not ready to help his own father-in-law. Rose and Nishi maintain friendly relationship in the house. His richness never gives her happiness. Sonali’s friendship with Rose is a genuine one. Rose is an elder woman. But they share many things freely. Sonali’s demotion is a great shock to Rose. She knows the seriousness of the Happyola project. Sonali doesn’t give permission for the fizzy drink company. She is demoted and sent to her own state. As a woman, she is daring enough to face the society. Through her father’s diary, she reveals female deaths, dowry deaths and sati. Her explanation to the diary of her father is that it presents a fact about the condition of women.

The events in the diary give clear cut view of the pity of women before independence. Sonali is the modern educated woman of Sahgal. She faces many problems as sincere ICS officer. She is demoted with transfer. But finally, she stands strongly in her decision. She helps the handless beggar. Later, she guessed that Rose’s death is a murder organized by her stepson Dev. There is no one daring enough to question him. Females are always treated as a dependent class. They have to be a household object and not equal human being as man.

Sonali is the daughter of a civil servant Keshav Ranade. He has worked in the British India. His personal sufferings have given him a bitter experience. Through the flash back technique, Sahgal brings out the female sufferings with evidence. Sonali feels proud of her job to be a civil servant. She wants to serve like her father. She said that “My training had taught me to review good harmless products with care and the sellers of wares as the world’s

most relentless people” (25). That is why she refused to accept the proposal of fizzy drink called ‘Happyola’. That straight forwardness of Sonali made her to get demotion from her position. But she never worries about threatening of the popular personalities. She wants to serve the people. That fizzy drink will affect the health of the people. She felt that “I am sure the true explanation is that we are blind from birth, born of parents blind from birth” (24). Being a woman, she couldn’t oppose the political personalities.

Her father wants her daughter to come over from the slavery of womanhood. He has tears in his eyes fifteen years ago when she passed her civil service examination. He has stressed the importance of female’s job and education. Her refusal for the fizzy drink proposal made her to feel about the society. Ravi Kachru is replaced in the position of Sonali because he is flexible with the political parties and businessmen. She understands the reality that “Twice ten can never make fifty. And Happyola cannot by any standards be a national necessity” (34).

Sonali’s demotion shows the real-life situation of that time. She is the good friend of Rose. Rose is an English wife of Ram. Rose shows her humanity in several ways like showing mercy for the beggar. Her kindness makes the beggar to have food regularly by her hands. Rose is also a true friend and faithful lover of Ram. She follows the Indian tradition of one-to-one life. She belongs to the British culture of free tradition. She has no limit to choose her husband. But she has converted herself to be a tradition-bound Indian wife. Female’s position is clearly described in “Feminist Concept: A Study of Nayantara Sahgal’s Fiction” as “Woman has always been dependent on man. The two sexes have not shared the world of reality” (Sinha 2).

Conclusion

So, the women should be treated with concern and equality. They are not inferior to males by anyway. Almost all the fields are touched by women. They are not an object for criticism. But they are the human beings with equal emotions and feelings like men. A woman should be like Sonali of *Rich Like Us*. She has tolerated all the sufferings in her life as a woman and sincere civil servant.

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Digitization and Instant Reference System for Dharmaśāstric Knowledge Tradition

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Abstract

The tradition of *Dharmaśāstra* (DS) carries extensive history and contains the treatises of Ancient Indian Social institutions. Dharma is a key concept of the text and it signifies the behavior that is considered to be in accordance with the 'right way of living' and 'path of righteousness'. DS covers a wide range of topics and is particularly divided into three major areas as *ācāra* (Customs), *vyavahāra* (stated legal procedures) and *prāyaścita* (penance/atonement). The texts of the DS are primarily written in the Sanskrit language and later translated into various languages. In the era of Information Technology, everyone wants to obtain and share information online only. DS texts are not only studied by Sanskrit scholars but also referred by historians, sociologists, political scientists, economists, law enthusiasts and linguists worldwide. As of yet, there is quite a lack of development done in this area where a person can search the information regarding the DS texts online for further research or in-depth studies. Therefore, the major objective of the paper is to digitize and develop an instant referencing system for DS texts. Therefore, for the above-stated purpose, the complete data of the *Manusmṛiti* (MS) has been collected and digitalized in the Devanagari script in Unicode. Therefore, a web-based Information Extraction system is being developed. The proposed system will be able to take input in various scripts and generate the desired output in a similar way. The information can be searched by typing a 'word' or selecting the options from the listed DS concept menu. As a result, the complete reference of the searched words/ concepts inclusive of its bilingual (Hindi and English) translation and transliteration will be easily accessible to the user. The proposed system will be available online for public use at no cost. This system may play a very important role in teaching, learning and research because of the lack of existing effective online tools.

Keywords: *Dharmaśāstra* (DS), Indian Knowledge Tradition, Information Extraction, Data Mining, Online Indexing, *Manusmṛiti* (MS)

1. Introduction

DS is a collection of many theological texts, and it contains the treatises of Hinduism on *Dharma* (duties). *Dharma* is of primary importance in Indian philosophy, religion, social issues and community laws. Ancient Indian Social institutions represent a distinct tradition of civilization formation, society development and community living. The fundamental meaning of *Dharma* in DS is diverse and it

includes accepted norms of behavior, procedures within a ritual, moral actions, righteousness and ethical attitudes, civil and criminal law, legal procedures and penance or punishment, and guidelines for proper and productive living. Olivelle (2004) has described the concept of *Dharma* which includes various social institutions discussed in DS literature such as marriage system, inheritance property, adoption rules and regulations, work contracts rules, judiciary system and process in case of disputes within the community and society, as well as personal choices such as food preferences, suspension of study and sexual demeanors etc.

The word *dharma* is derived from the Sanskrit verb root “*dhr*” which means to hold or support (Kane,1968). It can be considered analogous with the “right way of living” or “the path of righteousness” (Chambers, 1999). It also contains the widespread ideas for proper behavior leading to productive living, rights, duties, character, customs, conduct, virtues, laws and behavior considered appropriate, correct or morally upright. *Smṛti* has humanly authored written scriptures that contain the collected traditions. The *smṛtis* is an amalgamation of sutras (prose) and DS (poetry). *Smṛtis* can be considered as an ancient framework of socio-cultural law. The code of Manu, the code of *yājñavalkya* and the code of *Nārada* are the principal *smṛtis*. All these *smṛtis* contain special sections on the social laws, consumer laws, tribal community laws and related legal procedures. There are huge *tīkās* (commentaries) and *nibandhas* (digests) which are written on the basis of *smṛtis*. The major focus of these is to interpret the law as laid down in the *smṛtis*. The commentaries and digests have systemized, consolidated and analyzed the *smṛtis*, thereby giving an entire body of law. These are of particular importance and are essential as they help in understanding the original sources in a more refined manner. Famous *tīkās* are *smṛticandrikā*, *ratnākara* and *caturvargacintāmaṇi*, etc. When humans began to live in groups, it led to the development of the concept of civilization and community living. It was then but natural that they should conform to certain patterns of human behavior for peace and harmony. This gave birth to the norms or ways of living a more structured life. This concept in the ancient DS texts was coined as *ācāra* (Kaundinyayayn, 2014).

MS is a primary text of the DS, it is an ancient legal text divided into 12 chapters (*adhyaya*). The text is composed in metric verses, in the form of a dialogue between an exalted teacher and disciples who are eager to learn about the various aspects of *dharma*. The first 58 verses are attributed to Manu, while the remaining more than two thousand verses are attributed to his student Bhrigu (Olivelle, 2005). It contains special sections on the social laws, consumer laws, tribal community laws and related legal procedures. The first chapter discusses the genesis of the universe, the origination of ten Manus, the fourfold system of *varṇa* (Sarda et al, 2018) and *āśrama*, four types of *yugas*, division of time and centuries. The second chapter explains about features and sources of *dharma*, sixteen *saṃskāra*, procedure and methods of observing vows and performing ceremonies, student- guru bond, results of *yajña*, the importance of *ācārya*, *upādhyāya*, *guru*, *ṛtvika*, the concept of *vrātya*, *brahmacharya vidhi* and so on. Third, the fourth and fifth chapter talks about the *gṛhastha āśrama* and various duties/responsibilities attached to it, householder-ship and its objectives, selection of the clan, worshipping of women in the society, hospitality towards guests, types of marriages, pacification of the deceased, livelihood aspect of life, good and bad conduct, the concept of edible and inedible. Sixth chapter deals with the *vānaprastha vidhi parivrājaka-dharma*, *saṃnyāsa* and *mokṣa*. The seventh

chapter talks about the ruler, state-ship and kingdom, duties of the king and its subjects. The eighth chapter deals with *vyavahāra darśana* i.e. monetary, financial and fiscal department, revenue and expenditure, commercial activities, duties of witnesses, etc. The ninth chapter discusses the duties of the men and women, division of property, twelve types of sons, elimination of criminals and treatment of *vaiśyas* and Shudras. The tenth chapter liberally discusses inter-caste marriages and one's duties during emergency times. The eleventh and twelfth chapter describes the penance that a man must observe to repent the sins he had committed either knowingly or unknowingly. It talks about both direct and indirect penance, means of salvation, the concept of sins, deeds and misdeeds, donations and unification with the supreme soul. Therefore, the major concepts of MS are Creation of the world, Sources of dharma, the dharma of the four social classes (Chaubey, 2005) or the fourfold system of *Varnas* and *āśrama*, law of karma, rebirth and final liberation, Virtues and outcasts, Behavior, moral code and conduct, Sources of Law, Rights of women, *puruṣārtha*, *saṃskāra*, Rights and duties of every citizen, Statecraft, Rules of War, Ruler and Kingship.

Figure 1: User Interface

2. Scope of the Paper

DS is reckoned as one of the major subject streams in Sanskrit and political science departments in India and abroad. MS as a text along with its commentaries is precisely taught as a component subject at postgraduate level at various departments in all major universities worldwide having Sanskrit or Indic languages department. In today's era of globalization and information technology, where the entire world is connected by a click of a button, the world news is generated, shared and received through web consortiums, yet, any instant information retrieval system based on DS where a person

can find desirable output for their queries related to this specific knowledge field is not available. The major research problem of this work is that there is not any online system available where DS texts can be accessed online and the conceptual searching from the DS key texts can be done for the complete reference.

The system is being discussed here is a Web-based Search Mechanism and information/data Extraction Mechanism for MS. This is an automated or more precisely, a digitalized system of accepting input and generating output; therefore, gathering a very specific yet in-depth knowledge of the varied concepts of MS that any user/researcher/student wishes to study. The major objective of this paper is to digitize the DS literature and development of automatic information search system for instant reference with its English and Hindi translations. The system generates output and displays result as per the client's input query.

3. Data Collection and Digitization

The information extraction System is an online search system for MS, developed by the Computational linguistics R&D, department of the Sanskrit University of Delhi. The user can search any word available in MS and get a complete reference of that word. Verses of MS are stored in a digital database with its reference in UTF-8 format in Devanagari script. In layman's language, data or the collection of MS shlokas are extracted, proofread and digitally stored. The entire programming of the developed search mechanism is based on the process of online indexing of the database (Chandra and Anju, 2018).

3.1 Development of Computational Platform and Techniques

MS Search or Instant Reference System for MS is a cohesive mechanism as it works with the help of many small digital components. The major components are User Interface, Preprocessor, Information Extractor, Information Generator, Meaning Generator, Concepts & Script Validator and Output Generator. The computational environment for developing this search mechanism was created through building various different databases and modules. A digital database which consists a total of 2688 verses of MS is created. A concept list extracted from the MS is also created. All MS verses are translated into English and Hindi language and also a module is developed to transliterate in Roman. A Script Validator Module checks or validates the script of the input; it validates the script of the user's input and differentiates as to whether the given query is in Devanagari (वर्ण) or IAST (used for roman input such as English: *varna*) to produce the result in the same format. Information Extractor module works as an index for the MS database and further acts as an accurate referencing of the user's input for the output generation. Finally, the above modules and databases are preprocessed simultaneously and thus creates an interactive search mechanism to generate the desired output for the given query.

3.2 Tools and Techniques

MS Search or Instant Reference System is a web-based system. Therefore, to develop it, the methods of information extraction of web technology and computational linguistics for search have been used. Data mining techniques are used for searching (Chandra and Anju, 2017). Databases and Text files are used for storing the data digitally any web-based system has two major parts: Front-End

and Back-End. Front-end is developed using HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) with CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) and JS (Java script) used for page decoration and beautification of the User Interface. The back-end contains a lot of programming language, databases and servers. For this, Python programming language, Text files and Flask as a server have been used. Text editors are used to edit the extracted data.

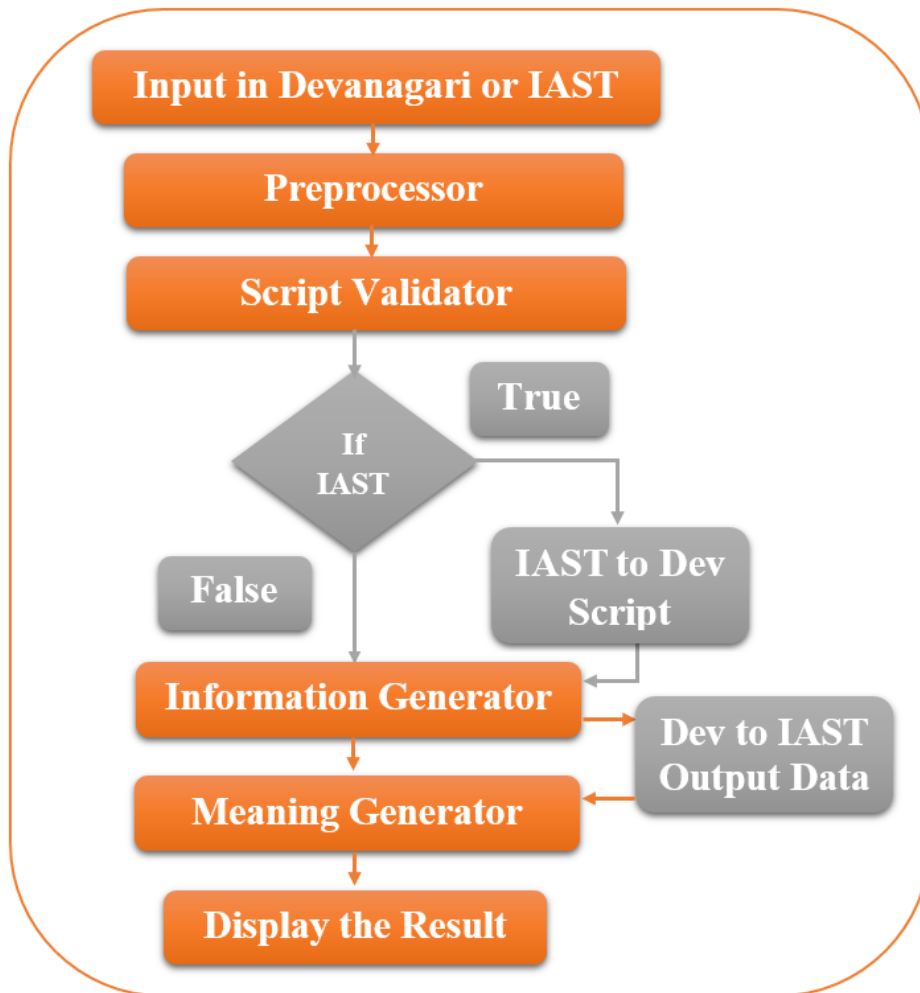


Figure 2: Flowchart of the System

3.3 Methodology

The developed system is an input-output generating system. It takes input from the user and generates the corresponding output. The user can give the input in either of the languages; English (roman) or Hindi (Devanagari) based upon his or her comfort level. The system has been designed in an user-friendly manner, thus, the input in the system can be given in two ways; that is either by typing the query in the text box given in the user interface (figure 1) or select an option from the pre-constructed drop-down menu. Once the input is given, a lot of pre-designed functions work simultaneously to give the output. The preprocessor initially runs the query at back end syncing it with the digital information indexer. The script validator checks the input language, concept indexer matches the tags of the respective verses with the given input query, then the following query is searched one by one from different databases and corresponding result is generated. The generated

result is formatted according to the user's query input and then displayed on the clients end. The final formatted display of the result. The working of the above explained methodology can be understood with the help of the following flowchart representation.

5. Major Features of the Developed System

This web-based developed system consists of a variety of features, it accepts the input query in two languages. Hence this system provides for a multiscript search in Devanagari and Roman. It further has the scope for creating multilingual searches such as Punjabi, Bangla, Oriya, etc. Since the system is digitalized, it is widely accessible. Precise conceptual information retrieval is the major highlight of this system. Information retrieval is quick and error-free. The concept of any text cannot be mined through instant indexing. So a concept list is generated, and texts are tagged with the concept. Most verses clearly denote the concept of *varṇa* system but the word "*varṇa*" doesn't appear directly in verses. The general index does not work to mine these verses for the concept "*varṇa*". Thus, these type of verses can be only mined through the conceptual searching. This is the special feature of this system, and it can be searched via this system.

This system provides for interactive data search, which gives the system a very user-friendly approach. Various options for search such as Keyword, concept and Phrase searching have been developed. Online indexing (Mani, 2010; Khandoliyan, 2012), bi-lingual translations and transliterations have also been made possible in this system. The entire system is available for public access over the web.

6. Proposed Result and Future Directions of the Research

MS search mechanism is a very useful system for researchers for immediate reference search. Users are able to get the respective shlokas along with its reference number, its bilingual transliterations (English & Hindi) and as well as bilingual translations of the respective shlokas. Concept based division has been also done for the ease of usability for the user. Currently this system is under development. In future, it is planned to digitize all major DS texts such as *Nārāda smṛti*, *Yājñavalakya smṛti*, *Arthaśāstra*, etc. The input/output methods of the system will be made multilingual (Punjabi, Sanskrit, Bangla, Telugu, Tamil etc.) in near future too. This web equipped system will hopefully be a major contribution in the Government of India run Digital India scheme and it will be a major education tool in helping both teachers and the students.

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Article Publication

Published Online: 28 February 2022

Date of Acceptance: 23 February 2022

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