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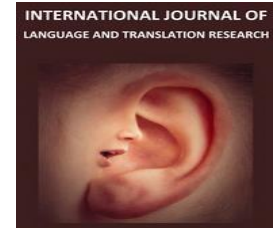
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Impact of Online-learning Activities on Improving IELTS Speaking Performance of Iranian EFL Learners: An Experimental Comparative Study



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Abstract

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This paper investigated the possible impacts of using online activities and the speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners. For this reason, 30 participants were selected randomly and divided into two experimental groups and one control group. The participants were given a speaking IELTS test at first. After that, the experimental groups received online-learning activities regarding speaking abilities in two various forms with teacher's intervention and without teacher's intervention; whereas the control group did not receive. Then, the three groups were given a post-test on speaking ability to compare the possible impacts of the online-learning activities. The results showed that the participants in the experimental groups yielded more positive results. In addition, between two experimental groups, the experimental groups with the teacher's active role had better results. The findings of this research can have very useful implications for IELTS courses in Iran.

Introduction

Modern technology and its advances are increasingly influencing educational settings in a way that language teachers and language learners are more and more dependent on these technologies (Dalgarno & Lee, 2010). As a matter of fact, due to the time restrictions and language learners have and in line with the fast growing of internet, e-learning language teaching and learning is going

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from strength to strength and many students prefer to enroll in online language classes in line with the interests of teachers in holding online courses (Al-Rawahi & Al-Mekhlafi, 2015). In addition, with the enhancement in the need for learning and teaching with communication tools and via virtual space and thanks to advances in internet technology educational institutions are increasingly adding online classrooms into their syllabi and more courses are being offered in this way (Khayef & Amini, 2015).

Among four skills of language, speaking is regarded as the most noticeable of all in second language teaching and learning (Sadiku, 2015). As Richards & Renandya (2002) assert: “A large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking” (p. 201). Regarding language testing, speaking is different from other skills in that it is interactive and has to be tested in an interactional mode in which there is a mutual dialogue and/or discussion between the tester and the teste.

Speaking assessment has been a part and parcel of worldwide large-scale language proficiency tests like IELTS, TOEFL, and Cambridge exams like FCE and CAE. In IELTS, the speaking is composed of various sections which are together between 11–14 minutes. These sections include general questions about the applicant and some other related topics, talking about a topic that has been written in a card, and talking about more abstract concepts in relation to a topic in the card. All of these sections are carried out in an interactive mode in which there is a constant interaction between the applicant and the interviewer (Heidari Tajan, 2016).

Teaching and learning a second language with technology and its differences from conventional language teaching has been the topic of many hot debates in the last decades (Allen & Seaman, 2007). In other words, since its advent in distance learning and teaching, online learning has been the subject of many questions about the best way to use this technology in a foreign language learning context and in such tests as IELTS (Rahnavard & Heidar, 2017). It is commonly argued that since online classes suffer from the lack of effective communication channels, therefore, they are less capable of representing the ‘social presence’ of participants in online classes (Georgieva & Smrikarov, 2004).

Since the application of technology in second language teaching and learning, there has been much research reported on the application of online activities and language learning and teaching and its differences from conventional/traditional language teaching activities (see for example

Baron, 2008; Chua & Don, 2013; Kruk, 2014; Wang & Liao, 2018). However, since applying technology in second language teaching and learning and comparing it to conventional language teaching with an emphasis on the IELTS speaking test and sub-components like fluency and accuracy has not been reported, to the best knowledge of the authors, and due to the paucity of experimental research in this area, this research was put into practice as an erroneous effort to fill this gap.

Research Questions

Q1. Do online-learning activities, as compared to conventional activities have any significant effect on Iranian IELTS candidates' speaking fluency?

Q2. Do online-learning activities, as compared to conventional activities have any significant effect on Iranian IELTS candidates' speaking accuracy?

Q3. Do online-learning activities, as compared to conventional activities, have any significant effect on Iranian IELTS candidates' speaking ability?

Q4. Does teaching with teachers' interference or without teachers' interference have statistically more significant effects on Iranian IELTS candidates' fluency, accuracy and speaking ability?

Methodology

Design

The design of the research was quasi-experimental as it was impossible to assign random sampling. More, this study enjoyed a comparative group design as there were two experimental groups with various treatments.

Participants

The participants of this research were 30 Iranian IELTS candidates at Danesh- Pazhoohan language institute in Isfahan, Iran. They were male and females aged between 20 and 25 years. They were assigned into three groups. One group was the control group and the other two groups were experimental groups. Each group consisted of 10 people.

Instruments

Oxford Placement Test

Oxford Placement Test is a standardized placement test for assessing the level of proficiency of learners. The test is made up of 100 items of reading and grammar of the participants. This test has a standard scoring scale including 5 different band scores for determining the current level of proficiency of learners: beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced.

Scale for Assessing IELTS Speaking Ability

For assessing and scoring IELTS speaking ability of the participants, there needed to have a valid and reliable scoring rubric. For this purpose, the rubric produced by the British council was used in this research as it was already valid and reliable.

Inter-rater Reliability

The speaking recordings were assessed by two raters. One rater assessed and scored the candidate simultaneously in the exam place. The second rater listened to the recordings and scored them. Both were English teachers and had experience in teaching IELTS preparation courses. They were IELTS certificate holders with a 9-band score in speaking.

Materials for Teaching IELTS

A number of various materials for both groups were used. The first material was IELTS past papers (speaking section only). The past papers were selected as they were commercially available and were authentic in nature. In addition, the instructors used some personally-developed pamphlets for teaching speaking tips for participants. The pamphlet was designed in such a way that it contained a wide range of speaking topics with specialized vocabulary for each topic.

For the experimental groups, two various classes were created. One experimental group was designed in a group in Skype software. In this group, the teacher provided students with a wide range of speaking topics like group conversations, pair conversations, form-based speaking tasks, and group dissuasions. However, the teacher did not attend the forum and did not interfere with the teachings. He only made sure that the participants were all in the forum and participated in the works provided by the teacher. The second experimental group was also created in a forum on

Skype in which the same tasks were given to the participants but the teacher played an active role in such a way that scaffolding and observation were provided by the teacher. The treatment group participated in the classes in the institution and was given traditional teachings.

Procedures

After the participants were assigned to conventional and online groups, they received teachings in class and in an online forum. They attended three times per week in the class and online forum for 90 minutes. Participants in two online forums were not required to attend the classes; they were all invited into a Skype channel which was created by the instructor and in which the same materials as the physical class were offered to them. In the online forum, the participants attended three times per week, each 90 minutes. After that, the three groups sat for an IELTS speaking test to compare the impacts of both conventional and online groups on IELTS speaking.

Data Analysis

In the first stage, a one-sample statistics was conducted on OPT to determine the level of participants was conducted.

Table 1

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
OPT	30	56.8667	5.13765	.93800

As can be seen in Table 1, the mean of the group was 56.86. As a result, the general level of the participants was intermediate. For comparing the frequency of participants in the pre-test, a descriptive statistic was conducted.

Pre-test: Fluency**Table 2*****Descriptive Statistics for Frequency***

			Std.	Std.	95% Interval for Mean	Confidence	Minimum	Maximum
	N	Mean	Deviation	Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control Group	10	3.8500	.66875	.21148	3.3716	4.3284	3.00	5.00
Experimental A	10	4.4000	.77460	.24495	3.8459	4.9541	3.00	5.00
Experimental B]	10	3.9500	.83166	.26300	3.3551	4.5449	3.00	5.00
Total	30	4.0667	.77385	.14129	3.7777	4.3556	3.00	5.00

As can be seen in Table 2, the mean of the control groups, experimental group 1 and experimental group 2 was 3.85, 4.40, and 3.90; respectively. The total mean of the groups was 4.066. However, in order to see if the groups were homogenous in the pre-test, a test of homogeneity of variance was conducted.

Table 3***Test of Homogeneity of Variances***

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.171	2	27	.325

As can be seen in Table 3, the significance was bigger than .05. As a result, there was an acceptable index of homogeneity in groups in the pre-test. To test the differences between the three groups, a test ANOVA was conducted.

Table 4***ANOVA***

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.717	2	.858	1.481	.245
Groups	15.650	27	.580		
Total	17.367	29			

As can be seen in Table 4, the significance of data between and within groups was .245. In this regard, there was statistically no significant difference between and within groups in protest in terms of fluency.

Table 5***Multiple Comparisons***

		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval			
(I) Group	(J) Group	(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control Group	Experimental A	-.55000	.34048	.257	-1.3942	.2942
	Experimental B]	-.10000	.34048	.954	-.9442	.7442
Experimental A	Control Group	.55000	.34048	.257	-.2942	1.3942
	Experimental B]	.45000	.34048	.396	-.3942	1.2942
Experimental B]	Control Group	.10000	.34048	.954	-.7442	.9442
	Experimental A	-.45000	.34048	.396	-1.2942	.3942

As can be seen in Table 5, the mean between the control group and the experimental group was .257. Therefore, there was statically no significant difference between them. There was also no statistically significant difference between the control group and the experimental as the level of significance was .954. between experimental a and control group and experimental b, was no statistical significance as the level of significance was .257 and .396; respectively.

Table 6***Statistics for Pre-test Fluency***

		Subset for alpha = 0.05
Group	N	1
Control Group	10	3.8500
Experimental B]	10	3.9500
Experimental A	10	4.4000
Sig.		.257
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.		

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 10.000.

As the data in Table 6 represents, there was statically no significant difference between the three groups in protest at the level of significance is .275 which is bigger than .0.05. However, like the pre-test, statistics were conducted for the post-test.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics

Post-test

					95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimu m	Maximu m
Control Group	10	4.1000	.73786	.23333	3.5722	4.6278	3.00	5.00
Experimental A	10	5.3500	.94428	.29861	4.6745	6.0255	4.00	7.00
Experimental B]	10	5.8500	1.20301	.38042	4.9894	6.7106	4.00	8.00
Total	30	5.1000	1.20631	.22024	4.6496	5.5504	3.00	8.00

As the data in Table 7 represent, the mean of the control group was 4.100. The mean of experimental A and experimental B were 5.35 and 5.85; respectively. All in all, the total mean of the groups was 5.100 in the post-test. For comparing between-group statistics, an ANOVA test was conducted.

Table 8

ANOVA for Post-test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	16.250	2	8.125	8.454	.001
Groups	25.950	27	.961		
Total	42.200	29			

As the data in Table 8 represent, the significance of the between and within groups was .001. As a result, there found a statistically significant difference between and within groups. For comparing the differences between control groups and experimental groups in Post-test, multiple comparisons were conducted.

Table 9***Multiple Comparisons***

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control Group	Experimental A	-1.25000*	.43843	.022	-2.3371	-.1629
	Experimental B]	-1.75000*	.43843	.001	-2.8371	-.6629
Experimental A	Control Group	1.25000*	.43843	.022	.1629	2.3371
	Experimental B]	-.50000	.43843	.498	-1.5871	.5871
Experimental B]	Control Group	1.75000*	.43843	.001	.6629	2.8371
	Experimental A	.50000	.43843	.498	-.5871	1.5871

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As can be seen in Table 9, the level of significance between the control group and experimental groups A and B was .022 and .001; respectively. As a result, there was a statistically- significant difference between them in the post-test. The level of significance between experimental A and the control group and experimental B was .22 and .498. Therefore, there was a statistically significant difference between them.

Pre-test: Accuracy

Like fluency, the mean of the groups was considered in terms of accuracy.

Table 10***Descriptive Statistics for Accuracy***

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control Group	10	4.2000	1.08525	.34319	3.4237	4.9763	2.00	5.50
Experimental A	10	3.8500	.74722	.23629	3.3155	4.3845	3.00	5.00
Experimental B]	10	4.3500	.81820	.25874	3.7647	4.9353	3.00	5.50
Total	30	4.1333	.88992	.16248	3.8010	4.4656	2.00	5.50

As can be seen in Table 10, the means of the control group, experimental A, and experimental B were 3.850 and 4.350 respectively.

Table 11

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.644	2	27	.533

As the data in Table 11 show, the significance of variance was .533. There was an acceptable index of homogeneity between them.

Table 12

ANOVA between and Within Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.317	2	.658	.821	.451
Groups	21.650	27	.802		
Total	22.967	29			

As can be seen in Table 12, the significance of the groups was .451. In this regard, there was a statistically-significant difference between and within groups in the pre-test.

Table 13

Multiple Comparisons

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control Group	Experimental A	.35000	.40046	.661	-.6429	1.3429
	Experimental B]	-.15000	.40046	.926	-1.1429	.8429
Experimental A	Control Group	-.35000	.40046	.661	-1.3429	.6429
	Experimental B]	-.50000	.40046	.436	-1.4929	.4929
	Control Group	.15000	.40046	.926	-.8429	1.1429

Experimental B]	Experimental A	.50000	.40046	.436	-.4929	1.4929
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As the data represents, the difference between the control group and experimental groups A and B was .661 and .926; respectively. Therefore, there was statistically no significant difference between them in the pre-test. The significance between experimental A and the control group and experimental B was .400 and .400; respectively. Therefore, there was statistically no significant difference between them in the pre-test.

Table 14

Results of Accuracy Pre-test

		Subset for alpha = 0.05
Group	N	1
Experimental A	10	3.8500
Control Group	10	4.2000
Experimental B]	10	4.3500
Sig.		.436

As the data in Table 14 represent, the significance between experimental A control group and experimental B was .436. Therefore, there was statically no significant difference between them in the pre-test.

Post-test: Accuracy

Table 15

Descriptive for Post-test

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Control Group	10	5.0000	.78174	.24721	4.4408	5.5592	4.00	6.50
Experimental A	10	5.1000	.77460	.24495	4.5459	5.6541	4.00	6.00
Experimental B]	10	6.5000	.81650	.25820	5.9159	7.0841	5.00	8.00
Total	30	5.5333	1.03335	.18866	5.1475	5.9192	4.00	8.00

As the data represented in Table 15, the mean of the control group, experimental A, and Experimental B was 5.00, 5.100, and, 6.500; respectively. As a result, there was a statistically-significant difference between them. All in all, the mean of the three groups was 5. 53.

Table 16

ANOVA for Post-test for Accuracy

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	14.067	2	7.033	11.237	.000
Groups	16.900	27	.626		
Total	30.967	29			

As the data in Table 16 represents, the significance of between and within groups was .000. As a result, there was a statistically-significant difference between and within groups inaccuracy in the post-test.

For comparing the differences between the three groups, multiple comparisons were conducted.

Table 17

Multiple Comparisons in Post-test

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control Group	Experimental A	-.10000	.35382	.957	-.9773	.7773
	Experimental B]	-1.50000*	.35382	.001	-2.3773	-.6227
Experimental A	Control Group	.10000	.35382	.957	-.7773	.9773
	Experimental B]	-1.40000*	.35382	.001	-2.2773	-.5227
Experimental B]	Control Group	1.50000*	.35382	.001	.6227	2.3773
	Experimental A	1.40000*	.35382	.001	.5227	2.2773

As can be seen in Table 17, the difference between the control group and the experimental A was .975. As a result, there was statistically no significant difference between them. The data show a significant difference between the control group and experimental B. As a result, there were

statistically significant differences between them. There was a statically-significant difference between experimental A and experimental B (.0001).

Speaking Ability

Like fluency and accuracy, the speaking ability of the subject was tested in pre-test and post-test. The results are shown in the following Tables.

Table 18

Descriptives: Pre-test: Speaking

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Control Group	10	3.9500	.45338	.14337	3.6257	4.2743	3.50	4.50
Experimental A	10	4.0500	.61010	.19293	3.6136	4.4864	3.00	4.75
Experimental B]	10	4.1500	.61464	.19437	3.7103	4.5897	3.00	4.75
Total	30	4.0500	.55086	.10057	3.8443	4.2557	3.00	4.75

As can be seen in Table18, the mean of the control group, experimental groups A and B was 3.95, 4.04, and 4.15; respectively. The total mean was 4.05. For ensuring that there was homogeneity between variances, a test of homogeneity was conducted. The results are shown in Table19.

Table 19

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.332	2	27	.721

As can be seen in Table 19, the significance was .721. As a result, there was an acceptable index of homogeneity between variances in the pre-test.

Table 20

ANOVA for Speaking in the Pre-test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.200	2	.100	.314	.733
Groups	8.600	27	.319		
Total	8.800	29			

As can be seen in Table 20, the level of significance is .733, As a result, there was statistically no significant difference between and within groups in the pre-test. For understanding the differences between groups in the pre-test, multiple comparisons were conducted.

Table 21

Multiple Comparisons Pre-test

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control Group	Experimental A	-.10000	.25240	.917	-.7258	.5258
	Experimental B]	-.20000	.25240	.711	-.8258	.4258
Experimental A	Control Group	.10000	.25240	.917	-.5258	.7258
	Experimental B]	-.10000	.25240	.917	-.7258	.5258
Experimental B]	Control Group	.20000	.25240	.711	-.4258	.8258
	Experimental A	.10000	.25240	.917	-.5258	.7258

As can be seen, the difference between the control group and the experimental was .917. Therefore, there was no statistically significant difference between them. There was statistically

no significant difference between control A and experimental B (.711). There were statistically no significant differences between experimental A and B (.917).

Table 22

Statistics for Speaking: Pre-test

		Subset for alpha = 0.05
Group	N	1
Control Group	10	3.9500
Experimental A	10	4.0500
Experimental B]	10	4.1500
Sig.		.711
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.		

As can be seen in Table 22, the overall significance in speaking was .711. Therefore, there was statistically no significant difference between groups in the pre-test.

Post-test: Speaking

For determining the differences between pre-test and post-test, statistics were run.

Table 23

Descriptives for Post-test

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Control Group	10	4.5500	.28382	.08975	4.3470	4.7530	4.00	5.00
Experimental A	10	5.2250	.66091	.20900	4.7522	5.6978	4.00	6.00
Experimental B]	10	6.1750	.71734	.22684	5.6618	6.6882	5.00	7.50
Total	30	5.3167	.88311	.16123	4.9869	5.6464	4.00	7.50

As the data in Table 23 represents, the mean of the control group was 4.55. The mean of experimental A and experimental B was 5.22 and 6.17; respectively. The total mean was 5.31.

Table 24

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.329	2	6.665	19.375	.000
Groups	9.288	27	.344		
Total	22.617	29			

As the results of the ANOVA show, the significance was .000. Therefore, there were statistically significant differences between and within groups.

For understanding the differences between groups, multiple comparisons were conducted.

Table 25

Multiple Comparisons

		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
(I) Group	(J) Group	J)			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control Group	Experimental A	-.67500*	.26229	.041	-1.3253	-.0247
	Experimental B]	-1.62500*	.26229	.000	-2.2753	-.9747
Experimental A	Control Group	.67500*	.26229	.041	.0247	1.3253
	Experimental B]	-.95000*	.26229	.003	-1.6003	-.2997
Experimental B]	Control Group	1.62500*	.26229	.000	.9747	2.2753
	Experimental A	.95000*	.26229	.003	.2997	1.6003

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As can be seen in Table 25, the level of significance between the control group and the experimental A is .041. Therefore, there was a statistically significant difference between them in the post-test. Also, there was a statistically significant between the control group and experimental

B (.000). More, the significance between experimental groups A and B was .0003. As a result, there was a statistically significant difference between them.

Results and Discussion

Response to the First Research Question

The first research question of this study was to investigate the possible impact of online-learning activities on Iranian IELTS candidates' speaking fluency. As the data in Tables 3, 4 and 5 represent, before the treatment, there were statistically no significant differences between the three groups in terms of fluency (.245). In addition, the result of the total significance of the three groups in Table 6 represents that the significance is not statistically significant in the three groups (.257). However, after the treatment, the three groups differed in terms of fluency. In other words, as the data in Tables 8 and 8 demonstrate, the level of significance in the three groups is .001. In this regard, it can be concluded that the fluency of the participants in the experimental groups differed statistically-significant from that of the control group. In other words, the null hypothesis of this research is rejected.

Response to the Second Research Question

The second research question of this research was to explore the impacts of online-learning activities on Iranian IELTS candidates' speaking accuracy. As the data in Tables 10, 11 and 12 reveals, before the treatment, there were statistically no significant differences between the three groups in terms of accuracy (.451). In addition, as the data of multiple comparisons in Table 14 reveals, there were statistically no significant differences between the groups as the total significance was .436. However, after the treatment, there found differences between the control group and two other experimental groups as shown in Tables 15, 16 and 17 (.000). In addition, as the data in Table 17 multiple comparisons represent, the three groups differ in terms of accuracy. In this regard, there was a positive relationship between teaching online courses and enhancing the accuracy of IELTS candidates. As a consequence, the null hypothesis of the second research question is rejected.

Response to the Third Research Question

The third research question of this research was to investigate the possible impacts of online-learning activities on Iranian IELTS candidates. As the data in Tables 18,19 and 20 represent, before the treatment, there was statistically no significant difference between the three groups in terms of accuracy (.733). However, as the data in Tables 22, 23 and 24 represent, the participants differed in terms of speaking ability (.000). In other words, the students speaking ability differed after the treatment they received as shown in Table 25, multiple comparisons. In this regard, it is said that there was a statistically significant difference between online teaching activity and the speaking ability of IELTS candidates. In this regard, the third hypothesis of this research is rejected.

Response to the Fourth Research Question

The last research question of this research was to see which model of online teaching could have a more positive impact on IELTS candidates' fluency, accuracy, and speaking ability. As the data in Tables 2, 3, and 4, there were statistically no significant differences between the two modes of teaching in the experimental group (.245). In addition, as can be seen in Table 5, the level of significance between the two groups was .396; as a result, no difference was between the two groups in terms of fluency. In terms of accuracy, the results in Tables 11, 12,13, and 14 show, that there were no statistically significant differences between the two experimental groups in terms of accuracy (.436). Moreover, as far as speaking ability is concerned, there was statistically no significant differences between the two groups in the pre-test as shown in Tables 18,19, 20, and 21 (.917).

However, once the treatment was over and the participants were given a post-test, their performance increased in terms of fluency, accuracy, and speaking. Regarding fluency, Tables 8 and 9 show that there were differences between group experimental 1 and 2 (.498); however, this difference was slight. Regarding the accuracy, the data in Table 13 shows that the level of significance was .001 As a result, there were statistically significant differences between experimental group A and experimental group B in terms of accuracy. Considering the speaking ability, as the data in Table 25 represents, the level of significance between experimental group A and experimental group B is .003 which means that the two groups differ statistically.

All in all, it can be concluded that the treatments had positive impacts on Iranian IELTS candidates in terms of fluency, accuracy, and speaking. However, teaching these skills with teachers' interference and without teachers' interference, the former has more positive impacts than the latter.

Conclusions

In light of the results of this research, some conclusions can be drawn. It was found out that teaching with technology and by the virtue of Information Technology (IT) can facilitate the learning process of second language learners. In addition, it was concluded that as far as speaking ability is concerned, designing online classes with the active role of the teacher can facilitate the students' fluency, accuracy, and speaking ability.

This research has some implications. The first implications can be for English teachers in general and IELTS instructors in particular. They can use the results of this research for designing online courses in which they will supervise the students and the flow of the materials. The second group of beneficiaries is students taking such international tests as IELTS and TOEFL. They can use the results of this research to learn how to benefit from online preparatory courses as they are at home. The last, but not least group who can use the results of this research are curriculum designers. They can use the results of this research for gaining perceptions and insights on designing specialized materials for online learning and teaching.

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Analysis of Conversations in an Iranian High School Textbook: Grecian Maxims in Focus



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Abstract

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Relevance

Conversation which is a major human activity has been the focus of Grice's maxims in his Cooperative Principle. The aim of the present study was to analyze the conversation section in the Iranian high school textbook entitled, *prospect 3*. To achieve this objective, the required data was elicited from 38 English high school teachers through questionnaires and analyzed via SPSS (V.16). The study used descriptive statistics. The statistical analysis of the data revealed that most of the conversations among students followed the Grecian maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. However, in three conversations speakers violated the maxim of quantity and manner-- the maxim of quantity, maxims of quantity and manner, and maxim of quantity were violated in lessons 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

Introduction

One of the most important human activities is conversation. It involves communication and communicators. The ability to master conversation is a part of the communication skill that a person masters (Noermanzah & Friantary, 2019). Syafryadin, et al. (2019) state that conversation is one main part of speaking action.

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People communicate with one another in their daily life. They do not think about how they understand each other. They usually say something, but they mean something else. The difference between what is said and what is meant was Austin's core idea of his theory of pragmatism. But later Grice tried to systemize how a hearer gets the meaning from what is said. Grice's theory of conversational implicature attempts to show how a person obtains the meaning of what is said, from the expressed meaning to the implied meaning (Thomas 1995). Black (2006) introduced the theory of pragmatics. He presented Grice's theory of conversation implicature or Cooperative Principles--the principle which operates in four maxims: quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Grice believed that people employ conversation to collaborate and their aim is to communicate meaningfully. He (1975) stated that "make your contribution, such as required, at the stage at which occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talked exchange in which you are engaged", that is, people typically use language to explain their ideas, feelings, and social association. If they follow all the mentioned maxims, they create a harmonious conversation, and if they violate one of the maxims, their conversation is not cooperative. So, Grice's (1975) maxims proposed to speakers and interlocutors to make their conversation sound, meaningful and acceptable.

Literature Review

Interaction is not just word transfer; it is the study of the concept that is conveyed through the conversational exchange, and interpreting the concept in a conversational context where people speak is viewed as pragmatic (Griffith, 2006). Wray & Bloomer (2016) believe that pragmatism is related to the message that is a closet in the conversation. Pragmatics is the study of hidden meaning or what it engaged when it is not expressed or written (Yule 2006).

Cooperative Maxims

The cooperative principle is the basic presumption that is contributed to the purpose of conversation, namely cooperative conversational partners (Papke, 2015). This principle with its four maxims was at first described by the philosopher, Herbert Paul Grice and is often referred to as the 'Gricean Maxims' named, *quantity*, *quality*, *relevance*, and *manner*.

Maxim of *quantity* is related to the extent of information in a conversation, and it has two premises as follows:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required.
2. Don't make your contribution more informative than is required.

Providing sufficient information in a conversation is very important, while additional and unnecessary information may be attractive to the speaker or listener but unnecessary data will confuse the hearer.

Maxim of *quality* is the second guideline. It states, 'Try to make your participation one of the right things. Grice (1989) provided two premises for this maxim as follows:

1. Do not say what you think is wrong.
2. Do not say what you don't have the right evidence for it. People rely upon the cooperative nature of truthfulness in most conversations and believe that their interlocutor is truthful.

The maxim of the *relation* says, "Be relevant" (Grice 1989), that is each turn must be related to the previous turn. Both speaker and hearer are relevant until one of them changes the focus.

The fourth and final maxim is the maxim of *manner*, which is different from others. This maxim focuses on what is said, instead of how it is said. The four sub-maxims under *manner* are: avoid vague expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity), and be orderly.

If the speaker's talk is ambiguous, the interlocutor is probably requesting transparency, without clarification hearer cannot understand the vague expression, and it is also impossible for the hearer to distinguish truthfulness. The third sub-maxim 'Be brief' is simple and powerful. If all information is adequate, the speaker and hearer understand each other, no more is needed. The fourth sub-maxim under manner is 'Be orderly'. It is clear that the heart of the conversation is organized, so the organization of the speaker should be rational and linked to the objective of the conversation.

According to Yule (1996), it is important to notice that the maxims are assumptions and people try to prepare appropriate information. We think that they are truthful, relevant, and also clear as much as possible. So, we can say that Grice suggested standard behavior in conversation. If speakers follow conversation maxims in different conversations such as meetings or discussions, their communication will be effective and expected. It is important to know that during teaching and learning some of the maxims flout. This leads the learner to ambiguity and confusion.

There is a complex relationship between maxims and CP. Following Grice, the CP must perceive in exchanges of information and conversation. Gricean conversational maxims are

different from other maxims with which the speaker tries to have the most effective information transfer. He maintains that this kind of conversational practice is standard; (Grice 1989). Telegraphic conversation is not an effective exchange of information, because the hearer's background knowledge and need are important.

Many linguistic works related to the CP and the conversational maxim have been embedded in and focused on the wider theory of implicature (Davies, 2007; Chapman, 2005 for a broad and critical review). In this sense, CP and maxims have been qualified as a logical promotion. Hearers create interpretation and understanding of the speaker's predestinate meaning in real communication.

According to Grice, people think that common conversation should follow these maxims and try to elicit the meaning of speech in which the maxims are violated. Through four procedures: quietly and unostentatiously, by opting out of a maxim, coping with a clash between maxims, and flouting a maxim to exploit it, the four maxims can be violated (Mey 2001, 76-77) argues that, Grice's maxims can't be universal and different cultures have different maxims.

Thomas (1995) described maxim violation in which the speakers intentionally produced false implications in a discourse by disobeying a conversational maxim. Papke (2015) believes that violation of maxim arises has several causes, A speaker might violate the quality to mislead the listener. Jorfi (2015) maintains that violation of maxims happens when the maxims are manipulated and, as a result, the speaker deceives the hearer. Another form of violation is called signaling a violation (minor violation). An individual would possibly appear and inform you that he is breaking a maxim and why? The third type of violation is a maxim clash between two or more maxims; for example, a speaker might violate the maxim of quantity to protect the maxim of quality. The last type of violation is "flouting" a maxim (major violation) to produce a conversational implicature. Here, by breaking the maxim, one can indicate something superior to what is said. Therefore, there must be rules for a good conversation between interlocutors. So, the rule of conversation is a maxim. Cooperative rules refer to principles that are used by the speaker and hearer during a conversation; therefore, we can call maxim a cooperative principle, Yule (2014). If interlocutors carry out the maxims, the conversation will be great and communicative.

In the present research, conversation discourse in the English textbook, *prospect 3* was analyzed

to examine the cooperative principle of the conversation among interlocutors and its effects on students' perception of discourse information.

Method

The current research used a qualitative design. According to Cresweell (2014), one of the research methods that is focused on describing and analyzing data is qualitative design. Here, the needed data was derived from 38 English teachers through questionnaires and analyzed via SPSS (V.16).

Participants

A Total number of 38 Iranian teachers participated in this study.

Instrument

In order to gather data, questionnaires were distributed among the participants. They answered the questionnaires willingly and consciously. The questionnaires included 7 questions for each lesson. The questionnaires consist of sections on a) Quantity b) Quality c) Relevance, and d) Manner.

Model

The conversations under investigation were analyzed based on the Gricean maxim model. The results are as follows:

Maxims	Lesson 1	Explanations
quantity	He is really great he is clever and kind He is always very helpful.	These sentences are informative, and give as much information as is needed.
quality	And he's always helpful it's always helped me with my lessons.	He is truthful. He gives information with evidence.
relevance	Who is your best friend? what's he like? Is he hard working now? First question Second question third question forth question	These questions are relevant to the topic and answers are relative too. They are pertinent to the discussion
Manner	Reza He always helps me with my lessons	They speak as brief as orderly but there is an ambiguity. Reza's last name. which lessons? It is not clear.
Maxims	Lesson 3	Explanations

quantity	- I just love the new year's holiday, me too. It's really great. -We normally visit our relatives in Norooz. it's fun.	Their answers are as informative as required. The third sentence has not required information.
quality	Do you get a new year's gift? Sure, we usually get money.	She answered thoroughly and said that (I really liked it).
relevance	-I just love new year -Visit relatives in Norooz - New year's gift -We usually get money -Does your grandmother cook a new year's meal?	This conversation shows that questions and answers are related and talking about topic Norooz.
Manner	Does your grandmother cook the New year's meal? Actually, my mother makes it.	There is no ambiguity in this conversation answers and questions are clear. These sentences (we should go to me grandparents' house) should be replaced by (Do you get new year gifts) to follow the order in conversation.
Maxims	Lesson 6	Explanations
quantity	Do you want to come? I don't think so, I don't like a school trip, last summer <u>I fell and broke my leg</u> . Can you give me some advice? Sure	Maxim of quantity is broken down Reza didn't ask why he doesn't like a school trip. There is more information in his answer.
quality	Ehsan: I don't like the school trip, last summer. I fell and broke my leg. Reza: I twisted my uncle last winter I stayed at home for two weeks. Ehsan: That's too bad. I didn't know that.	There is truthfulness in their conversation.
relevance	We plan to go to the lake. I don't like a school trip. I fell and broke my leg. Reza: I twisted my uncle last winter. I stay at home for two weeks. Reza: After that, I participated in Helale Ahmar first aid class.	There is a relation between questions and answers in the conversation and, a relevant maxim can be seen.
Manner	We plan to go to the lake. Do you want to come? I don't think so, I don't like a school	There is no ambiguity in this conversation. There is no extra information. Questions and answers are orderly.

trip, last summer I fell and broke my leg.
 It sometimes happens, I twisted my uncle last winter.
 I participated in first aid class.
 I learn how to take care of myself.
 I like that can you give me some advice.

Conversation 1

Lesson 1: Personality

Listen to the conversation between two cousins. Ehsan: Who is your best friend at school?

Parham: Reza.

Ehsan: What's he like?

Parham: Oh, he is really great! He's clever and kind. Ehsan: Is he hard-working too?

Parham: Yes! And he's always very helpful. Ehsan: How?

Parham: He always helps me with my lessons.

Maxims of conversation 1

It follows the maxim of quantity because both speakers give enough information as is required.

It follows the maxim of quality both of the speakers say the truth.

It follows the maxim of relevant questions and answers were relevant.

It follows the maxim of manner there is no ambiguity in their speaking and it is an orderly conversation.

Conversation 3

Lesson 3: Festivals and Ceremonies

Listen to the conversation between two friends. Elham: I just love the New Year holidays!

Nasrin: Oh, yes, me too. It's really great.

Elham: We normally visit our relatives in Norooz. It's fun! Nasrin: Do you get New Year gifts too?

Elham: Sure! We usually get money. I really like it. Nasrin: Well..., We always go to my grandparents' houses.

Elham: That's nice! Does your grandmother cook the New Year's meal? Nasrin: Actually, she doesn't. My mother makes it.

Maxims of conversation 3

It follows the maxim of quantity because of enough information in this conversation. It follows the maxim of quality, the speaker answers truly. It follows the maxim of the relevant speech talking about Norooz and their utterances are relevant.

It follows the maxim of manner. There is no ambiguity in this conversation but it doesn't obey the sub-maxim orderly. It is better to replace the sentence, "we go always to my grandparents' house" with "Doyou get new year gifts?" Conversation 6.

Lesson 6: Health and Injuries

Listen to the conversation between two friends. Reza: We plan to go to the lake. Do you want to come? Ehsan: I don't think so. I don't like school trips. Last summer I fell and broke my leg.

Reza: It sometimes happens. I twisted my ankle last winter. I stayed home for two weeks!

Ehsan: That's too bad! I didn't know that.

Reza: Yeah..., but after that, I participated in Helal-e-Ahmar first aid classes. I learned how to take care of myself.

Ehsan: I like that. Can you give me some advice? Reza: Sure!

Maxims of conversation 6

It breaks down the maxim of quantity. In this conversation Reza doesn't ask "why he doesn't like school trips?" but Ehsan talked about it.

It follows the maxim of quality because its discourse is honest. They don't tell lie, they are truthful.

It follows the maxim of relevance; they speak about a single topic and there is a correlation between the question and answer.

Data analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. As a result, four factors were derived from 7 items for each lesson. The data were collected via questionnaires and analyzed via SPSS (V.16) The study used descriptive statistics. Each question of the questionnaire were analyzed separately.

There are three options for answering the questions, "I agree", "I have no opinions", and "I disagree".

Option 1 for "I agree"

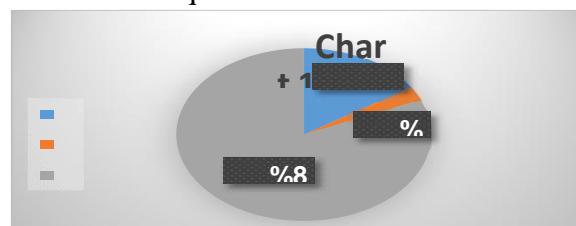
Option 2 for "I have no opinions" Option 3 for "I disagree"

Lesson 1

Quantity

Question 1-Lesson 1: There is enough information in the questions and answers.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	6	15.8
2	1	2.6
3	31	81.6
Total	38	100.0

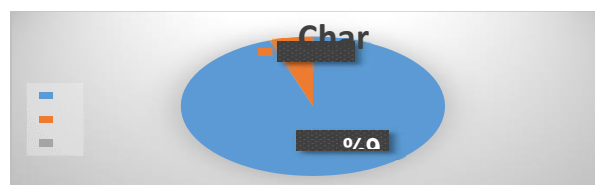


As can be seen, the third option with 31 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (81.6%) opposed question 1.

Quantity

1- Question 2- Lesson 1: The speaker does not provide additional information to the listener.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	36	94.7
2	2	5.3
Total	38	100.0

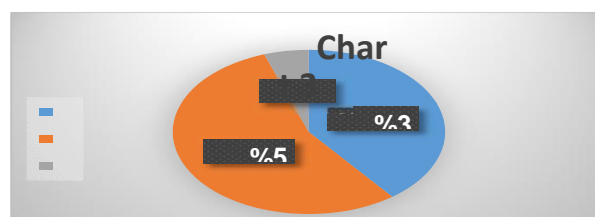


As can be seen, the first option with 36 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people 94.7% agree with question 2.

Quality

2- Question 3- Lesson 1: There is no false information between the speaker and the listener in

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	15	39.5
2	21	55.2
3	2	5.3
Total	38	100.0



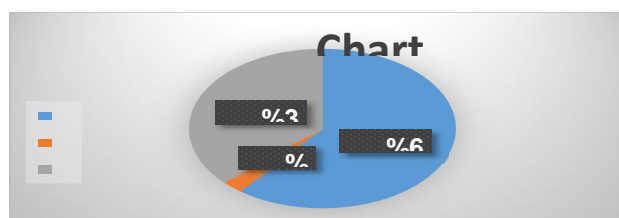
the conversation.

As can be seen, the second option with 21 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (55.2%) have no opinion about question 3.

Quality

3- Question 4- Lesson 1: The speaker's response to the listener is based on evidence.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	23	60.5
2	1	2.6
3	14	36.9
Total	38	100.0

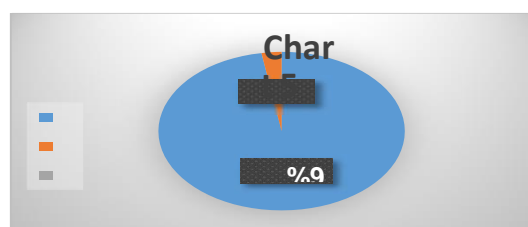


As can be seen, the first option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) agree with question 4.

Relevance

4- Question 5- Lesson 1: The speaker and listener talk about the same topic.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	37	97.4
2	1	2.6
Total	38	100.0

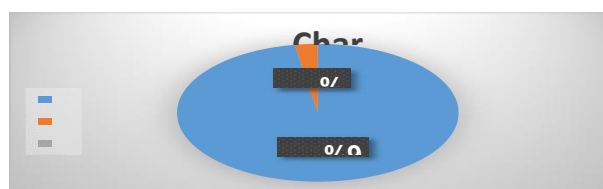


As can be seen, the first option with 37 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (97.4%) agree with question 5.

Relevance

5- Question 6- Lesson 1: The speaker and listener speak clearly.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	37	97.4
2	1	2.6
Total	38	100.0

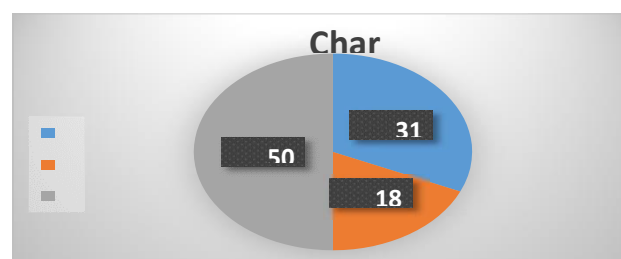


As can be seen, the first option with 37 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people 97.4% agree with question 6.

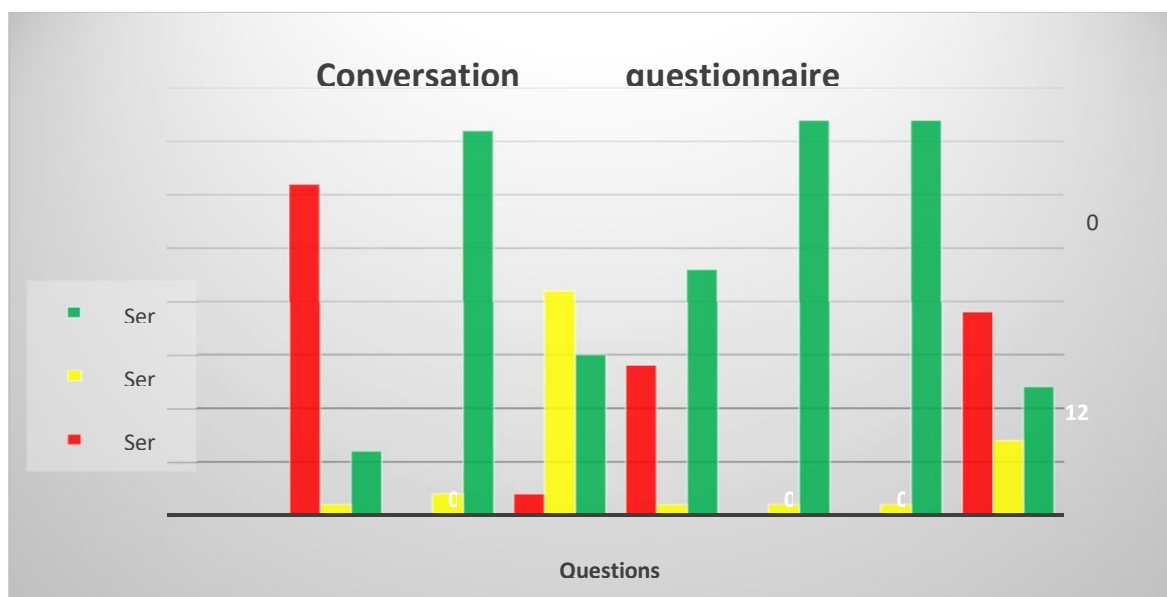
Manner

6- Question 7- Lesson 1: There is no ambiguity in the conversation between the listener and the speaker.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	12	31.6
	2	7	18.4
	3	19	50
	Total	38	100.0



As can be seen, the third option with 19 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (50%) are opposed to question 7.



Graph 1

In the above diagram series1 with green color as "agree", series 2 with yellow color as "no opinions", and series3 with red color as "disagree".

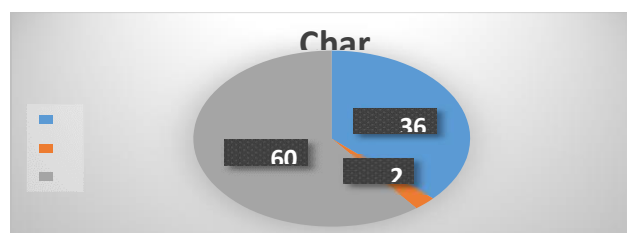
According to the above diagram (Graph 1), about 3.7 of the participants (62.37%) had a positive opinion about the conversation questionnaire lesson 1, about 9.4 of the participants (24.74%) had a negative opinion, and about 4.9 of the participants (12.89%) had no opinions.

Lesson 3

Quantity

7- Question 1-Lesson 3: There is enough information in the questions and answers.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	14	36.9
2	1	2.6
3	23	60.5
Total	38	100.0

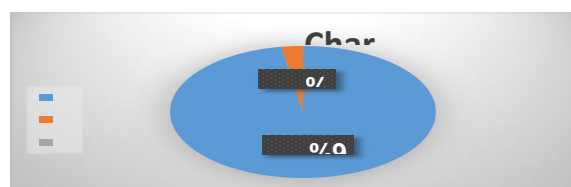


As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 8.

Quantity

8- Question 2- Lesson 3: The speaker does not provide additional information to the listener.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	37	97.4
2	1	2.6
Total	38	100.0

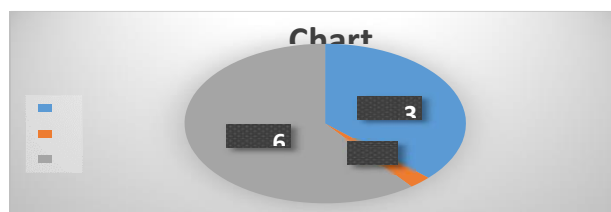


As can be seen, the first option with 37 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (97.4%) agree with question 9.

Quality

9- Question 3- Lesson 3: There is no false information between the speaker and the listener in the conversation.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	14	36.9
	2	1	2.6
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0

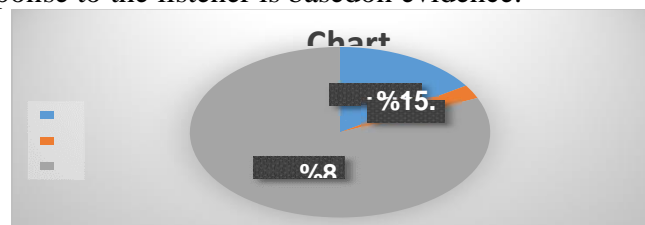


As can be seen, the third option with 23 respondents has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 10.

Quality

10- Question 4- Lesson 3: The speaker's response to the listener is based on evidence.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	6	15.8
	2	1	2.6
	3	31	81.6
	Total	38	100.0

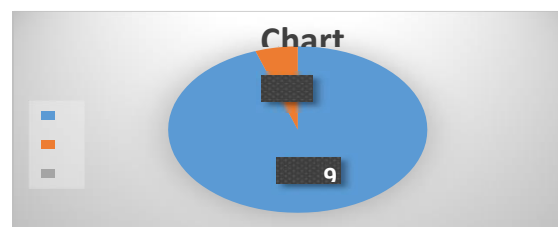


As can be seen, the third option with 31 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (81.6%) are opposed to question 11.

Relevance

11- Question 5- Lesson 3: The speaker and listener talk about the same topic.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	36	94.7
	2	2	5.3
	Total	38	100.0

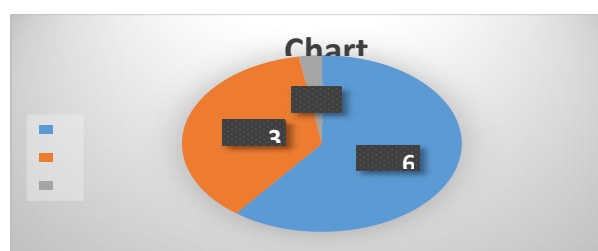


As can be seen, the first option with 36 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (94.7%) agree with question 12.

Relevance

12- Question 6- Lesson 3: The speaker and listener speak clearly.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	23	60.5
	2	14	36.9
	3	1	2.6
	Total	38	100.0

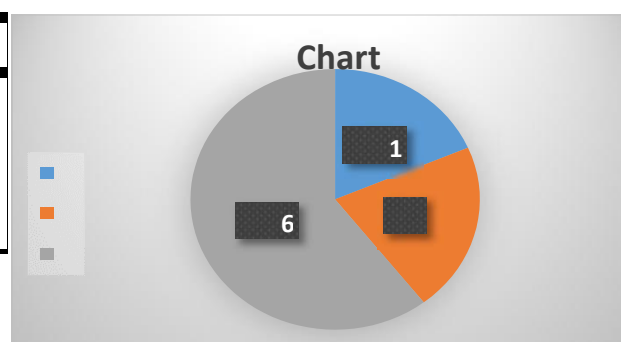


As can be seen, the first option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) agree with question 13.

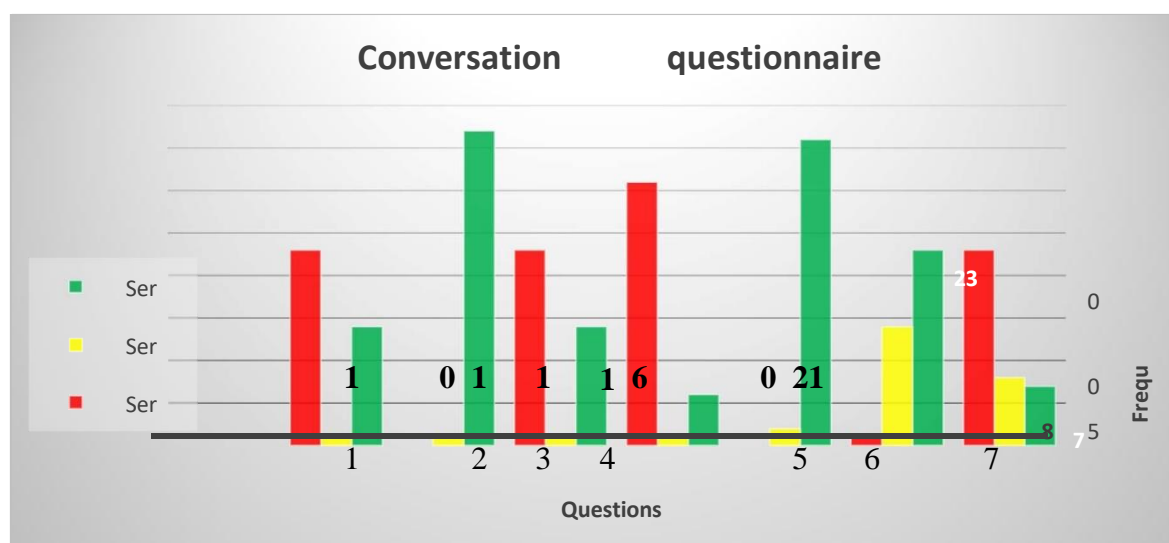
Manner

13- Question 7- Lesson 3: There is no ambiguity in the conversation between the listener and the speaker.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	7	18.5
	2	8	21
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0



As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 14.



In the above diagram series1 with green color as "agree", series 2 with yellow color as "no opinions", and series 3 with red color as "disagree".

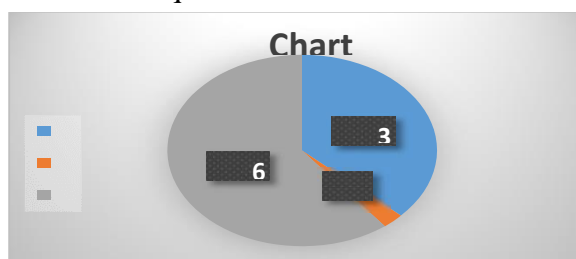
According to the above diagram (Graph 2), about 19.6 of the participants (51.58%) had a positive opinion about the conversation questionnaire lesson 3, about 14.4 of the participants (37.89%) had a negative opinion, and about 4.0 of the participants (10.53%) had no opinions.

Lesson 6

Quantity

14- Question 1-Lesson 6: There is enough information in the questionsand answers.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	14	36.9
2	1	2.6
3	23	60.5
Total	38	100.0

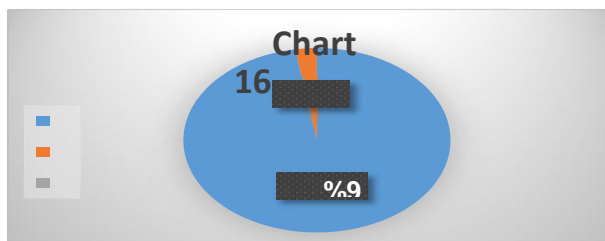


As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 15.

Quantity

15- Question 2- Lesson 6: The speaker does not provide additionalinformation to the listener.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1	37	97.4
2	1	2.6
Total	38	100.0

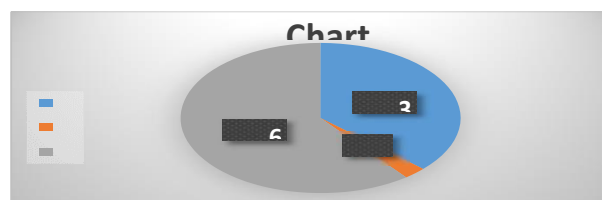


As can be seen, the first option with 37 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (97.4%) agree with question 16.

Quality

16- Question 3- Lesson 6: There is no false information between the speaker and the listener in the conversation.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	14	36.9
	2	1	2.6
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0

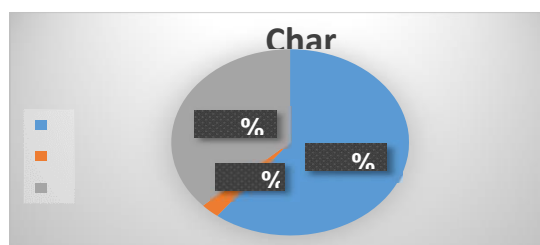


As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 17.

Quality

17- Question 4- Lesson 6: The speaker's response to the listener is based on evidence.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	23	60.5
	2	1	2.6
	3	14	36.9
	Total	38	100.0

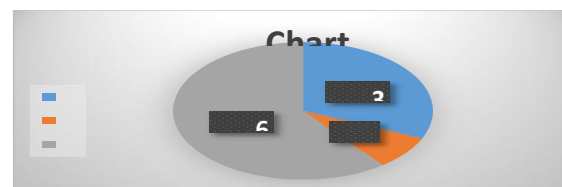


As can be seen, the first option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) agree with question 18.

Relevance

18- Question 5- Lesson 6: The speaker and listener talk about the same topic.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	12	31.6
	2	3	7.9
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0

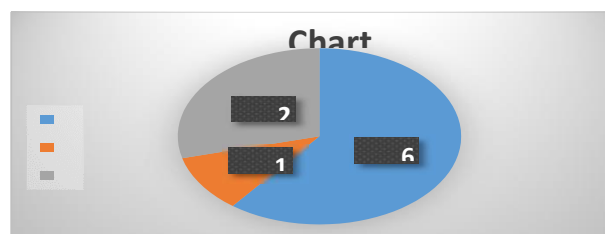


As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 19.

Relevance

19- Question 6- Lesson 6: The speaker and listener speak clearly.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	23	60.5
	2	4	10.5
	3	11	29
	Total	38	100.0

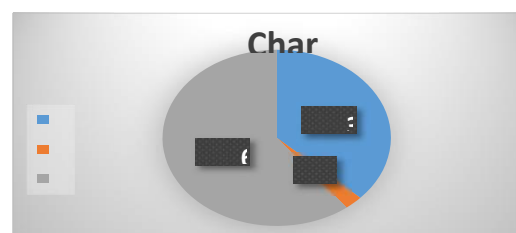


As can be seen, the first option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) agree with question 20.

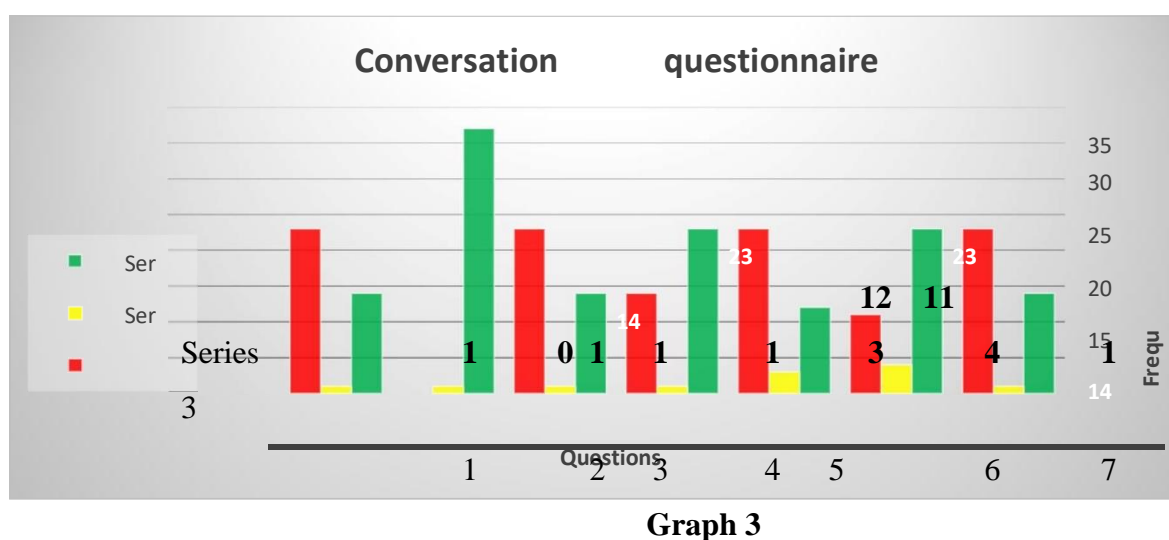
Manner

20- Question 7- Lesson 6: There is no ambiguity in the conversation between the listener and the speaker.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	14	36.9
	2	1	2.6
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0



As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 21.



In the above diagram series1 with green color as "agree", series 2 with yellow color as "no opinions", and series3 with red color as "disagree".

According to the above diagram (Graph 3), about 19.6 of the participants (51.58%) had a positive opinion about the conversation questionnaire lesson 6, about 16.7 of the participants (43.95%) had a negative opinion, and about 1.7 of the participants (4.47%) had no opinions

Lessons No.	L.1	L.3	L.6	Percentage of each Maxim in lessons
Maxims				
Quantity	--	*	*	66.66 %
Quality	--	--	--	0.0 %
Relevant	--	--	--	0.0 %
Manner	*	*	--	66.66 %
Percentage of Maxims in each lesson	25 %	50 %	25 %	

According to the above table, in lesson one 25%, in lesson three 50%, and in lesson six 25% violation of the maxim was found, and the total violation in these three lessons, for the maxim of quantity is 66.66%, and for the maxim of manner is 66.66%.

Discussion and Conclusion

Conversation is one of the skills involved in communication. In conversation, it is important to provide sufficient information. extra information is interesting for the speaker and hearer but they do not add to the running goal of the dialogic change. In the current study, the author analyzed the conversation between two students in each lesson of *prospect 3*, based on conversational maxims.

The results showed that in lesson 1 conversation, the maxim of quantity, in lesson 3 conversation the maxims of quantity and manner, and in lesson 6 conversation the maxim of quantity have been violated.

According to Mey (2001) and Yule (2014), a good conversation does not break down any maxims, and as a result, misunderstanding does not come about between the speaker and hearer.

Based on the findings of this study, most of the conversations in the investigated material follow the maxims (quantity - quality - relevance - manner). It means that the speakers' answers to the questions were informative as required and that the interlocutors did not say what was false – they were truthful. Additionally, questions and answers were relevant to the conversation and the interlocutors talked about the subject of the conversation. They avoided ambiguity in their conversation, did not use prolixity, and were brief.

Finally, it is to be noted that the analysis of the conversations in prospects 1 and 2 based on the basis of Gricean maxims would provide a more vivid picture of following or violation of such maxims. Thus, these conversations need to be modified.

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Power of Online Games in Enriching EFL Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge



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Abstract

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Keywords:

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learning

Online games have been proven to be influential in escalating the learning rate of language. Many facets of language were investigated in the light of online games, but the vocabulary was not considered enough at different proficiency levels. Therefore, the present study aimed at inspecting the impact of online games on young EFL learners' vocabulary enhancement. For this purpose, following a true experimental design, a sample of eighty male and female learners took part in the study. They were divided into two control and experimental groups randomly. They were homogenized using OPT test. Then, they were pre-tested using an online vocabulary test. Later, the control group was taught using traditional methods of text-book and writing and the experimental group was treated using BINGO online game. Subsequently, the groups were post-tested through another online vocabulary test. Scores were entered into SPSS and the descriptive statistics were calculated and t-tests were run. The results revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in mastering specified vocabulary items, and there was a considerable difference between the two groups. The study has implications for teachers, curriculum designers, and students.

قدرت بازی های آنلاین در غنی سازی دانش واژگان زبان آموزان انگلیسی

ثابت شده است که بازی های آنلاین در افزایش نرخ یادگیری زبان تاثیرگذار هستند. بسیاری از جنبه های زبان در پرتو بازی های آنلاین مورد بررسی قرار گرفت، اما واژگان در سطوح مختلف مهارت به اندازه کافی در نظر گرفته نشد. بنابراین، مطالعه حاضر با هدف بررسی تاثیر بازی های آنلاین بر تقویت واژگان زبان آموزان جوان انگلیسی انجام شد. بدین منظور، در پی یک طرح آزمایشی واقعی، نمونه ای متشکل از هشتاد دانش آموز دختر و پسر در پژوهش شرکت کردند. به طور تصادفی به دو گروه کنترل و آزمایش تقسیم شدند. با استفاده از آزمون OPT همگن شدند. سپس، با استفاده از آزمون آنلاین واژگان، از قبل مورد آزمایش قرار گرفتند. سپس گروه گواه با استفاده از روش های سنتی کتاب درسی و نگارش و گروه آزمایش با استفاده از بازی آنلاین BINGO تحت آموزش قرار گرفتند. پس از آن، گروه ها از طریق یک آزمون آنلاین واژگان دیگر پس از آزمون قرار گرفتند. نمرات وارد نرم افزار SPSS شده و آمار توصیفی محاسبه و آزمون t اجرا شد. نتایج نشان داد که گروه آزمایش در تسلط بر واژگان مشخص شده از گروه کنترل بهتر عمل کرده و بین دو گروه تفاوت قابل توجهی وجود دارد. این مطالعه پیامدهایی برای معلمان، طراحان برنامه درسی و دانش آموزان دارد.

واژگان کلیدی: تقویت واژگان، بازی های آنلاین، یادگیری زبان

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Introduction

Vocabulary is assumed to be one of the central components of language (Bagga-Gupta, 2022; Putri, 2022). It is learned both formally and informally (Carraro & Trinder, 2021; Temban et., 2021). In both conditions, the children make attempts to find ways to make learning easier. In teaching language, the experts always examine different methods to put an eternal effect on the learners. The creation of such an effect is not easy and is troublesome for learners. Of the many suggested procedures which develop learning vocabulary, internet-based tools like games were confirmed to be effective (Ortiz-Martinez, 2022; Thai, 2022).

Human daily life is inevitably governed or affected by digital technologies (Pink, et al., 2022), and one cannot deny the time-consuming and amusing role of technologies (Davis et al., 2013). Recently, instructional media has received considerable attention (Apriyanti et al., 2020; Mahzum et al., 2020) in language learning. Through media, students can independently and consciously learn how to instruct and practice vocabulary (Febriani, 2020; Graves, 2016). Learning media plays an important role in conveying information and messages from resources to students (Haryana et al., 2022; Winarto et al., 2020).

Some new technologies, for instance, personal computer (PC) and play station (PS), games have been changing the learning-teaching of languages (Davis, 2012). For instance, new games have something more than entertainment for students. They have some impact beyond amusement. Additionally, recent research indicated that media can have positive effects on learners' engagement and motivation. Of the many types of instruction digital technologies which affected other components of language are a game or what has been called gamification in education.

Laamarti, Eid, and Saddik (2014) described a game as being a contest that is ruled \-governed, goal-oriented, amusing, and entertaining. In addition, According to Vagna (2022), a game is defined as “an enjoyable activity that gets people engaged for great amusement. Most of us play fun games because it is simply fun and happy; it enhances the function of our brain, cognitive skills as well as release serotonin in our brains” (p. 16). Based on the internet need, educational games are either online or offline (Hsu & Chang, 2022). Online games are played through mobiles and computers and use the internet (Pajarillo-Aquino, 2019). According to Vena and Chen (2017), gamers are of certain types which are competitors, explorers, collectors, achievers, jokers, directors, storytellers, performers, and craftsmen. Each player has a specific goal for playing games and this causes them to spend hours watching or staring at a screen.

After their introduction to education, online games were examined in terms of their merits and demerits. There are plenty of games that have audio-visual objects in them also animated characters are contained. This feature can increase learners' interactivity (Confos & Davis, 2016). Moreover; pc games are intelligent and can specify understudies and objective study settings. As a result of the increasing engagement of students in games, gamification has appeared. Gamification is an approach to engaging students by using games in the learning environment (Davis et al., 2021).

From one side, they are used as a tool to facilitate learning, provide a stress-free environment, motivate learners and bring about a sense of freshness. On the other hand, the other side of online games which some researchers like Chatterjee (2020) called it dark side of online games, causes depression, loss of eyesight, and loss of weight or overweight

The effectiveness of online games in various areas of language learning was examined and proved positive. Yolageldili and Arikan (2011) inspected the efficiency of exploiting games in instructing grammar to young learners. Besides, Castillo-Cuesta (2020) found that digital games are of use in improving grammatical structures and modes. However, as studies indicated, scores of aspects of language like grammar, pronunciation, collocations, etc. were investigated under the effect of media and digital/online games; but one area which received less attention by researchers is learning vocabulary through online games. Therefore, this has been felt as a problem in the literature, and the current study targets it.

Research Questions

The objective of the current study was to investigate the impact of online games on EFL learners' vocabulary enhancement. To attain this aim, two research questions are put together:

RQ 1: To what extent does implementing online games have any statistically significant effect on enriching EFL learners' vocabulary?

RQ 2: Does implementing online games have any statistically significant effect on enriching EFL learners' vocabulary?

Literature Review

Vocabulary is among the challenging issues of language learning; and this is due to the large number of them plus their variety (Raw & Ismail, 2021). According to Nejati et al. (2018), one

of the building blocks of language is vocabulary, and vocabulary forms the kernel of skills of language. EFL/ESL language learners rely seriously on the development of vocabulary knowledge (Alqahtani, 2015). As Afzal (2019) reported non-native speakers of English experience troubles concerning the meanings of the new lexical items and their characteristics like spelling, pronunciation, and meaning. Sidek and Rahim (2015) stressed the fact that poor vocabulary contributes to ineffective communication. According to Alamri and Rogers (2018), students not only have problems learning vocabulary but also recalling them.

Scores of studies (Afzal & Mansoor, 2019; Alamri & Rogers, 2018; Chong & Kee, 2019) indicated the concern of teachers about the students' recall of vocabulary. For example, Afzal and Mansoor (2019) stressed the unproductive teaching methods used in vocabulary teaching and learning. Solhi Andarab (2019) noted that learning vocabulary is a difficulty and such difficulty reside in the problem of anchoring the new vocabularies to the earlier related learned items.

The problem of learning and recalling vocabulary was promoted to some extent by using computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and Mobile assisted language learning (MALL). Inspired by CALL and MALL, educational tools or authentic tools were introduced to pedagogy. Gangaiamaran and Pasupathi (2017) and Klimova (2019) showed that MALL and CALL advanced and facilitated language experience. Nasir (2020) reported that language learning indicated a great demand for internet-based platforms and this issue has motivated the teachers. Mobile learning is believed to optimize the potential or power of mobile devices as learning means in language learning contexts (Hasram et al., 2021). Of the instruments which have been indicated to contribute greatly to language learning, especially vocabulary learning is games (Ara, 2009; Wang et al., 2011).

Gee (2005) argued that games are either educational or non-educational, that is, some are authentic and some are created for non-educational use. A game is a play between two or more players or even one player plays it to reach an aim (Kostikova, 2017). He added that a game is a potential learning activity, has an objective, the players have control over it, has challenges, is motivating, is fun, and requires interaction between the players. They are either online or offline. Numerous scholars describe online games in learning as the incorporation of game thinking and game mechanics (Yamaguchi et al., 2011; Chapman & Rich, 2018). Authentic games often increase students' motivation, since they have communicative aims and practices (Warschauer & Healey, 1998, as cited in Sorensen & Meyer, 2007). Games create a fun milieu, persuade learners

and provide leisure activities (Sorensen & Meyer, 2007). For many classrooms, games are considered to be tasks (Warschauer & Kern, 2000). According to Kostikova (2017), some of the most effective games are “(1) information gap, (2) guessing games, (3) search games, (4) matching games, (5) matching-up games, (6) exchanging games, (7) collecting games, and (8) arranging games” (p. 174). According to Sorensen and Audon (2004), children usually appreciate and use games as a communicative tool, collecting information and gaming at home and in schools, the learners use games to solve problems and do tasks. Wu et al. (2011) in their study on the impact of games on motivation, confidence, and ability of students, showed that games are vital in escalating learning variables.

In line with the purpose of the study, online games are games that are played and used using the internet (Shamsiddinovna, 2022). Hasin and Nasir (2021) reported that online games have acceptance among learners disregarding their age and gender. Online games have different multimedia capacities which promote learning (Deris & Shukor, 2019). Further, Arikan (2011) found that online games provide instructional benefits for EFL/ESL teachers and students. Yip and Kwan (2006) showed that online games help learners learn more words and remember new items more than other activities.

Method

The present part of the study is devoted to the method of the study in which participants, design, instruments, the procedure of data collection, and the procedure of data analysis are dealt with.

Participants and Setting

Several 86 intermediate EFL students learning English at Safir English Institute of Sharyar ranging from 12 to 16 were selected to form the population of the study. The Oxford Proficiency Test (OPT) was administered to them homogenizing them and selecting the participants. At last, based on the scores of OPT, 60 learners formed the participants. However, 60 students were divided into two equal control and experimental groups randomly. The study took place during the 2022 summer semester of the mentioned institute in Iran.

Instruments

OPT, pre-test, and post-test were the tools used in the study. To check the level of general language proficiency of the participants at the beginning of the study and form a homogenous sample, OPT was utilized. The items of the OPT test were taken from ‘Longman Complete

Course for the TOEFL Test by Philips (2011). The internal consistency of the test was calculated and reported to be (0.76), which was fairly satisfactory. Furthermore, to ensure its validity, it was reviewed by two language experts and their comments were utilized in the follow-up version of the main study. The OPT consisted of three parts: vocabulary test, reading comprehension, and grammatical structures. This test included 40 vocabulary tests, 40 grammar tests, and 20 reading comprehension tests.

The second instrument was a 30 items multiple choice vocabulary test which was withdrawn from <https://www.englishtestsonline.com>. This kind of test was used to ensure the participants' homogeneity.

The post-test or third instrument was obtained from <https://www.grammarbank.com/> and included 30 items thoroughly different from the pre-test.

Design

In line with the nature of the research questions, the study followed the true-experimental method in which the population was randomly divided into control and experimental groups, and then they were tested and treated through pre-test and post-test. The dependent variable was vocabulary learning and the independent one was an online game.

Data collection

Before everything else, the researcher attended Safir English Institute of Shahryar County of Tehran province to talk about the study, get the permissions, the number of students, their gender, and the time of participation. After primary speculations and getting the permissions, the researcher got the list of intermediate male and female learners on different days. Then selected 80 learners based on availability sampling. Then the researcher attended the institute on different days to explain the nature of the study and the time plan of participation in the study. Then the students were invited to attend the institute on a working day to sit for OPT. When the scores of OPT were interpreted, the 60 remaining learners were divided into two control and experimental groups randomly. Moreover, both groups were pre-tested to assure their homogeneity before treatment. In the next phase, the control group was instructed through the traditional system of teaching vocabulary and grammar, i.e. the conventional method, paper, and pencil method, was employed to teach new words to the participants of the control group. This group learned new

words in sentences, texts, and passages. The course lasted for fifteen weeks, 2 sessions per week. Then, the experimental group was instructed through the instruction of the BINGO game. The game was run by writing 10 words on the board and every student selected five words and wrote them down. After that, the teacher randomly selected one word without saying it and gave the students its definition or synonym. If a student guessed the right word, he or she should shout BINGO and wins the round. When the game was played within two sessions in a week, then both control and experimental groups were post-tested. The scores obtained from the pre-and post- tests were analyzed statistically.

Data analysis

The scores obtained from pre-tests and post-tests were entered into 'SPSS 1.0. 0.1275' version. Then, the descriptive statistics of the data including mean, mode, median, range, and SD were calculated to answer the research questions. Then, **paired samples t-test** was run to estimate the differences between the two groups.

Results

The present part of the study is devoted to the presentation of the results. The results are presented through tables and graphs.

Results of pre-tests

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of groups at pre-test

Summary		
	Control group	Experimental group
Mean	22.1667	20.6333
Variance	34.6722	53.9656
Stand. Dev.	5.8883	7.3461
N	30	30
T		0.9593
d.o.f		29
critical value		2.045

Based on Table 1, the Control group mean is considered to be equal to the Experimental group mean. In other words, the difference between the means of the Control group and the Experimental group is not big enough to be statistically significant. The p-value equals 0.3534, ($P(x < -0.9432) = 0.1767$). It means that the chance of type I error, rejecting a correct H_0 , is too high: 0.3534 (35.34%). The larger the p-value the more it supports H_0 .

The test statistic T equals -0.9432, which is in the 95% region of acceptance: [-2.0452, 2.0452]. The 95% confidence interval of the Experimental group minus the Control group is: [-4.8584, 1.7917]. The observed effect size d is very small, 0.17. However, this demonstrates that the extent of the difference between the mean of the differences and the expected average of the differences is not remarkable.

Results of post-tests

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of groups at post-test

Summary		
	Control group	Experimental group
Mean	24.2	27.5333
Variance	39.8267	49.1822
Stand. Dev.	6.3108	7.013
n	30	30
t		-4.246
d.o.f		29
critical value		2.045

As table 2 shows, the mean score of the control group is 19.2 and that of the experimental group is 27.53. Since the p-value $< \alpha$, H_0 is rejected. The control group's means are considered to be not equal to the experimental group's mean. In other words, the difference between the averages of control and experimental is big enough to be statistically significant. The p-value equals 0.0002485, ($P(x < 4.1747) = \mathbf{0.9999}$). It means that the chance of type I error (rejecting a correct H_0) is small: 0.0002485 (0.025%). The smaller the p-value the more it supports H_1 .

The test statistic T equals 4.1747, which is not in the 95% region of acceptance: [-2.0452, 2.0452]. The 95% confidence interval of control minus experimental is: [4.2507, 12.4159]. The

observed effect size d is medium, 0.76. This shows that the enormity of the difference between the average of the differences and the expected average of the differences is medium.

Comparing pre-test and post-test of the control group

Table 3

Comparison of pre and post-tests of the control group

Group	Co-pre-test	Co-post-test
Mean	22.1667	24.02
SD	34.67	39.82
Differences in the means	2.033	

As Table 3 shows, the mean of the Control-pre-test minus the control-post-test equals 2.033 which is not high enough to mark the difference between the pre-test and post-test of the control group to be significant.

Comparing pre-test and post-test of the experimental group

Table 4

Comparison of pre and post-tests of the experimental group

Group	Ex-pre-test	Ex-post-test
Mean	22.16	27.53
SD	34.67	49.18
Differences in the means	5.3700	

As Table 4.4 shows, the mean of experimental-pre-test minus experimental-post-test equals 5.3700 which is high enough to mark the difference between pre-test and post-test of the experimental group to be significant.

Discussion

Within the current part of the study, the results are discussed and conclusions are drawn. Before dealing with the discussion, the research questions are re-stated and answered to pave the way for discussion. The posed research questions of the study are as follows:

RQ 1: To what extent does implementing online games have any statistically significant effect on enriching EFL learners' vocabulary?

RQ 2: Does implementing online games have any statistically significant effect on enriching EFL learners' vocabulary?

Regarding the first research question, as the results indicated, exercise in online games improves EFL learners' vocabulary to a great extent. Regarding the second research question, online games have a significant effect on enriching EFL learners' vocabulary. The strong point of this study was that traditional methods of teaching vocabulary are not enough to rely on, and there should be motives to exercise technology-based methods of teaching and learning vocabulary.

The results of the study are in line with Ashraf et al. (2014). They studied the influence of online games on EFL learners' vocabulary with a population of 24 intermediate learners and found that online games are more effective in learning English vocabulary. In comparing these two studies, however, it should be said that our study participants were more than Ashraf et al. A study by Hasram et al. (2021) also supports the results of the current study. In their study, they inspected the degree of improvement of vocabulary performance with a population of 121 pupils. The findings of this study showed significant development in the student's vocabulary marks after using WordWall (WOW) as a vocabulary learning additional tool. The strong point of Haram et al. study was that it used a mixed methods design cross-sectionally. The results are consistent with Derakhshan and Davoodi Khatir's (2015) suggestions for the implementation of online games in learning vocabulary. They suggested that game-based learning activities and techniques in the classroom attract more attention to learning and teaching new vocabulary more effectively. The weak point of this study was that it reviewed other studies and did not conduct an experimental study. These results support the claim of Freeman (1986), based on which if learners enjoy language games, they will enjoy communicative aspects of the classroom. This means that games are entertaining for learners and as a result of which the input could be processed more easily. The results are supported by Stockwell (2014). He proposed that learning should take a technological aspect to itself; because it leads to a deeper understanding of language as mediated by technology in the language learning process.

All in all, getting rid of conventional methods of vocabulary learning, paves the way for internet and computer-based methods. The most possible justifications are that they motivate learners, make the language attractive, and are programmed. According to Yip and Kwan (2006), games improve learners' performance. Besides, Ashraf et al. (2014) argued that the use of

computer-oriented technologies facilitates learning. Besides, they noted that internet-based activities have timetables, colorful windows, and musical patterns.

Conclusion

The study set out to investigate the effect of online games on the improvement of learning vocabulary. However, the experiment confirmed that the implementation of online games has a statistically significant effect on learning vocabulary. This means that the exercise of games, especially the online ones, creates permanent learning and leads to an increase in the breadth of vocabulary in EFL contexts.

In terms of implications, an implication of this study is the possibility of providing teachers with insights to allocate pieces of time to games while working with vocabularies. This means that learners undoubtedly react positively. Besides, the evidence from this study suggests that in overcoming psychological barriers when learning grammatical and lexical items, the use of the internet and computer-based activities motivate and encourage learners. Taken together, these findings suggest a role for both offline and online games in promoting all facets of language learning.

This study suggests the following future research directions. Further research is needed to combine offline games and online game to see which type improve facets of language learning. In addition, other researchers may wish to choose more participants and exercise the use of online games across more advanced levels of language learning. We encourage others to carry out further research on the effect of using games in reducing anxiety and increasing motivation.

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Textual Pragmatic Markers in the Speech of Jordanian University Students: A Functional-Pragmatic Approach



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Abstract

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Keywords:

Linguistic adaption, pragmatic function, pragmatic markers, Relevance Theory, textual marker

This study aimed at investigating the use of textual English pragmatic markers (PMs) as used by Jordanian university students by adopting a functional-pragmatic approach to explore the functions of these PMs. It also examined the effect of gender on the use of textual PMs. Participants were 10 fourth-year university students (5 males and 5 females) who studied Translation at Isra Private University. Online interviews, storytelling activities, and a short questionnaire were used to elicit data from the participants. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively in light of the study's research questions. The study revealed that the functions of textual markers are: marking contrast, elaborating, reformulating and exemplifying, showing temporal sequence, indicating inferential or conclusive relationships and summaries, signaling shifts or transition of discourse and continuation of discourse, and signaling the opening or closing of opening or closing of discourse. In relation to the use of textual PMs, the results showed that there were no significant differences between males and females.

نشانگرهای کاربردی متنی در گفتار دانشجویان دانشگاه اردن: رویکردی کاربردی-عملی

این مطالعه با هدف بررسی استفاده از نشانگرهای کاربردی متنی انگلیسی (PMs) که توسط دانشجویان دانشگاه اردن استفاده می‌شود با اتخاذ یک رویکرد کاربردی-عملی برای کشف عملکرد این PMs انجام شد. همچنین تأثیر جنسیت بر استفاده از PM های متنی را بررسی کرد. شرکت کنندگان 10 دانشجوی سال چهارم (5 پسر و 5 زن) بودند که در دانشگاه خصوصی اسرا در رشته مترجمی تحصیل کردند. مصاحبه های آنلاین، فعالیت های روایتی، فعالیت های داستان سرایی و یک پرسشنامه کوتاه برای استخراج داده ها از شرکت کنندگان استفاده شد. داده ها با توجه به سؤالات تحقیق به صورت کیفی و کمی مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفت. این مطالعه نشان داد که کارکردهای نشانگرهای متنی عبارتند از: نشاندهندگی تضاد، توضیح دادن، دوبار سازی و مثال زدن، نشان دادن توالی زمانی، نشان دادن روابط و خلاصه های استنتاجی یا قطعی، سیگنال دهی تغییر یا انتقال گفتار و ادامه گفتار، و علامت دادن به باز یا بسته شدن باز یا بسته شدن گفتار در رابطه با استفاده از PM های متنی، نتایج نشان داد که بین زن و مرد تفاوت معناداری وجود ندارد. **واژگان کلیدی:** انطباق زبانی، کارکرد عملی، نشانگرهای عملگرا، نظریه ارتباط، نشانگر متنی

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Introduction

Talks, conversations, and speeches in English have many lexical items such as *sure*, *so*, and *and*, that are called PMs. Research on PMs has attracted the attention of many scholars, as they affect the interpretation of utterances. PMs, as essential lexical items, have been investigated by many scholars in different languages such as English (e.g., Fraser, 1999; Blakemore, 2002; Schiffrin, 2003; Jucker and Redeker, 2006), Arabic (e.g., Al-Batal, 1994), Hebrew (e.g., Maschler, 1998; Shloush, 1998; Ziv, 1998), Hungarian (Vaskó, 2000), Chinese (e.g., Tsai & Chu, 2015), Swedish (e.g., Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg, 2003) and Spanish (e.g., De Fina, 1997).

According to Anderson (2001), there are two types of PMs: textual markers and interpersonal markers. The functions of these types were described by Anderson (2001, pp. 65-66) in the following quote:

A pragmatic marker that has an interactional function describes what the speaker perceives as the hearer's relation to a communicated proposition/assumption (i.e. it is hearer-oriented). Finally, a pragmatic marker with a textual function describes what the speaker perceives as the relation between sequentially arranged units of discourse, for instance between propositions or communicated assumptions in general.

The functions of textual PMs are presented in Table (1) below. According to Ament, Vidal and Barón (2018, p. 64), these functions are a collection from a review of literature by a number of authors and researchers who have investigated the functions of PMs.

Table 1

Functions of Textual and Interpersonal Markers

Functions of Textual Markers
To show causal relationships to show consequence or effect, to mark the link between two clauses
To mark a contrast between two clauses or between two parts of the discourse
To show a continuation of discourse on the same topic, to add additional information
To elaborate, reformulate or exemplify
To signal the opening or closing of discourse or mark the end or beginning of a turn
To show the temporal sequence between clauses or between two parts of the discourse
To signal shifts or transitions of discourse topics, to mark digression from one topic to another, or to return to a previous topic

This study aimed to investigate the use of textual English PMs as used by Jordanian university students. In addition, the study adopted a functional-pragmatic approach to explore the functions of these textual PMs. This study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the textual and English PMs used in the speech of Jordanian university students learners?

2. What are the functions of the textual English PMs as used by the participants?

3. To what extent does gender influence the use of textual English PMs?

2. Theoretical background

In this study two theories have been adopted, these theories are Linguistic adaptation theory and Relevance theory. According to Verschueren (2000), "*Adaptability, then, is the property of language which enables human beings to make negotiable linguistic choices from a variable range of possibilities in such a way as to approach points of satisfaction for communicative needs*" (p.61). According to Sperber and Wilson (2001), "relevance theory yields hypotheses about the way thoughts follow one another, and about the points at which the individual might turn to the environment, rather than to his own internal resources, for relevant information" (p.147). In other words, the speaker tries to attract the hearer toward his or her points or way of thinking.

Literature Review

There are many studies that have been conducted on the use of textual English PMs. Erman (2001) considers pragmatic markers to be "monitors" as they monitor verbal communication on three levels: textual, social, and metalinguistic. The use of you know by adults and adolescents was examined to determine if there was a difference in relation to the previously mentioned three levels. Erman found that indeed there was a discrepancy in the way adults employed the marker in their speech compared to adolescents. While adults used you know as a textual monitor i. e. to organize their talk in a coherent way, adolescents tend to use this marker as a social and metalinguistic monitor i. e. as an interactional marker. That is, adolescent discourse you know "is more oriented towards the activity of communicating" (2001: 1356) rather than to building textual coherence as adults do.

Some researchers have investigated the use of a particular PM. For example, Bolden (2009) used conversation analysis methodology to investigate a corpus of recorded conversations collected from daily talk to demonstrate another function of so, i.e., achieving incipient actions.

The analysis primarily deals with so as ‘prefacing sequence-initiating actions. It shows that so is used by speakers to signal an action that is about to take place, calling this status ‘emerging from incipency’ and is not defined by the preceding context. She concludes that so can also be used by speakers to establish certain actions to shape their ‘interactional agenda’. This use of so as a discourse marker is meant to create discourse coherence to achieve understanding (Bolden, 2009, p. 996).

Fung and Carter (2007) examined the use of PMs by native English speakers and learners of English from Hong Kong. In this study, secondary school children in Hong Kong have been compared to the British English corpus of the same age group in order to find differences (if any) in the use of PMs. PMs were categorized based on their functions into interpersonal, referential, sequential, or cognitive. The results showed that there were important differences in how second language learners used PMs compared to native English speakers. The results also revealed that native English speakers used PMs for many functions, unlike second language learners. The study concluded with some pedagogical implications such as the need to strengthen learners’ pragmatic competence in spoken language by improving the use of PMs.

Alshbeekat and algahzo (2021) investigated the use of both textual and interpersonal English pragmatic markers in spoken learner English. The study revealed that the text’s pragmatic markers are more commonly used as compared to interpersonal PMs. It also revealed that there is no significant difference among male and female students in using PMs.

A functional pragmatic approach to the study of PMs

This study is different from other studies because of the use of a functional-pragmatic approach to explore the use and functions of textual English PMs by Jordanian university students following some scholars like Blackmore’s Relevance theory (2001). In this approach, the PM is used as a wide concept and includes both coherence functions and communication signs about the explanation and clarifications that a speaker offers for the interlocutor. Andersen (2001, p.30) stated that:

An utterance can be more or less relevant depending on the strength of the contextual effects achieved and the processing costs required (the greater the contextual effects, the higher the relevance; the greater the processing effort, the smaller the relevance).

According to (Wilson and Sperber, 1993) PMs are the crucial elements that help an interlocutor to understand and recognize both implicit and explicit meanings precisely.

Method

In order to achieve the study's objectives in examining the use of textual English PMs by Jordanian EFL learners, a mixed method approach has been used. That is, the researcher has adopted a qualitative approach to find and analyze the participants' interviews for the use and function of PMs and a quantitative approach using SPSS to find the frequencies and percentages of each textual PM. In addition to that, a T-Test has been used in order to find if there are significant differences in the use of textual PMs by male and female participants.

Participants

The participants were 10 fourth-year undergraduate university students who study Translation at Isra University. It included 5 females and 5 males. Their ages range from 22 and 24. The participants have been chosen after a proficiency test to make sure that all students are at the same level. The Oxford quick placement is the placement test that has been used in this study.

Data Analysis Procedure

After finishing the interviews, the storytelling activity, and the questionnaires, the researcher transcribed the utterances that contain both interpersonal and textual PMs by using EudicoLinguistic Annotator (ELAN), version 4.6.2, which was convenient and freely available online. In the first place, the audio recording of the interviews was transcribed into a storytelling activity. Overall, the transcription of data for analysis amounts to 5 hours and 160 minutes. The participants were identified by a unique code which was given to each participant by the researcher. The participants were 10 students (5 males and 5 females). The numbers from 1 to 5 were given to the males, the and numbers from 6 to 10 were given to the females. Besides the numbers, the capital letter S, was used to refer to the student. For example, code S3 is a male student, while S15 is a female Student. This coding facilitated understanding of who took the turn first, or who used the PM in any particular conversation, and avoided confusion between the participants. The textual PMs have been extracted from the data. After that, the researcher tested the reliability by giving the extraction to three professors in order to make sure that the textual PMs are extracted correctly. The functions of textual PMs have been analyzed qualitatively based on Relevance theory and Linguistic adaptation theory. Moreover, quantitative analysis has also been conducted using SPSS analytical tool to find the frequencies and percentages for each PM. In addition to that, a T-Test has been used in order to find if there are significant differences in the use of textual PMs by males and females participants.

Results

After all the data had been collected, the transcription process started. For the 20 interviews and the storytelling activity, the total number of words was 33,975 after the researcher's turn was excluded. The average word count for each interview was 1,698. After transcribing the recordings, all PMs tokens were extracted. Table 1 includes the textual PMs in both the interviews and the storytelling activity.

Table 2

The Textual PMs

Textual PMs	Number of occurrences
So	131
And	121
Because	51
Like	66
Well	3
Yeah	2
Finally	17
Then	29
But	120
However	35
Or	5
Okay	1
Right	13
that' all	11
and then	57
first of all	22
First	45
Secondly	59
I mean	18
that is	89

in the end	22
for example	16
such as	17
After	26
When	41
what about	12
Total	1029

Incidence of using PMs

This part of the analysis aimed to examine the prevalence of using textual PMS among the sample. A total number of 10 interviews were done, 50% (n=5) of the interviews were with male participants, and 50% (n=5) of the interviews were with female participants. Examining the incidence of using textual PMs analysis (table 2) revealed that all participants 100% (n= 10) used the following textual PMs words; “so”; “and”; “like”; “but”; “that is”; and “first”. While the least textual PMs used incident were; “basically” 5% (n= 1); then “totally” 15% (n= 3), and then “for example” 40% (n= 8).

Table 3

Incidence of using PMs related to gender

PMs words		Gender				Total	
		Male		Female		n	%
		N	%	n	%		
So	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
And	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
You know	Yes	7	35	10	50	17	85
	No	3	15	0	0	3	15
In addition	Yes	7	35	9	45	16	80
	No	3	15	1	5	4	20
Like	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100

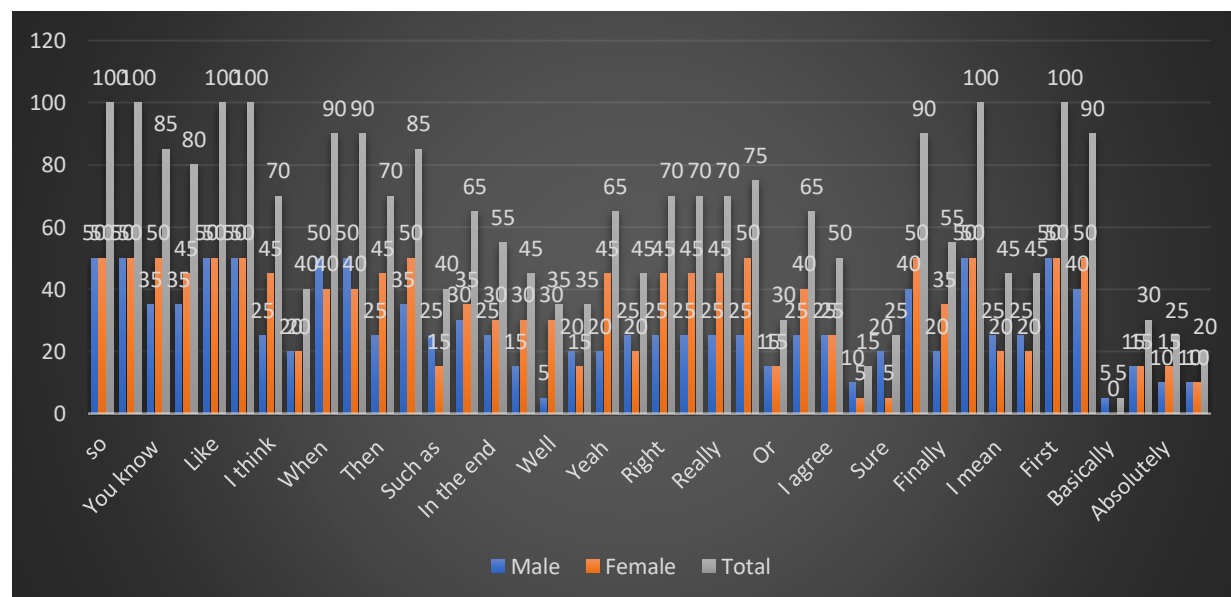
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
But	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
I think	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
For example	Yes	4	20	4	20	8	40
	No	6	30	6	30	12	60
When	Yes	10	50	8	40	18	90
	No	0	0	2	10	2	10
Because	Yes	10	50	8	40	18	90
	No	0	0	2	10	2	10
Then	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
However	Yes	7	35	10	50	17	85
	No	3	15	0	0	3	15
Such as	Yes	5	25	3	15	8	40
	No	5	25	7	35	12	60
After	Yes	6	30	7	35	13	65
	No	4	20	3	15	7	35
In the end	Yes	5	25	6	30	11	55
	No	5	25	4	20	9	45
That's all	Yes	3	15	6	30	9	45
	No	7	35	4	20	11	55
Well	Yes	1	5	6	30	7	35
	No	9	45	4	20	13	65
What about	Yes	4	20	3	15	7	35
	No	6	30	7	35	13	65
Yeah	Yes	4	20	9	45	13	65
	No	6	30	1	5	7	35
I am not sure	Yes	5	25	4	20	9	45

	No	5	25	6	30	11	55
Right	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
Great	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
Really	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
You know what	Yes	5	25	10	50	15	75
	No	5	25	0	0	5	25
Or	Yes	3	15	3	15	6	30
	No	7	35	7	35	14	70
Yes	Yes	5	25	8	40	13	65
	No	5	25	2	10	7	35
I agree	Yes	5	25	5	25	10	50
	No	5	25	5	25	10	50
Totally	Yes	2	10	1	5	3	15
	No	8	40	9	45	17	85
Sure	Yes	4	20	1	5	5	25
	No	6	30	9	45	15	75
And then	Yes	8	40	10	50	18	90
	No	2	10	0	0	2	10
Finally	Yes	4	20	7	35	11	55
	No	6	30	3	15	9	45
That is	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
I mean	Yes	5	25	4	20	9	45
	No	5	25	6	30	11	55
First of all	Yes	5	25	4	20	9	45
	No	5	25	6	30	11	55
First	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100

	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
Secondly	Yes	8	40	10	50	18	90
	No	2	10	0	0	2	10
Basically	Yes	1	5	0	0	1	5
	No	9	45	10	50	19	95
Exactly	Yes	3	15	3	15	6	30
	No	7	35	7	35	14	70
Absolutely	Yes	2	10	3	15	5	25
	No	8	40	7	35	15	75
Okay	Yes	2	10	2	10	4	20
	No	8	40	8	40	16	80

Figure 1

Incidence of using textual PMs related to gender



Frequency of using PMs

This part of the analysis aimed to examine the frequency of each used textual PMs among the sample. In general, the most frequent used words were; “and” a textual PMs by 8.1% (n=121); then “so” a textual PMs by 8.8% (n= 131); then “but” a textual PM by 8.1% (n= 120). While the

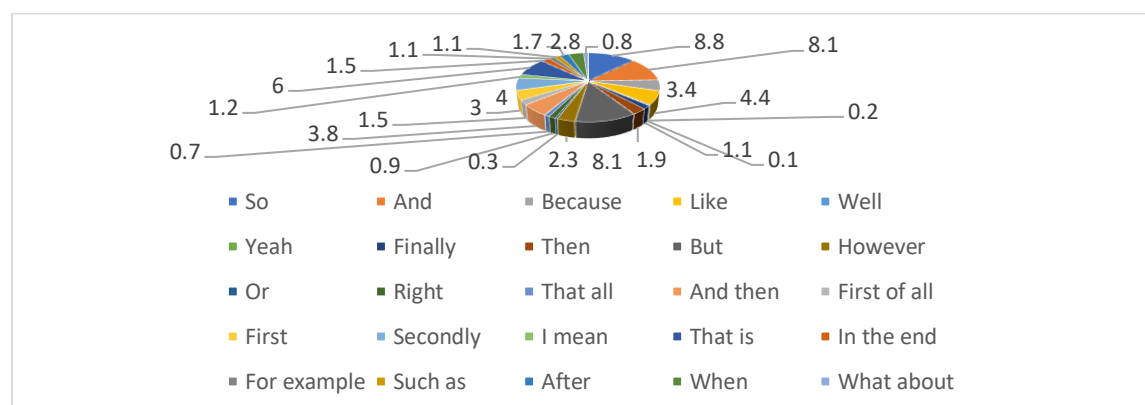
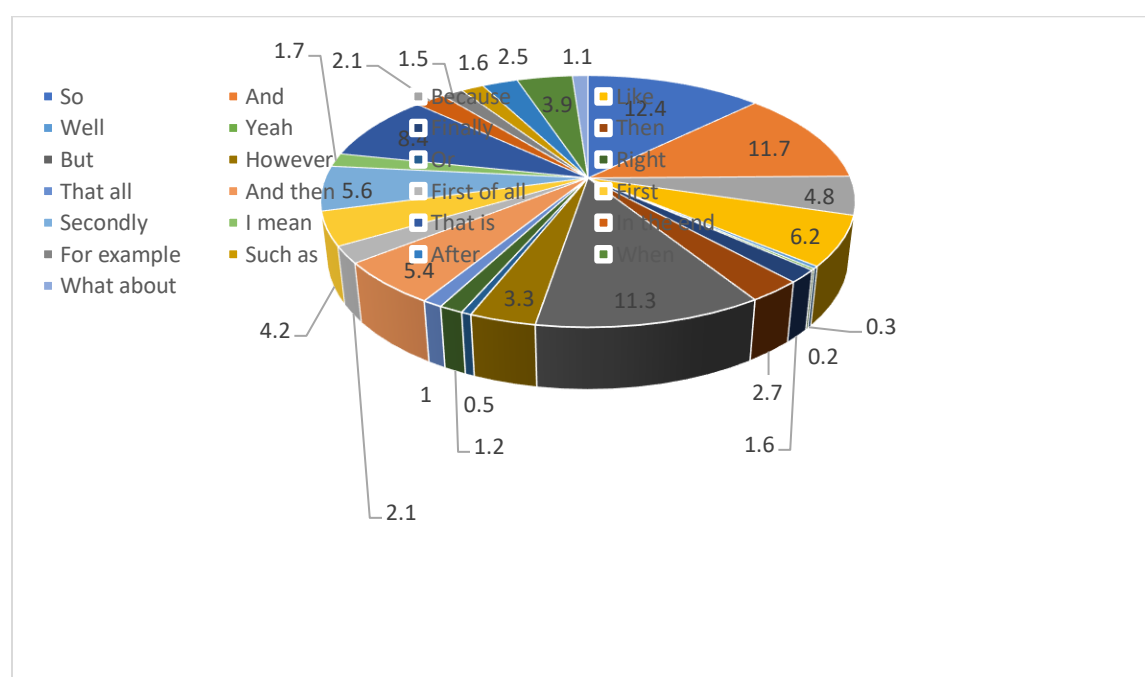
least frequent used PMs were; “yeah” a textual PMs by 0.1% (n=2); then “well” a textual PM by 0.2% (n= 3). Within textual PMs the most frequent used word was; (n= 121); “so” by 12.4% (n= 131); then “and” by 11.7% then “but” by 11.3% (n= 120).

Table 4

The frequency of each used textual PMs among the sample

Textual PMs			
Words	N	% of total	% of textual PMs
So	131	8.8	12.4
And	121	8.1	11.7
Because	51	3.4	4.8
Like	66	4.4	6.2
Well	3	0.2	0.3
Yeah	2	0.1	0.2
Finally	17	1.1	1.6
Then	29	1.9	2.7
But	120	8.1	11.3
However	35	2.3	3.3
Or	5	0.3	0.5
Right	13	0.9	1.2
That all	11	0.7	1
And then	57	3.8	5.4
First of all	22	1.5	2.1
First	45	3	4.2
Secondly	59	4	5.6
I mean	18	1.2	1.7
That is	89	6	8.4
In the end	22	1.5	2.1
For example	16	1.1	1.5
Such as	17	1.1	1.6
After	26	1.7	2.5

When	41	2.8	3.9
What about	12	0.8	1.1

Figure 2*Frequency of textual PMs within total***Figure 3***Frequency of textual PMs within textual PMs*

Results from the first research question support Fung and Carter's (2007). They stated (2007.p.433) that the use of textual PMs; " reflect the unnatural linguistic input ESL learners are

exposed to and the traditional grammar-centered pedagogic focus which has been geared towards the literal or propositional (semantic) meanings of words rather than their pragmatic use in spoken language." In other words, it can be noticed that because of the focus is mainly on prepositional content rather than on pragmatic use of the PMs, the textual PMs are employed by the Jordanian EFL learner.

A suggested justification for this use is the context of learning and teaching English as indicated by Ament and Barón (2018). The context of learning and teaching English is an academic setting, where textual PMs are probable to appear at much higher frequencies than interpersonal PMs. Ament (2011.p.82) claimed that the focus on " the functions of textual PMs such as to structure discourse, mark openings, and closings, emphasis, and shift topics, to name a few, we can see a parallel between these PMs and the types of pragmatic functions lecturers employ when delivering their courses and therefore, which PMs are available in the input." In other words, the use of textual PMs more that t can be referred the influence of instructor's language on the students at the university as the students are exposed more to the language of their instructors. Results from the learner profile questionnaire supported this justification as it revealed that 100% of the participants were Jordanian. No students reported studying through English medium instruction before entering university. All participants reported English as a second language and Arabic is the used language inside their homes. Which means that all students are influence by the language of their instructors. The mean age of participants was twenty-three, age is one of the significant factors to study when examining the PMs (Blyth & Wang, 1990; Muller, 2005; Stubb& Holmes, 1995; Trillo, 2002), but because the age range of the participants in this study is 20–24 years, which is quite narrow, the age factor is not considered.

Both Flowerdew and Tarouza, (1995) and Jung (2003) examined the effect of PMs on second language comprehension and argued that textual markers are more salient and more critical to the understanding. To sum up, the importance of the occurrence of textual PMs in the spoken language in addition to the frequent use of textual PMs in academic discourse may illustrate the reason for producing the textual PMs at high frequencies.

This result is in line with Firth (1996) who stated that if a linguistic term is not crucial for communication it is frequently ignored as it does not reflect essential information. This result highlights House's (2003) results, who stated that the students should not mark their relation to a proposition, and, also, should not pay any attention to the hearer's relation to the proposition.

Difference in using PMs related to gender

In order to examine the difference in using textual PMs related to gender, independent t test was used, setting significant point at $\alpha < 0.05$. Results (table 3) revealed that there was a significant difference between males and females in using the word “but” ($t = 0.06$, $p = 0.04$), with mean for females ($M = 7.5$, $SD = 2.8$) higher than the mean of males ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 2.8$). Which means that females are more likely to use the word “but”. Also, there was a significant difference between males and females in using the word “well” ($t = 2.3$, $p = 0.03$), with mean for females ($M = 1.1$, $SD = 1$) higher than the mean of males ($M = 0.2$, $SD = 0.6$). Which means that females are more likely to use the word “well”. Moreover, there was a significant difference between males and females in using the word “you know what I mean” ($t = 3.5$, $p = 0.001$), with mean for females ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 1.5$) higher than the mean of males ($M = 1.6$, $SD = 1.8$). Which means that females are more likely to use the word “you know what I mean”. In addition, there was a significant difference between males and females in using the word “when” ($t = 2.6$, $p = 0.02$), with mean for males ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.5$) higher than the mean of females ($M = 1.3$, $SD = 0.9$). Which means that males are more likely to use the word “when”.

This finding aligns with the finding of many studies which show that there are many differences in the use of certain textual PMs between men and women for example, Erman (1992) argued that there are gender-specific differences in the use of textual PMs. Erman (1992. P, 217) stated that "women tended to use pragmatic expressions between complete propositions to connect consecutive arguments, whereas the men preferred to use them either as attention-drawing devices or to signal repair work.". Erman (1992) showed that the use of PMs based on if the talk occurs in a same-sex or in a mixed-sex atmosphere, thus they tend to be used more meanly in mixed-sex as compared to same-sex interaction.

Similarly, Lakoff (1973. P.45) stated that, In appropriate women's speech, strong expression of feeling is avoided, expression of uncertainty is favored, and means of expression in regard to subject-matter deemed 'trivial' to the 'real' world are elaborated. Speech about women implies an object, whose sexual nature requires euphemism, and whose social roles are derivative and dependent in relation to men.

Many studies of PMs in both western (Zimmerman and West 1975; West and Zimmerman 1983; Fishman 1983; Holmes 1983, 1984, 1986; Coates 1988b; Nordenstam 1992) and non-western (P. Brown 1980; Ide 1982; Smith 1992) cultures presented that men are more likely than

women in employing PMs for confrontational devices and women are more likely than men in employing PMs for facilitative devices in their speech. These forms have been illustrated as signifying that women are more sensitive to the social state that the men it could be said that they are 'politer', They choose a style of speech that show their identities. Therefore, these explanations pinpoint the basis of the differences in gender.

Similarly, several studies focus on the differences between men and women in using textual PMs for example Bazzanella (1990) stated that Italian male and female speakers may exhibit sex-preferential choice of particular phatic connectives. Holmes (1984) clarified that New Zealand women are more likely to use *I mean* deliberately, expressing certainty, while New Zealand men are more likely to use it tentatively, and expressing uncertainty. Holmes (1986) claimed that New Zealand women tend to use *you know* facilitatively, while men are more likely to use it to express uncertainty.

Wouk (1999) stated that there is a gender difference in using the PMs in Indonesian. She stated that differences arise much less frequently than has been the case in these other studies. So this finding cope with the findings of abovementioned results and show that there is a difference among male and female Jordanian EFL learners in using PMs.

Table 5

Difference in using PMs related to gender

PMs words	t test		Gender			
	t	P	Male		Female	
			M	SD	M	SD
You know	0	1	2.2	1.7	2.2	3.5
In addition	1.3	0.2	3.1	2.9	1.8	1.4
I think	-0.7	0.5	0.9	1.1	1.2	0.8
For example	0	1	0.8	1.3	0.8	1
When	2.6	0.02	2.8	1.5	1.3	0.9
Because	-0.7	0.5	2.3	1.2	2.8	2
Then	-0.5	0.7	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.2
However	0.5	0.6	2	2.1	1.6	1.2
Such as	1.7	0.1	1.4	1.7	0.4	0.7

After	0.7	0.5	1.5	1.6	1.1	1.7
In the end	-0.3	0.7	1	1.3	1.2	1.3
That's all	-1	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7
Well	-2.4	0.03	0.2	0.6	1.1	1
What about	1	0.3	1.3	2.3	0.5	1
Yeah	0.2	0.8	1.5	2.8	1.3	0.8
I am not sure	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.7	0.7	1.3
Right	-0.3	0.8	1.8	2	2	1.2
Great	-1	0.3	1.7	1.9	2.4	1.2
Really	0.5	0.6	1.6	1.8	1.3	0.8
You know what	-4.1	0.001	1.6	1.8	4.5	1.3
Or	0	1	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5
Yes	0.7	0.5	1.9	2.1	1.4	0.8
I agree	0.8	0.5	1.4	2.3	0.8	2
Totally	0.9	0.3	0.4	1	0.1	0.3
Sure	2	0.1	1.1	1.5	0.1	0.3
And then	-1	0.4	2.2	2	3.5	3.8
Finally	-0.9	0.4	0.6	1	1.1	1.4
I mean	-1	0.4	1.4	1.7	2.2	2
First of all	0.6	0.6	1.3	1.7	0.9	1.4
Secondly	0.5	0.6	3.3	4	2.6	1.4
Basically	1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0	0
Exactly	0.6	0.6	1	1.9	0.6	1
Absolutely	0.7	0.5	0.8	2.2	0.3	0.5
Okay	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.4

Difference in using textual PMs related to gender

To examine the difference in using textual PMs related to gender, independent t test was used, setting significant point at $\alpha < 0.05$. Results (table 4) revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in using the word textual PMs ($t = -0.14$, $p = 0.9$). These

results align with the findings of Escalera (2009) claimed that there are no significant gender differences when discourse marker use is examined within a given activity context. Role-play context is the exception to this general finding.

Freed and Greenwood (1996) found very similar result; they stated that differences between male and female uses of PMs were slight when the two genders were engaged in same activities. Such remarks propose that the basis of 'gender variation' in talk depends on the type of interaction and role involved, with these tending to be connected with one or the other of the two genders.

Table 6

Difference in using textual PMs related to gender

PMs words	t test		Gender			
	t	P	Male		Female	
			M	SD	M	SD
textual PMs	-0.14	0.9	52.4	9.2	53.1	12.6

According to SPSS, the most frequent used words were; “and”, then “so”; then “but”. While the least frequent used PMs were; “basically”; then “yeah”; then “well”. Within interpersonal PMs the most frequent used word were; “you know what I mean”; then “you know”; then “great”. In relation to gender differences in employing PMs. It can be noticed that there is a significant difference between males and females in using the PMs. For example, the results revealed that females are more likely to use the PMs “but”, “well” and “you know what I mean” than men. In addition, there was a significant difference between males and females in using the PM “when” which means that males are more likely to use the word “when”. In relation the use of textual PMs the results revealed that there is was no significant difference between males and females.

The Functions of the textual English PMs used by Jordanian EFL learners.

The functions of the textual English PMs that are used by the EFL learners are one of the main concerns of this study. Table 7 presents functions of textual PMs and examples of items from the data.

The functions of the textual English PMs that are used by the EFL learners are analyzed in the following section. (A) refers to the interviewer and (B) refers to the students.

Table 7

Functions and examples of items from the data Functions of Textual Markers Items found in the data Functions of Interpersonal Markers Items found in the data

Functions of Textual Markers	Items found in the data
To mark contrast	But, however, and,
To Elaborate, Reformulate and exemplify	I mean, like, that is, for example
To show temporal sequence	First, firstly, secondly, next, then, finally, now, first of all
To indicate an inferential or conclusive relationships and summaries	Because, so, and
To signal shifts or transition of discourse and continuation of discourse	So, well, and then, and, but, what about
To signal the opening or closing of discourse	Okay, so, yeah, that's it, that's all

Functions of textual pragmatic markers based on Relevance theory and Adaptation theory

1-To mark Contrast

Marking contrast is one of the functions of the textual PMs that has been found in the speech of EFL learner. In this function, the PMs are normally used to show a denial or a contrast of a message connected with another message in the foregoing discourse. For example:

(19) In that film the mother tried to make her son happy and forget every bad moment he felt when she was away from him, *but* the son couldn't forget.

In Example (19), *but* is a linguistic choice made by the students to signal that the coming utterance is being contrasted. With this marker, the student decreases the processing effort of the hearers in interpreting the utterance and helps them achieve the Cognitive effect.

(20) The first girl wanted to leave the dog and go home, *however*, her friend insisted on her situation and refused to leave without the dog.

2- To Elaborate, Reformulate, and exemplify

The textual markers can be used for elaborative functions which refer to add more information in order to make a statement clearer for the receptor. In other words, it provides the hearers with

an indication, that what comes is an explanation and illustration for what has been mentioned before, for example:

(25) In that film the judge claimed that the daughter was found innocent, she didn't kill her friend, that is to say, the court couldn't conduct her legally.

In example (2), the textual PM, *that is to say*, has an elaborative function it has been used in the below example to introduce more details that are added to the preceding discourse, in example (2) "the court couldn't conduct her legally" is added to the previous discourse "In that film the judge claimed that the daughter was found innocent, she didn't kill her friend". So, the use of, *That is to say*, is employed to add more details and information in the preceding file and help the hearers produce cognitive effects and achieve the communicative purpose.

3-To show temporal sequence

The textual PMs have a temporal function. They can be used to express temporal sequence and arrangement of events in other words they play a vital role in achieving coherence in the discourse and establishing links among the idea of the discourse. Let's see the following example:

(26) **Before** I reached my house, I decided to phone my friend so I went to my car to get the phone.

Example (26) is extracted from the talk of one of the students he was describing the worst moment in his life. The student has chosen the textual PM before to indicate that the coming discourse is the time when things in the previous discourse happened from the perspective of the relevance theory the use of *before* decreases the hearers' processing effort in determining the time of the event and interpreting the speaker's utterance.

Temporal markers are used commonly in talks, especially in storytelling and narrating activity as these kinds of activities require an arrangement of events. They work as signs to give an account of a series of events in a speech, presenting the time of a current event or a past event and the sequence of a series of events. These markers give listeners an idea about what goes first, and what comes next. Consequently, offering a strong thread for a better explanation of the speaker's utterances.

4-To indicate inferential or conclusive relationships and summaries

Indicating results is one of the most well-known functions of *so* (Anping, 2002; Blakemore, 1988; Buysse, 2012; Fraser, 1990; Fraser, 1999; Müller, 2005; Schiffrin, 1987). *So*, Example (30) shows obviously that the upcoming part of the discourse is the consequence that results from the

proposition of its previous discourse that "all my cousins passed the tawijihi exam and I failed the exam. I was depressed and sad." On one hand, the use of *so* shows in this context that the student wants to guide the hearer towards this interpretation. On the other hand, *so* works as an indication that helps the hearers to arrive at this interpretation. In the following example *so* plays the same role.

(31) Many students were better than me in English so I tried to be better than them or learn from them.

In the above-mentioned example, the student employed the textual PM while she was describing her academic status as part of her discourse about her first day at the university. So, this context has been used to reflect that the upcoming segment which is "I tried to be better than them or learn from them" is a result of the prior mentioned discourse which is "Many students were better than me in English".

5-To signal shifts or transition of discourse, continuation of discourse

Signaling shifts or transitions of discourse is one of the functions that textual PMs have. Sacks et al (1974) state that '[o]nce a state of talk has been ratified, cues must be available for requesting the floor and giving it up, for informing the speaker as to the stability of the focus of attention he is receiving' (1974, p. 697).

According Lam (2010). "Socan indicates the speaker is willing, or more directly, encouraging the addressee to take the floor" (Lam, 2010, p. 670).

The following example is taken from the storytelling activity and it shows how the textual PM is used to signal transition.

(34) B: both ladies are thinking about what they should do yeah.

A: mmm

B: because you know *yeah* (erm), the situation is difficult

A: it is

B: *yeah*, one of the ladies took that dog, it was raining: *yeah* (erm) what else (erm) *yeah*

A: then what happened?

B: she fed it and it slept.

In example (34), the students describe what the ladies are doing in the storytelling activity. It looks like the student didn't have much to say. He uses the lengthened *yeah* at the end of his turn to inform the interviewer that he is willing to exit the turn and give the interviewer the floor. In

this example the textual PM *yeah* has not been used only to notify the interviewer that the student has nothing to say but also to notify the interviewer that he is now awaiting her to take the turn. The interviewer's turn "then what happened?" comes as verification that *yeah* has done its job of marking transition.

6-To signal opening or closing of a discourse

The textual PMs can be used to open or close discourses. In the following example *that's all* has been used by many students to indicate that they are done with their ideas. Let's see the following example:

As it is mentioned before that PMs have an opening function in other words, they can be used to initiate a discourse that following examples are taken from the storytelling activities and interviews with the Jordan university students.

(36) *Okay*, I can see in these pictures two ladies and they are walking in the rain they are happy.

In example (38), the students used the Textual PM *okay* to show that she will start her discourse so the use of this PM adopts the linguistic and communicative text as it provides with the receptor that the speaker will start her discourse.

Discussion

This section revisits the research questions of this thesis and suggests how this research contributes to the study of various aspects of PMs.

RQ1. What are the textual and interpersonal English PMs used in the speech of Jordanian EFL learners?

In order to find out the answer of the first question, the PMs have been extracted from the interviews storytelling task, then they have been classified into textual and interpersonal based on their function in the context. Table 6 includes the classification of PMs into textual and interpersonal. The findings of this study reveal that textual PMs are more easily to be used and acquired compared to interpersonal PMs.

RQ2. What are the functions of the textual and interpersonal English PMs as used by the participants?

The functions of the textual and interpersonal English PMs that are used by the EFL learners are one of the main concerns of this study. This study presents functions of both textual and interpersonal PMs and examples of items from the data. The functions of PMs used by Jordanian

students are extracted from the interviews and storytelling activities conducted with students. (See table 13). The functions of textual and interpersonal PMs have been explained by using Linguistic adaptation theory and Relevance theory.

RQ3. To what extent does gender influence the use of English PMs?

The SPSS revealed that there was a significant difference between males and females in using some PMs (See table 11), however, to examine the difference in using textual and interpersonal PMs related to gender, an independent *t-test* was used, setting a significant point at $\alpha < 0.05$. Results (table 12) revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in using the word textual PMs ($t = -0.14, p = 0.9$).

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussions as presented in chapter four, there are three major findings that can be stated.

The first finding introduces the PMs that are used by Jordanian EFL learners. The second is about the functions of textual and interpersonal PMs used by the students. The third finding is about the difference between males and females in using PMs. Further details are explained below.

The first conclusion is meant to find out the PMs used by EFL learners, it shows that the PMs that are used by Jordanian EFL learners are as follows: so, and, you know, in addition to, like, but, I think, for example, when, because, then, however, such as, after, in the end, that's all, well, what about, yeah, and then, finally, that is, I mean, first of all, first, secondly, basically, exactly, absolutely, I'm not sure, right, great, really, you know what I mean, or, yes, I agree, totally, sure, kind of, okay. These PMs have been classified into textual and interpersonal based on the contexts so it can be noticed that some PMs occur as textual in some contexts and in other contexts as interpersonal such as " " and "Okay".

The second conclusion is meant to elicit the function of textual and interpersonal PMs used by Jordanian students. The functions of textual markers are marking contrast, elaborating, reformulating, and exemplifying, showing temporal sequence, indicating inferential or conclusive relationships and summaries, signaling shifts or transition of discourse and continuation of discourse, and signaling the opening or closing of the opening or closing of discourse. The functions of interpersonal markers are signaling receipt of Information, showing support to the interlocutor, adding more information and making the statement more clear, stimulating

interaction, hesitating or showing repair, denoting thinking Processes, assessing the interlocutor's knowledge, acting as a hedging device, indicate attitudes and opinion.

The third conclusion is meant to reveal that according to SPSS, the most frequently used words were; “and”, then “so”; then “but”. While the least frequently used PMs were; “basically”; then “yeah”; then “well”. To examine the difference in using textual and interpersonal PMs related to gender, an independent *t*-test was used, setting a significant point at $\alpha < 0.05$. Results (table 12) revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in using textual and interpersonal PMs.

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Harmonizing Symbolic Representations and Teaching Methods with the Child's Ability: A Discourse Analysis Approach



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Abstract

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Keywords:

Symbolic representations, methods, Meaning-Text analysis, learning goals

Symbolic representations and the methods a teacher adopts to teach pupils, especially at the lower levels are very germane to the actualization of a child's learning goals and objectives. Nowadays, many parents, teachers, school owners, and other educational stakeholders are interested in ensuring that a child graduates from one class to another at a rapid rate; whether or not the child understands what he/she learns is not the concern of many educational stakeholders today. This study investigates the graphic symbols and the methods that teachers use to teach pupils, especially at the lower levels. This is qualitative research that adopts Meaning-Text-Theory as its theoretical framework for data analysis. Data were randomly selected from English Alphabetic and phonic textbooks. Participant and non-participant observations of teachers' teachings in pre-primary schools in Ogun and Lagos States, Nigeria, were adopted as instruments for data collection. One of the major findings reveals that the drilling and recitations methods that most teachers use in teaching their pupils yield little or no results as the pupils they teach find it difficult to neither identify nor understand what they are being taught. The paper, therefore, recommends that pupils should first be tested to know their capabilities before teachers apply learners' friendly practical method because failure to do so may result in non-achievement of the learning goals and objectives.

همانگ سازی بازنمایی های نمادین و روش های آموزشی با توانایی کودک: رویکرد تحلیل گفتمان

بازنمایی های نمادین و روش هایی که معلم برای آموزش به دانش آموزان به کار می گیرد، به ویژه در سطوح پایین تر، برای تحقق اهداف و مقاصد یادگیری کودک بسیار مؤثر است. امروزه، بسیاری از والدین، معلمان، صاحبان مدارس و سایر ذینفعان آموزشی علاقه مند هستند تا اطمینان حاصل کنند که کودک از کلاسی به کلاس دیگر با سرعت بالایی فارغ التحصیل می شود. اینکه کودک آنچه را که می آموزد می فهمد یا نه، دغدغه بسیاری از ذینفعان آموزشی امروز نیست. این پژوهش به بررسی نمادهای گرافیکی و روش هایی می پردازد که معلمان برای آموزش به دانش آموزان به ویژه در سطوح پایین تر به کار می برند. این تحقیق کیفی است که نظریه معنا-متن را به عنوان چارچوب نظری خود برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده ها اتخاذ می کند. داده ها به طور تصادفی از کتاب های درسی الفبای انگلیسی و آوایی انتخاب شدند. مشاهدات مشارکت کننده و غیرمشارکت کننده از آموزه های معلمان در مدارس پیش دبستانی در ایالات اوگان و لاگوس، نیجریه، به عنوان ابزاری برای جمع آوری داده ها استفاده شد. یکی از یافته های اصلی نشان می دهد که روش های حفاری و تلاوت که اغلب معلمان در آموزش به دانش آموزان خود استفاده می کنند، نتیجه کمی یا بدون نتیجه می دهد، زیرا دانش آموزانی که آموزش می دهند، نه شناسایی و نه درک آنچه به آنها آموزش داده می شود، دشوار است. بنابراین، این مقاله توصیه می کند که دانش آموزان ابتدا باید برای شناخت توانایی های خود، قبل از اینکه معلمان روش عملی دوستانه یادگیرنده را به کار گیرند، آزمایش شوند، زیرا عدم انجام این کار ممکن است منجر به عدم دستیابی به اهداف و مقاصد یادگیری شود.

واژگان کلیدی: بازنمایی های نمادین، روش ها، تحلیل معنا-متن، اهداف یادگیری

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Introduction

Symbolic representations (Wikipedia) and teaching methods are very important in the teaching of pupils, especially at the lower levels. Before these representations and methods are considered, the abilities of a child should be tested. Li et.al (2018) observe that symbolic representations are foundations for advanced Mathematics abilities while Stokke and Seloe (2020) maintain that they are keys to political representation and deserve critical attention. Symbolic Representations (SRs) are not only foundations for a child's learning but concrete foundations for all abilities, especially in preschool children. Li et.al (2018) observe that symbolic representations are foundations for advanced mathematics abilities. To buttress this, they are concrete foundations for all abilities, especially in preschool children. The symbols and methods that teachers adopt (among other factors such as children's early exposures to the language of the environment and other languages, the learning environment, language attitude, etc.) to help young children to develop their domains of learning easily are SRs. Bidaradi et al (2016) posits that "a good teaching method helps the students to question their preconceptions and motivates them to learn." Again, the characteristics of the learners influence the suitability, efficiency, and appropriateness of a method adopted by the teachers because, if the symbols used in the texts and the methods adopted by the teachers are not well interpreted and applied (after due testing of the child's abilities), there could be confusion, lack of understanding and a complete waste of time by the teachers, the pupils, their parents, and other education stakeholders.

Symbolic representations should be well presented and interpreted before the teachers consciously study them, and understand pupils' characteristics and abilities before they (i.e., the teachers) apply suitable techniques of teaching. Bialystok (1993) asserts that children's early mental representations must change to support the cognitive skills they serve and that some pieces of evidence from children's understanding of written language and written numbers show that early conceptions are inadequate for engaging in symbolic thoughts. To ensure that children's early cognitive abilities are sharpened, there is an urgent need for teachers to align SRs with teaching methods used at the pre-school levels.

A lot of scholars have done several pieces of research on different traditional and modern teaching methods available for teachers to explore. Teaching methods are said to "enable education to fulfill its aims" (Hirsh, et al 2020). Traditional and contemporary methods of teaching are still applied by teachers especially in Ogun and Lagos State, Nigeria. Namitha (2018) identifies

traditional and multimedia teaching/innovative methods such as the mnemonic words-words-words approach, role-playing, scenario analysis-based teaching, and the mind-map method. In the schools, we randomly selected, only the traditional methods of teaching were applied probably due to the poverty level of the school owners or lack of digital knowledge. The problem is not in the availability of teaching methods but in the application of these methods by the teacher to help learners to comprehend what they are being taught. What then are teaching methods?

Although some researchers (such as Al-Banna & Aziz, 2014, and MacDonald (2021,) have differentiated teaching methods from teaching strategies, here, teaching methods are synonymous with teaching principles, strategies, patterns, and styles. They can be teacher-centered, lecturing (Gopinath 2015) or student-focused (co-creation of knowledge” (Gregory 2002 as cited in Gopinath, 2015); teacher-centered if the teacher dominates the teaching and student-centered if the teacher constructs the teaching with the pupils. (i.e. if the teacher only controls them but allows them to think-out ideas and practice them. Many of these teaching methods are not rightfully applied and as such there may be futuristic problems in early childhood care and education in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, there seem to be insufficient materials for early childhood care and education both in many public and private schools despite the government’s formulation of various education policies (such as UBEC, 2004, FMR, 2009 and NERDC 2013) for the betterment of its citizens at all levels. Gbadegesin (2018) avers that the commitment of public sectors to early childhood care and education has been inadequate and “left to the hands of private investors without proper monitoring and control” (21). Many financially buoyant parents send their children and wards to schools that charge exorbitant tuition and sometimes their children and wards are not still taught well because the necessary resources are not available anywhere. Training and retraining of teachers on how to teach effectively in many schools in Nigeria are just based on the uttering stage; the actual actions on these are not always done.

It is worth noting that although there is a global interest in early childhood education, it is very sad that many education stakeholders in Nigeria are no longer interested in what the child learns but in how he or she is promoted from one class to another. King et al (2016) even observe that although automatic promotion policy states that the lenient promotion of students with poor performance does not hamper their abilities, promoting students into grades that they do not prepare for may backfire, and lead to early dropout. To prevent this and many other hydra-headed

problems in early childhood care and education, there should be an agreement between the symbolic representations, the child's ability, and the teacher's choice of methods.

To ensure that symbolic representations correspond with the child's ability and the teaching methods used by the teachers, especially at lower levels, there must be a holistic interest in children's education and total re-visitation and/or complete overhauling of the present methods of recitations and drillings used by teachers in private schools in Lagos and Ogun States, SRs and pupil's ability. To align with Gbadegesin's (2018) observation, there should be a correction of the mismatch between theory and practice in pre-school institutions and by extension between the SRs in textbooks and teachers' teaching methods. The unfortunate situation which normally arises where teachers are confused about how to teach, what to teach, and the child's ability should equally be revisited and addressed immediately.

It seems that many teachers (especially in private schools) do not understand the teaching methods that are suitable for pupils in lower classes and as such, they use uniform teaching methods that yield little or no results. If they can differentiate the one suitable for individuals, small groups or large groups, half of the problems of teaching may be minimized. The inability to choose the right teaching methods that match the pupils' texts is a serious problem that should be addressed on time. Going through the schools, we discovered that all the teachers use the same methods of recitations, drilling, and demonstrations to teach pupils. How about the thousand and one methods of teaching? These have been relegated to the background. Some teachers, in the course of their inability to choose a suitable method, even combine up to five levels and teach alone. In this unhealthy and confusing situation, can there be any appropriate strategy for the teacher? We observe that where this occurs, a lot of these pupils neither understood what they were taught nor did tests and examinations successfully on their own.

The major objective of this research, therefore, is to investigate how letter symbols in English and Phonic Textbooks of preschool pupils can be presented to coincide with the teaching methods adopted by the preschool teachers so that their pupils can comprehend what they are being taught. Also, to suggest a teaching method that may be used to help the pupils easily understand symbolic representatives and to identify how the pupils' abilities can be tested. We observe that many preschool teachers were unable to discover suitable teaching strategies that they can apply in teaching preschool children; this research, therefore, attempts to suggest ways that this can be done successfully so that pupils can start their educational foundation properly.

Review of Literature

Symbolic Representations

Symbolic representation is ambiguous and multidisciplinary in nature. Bialystok (1992) observes that it is the specialized form of knowledge necessary for literacy and numeracy skills and that this takes a gradual development but is evident when a child is 6. It is a representation of something “through a symbol” to evoke the “particular meanings or emotions “(Pitkin 1967 as cited in Lombardo and Meier (2018). Corbit and Callaghand (2015) posit that it is a communicative behavior that differentiates humans from other species and binds them together. Symbolic representations denote any interpretative symbols used by pupils and for pupils (at all levels) especially in lower classes such as the letter symbols and number symbols. This study focuses on written letters of alphabets, words, the objects they stand for, and the methods that the teacher uses in teaching these symbols so that pupils can easily understand their lessons. For this research, the English alphabets/ letters for Nursery 1 and 2, the phonic symbols for crèche and KG classes (used by pupils below two years in crèche) and Nursery 2, (for pupils between 2 and 3 years) are selected as data.

Teaching Methods

Teaching methods are the principles, patterns, and strategies used by teachers to help pupils learn. These methods are partly determined by the subject matter and the learners. Besides these, the symbols used in texts, the teacher’s knowledge, and the environment of learning can also influence the choice of teaching methods. Tungoe (2016) observes that teachers should “understand that every student learns differently “so that they can employ “the best methods and practices” in their daily activities. In other to understand the pupils, their cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and intuitive abilities have to be tested by teachers to know when to start, where to start, how to start; and how to continue teaching the pupils for effectiveness. Teachers have to painstakingly select teaching methods that are student-focused and easy for them to comprehend the subject matter.

Some teaching methods are visual, audio, case study, demonstration, lecture, question-and-answer, etc. Lathan, (nd) identifies A-Z teaching methods (such as audio tutorials, bulletin boards, classroom discussion, debates, exhibits and display, flashcards, genius hour, hands-on-activities, interviewing, lecturing, making posters, oral reports, panel discussions, recitations, scrapbooks, team-building exercises, use of community resources, video lessons, web quest. etc). Many other

scholars such as Reece & Walker (2009, Gill 2013, MacDonald, (2021, Al-Banna & Aziz, 2014) avert that lecture, demonstration, team teaching discussion, debate, question and answer, and video. seminar, laboratory, workshop, gaming/quiz, ice breaker, buzz group, field trip, role play, project/assignment, tutorial, open/distance learning, and one-on-one as some teaching methods available for teachers to adopt. Reece & Walker (2009 further group these teaching methods into individual teaching strategies, large group strategies, and small group strategies. Project/assignment and tutorial are individual strategies, lecture, demonstration, team teaching, discussion, debate, question and answer, and video as large group strategies while the rest are categorized into small group strategies. Many other scholars have given different traditional and contemporary examples of teaching methods.

Having considered several teaching methods, Woolf (2009) pinpoints that human teachers do not have complete truth about which teaching strategies are effective or how alternate teaching strategies affect students learning; so, he suggests (among other methods) the use of intelligent interactive tutors such as facial animation, machine learning, classic intelligent tutors, supervised and non-supervised learning methods and computational advisor), Woolf's observation can only be possible in a digital classroom but the reverse is the case in the schools we randomly selected in Ogun and Lagos States. Nigeria seems to be working anticlockwise in terms of educational technology; in this 21st century when the world is embracing digital learning, the majority of our schools are still using chalks and blackboards or markers and whiteboards. Many teachers do not even know what an interactive board looks like, let alone use it.

Whether digital or traditional, the teaching methods that we think may be necessary for teaching young children in their formative ages should incorporate the maxims of education (such as starting from the known to the unknown, simple to complex, analysis to synthesis, particular to general, empirical to rational, induction to deduction, psychological to logical, actual to a representative, near too far, concrete to abstract, whole to part, definite to indefinite (Vallikat 2021, Kaushal, 2017) and should be the learners' friendly practical model

Learners' Friendly Practical Method

We suggest that the Learners' Friendly Practical Method (LefriPram) should be used by teachers nowadays in today's teaching, possibly due to the new normal caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. A situation where both teachers and their pupils have to mask up before they can interact needs to

be handled with complete physical and emotional inputs so that learning outputs can be achieved and LefriPram may achieve this goal.

LefriPram entails that the teacher (as a matter of necessity) first and foremost understands the learner's abilities and disabilities, likes, and dislikes; dos and don'ts, and these peculiarities. These could be studied in the first two weeks of resumption (to have a peripheral knowledge of the child). Having done this, the teacher deliberately becomes very friendly (but firm) to the child. After these steps, he/she through the learning period of the child, may identify their uniqueness based on their abilities and thereafter group them into learning clusters. As young as they are, the teacher should be able to know who is a leader among them and who can be led. He/she, therefore, use the play-way method coupled with digital learners (audio and video current software) to teach the pupils (what is suitable to their levels). It, therefore, means that the teacher will select the SRs that align with the child's ability and administer them individually to each child according to their abilities.

Child's Ability

A child's ability is all-encompassing; it includes the child's cognition, affection, psychomotor and intuitive skills. It means the child's enablement to learn and solve problems (cognitive ability); ability to be engaged in social interactions and emotional regulation; the child's speech, language, and useability (which are displayed through the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing) and a child's physical skills such as a fine motor (finger skills) and gross motor (whole body) skills and sensory awareness (Kidsense, 2017).

It is unfortunate that in choosing teaching methods, many teachers in Ogun and Lagos did not consider the affective, intuitive, or psychomotor levels of a child; all they were interested in and concentrated on was the cognitive domain. Again, many did not care to differentiate a child that has a high level of intelligence quotient (IQ) from one that has a low IQ to know how to teach and what method to adopt while teaching. They seemed to have been very busy with their uniform method from the inception of their teaching to the end of it. These facts were gathered through our participant observations during classroom discourses, where the teachers delivered lessons.

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis (TA) is a polymorphous word that comprises all sorts of analyses that are either written or spoken; it is a broad term for various research methods used to describe, interpret and

understand texts (Gaulfield 2019). Simply put, it is a critique, an evaluation, or an assessment of any written or spoken language in any field of human endeavor. It is an aspect of the study of discourse that centers on an individual's understanding of the language, symbols, objects, pictures, etc. used in the text. The term textual is derived from the Latin word *textuales*; its adjective form is *textus* (text) (Fregal 2014). According to Brockert (2008 as cited in Goncalves 2018), a text is a verbal production that carries a linguistically organized message and tends to produce in a receiver, an effect of coherence. It is a linguistic sign (Fregal 2014). So, in this work, text and textual are used interchangeably to mean the same thing (i.e. SRs in forms of words, objects, symbols, etc). To buttress this, Gonclaves (2018) submits that text relates to several points of view.

Many other scholars such as Crombie (1985) maintain that the study of discourse must involve the study of every aspect of language. Many researchers have given various definitions of what exactly a text is. Some equate a text to discourse; and some, text as discourse. A text is any object whose meaning and significance can be interpreted in depth; a film, an image, an artifact, or a place (Gaulfield 2019). It is “a: semantic unit” (Omonazin 2014); a “production that provokes a reaction in the receptor” (De Beaugrande & Dressler 1986 as cited in Omonazin, 2014). De Beaugrande & Dressler explain that it “is a communicative event” that comprises seven textuality principles namely: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situational, and intertextuality. These principles are said to be divided into two major categories namely, the text-internal (this comprises the first three principles and text-external which are context-related principles, i.e., the last four principles). Fourclough (1995) opines that TA is organized into vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure.

Nordquist (2019) considers text linguistics as a branch of linguistics that is concerned with the description and analysis of extended written and spoken texts in communication contexts. He observes that cohesion, coherence, principles, and informativeness are elements of textuality. Mechkunova (2019) maintains that texts should be parsed to extract machine-readable facts from them; hence the need for textual analysis. Several approaches are available for textual analysis of in all fields of human endeavor.

The various approaches and methods that researchers adopt in analyzing texts must be suitable to the type or nature of the texts in question. Wetheral (2001) observes that a text can be analyzed using four approaches and these are, the study of the language system (pattern), the use of language as activity (interactional elements), the focus on ideologies biases (implicit assumptions), and

mediated discourse analysis. Again, Frey et al (1999) also identify rhetorical criticism, content analysis, interaction analysis, and performance studies as four approaches to text analysis. Each of these approaches has numerous theoretical frameworks (within them). For example, rhetorical criticism has classical rhetoric, contemporary rhetoric, historical criticism, biographical studies, and many other theories under it. The same applies to other major approaches.

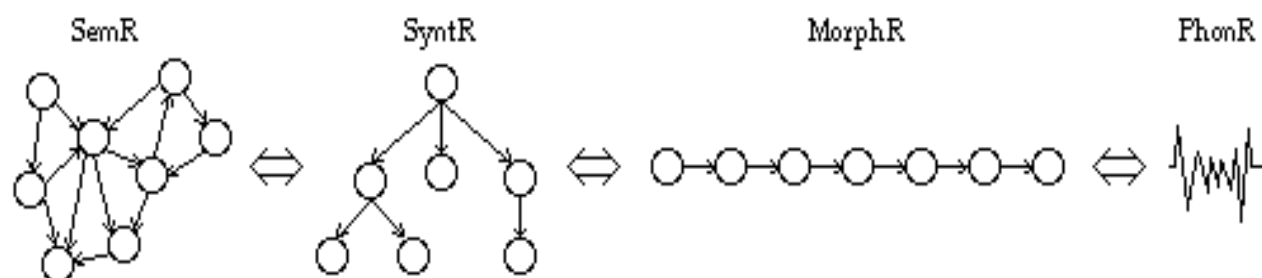
This study, therefore, focuses on the framework of interaction analysis and specifically adopted Aleksandr Zolkovskij and Igor Mel'cuk's Meaning-Text-Theory. The major aspect of the analysis is the application of semantic representations to selected texts.

Meaning Text-Theory

Meaning Text-Theory (MTT) was propounded by Aleksandr Zolovskij and Igo Mel 'cuk in the 1960s (Wikipedia; Kahane, 2019). It is a very complex and polymorphous theory that centers on linguistic descriptions of texts; it also accommodates computer applications such as machine translation, phraseology, and lexicography due to its formal characters (en.m.wikipedia.org). This theory deals with the semantics of an utterance to its phonetics, syntactic and morphological levels. Representations of different levels are mapped in a sequence of networks known as semantic representation (=SemR) through syntactic representation (=SyntR) to morphological representation (=MorphR) and Phonetic representation (=PhonR).

The (=SemR) comprises semantic structures (=SemS), a network of predications represented as nodes (lexical and grammatical meanings) to arguments. The time is made up of semantic structure, semantic-communicative structure, rhetorical structure, and structure (hence $SemR = \langle SemS, Sem-CommS, RhetS, RefS \rangle$ (Milicevic, 2006). The synth uses dependency trees (SyntS) especially, the syntactic communicative structures and anaphoric structures; the deep syntactic representation (DSyntR) and the surface syntactic representation (SSyntR) are realized here. In other words, four structures are realised at the DSyntR namely, deep-syntactic structure, deep-syntactic-communicative structure, deep-syntactic-prosodic structure and Deep-syntactic – Anaphoric structure, hence the formula: $[DSyntR = \langle DSyntS, Dsynt-CommS, DSynt-ProS, DSynt-AnaphS \rangle]$. Morphy is realized in a fixed linearised order that shows the ordering of elements in the actual utterances. There are two levels of Morphy namely, the deep (DMorphR) and surface (SMorphR) morphological representations. The surface morphological component (a subset of morphemic rule) finally maps (= SMorphR) onto PhonR (Wikipedia).

The diagram below shows the MTT's four levels of representations of meaning as explained above.



(Wikipedia)

The time is a web-like structure, SyntR applies dependency trees, (this constitutes the syntactic structures (SyntS); the Morphy are shown as strings of morphemes shown in linear order while the PhonR is presented in wave-like strings.

This paper cannot accommodate the vastness of MTT levels of representations. So, the only aspect of where major analysis is done is the time. It is worth noting that the relationships of these linguistics levels are said to be mappings (translations) and not transformational; their mappings are said to be mediated by sets of rules known as components. (Wikipedia). This entails that there are sufficient language-specific transitions between these representation levels.

The Study Area: Nigeria

Nigeria is often regarded as the giant of Africa possibly because of its achievements or as a result of its large population. Olukoju (2004) observes that it is located in West Africa with the Republic of Benin in the Western part; Cameroon and Chad in the Eastern part; Niger in the Northern part and Guinea in the Southern part. It has a population of over 150 million and has just celebrated its 61st Independence from the British colonization on October, 1st, 2021. It is now bedecked with unprecedented insecurity of lives and property, and, hopefully, this will soon be a thing of the past. Nigeria is made up of 6 geopolitical zones namely, the South-South, the South-East, the South-West, the North-East, the North-West, and the North-Central. The study region is the South-West which comprises, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun, Oyo, Ogun; and Lagos, and the sample population (i.e. the locations of this study) are Lagos and Ogun; these were purposively selected.

Methodology

This study is explanatory research that adopts a qualitative approach, its design is an ex post facto type; data are not manipulated. Data were randomly gathered from many private schools, in Lagos and Ogun State. Participants and non-participant observations were done by the researcher and her assistants. The researcher used research assistants who were teachers in crèches, KG classes, and nursery classes to gather data. Video clips and audio tapes from the live teachings were sent to the researcher's phones; the researcher watched and listened to the messages sent to her phone, and randomly selected a few data for this study. The nature of this research and the mode of analysis adopted in this work informed the selection of a few data.

The researcher visited some schools (after obtaining permission from necessary authorities) and sat at the back of the class with a recorder and a note to jot down the necessary information she needed. At the same time, she employed research assistants who helped her record some teachings and sent them to her via her phone. Again, letter symbols were randomly selected from the *Right Approach to English for Nursery schools Volume 1* and 2 by Modupe, A Yisa et al (2021) and used as data. Data were first presented (as Pre- 1, Pre-2, etc.) before their analysis using the discourse approach of text analysis and specifically the semantic representations of Aleksandr Zolovskij and Igor Mel'cut's Meaning-Text-Theory. The aspects of analysis that were mainly applicable were the functional meanings, the interconnectivity between the lexical functions, and the communicative imports to data randomly selected for the study here; emphasis is placed on language functions and not on structures.

Having engaged in participant and non-participant observations, and listened to both the video and audio clips sent to the researcher by the research assistants, the researcher observed that the teaching methods that the teachers used at the lower levels in Ogun and Lagos were predominantly recitations, demonstrations, drilling, play-way and textbook methods. There were no multimedia methods or individualized digital methods in all the schools selected for this study. Possibly, the poverty levels of the school owners might have been responsible for it.

Results

Symbolic representations and their interpretations from Alphabetic and Phonic textbooks are presented first before their analyses are shown as follows:

Data Presentation and Analysis (*From Nursery 1 & 2*)

Pre- 1

- (a) This is a letter a
- (b) Trace a
- (c) Sound and color a
- (d) a



Trace a



Note: The first box contains the expected task from the pupils; boxes 2 to 4 contain one of the pupil's responses to box 1 (the expected task).

Analysis of Pre-1

There is a mapping from the [= SemR] of “*this is a letter a*” through the [=SyntR] to the [=Morph R] to the [=PhonR]. At the [=SyntR], this is declarative, which is only easily interpreted by the teacher but not the pupils. In other words, although this (symbol) is accessible to the teachers and the pupils, the pupils (as a result of their inability to interpret the symbol and their age (below two years) find it hard to understand any of the *many-to-many* correspondence available for them. The propositional, i.e., the [=situational] or the paraphrases of ‘*this is a letter a*’ are the [= Es] “*see letter a*”, “*look at letter a*”, “*this is how to letter a is written*” and another [=E] as in “*write a letter a*”. The outcome of the first [= E] in 1 (a) is capable of confusing the pupils since they are unfamiliar to them (children in crèche are expected to be sung for).

The semantemes [=lexical meaning of a language [=l] of (b) is non-elementary to the teachers but elementary i.e. [=sem, semantic primitive) to the pupils. The [=l] of the five small boxes (on the right-hand side of the text) conveys the [= Sem-CommS] and [= RhetS] (i.e., the communicative and the stylistic meaning. The intention of the text composer and the teachers (of this) is to convey the [=SemS] into a specific interpretation by showing where the text should be packaged (i.e., in the box). The [=SemS] of the five boxes only maps out the aesthetic intents of the message but not the meanings to the pupils.

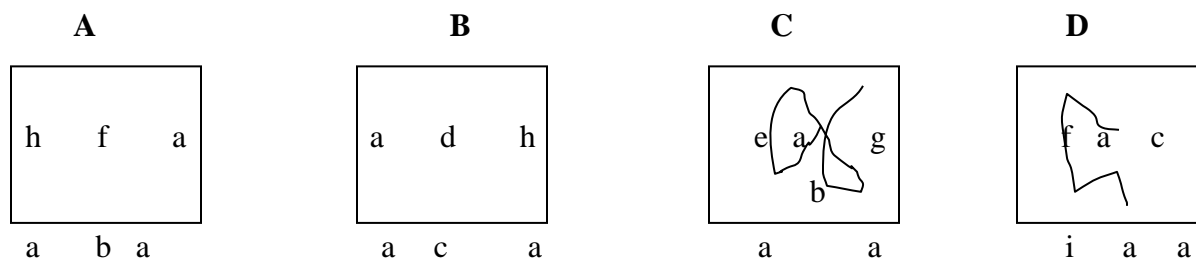
Again, 1 (a), (b), (c) and (d) all display their [= Sem-CommS] as the “*letter a*” (i.e., the theme, T) and other [= Es] are the rhemes (Rs). The [=RhetS] is official here. To further explain the Theme (T) ~Rheme (R) communication in (b) we have. [this] **T** [is letter a] **R**.

The teaching method adopted to teach the students 1 (a) to (d) were repetition and drilling methods. The name of the object in (d) was not written and the pupils of less than 2 were expected to write “apple” by themselves. The [= SemS] of the object in (d) and the name given to the letter “a” should have been subjected to paraphrases but the reverse was the case as the teachers only assumes that the pupils are capable of doing the task expected of them.

It should also be noted that the symbols, their interpretations, and the meanings attached to them are unfamiliar to the children because apart from the fact that all of them are under 2 years of age, they do not understand the objects since many of the objects are not found in the environments that these children grow. Again, at this stage, a child has not to been taught colors; but suddenly, he/she is expected to use colors to color the objects written out in the texts. It indicates the teachers have not tested the ability of these children to know what they can do and what they cannot do. From our observation, these children were still learning how to handle pencils. Also, the activities given to these them were very many for their cognitive accommodation, therefore, making it herculean for them to understand what they were expected and how they were supposed to do them. In fact, in the course of helping one of them to do the work, he exclaimed that the work was too much for him to do.

Pre-2

Circle letter a



Note: Box A & B contain the child's expected tasks; Box C & D contains the finished tasks by one of the pupils

Analysis of Pre-2

The semantemes of the [=situational] meaning of Pre 2, *Circle letter a* are both non-elementary and elementary. The teacher can map out various meanings from it but the pupils cannot due to their levels of exposure, understanding, and methods that the teacher used for them. The [=RhetS] intention of the teacher by giving the pupils a set of different boxes to carry out the same assignment could have been intentional; a desire to express its repetition method to ensure that the pupils grasp what is being taught. The [= RhetS] is suitable, official, aesthetic, universally accepted, and satisfactory at this level but the pupils at this level are unable to do the tasks because they (the class activities) are beyond their levels.

Again, the complexity of [=RhetS] vis-à-vis the age bracket of the pupils (below two years) and the repetition and recitation methods applied here only make the [= PhonR] non-elementary to the pupils as they were able to recite the *letter an* as expected of them but they were alien to the semantic interpretations of the symbols in their expected tasks. Having violated the emphasis on the central aspect of meaning and concentrated on the peripherals; the pupils were unable to perform the activities expected from them as shown in the selected Boxes C and D by one of the pupils.

Pre-3

A: Excerpt from Audio clip	B: Excerpt from the Phonic Book
Teacher (T) 1 : Oya, let's go	ba ma sa ya
T2: We want to do	
T3: We want to play	ha na ja ka
T4: We want to play	
T5: : Irregular two letter words	fa la la WA
T6: We want to	
T7: Bo an ga	ca qa wa ya
Pupils(P 8): bo a ga	
T9: Go a ga	sa da ha ra
P10: Go a ga	
T11: Go a a	pa xa ma fa
P12: Go an a	

T13: she an o

This box contains excerpts A (teachers' method) and B: symbolic representations

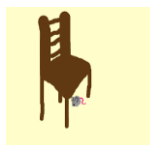
Pre-3 contains *excerpt A* which is made up of 13 utterances in which 10 were predominated uttered by the teacher and only 3 slots unavoidably “imposed” on the pupils. The paraphrastic power of T1 i.e. the propositional meanings could have been quite ambiguous if the preceding SemRs were not verbalized immediately by the teacher. Again, the repetitive method of delivery and the recitation as shown in *excerpt A* is in disharmony with the lettered symbolic representations in *Excerpt B*.

The intensification, assertiveness, verbalization, and positionality of the teacher's utterances can only be said to add color to the teaching. In other words, the pupils can only recite them rather than having any idea of what their meanings are. Their [=Sems] is non-elementary to the teacher but not the pupils.

Pre-4

Recite the poem and color the pictures

1. Pussy cat, pussy cat
2. Where have you been?
3. I've been to London
4. To see the Queen.
5. Pussy cay, pussy cat,
6. What did you do there?
7. I scared a little mouse



8. Under the chair

Analysis of Pre-4

The paraphrastic power of the [= SemR] and [=PhonR] of Pre-4 with the age bracket of the pupil and the method of recitation applied by the teacher only resulted in the disharmony of all of these. The propositional meanings in terms of the lexical unit of the above are both elementary and non-elementary. The [=Sem-commS] verbalized assertively was intentionally meant for the pupils to

recite this for recitation purposes only. Many of these pupils do not even know the lexical items used in the poem nor do they understand the connectivity/ interrelationships between them. The [=RhetR] intended for communicative purposes is defeated as the pupils were unable to decipher any meaning they were reciting. The text producer and the teacher need to work in tandem to ensure that there is unity between the graphic symbols, the abilities of the child, and the methods of presentation and teaching given to the pupils.

Pre-5

Write the sound of each object.

(i)



---ncle.

(ii)



---ase

(iii)



---ell

(iv)



--ylophone

(v)



---am

(vi)



--- ero

Note: the objects above are: (i.) a man (ii) a vase, (iii) a well, (iv) a xylophone, (iv) a yam and (vi) a zero

Analysis of Pre-5

The text presenters of the above seem not to understand the level of the readership of those expected to read these symbolic representations, and as such the propositional meanings of (i) to (vi) appear to be beyond the users of these texts. The high level of the paraphrases of (iii) for instance, which may be “tell, fell, sell, bell, cell, dell, hell, jell”, etc. is beyond a child’s (at this level’s) comprehension. However, although the [=RhetS] of (i) to (vi) are pleasant to behold, the communicative intents of the symbols are elementary and difficult for the pupils to understand. The central structure of meaning and its lexical functions (i.e. the SemS and its LF) are strange to the pupils. This results in disharmony between the symbolic representation, the child’s ability, the SemS, and the teaching methods. The outcome of this (dis)agreement is a lack of understanding by the pupils. In other words, although the [- Sem-commS] and the [= RhetS] were intended to communicate understanding, the reverse was the case, as the pupils in questions gave wrong answers, especially to (i), (iv), and (vi).

Discussion

This study analyzed the randomly selected data from an English alphabet book and a phonic book of pupils in crèches, kindergarten, nursery 1, and nursery 2 respectively. And having analyzed Aleksandr Zolovskij and Igo Mel'cut's Meaning-Text-Theory, the following findings were made

- Teachers predominantly applied propositional meanings to lettered symbolic representations at the expense of these pupils' abilities
- Situational lexical meanings tend to confuse the pupils since their interpretative symbols are not domiciled in the learning environments of the pupils in question
- The [-Sem-CommS + Rhett + RefS] intentionally presented to enable the pupils to communicate effectively do not measure up to the expectations of the presenters and text composers.
- The stylistics and referential meanings are quite aesthetic, and communicative and many are non-elementary to the pupils.
- Also, the lettered symbolic representations and the communicative intentions of the teachers were beautifully presented, but they did not lead to the actualization of the intended goals and objectives of teaching in these lower classes.

Conclusions

This paper, from a discourse analysis text linguistic point of view, proposes a harmonization of lettered symbolic representations, their interpretations, and the methods that teachers should adopt to teach pupils. The researcher observes that the pupils at these lower levels (crèche, KG, Nursery 1 and 2, being the foundation levels) should be taught right. A situation whereby the text producer presents texts without due consideration of the child's abilities (cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and intuitive) is unhealthy for the child's academic future. Again, the adoption of repetition and the recitation of teaching methods can only help the pupils to improve their [= PhonR] i.e. the articulatory level while the [= SemR] level is relegated to the background.

Simplified, easy-to-understand symbolic representations available in the academic environments of a child and a harmonized functional, pupil-oriented interactional method of teaching should be adopted by a teacher in teaching pupils in lower classes. The researcher suggests that LefriPram should be adopted by the teachers after due selections or choice of suitable symbolic representations by concerned education stakeholders might have been done. Again, there is a need for pupils' abilities to be tasted orally to ascertain whether or not they understand the objects they are to be taught before the application of the suggested method.

To further ensure that the symbolic representations tally with the teachers' choice of methods for effective teaching, this research recommends the following:

- Teachers should recommend and use symbolic representations that are in harmony with the child's ability (cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and intuitive abilities)
- The text makers should produce texts after due consideration of a child's complex abilities.
- The text producers and the teachers should ensure that their presentations are understood by the majority of pupils in the class; in other words, the text producers should not be interested only in what they produce but the intended audience (who will use the texts).
- Individual teachers should be assigned to handle one class and not a mixture of all classes; possibly due to poverty or lack of knowledge of how a class should be taught.
- Intelligent pupils who are identified through their complete participation and ability to give the right answers should be attended to first and thereafter, the teacher should give easy-to-do group class-works while he/she attends to those with low IQ within the speculated time.

- Education stakeholders in Lagos and Ogun should be interested in digital classrooms to further advancement in education.
- Education stakeholders should devote quality time to overseeing everything that takes place in the classroom between the teachers and the pupils.
- Government at all levels should be interested in training and retraining teachers for effectiveness constantly
- Government at all levels should also support private school owners financially to help in building their academic structures.

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Manipulation of Realities through Euphemistic and Derogatory Terms and Phrases in Political Texts: Obama's actions regarding American Gulf Oil Spill



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Abstract

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Keywords:

CDA, Gulf oil
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discursive
features

This study of political media discourse, following Van Dijk's multi-disciplinary (2006) framework, takes a closer look at the manipulation of realities in texts through discursive strategies of euphemization and derogation (praising and criticizing). Taking a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective, this paper analyzed textual data from sixteen opinion articles and editorials published in four American newspapers (*The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Post*, and *The New York Times*) concerning the actions taken by the US President, Barack Obama, to control the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill. The findings revealed that these opinion articles and editorials represent the same social actors and events differently by choosing such discursive features as euphemistic and derogatory terms, phrases and strategies. Moreover, the critical text analysis revealed that the political approach of each newspaper is materialized and can be traced in the language it produces. In other words, depending on the political party it is supporting, each newspaper manipulates its readers to either praise or criticize the actions taken by president Obama concerning the Gulf oil spill. It seems that *The Washington times* and *The New York Post* support the opposing political party and mostly criticize the president of their country, while most of the actions taken by the president concerning this issue are approved by *The New York Times*. As for *The Washington Post*, it criticizes some actions of the president, but not as much as *The Washington times* and *The New York Post*.

دستکاری واقعیت ها از طریق اصطلاحات و عبارات خوشایند و تحقیرآمیز در متون سیاسی: اقدامات اوباما در مورد نشت نفت آمریکا در خلیج فارس
این مطالعه از گفتمان رسانه های سیاسی، با پیروی از چارچوب چند رشته ای ون دایک (2006)، نگاهی دقیق تر به دستکاری واقعیت ها در متون از طریق راهبردهای گفتمانی تعبیر و تقبیح (تمجید و انتقاد) دارد. این مقاله با در نظر گرفتن دیدگاه تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی (CDA)، داده های متنی شانزده مقاله نظری و سرمقاله منتشر شده در چهار روزنامه آمریکایی (واشنگتن پست، واشنگتن تایمز، نیویورک پست و نیویورک تایمز) را در رابطه با اقدامات انجام شده تجزیه و تحلیل کرد. توسط باراک اوباما، رئیس جمهور ایالات متحده، برای کنترل نشت نفت خلیج مکزیک. یافته ها نشان داد که این مقالات نظری و سرمقاله ها با انتخاب ویژگی های گفتمانی مانند اصطلاحات، عبارات و راهبردهای خوشایند و تحقیرآمیز، بازیگران و رویدادهای اجتماعی یکسان را به طور متفاوت نشان می دهند. علاوه بر این، تحلیل متن انتقادی نشان داد که رویکرد سیاسی هر روزنامه عینیت یافته و بازبانی که تولید می کند قابل ردیابی است. به عبارت دیگر، بسته به حزب سیاسی که از آن حمایت می کند، هر روزنامه خوانندگان خود را دستکاری می کند تا اقدامات انجام شده توسط پرزیدنت اوباما در مورد نشت نفت در خلیج فارس را ستایش یا انتقاد کند. به نظر می رسد واشنگتن تایمز و نیویورک پست از حزب سیاسی مخالف حمایت می کنند و بیشتر از رئیس جمهور کشورشان انتقاد می کنند، در حالی که اکثر اقدامات رئیس جمهور در این زمینه مورد تأیید نیویورک تایمز است. در مورد واشنگتن پست، برخی اقدامات رئیس جمهور را مورد انتقاد قرار می دهد، اما نه به اندازه واشنگتن تایمز و نیویورک پست.

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Introduction

One of the most disturbing and environmental polluting events of the year 2010 happened on April 20. An explosion ripped through British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon drilling rig, about 40 miles off the coast of Louisiana, USA. At the time of explosion, eleven workers lost their lives and seventeen others were injured. And soon, nearly a mile beneath the surface of the ocean, oil began spewing into the water. Ever since the occurrence of that disaster, the US President Barack Obama has taken necessary measures to tackle this challenge. The actions taken to control this oil spill have drawn the interest of many journalists in America. However, these actions have had different representations and evaluations in the printed political media.

The main concern of the present study is to textually analyze the manipulation of realities in political texts using Van Dijk's (2006) framework by focusing on the euphemistic (praising) and derogatory (criticizing) terms and phrases. In addition, from a critical perspective this study aims to demonstrate how the different ideological points of view and political approaches of journalists lead them to have very different linguistic choices in the treatment of the same event. In other words, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How can manipulation of realities be detected through euphemistic and derogatory terms and phrases in political texts?

2. How are different social approaches manifested in the discourse of the printed media ?

By studying the forms of language, we can explore the social processes and then the ideology embedded in them; thus, the more practical objective of this study is consciousness-raising through focusing on language. It is to be noted, however, that by scrutinizing the words and phrases in printed political texts, we do not aim to show that there is an intrigue on the part of the news writers to deceive and betray the public.

Literature Review

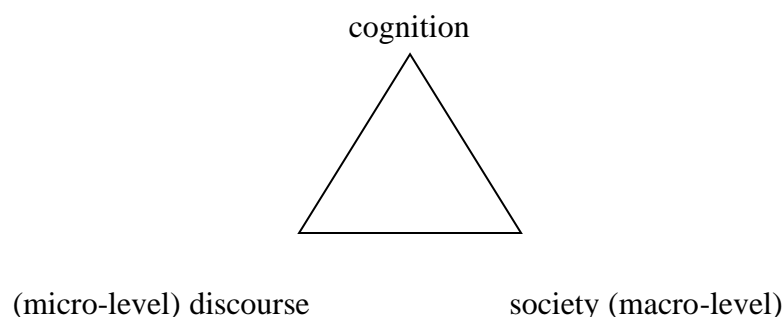
The analysis done in this study has a critical perspective nature which conceives language as a social practice construed by, and at the same time construing, the society. This conceptualization of the relationship between language and the society allows us to explore the political sphere through its realizations in language. This study takes manipulation of social realities as the "exercise of a form of illegitimate influence by means of discourse," (Van Dijk, 2006: 360). Put differently, the manipulator by using discourse makes others believe the things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interest of the manipulated (Chouliaraki, 2005;

Van Dijk, 2006). Manipulation usually occurs when the recipients are unable to understand the real intentions or to see the full consequences of the beliefs or actions advocated by the manipulator. This may be the case especially when the recipients lack the specific knowledge that might be used to resist manipulation (Wodak, 1987). Therefore, the same recipients may be more or less manipulable in different circumstances.

Indeed, to explain how texts can be socially manipulative presupposes an account that relates textual structures to social cognitions, and social cognitions to social structures. The multi-disciplinary framework or model developed by Van Dijk (2001) suggests this kind of relation. Manipulation of social realities in this study is viewed under this socio-cognitive approach, which links discourse, cognition and society (Figure 1). For Van Dijk, micro-level notions such as discourse and macro-level notions such as social relations are mediated by cognition.

Figure 1

Discursive-cognitive-social structures triangle



In other words, manipulation is known to be a social, cognitive and discursive phenomenon (Van Dijk, 2006). It is social because it involves interaction and power abuse between groups and social actors; it is cognitive because it implies the manipulation of the minds of the participants, and it is discursive because it is being exercised through text, talk and visual images.

For Van Dijk (2006), socially, manipulation involves power and domination. By power, it is meant the kind of control that some social actors or groups exercise over others. The occurrence of this type of manipulative control requires some social conditions in terms of group membership, institutional position, profession, material or symbolic resources that define the power groups and membership. Thus, what journalists produce cannot be free from being manipulative; they can manipulate the recipient of media discourse because of their institutional position in societies and their access to mass media and public discourse.

Cognitively, for manipulators, it is essential that the recipients form the mental model the manipulators want them to form. Put differently, the targets of manipulation are made to believe that some actions or policies are in their own interests, whereas in fact they are in the interests of the manipulators and their associates. Newspapers depending on their political approach, sometimes by blaming the victim discursively influence the mental models of recipients (Van Dijk, 2006).

Since social-political manipulation involves domination (power abuse), Van Dijk (2006) claims that such manipulation is ideological which involves ideologies, ideological attitudes and ideological discourse structures. Power and ideologies have been found effective in shaping discourse at all levels and in all situations of speaking and writing (Diamond, 1996; Fairclough, 2001; Foucault, 1982). Discursively, thus, manipulation generally involves the usual forms and formats of ideological discourse, such as emphasizing "Our" good things (euphemistic strategies), and emphasizing "Their" bad things (derogatory strategies). In order to analyze this strategy of polarization, Van Dijk's (2006: 373) "ideological square" is used, which can be applied to the structures at various levels of discourse as follows:

- Overall interaction strategies (Positive self-presentation/ Negative other-presentation)
- Macro speech act implying Our 'good' acts and Their 'bad' acts (Accusation, defense)
- Semantic macrostructures ((De-)emphasize negative/positive topics about Us/Them)
- Local speech acts implementing and sustaining the global ones, e.g. statements that prove accusations.
- Local meanings Our/Their positive/negative actions (Give many/few details; be general/specific; be vague/precise; be explicit/implicit; etc.)
- Lexicon (Select positive words for Us, negative words for Them)
- Local syntax (Active vs. passive sentences, nominalizations: (de)emphasize Our/Their positive/negative agency, responsibility)
- Rhetorical figures (Hyperboles vs. euphemisms for positive/negative meanings; Metonymies and metaphors emphasizing Our/Their positive/negative properties)
- Expressions: sounds and visuals (Emphasize (loud, etc.; large, bold, etc.) positive/negative meanings; Order (first, last; top, bottom, etc.) positive/negative meanings).

It is worthy of attention that all discourse featuring the usual ideological polarization patterns cannot simply be claimed to be manipulative. Indeed, there may be social–political discourse that is persuasive but not manipulative, such as persuasive parliamentary debates or a discussion in a newspaper or on television. The difference between a persuasive and manipulative discourse is that in persuasion the interlocutors are free to believe or act as they please, depending on whether or not they accept the arguments of the persuader, whereas in manipulation recipients are typically assigned a more passive role. This inability on the part of the recipients to understand the real intentions of the manipulators in manipulative discourse is caused when the recipients lack the relevant knowledge that enables them to resist manipulation. Another reason that some discourse is sometimes manipulative is that it is produced by member of "symbolic elites", such as politicians, journalists, scholars, writers, teachers, etc. (Van Dijk, 1996).

Although fascinating and pertinent, the distinction between persuasion and manipulation is not scrutinized here and is beyond the scope of the present study. The focus of the analysis here is on the latter term, that is, on the manipulation of realities through discursive means in different political texts. In other words, how social actors and events are represented differently in different newspapers. Ideologies and attitudes are inscribed in texts and control the structures of texts in media discourse. Thus, this study tries to display how groups with different social approaches manipulate social realities and evaluate them in order to secure their own group's interests.

Hodge and Kress (1993) claim that two broad discursive strategies are used in ideological struggles: (1) the manipulation of reality and (2) the manipulation of the orientation to reality. The ways in which the events and participants are represented (construction of reality) and the evaluation of the participants in these events (orientation to reality) are explored in the present paper. Actually, in the analysis done here, the evaluation of social actors is based on the system of Appraisal developed by Martin and Rose (2003). According to Martin and Rose (2003) the system of Appraisal is a framework for mapping attitudes as they are construed in a text, the different lexico-grammatical items the writers use to position themselves in relation to the events and the participants. This system focuses on terms and phrases that construct attitudinal orientations in terms of "judgment" and "affect". Judgment is emphasized when commenting on the behavior of social actors in social or moral terms, whereas the system of affect involves encoding feelings which are a reaction to behavior, texts or phenomena (Martin, 2000). This study, therefore, does not aim to evaluate the behavior of the social actors; rather, it attends to the tendency of each

newspaper towards the actions taken by the social actors. Thus, the analysis is based on the "affect" dimension of this system.

Method

Materials

One of the aims of this study is to make overt the different ways in which language is used to construct an explanation of the events and its participants. The structure and process of this discursive formation emerges from analyzing texts which are representative of the same genre but belong to different ideological positions. Thus, the study presents a critical discourse analysis on 16 opinion articles and editorials published in four American newspapers; namely, *The New York Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* from June 15, 2010 to June 25, 2010. All these political texts concern the actions taken by the US Ex-president, Barack Obama, on the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill after Obama's first oval office address regarding this issue (except for one editorial in *The Washington Times* which was posted on May 25, since there was not enough editorials in that newspaper about this theme).

The reason for selecting editorial genre is that only in these types of news material the opinion of the editors of the newspapers (institutional not personal opinion) on the current issues are expressed even if they are signed by a particular author. In fact, the dominant ideology and the social approach of each specific newspaper are manifested in these types of media discourse. They represent the opinions of the group or of several interest groups to which the newspaper has allegiance. Concerning newspaper selection, according to Fowler (1991), for the ideology to be (re)presented or formulated in media, two factors should be considered, i.e. size of publication and the number of people who read the printed media in a day or in a week. Thus, all the four above-mentioned newspapers were randomly selected from among the newspapers that have vast circulation and are published daily in the United States.

Data Analysis Procedures

In order to do the textual analysis, initially the genre of the news stories (opinion articles and editorials) was described. Then an analysis was done on how social actors are evaluated and how events are represented. In order to achieve this objective all the ideological laden words and phrases of each text and their presumed ideological effects were analyzed according to the features introduced by Van Dijk (2006) and Martin & Rose (2003). The analysis, with its focus on

evaluation involved finding the euphemistic (praising) and derogatory (criticizing) terms and phrases. The next step was to examine each text to see the prevalence of euphemization or derogation strategies. In the last step of the analysis, each text was critically analyzed by focusing on social actors and discursive strategies (Van Dijk, 1999; Van Leeuwen, 1996; Wodak, 1996).

That is, the analyzed discourse findings were interpreted toward manifesting the relationship between particular social approaches and their influence on the representation of realities.

Analysis and Results

The editorial genre, the focus of this study, is characterized by being one of the widest circulated opinion discourses of society and by representing institutional not personal opinion (Bolívar, 1994; Van Dijk, 1996). The schematic structure of editorials typically consists of a summary of the event, an evaluation, and a pragmatic conclusion (Van Dijk, 1996). This schematic structure represents the ideal realization of the editorial genre, but it is important to remember that the actual instantiation of the genre might vary, mix or omit these components.

In each news story, the schematic structure of editorials and opinion articles was observed. Each story started with a headline, usually containing ideology laden words. The first paragraphs represented the main event of each article, i.e. President Obama's oval office address on the Gulf of Mexico oil spill and his actions towards tackling this issue. Then, in the body of the news which is the main focus of the present study, the news story writer started evaluating (either praising or criticizing) the actions and the actors. All of the news stories ended with a conclusion. The ideological aspects of discourse are explored in the use of euphemistic and derogatory discursive strategies, deployed in the manipulation of reality, i.e. the ways in which the events and participants are represented, and the manipulation of the orientation to reality, i.e. the evaluation of these events and participants, (Martín Rojo, 1995; Van Dijk, 2006; Wodak, 1996, 1997). Based on the above statement, all the euphemistic and derogatory words and phrases of each text were identified and then their presumed effects focusing specifically on the appraisal of the participants and the reconstruction of events were determined.

The appraisal of social actors

In this part, all the euphemistic and derogatory terms that show readers how editors feel about the social actors and their character were identified, and their effects were stated. These evaluative

traces evoke social models or scripts that the readers use when trying to make sense of the text. These elements contribute to the creation of a desired reading position and the manipulation of the readers to either praise or condemn the social actors, which of course can be withstood by readers who have the counter knowledge that enables them to resist manipulation. The social actor who is in the focus of the analysis done in this paper is Mr. Obama. Table 1 summarizes the appraisal of Mr. Obama in each of the newspapers. In order to determine the effect of each of these terms and phrases, Martin and Rose's (2003) categorization (focusing on the "affect" dimension) was used.

The groups of emotions selected to evaluate actors and express the feeling of the writers in reaction to the behavior of the actors are as follows:

- un/happiness (emotions of sadness, anger, happiness, and love);
- in/security (emotion concerned with anxiety, fear, confidence and trust);
- dis/satisfaction (emotion concerned with telos – ennui, displeasure, curiosity, respect) (cited in Achugar, 2004: 300).

Table 1

Appraisal of Obama in the four newspapers

Newspaper	Euphemistic	Derogatory	Affect
New York Post		came up short	Dissatisfaction
		failed to inspire	dissatisfaction
		missed the opportunity	unhappiness
		still doesn't get it	dissatisfaction
		has been too detached	dissatisfaction
		taking a new tack	insecurity (being deceived)
		lack of leadership	dissatisfaction
		tough O	unhappiness
		got it all wrong	dissatisfaction
		didn't mention	dissatisfaction

The New York Times	was right		Satisfaction
	his	was less frank	dissatisfaction
	determination		security
	vowed to		security
	ensure		security
	pledged to	opened the door far to	dissatisfaction
	strengthen	wide	
The Washington Post		didn't lay the proper foundation	Dissatisfaction
		his impotence	dissatisfaction
		ignored challenges	dissatisfaction
		focused on the relatively insignificant	dissatisfaction
The Washington Times		sitting on his own hands	Unhappiness
		poor presidential leadership	
		failing in two critical responsibilities	dissatisfaction
		incompetence	dissatisfaction
			dissatisfaction

As Table 1 illustrates, *New York Post*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* show unhappiness, dissatisfaction and insecurity towards the actions of Mr. Obama. Reversely, *The New York Times* is satisfied with the actions of the president and feels to be secure and sure that he is on the right path in handling this issue. These differences indicate the different ideologies of the newspapers which can be traced in the language they have produced.

The representation of the events

The representation of the events in the four newspapers projects a view of the whole situation and the aspects each newspaper wishes to highlight out of the events. The different euphemistic and derogatory terms and phrases the writers chose to represent the events of Gulf oil spill reflect how

the same action and the same social actors are represented differently, once praised and once blamed. The lexical items and phrases that refer to such events were identified and later categorized according to how they help construct a view of the event from an evaluative perspective using Van Dijk's (2006) framework (See Appendix for samples of the analyzed data extracted from the four newspapers). Table 2 below gives a few examples of the ideologically laden words and their discourse levels. The visuals and text layout of the news texts were not analyzed, since their analysis seemed to be far beyond the objectives of the present study.

Table 2

Examples of the ideologically- laden words and their discourse levels

Level of Text Analysis	Textual feature/ structure	Discursive strategy
Macro speech acts	accusation <i>"he promoted the fiction that the government is on the top of this"</i>	implying Their bad act (derogation)
Local speech acts	statements that prove the accusation <i>"in a mere two weeks 90 percent of oil would be captured"</i>	sustaining the macro speech acts (derogation)
Local meanings	Be Vague/ precise <i>"giving faint outlines of agendas"</i>	Their negative actions (derogation)
Lexicon (micro-level)	selecting negative words for Them <i>"inability to deal"</i>	negative Other presentation (derogation)
Rhetorical Figures (micro-level)	Hyperboles <i>"economy-killer"</i>	emphasizing Their negative properties (derogation)
	Metaphor <i>"marshmallows had more substance"</i>	emphasizing Their negative properties (derogation)

The textual analysis shows that the four newspapers evaluate Mr. Obama's actions differently; for instance, *The New York Times* blames British Petroleum (BP) for this disaster, and claims that it gave false information concerning its abilities before the oil spill and false information about the size of the spill after this event:

There are a lot of reasons, of course, not to trust BP.

The company insisted for years that it was ready to deal with a huge oil spill in the gulf, and it was completely unprepared. After the blowout on the Deepwater Horizon rig, it downplayed the size of the spill, starting with 1,000 barrels a day, then moving to 5,000, then — as its tallies became less and less credible — turning over the job of estimating to government scientists. Their present estimate is as much as 60,000 barrels a day (16/05/2010).

The *Washington Times* has a completely different point of view and explicitly blames Mr. Obama for delaying in taking action to control the disaster, and claims it is because of his incompetence:

Government shares blame for oil disaster: BP shouldn't have to pay for Obama's incompetence

When allocating blame for the crisis in the Gulf, BP executives aren't the only ones with oil on their hands. The British petroleum giant should be held legally liable for damage caused by the oil leak, but only for costs related to its portion of the responsibility. At every step, government has hampered cleanup efforts, thereby exacerbating the problem. That's not BP's fault.

[....] BP isn't accountable for additional cleanup costs and damages that resulted from government's failure to give a green light to this process. In this dim light, it's obvious why the Obama administration put the thumbscrews to BP executives to get them to agree to a cleanup fund managed by the White House: Government's share of the blame is substantial, and waiting for courts to allocate objective damages - which would be the normal way of proceeding - risked exposing bureaucratic culpability.

Delays and obstructions caused by the federal government are numerous. [.....](22/05 2010)

In order to explore the overall evaluation of these four newspapers concerning the gulf issue, the frequency of all of the euphemistic or derogatory terms and phrases stated in the text were calculated as percentages (Table 3). The aim was to see whether the euphemistic or derogatory strategies have prevalence in each newspaper, or put differently whether each newspaper is manipulating its readers to praise or criticize Mr. Obama for his efforts in dealing with the crisis.

Table 3

The percentage of the euphemistic or derogatory terms and phrases in each newspaper

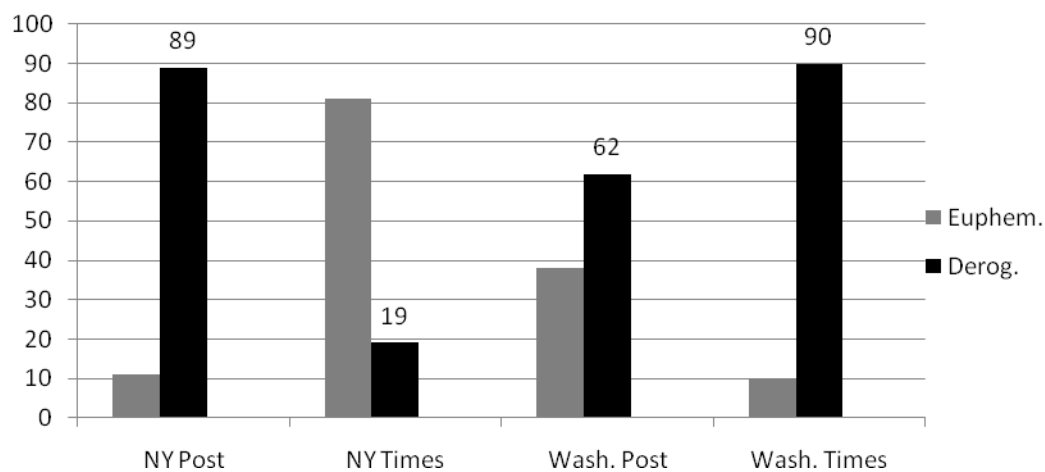
Name of Newspaper	Euphemistic terms and phrases	and Derogatory terms and phrases
New York Post	11%	89%

New York Times	81%	19%
The Washington Post	38%	62%
The Washington times	10%	90%

The results revealed that *The Washington times* and *The New York Post* mostly criticize the president, while most of the actions taken by the president concerning the issue are approved by *The New York Times*. As for *The Washington Post*, it is a bit conservative in criticizing some of the actions of the president, but on the whole it tends to criticize more than to praise but not as much as *The Washington times* and *The New York Post*. Figure 2 below attests to these findings.

Figure 2

The percentage of the euphemistic or derogatory terms and phrases in each newspaper



Discussion and conclusion

The results of textual analysis of the randomly chosen news stories in the present study demonstrated that the representations of the same social actors, President Obama and British Petroleum, by different newspapers were significantly different. This can be related to the underlying ideological attitudes or social approaches of the media groups. By the same token, the analyzed media discourse presented facts in a way that would influence the reader's view of the given incidents and would manipulate the readers to some extent to praise or criticize the same

social actors and their actions. This manipulation can be prevented if the relevant knowledge is given to the readers (Van Dijk, 2006).

The findings of this study are in line with the studies that show the media can and sometimes do manipulate the truth in order to put across their own or the government's political agenda (e.g. Atawaneh, 2009; Fitch, 2005; Gandara, 2004; Leudar & Marsland, 2004). The ideologies of the reporting media are reflected in the language they produce, and the same events can be very differently reported, if the reporting media have different ideologies. For example, Vaughan (1995) analyzed the reporting of the 1982 war of Israel against Lebanon in a comparative discourse study of editorials. She found that the four sets of editorials analyzed viewed the situation very differently each promoting their own interests. In another study, Lazar and Lazar (2004) analyzed the speeches of Bush after September 11, 2001. They found that the false stereotype of the Middle Eastern people as "terrorists, murderers and enemies of democracy and civilization" was dominant in his speeches. Achugar (2004) analyzed the editorials of two Uruguay newspapers concerning the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath: *El País*'s views the US as right in its policy against terrorism, while *La República* believes the US is involved in state terrorism like other terrorist groups.

The findings of this study and those of the above-mentioned studies have shown how discourse can be ideologically positioned and how social positions of different groups of which language producers are members affect their discourse and talk. These findings corroborate the fact that there are relations between social organizations, institutions, groups, roles, situations, power, or political decision making, on the one hand, and discourse structures, on the other hand (Fairclough, 1989, 2001; Kedar, 1987; Kramarae, Schulz and O Barr, 1984; Kress, 1985; Ng and Bradac, 1993; Wodak, 1989). The media can play a significant role in spreading, defending and legitimating ideologies. When there are different political parties with opposing views, the same events can be reported in totally different ways. The group members by employing manipulative discursive strategies express and support their specific social positions.

One of the main implications of this study for language teaching is to teach language learners how to examine and judge any texts they read or hear carefully and not to simply accept it because it is produced by a "symbolic elite" (Van Dijk, 1996), and if necessary, by gathering relevant information change their interpretation. Actually, teachers have to encourage their students that when reading a political text, it is better to critically analyze the text and to find the intention of

the writers and also their political approach toward the events they are describing in their writings. Actually, by drawing the attention of students to these discursive structures of discourse and their socio-political effects, teachers can hope to make students conscious of and sensitive to the latent invisible misinformation, manipulation, misdirection and misinterpretation exercised by some writers and speakers.

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Appendix: Samples of analyzed texts extracted from the four newspapers

The New York Post

Text 1: Deepwater Obama

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
don't worry		*	reduction of significance (macro speech act)
Marshmallows have more substance		*	metaphor, comparison, emphasizing negative properties (rhet. fig)
start an escrow account	*		defending a positive decision (macro speech act)
faint outlines		*	a vague presentation (local meaning)
We were hoping...		*	an expected reaction
criminal dysfunction in the federal government		*	accusation (macro speech act)
Obama's nod to this factor	*		defending a positive decision (local speech act)
clean up	*		management, specific (local meaning)
Nice	*		positive actor presentation (lexicon)
took so long		*	objection (macro speech act)
another plan		*	similar failures
Yay		*	(slang) disrespect (rhet. fig)
don't need		*	Rejection
Inability		*	negative other presentation
Obama should have said- but didn't.		*	objection (macro speech act)

He (Obama) promoted the fiction.	*	objection (macro speech act)
Yeah, I'm the founder of the Tea Party.	*	ridicule, emphasizing negative properties (rhet. fig)
came up short	*	negative actor presentation (lexicon)
failed to inspire	*	negative actor presentation (lexicon)
missed the opportunity	*	negative actor presentation (lexicon)
President Obama still doesn't get it.	*	negative actor presentation (lexicon)

Text 2: Obama's Intentions

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
majority polls		*	give details (local meaning)
too detached		*	hyperbole, negative actor presentation (rhet. fig.)
taking a new tack		*	deceiving, (macro speech act)
huffing and puffing		*	(metaphor), comparison, ridicule
Grotesquerie		*	hyperbole, negative meaning (rhet. fig.)
off-base		*	negative other presentation (lexicon)
demonizing PB beyond reason		*	victimization, implying their bad acts (macro speech act)
rarely relevant		*	vague (local meaning)
Chicago style		*	negative other presentation (lexicon)
Threats		*	vilification, implying their bad acts (lexicon)

Wise	*	positive actor description(lexicon)
safeguard funds	*	positive action(lexicon)
whipping up a mob	*	metaphor, negative other presentation (rhet. fig.)
Revenge	*	vilification, implying their bad acts (lexicon)
driving the company into bankruptcy	*	accusation, (macro speech act)
sound strategy	*	ridicule, sarcasm, (rhet. fig.)
puffing up presidential strategy	*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties (rhet. fig.)

The New York Times

Text 1: Editorial: From the Oval Office

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
more energy	*		positive actor presentation (lexicon)
more dedication	*		positive actor presentation (lexicon)
short on specifics		*	vague (local meaning)
Right	*		positive actor presentation (lexicon)
less than frank		*	vague (local meaning)
faltering efforts		*	negative other presentation (lexicon)
would order	*		positive actor presentation (local speech act)

a fair manner	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Timely	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Obama's determination	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
press it	*		firm determination, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Ensure	*		firm determination, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Strengthen	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Relentless	*		positive presentation (lexicon)
left to its own devices		*	lack of management
long-stalled	*		significance and impact, positive presentation (lexicon)
Comprehensive	*		significance and impact, positive presentation (lexicon)
necessary first-step	*		significance and impact, positive presentation (lexicon)
tackling the problem	*		management, positive actor presentation (local speech act)
Unless		*	conditional,
takes full charge	*		management, positive presentation (lexicon)

Text 2: Editorial: BP Begins to Ante Up

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	

a good start	*	praising, positive presentation (lexicon)
Stressed	*	firm determination, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
BP's obligation	*	blaming others, (lexicon)
would not pre-empt	*	firm determination, precise (local meaning)
government scientists	*	in-group favoritism, (lexicon)
escrow fund	*	a positive action, (local meaning)
not be able to walk away	*	firm determination, precise (local meaning)
Reassuring	*	management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Managed	*	management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
won high marks	*	positive actor presentation (local meaning)
keep pressing	*	management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
the battle is not over	*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties (rhet.fig)
not adjudicated	*	mismanagement, negative word, (lexicon)

The Washington Post

Text 1: Column: Obama's address: grand setting, weak policies

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	

grand setting	*		positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
weak policies		*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
Chasm		*	deficiency, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
ambition of its commitments	*		positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
thinness of its policies		*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
Decisive	*		firm determination, positive action (lexicon)
gone missing		*	deficiency, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
Limp		*	emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
Weak		*	emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
dramatic setting		*	hyperbole, exaggeration, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)
little worth saying		*	insignificant, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
not done much service		*	insignificance, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)

Text 2: Column: A Glimmer of Leadership in Obama's Oval Office Speech

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	

glimmer of leadership	*	sardonic remark,
idiotic advice	*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
about right	*	positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
look presidential	*	sardonic remark
pretty stressed	*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
Serious	*	positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
hardest job on the planet	*	hyperbole, irony, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)
better framed	*	positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
take the opportunity	*	positive decision, (local speech act)
he is a leader	*	sardonic remark
Ridiculous	*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
"kick some ass" language	*	slang, disrespect, negative other presentation, (lexicon)
macho-challenged	*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
Right	*	positive action, (lexicon)
Exhausting	*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
voracious energy appetite	*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
Nightmare	*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)

bipartisan thing	*		a sardonic remark
hit the crescendo	*		hyperbole, emphasizing positive properties (rhet. fig.)
rolled right	*		positive action, (lexicon)
Chiding	*		positive action, (lexicon)
liked him better	*		positive presentation, (lexicon)
not yet the bright beam		*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)

The Washington Times

Text 1: Editorial: Obama's 'blame others' approach: Government is partly to blame for this disastrous oil spill

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
blame		*	accusation, negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
sit on his hands		*	idiom, objection, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)
over a month		*	Idleness
sank into the mire of his own presidency		*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)
the blame Bush game		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
increasingly worn		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
increasingly unconvincing		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
other targets		*	other victims

everything's else's fault	somebody	*	disclaiming emphasizing responsibility, negative properties, (local speech act)
Obama world		*	exclusion of others, negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
bureaucrats mistakes	never make	*	false belief, incorruptibility, emphasizing negative properties, (local speech act)
cannot escape		*	inability, negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
failed to discover		*	inability, negative actor presentation, (local speech act)
so much for the efficacy of federal regulators		*	irony, disparagement, negative other presentation, (rhet. fig.)
prevented.... from		*	unnecessary control, negative action, (lexicon)
Clearly		*	hyperbole, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
there was a fear		*	horror, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
ill-nuanced admission		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
blow up		*	awful result, negative other presentation, (lexicon)
carefully concocted defense		*	deceitful action, negative other presentation, (lexicon)
it hasn't messed up		*	negative other presentation (local speech act)
government's role	own murky	*	negative other presentation (lexicon)

imposing penalties		*	cruel action negative other presentation (lexicon)
punishing oil companies		*	blaming others negative other presentation (lexicon)
had nothing to do with the spill		*	exempting,
protect government	*		positive action, (lexicon)
at the expense of truth	*		honesty, positive action, (lexicon)

Text 2: Editorial: Obama's Gulf war: Lackluster response to oil spill exposes poor presidential leadership

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
lackluster response		*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
poor presidential leadership		*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
approval rating dropped		*	specifics, (local meaning)
more bad news		*	comparison, negative other presentation, (lexicon)
remarkable similarity		*	comparison, emphasize on negative properties, (local speech act)
Eroded		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
failing to perform		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
comparable rating		*	specifics, negative other presentation, (lexicon)

slightly worse	*	comparison, negative other presentation, (local speech act)
no comparison	*	dissimilarity, positive presentation (lexicon)
failing in two critical responsibilities	*	negative actor presentation, (macro speech act)
got off to a rocky start	*	having bad luck, negative actor presentation, (local speech act)
Obama's administration stood in the way	*	inability, negative actor presentation, (local speech act)
more economic harm	*	comparison, negative other presentation, (local speech act)
defended the policy	*	a positive action, (local speech act)
But	*	contrast, comparison, negative other presentation, (local speech act)
failed as an inspirational leader	*	negative actor presentation, (local speech act)
won't generate	*	negative other presentation, (local speech act)
requisite sense of urgency	*	acting sensibly, precise, (local meaning)
Bellyached	*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
crumbling presidency intact	*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)