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Editorial Foreword

Welcome to the first issue of the *Dibon Journal of Education* (DJE), published by Dibon Publishing House in the United Kingdom. We are delighted to introduce this new peer-reviewed international academic journal dedicated to advancing knowledge in the field of education.

DJE is a peer-reviewed international journal aims to bridge the crucial gap between educational research and classroom implementation. Our mission is to publish high-quality empirical studies that advance theoretical understanding and offer practical applications for educators at all levels.

The establishment of *DJE* comes at a critical time when educational systems face unprecedented challenges. Traditional approaches to teaching and learning are being questioned, while new possibilities for educational innovation emerge daily. Through this journal, we hope to contribute meaningfully to addressing these challenges by disseminating research that informs and transforms educational practice.

What distinguishes *DJE* from existing educational journals is our specific focus on the integration of emerging technologies in educational contexts. We recognize that artificial intelligence and other technological innovations represent both significant challenges and extraordinary opportunities for education. Through rigorous research and evidence-based approaches, we seek to illuminate how these technologies can enhance teaching and learning while preserving the essential human dimensions of education.

The articles featured in this inaugural issue exemplify our commitment to methodological rigor and practical relevance. Each contribution offers valuable insights into one or more of our focus areas: educational leadership and administration, curriculum design, instructional methods, educational technology integration, AI in education, assessment methodologies, special and inclusive education, early childhood education, and educational psychology.

Our rigorous double-blind peer review process ensures that all published research meets the highest standards of academic excellence. As an open-access journal, we are committed to making quality research freely accessible to educators, researchers, and policymakers worldwide, thereby democratizing access to educational knowledge.

We invite researchers, educators, and practitioners to join this scholarly conversation by submitting your work to future issues of DJE. Together, we can build a knowledge base that advances education and benefits learners around the world.

Editor-in-Chief
Dibon Journal of Education

Challenges Faced by the Visually Impaired Students during Online Learning: Lessons for Teachers

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Abstract- The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the educational system from face-to-face learning to online learning mode. This shift had impacted visually impaired students. This study aims to understand the academic experiences of visually impaired learners and explore their challenges during online learning. The study employed a mixed-methods approach to obtain the aims. For data collection, the researcher used a questionnaire addressed to eighteen visually impaired participants (15 Impaired, three partially Impaired) pursuing various academic programs across India. The findings reveal that Google Meet (83.3%) was the most accessible platform, but students faced significant challenges, including inaccessible PDF materials, limited availability of scribes for online exams, and difficulties with visual teaching aids like PowerPoint presentations. Based on these findings, the study recommends improving web accessibility and providing materials in screen-reader-friendly formats to ensure the availability of online scribes. It suggests that teachers use more assistive technologies and create proper connectivity between educational institutions and specialized digital libraries for impaired students.

Keywords: Visual Impairment; Distance Education; E-learning; Digital Accessibility; Screen Readers; Online Teaching; Educational Technology; Assistive Technologies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies have proven that learners with special disabilities need a conducive environment. When the Pandemic era started, the entire education system shifted to online learning mode due to the pandemic, where students with Impairedness face many challenges. Furthermore, the New Education Policy (NEP)-2020 talks about providing Equitable and Inclusive Education for all, including Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Students (NEP, 2020, 27). The awareness and knowledge of how to teach children with specific disabilities are relevant. NEP2020 suggests that it should be part of the teacher education program. At the same time, support must be given to implement a more integral teaching approach (Horn et al., 2012). Hence, it is the need of the day to understand the online learning experiences of impaired students and to bring forth the challenges they face in online learning mode. This would help the teachers to develop strategies for an Inclusive teaching-learning process (Das, 2023).

Many digital tools and online platforms are being used for teaching during this pandemic. However, these tools are not always as friendly as the screen readers that visually impaired students use (Courtney & Keith, 2017). Teachers and students face problems using these tools for teaching and learning. Since many colleges and universities are continuing some online classes even after the pandemic, it is important to solve these problems. Furthermore, visually impaired students need proper support to use these online tools effectively. Without such support, these students cannot participate properly in online classes. Therefore, it is necessary to find out what problems teachers and visually impaired students face while using online tools and how to solve them. Therefore, this study aims to understand the academic experiences of Visually Impaired learners and explore the different challenges Impaired students face during online learning. Additionally, the study will suggest recommendations to improve online teaching-learning experiences for impaired students.

Thus, this study aims to answer the following main questions:
1. What are the challenges that Impaired students face during online learning?
2. How can we improve the online teaching-learning process for the Visually Impaired?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Challenges Faced by Visually Impaired Learners during Online Learning*

Many platforms like Diksha have failed to provide material that is accessible to impaired students. It becomes difficult for such learners to navigate while finding material. In this platform, documents such as e-textbooks are not uploaded in a user-friendly format, i.e. a screen reader is unable to navigate any part of the material. In some cases, multiple pages within a chapter are uploaded in such a format that a screen reader skips onto the next accessible page. This makes it impossible for a student with a visual impairment to follow the content (Varnikar, 2020). Further, many online tools, such as Grammarly and Online Writing Tutor, could be used to improve writing skills. However, the errors these online tools highlight are usually incomprehensible for the screen reader software. As a result, such learners have to rely on their peers to correct errors (Ravichandran et al., 2022).

2.2 *Lack of Human Scribes*

During face-to-face learning, it was easier for impaired students to write the exam due to peer support, teachers, and college management authority. It has become difficult for Visually Impaired learners to find writers for online exams. Many Visually Impaired learners face difficulties writing online exams, particularly in rural areas, where students are not familiar with the effective use of assistive devices (Sharma et al., 2025). However, this situation is almost the same in the urban area. One of the prominent scholars in this field, Aadhithya MS, in his article titled, "Visually impaired students struggling scribes to take remote exams", has highlighted the problems the visually challenged students faced in writing remote exams and uploading the images of the answer sheets. Further, their study found a lack of awareness among visually impaired students of the effective use of assistive devices as one of the root causes of the aforementioned problems. Many Visually Impaired students are not familiar with the effective use of technology. As a result, such students have to rely on their peers to complete their assignments and edit or proofread the document.

2.3 *Use of Visual Aids in the Classrooms*

Generally, visual aids are considered as effective tools for teaching in a classroom. However, the predominant use of visual aids affects the understanding of visually impaired learners. Most of the teachers use PPT in their classrooms. Teachers include lots of visual aids such as graphs, images, and scanned PDFs to convey their ideas, which are completely inaccessible for visually impaired learners because the screen-readers cannot read out for them (Makarova et al., 2017). For example, when teachers show pie charts or bar graphs to explain data, visually impaired students cannot understand the information because screen readers cannot describe these visual elements properly.

Furthermore, many teachers share their PowerPoint slides through screen sharing during online classes. They often use pointing words like "this," "here," or "there" while explaining, which makes it difficult for visually impaired students to follow the content (Ravichandran et al., 2022). When teachers upload these presentations on learning platforms, the PDF versions are usually image-based, making them inaccessible through screen readers. As a result, visually impaired students have to depend on their classmates to explain the content to them later.

Another problem is that many online learning platforms use icons and symbols for navigation. These platforms also have features like drag and drop, highlighting text, or drawing shapes, which are hard for visually impaired students to use (Courtney & Keith, 2017; Palan, 2020). Even simple tasks like finding the correct button to submit assignments or participate in online discussions become challenging when proper alt-text descriptions are not provided. Consequently, visually impaired students feel left out of the classroom and cannot participate fully in learning activities.

Moreover, teachers often ask students to share their screens or use collaborative tools like virtual whiteboards during online presentations or group activities. These activities are designed keeping sighted students in mind, and visually impaired students find it hard to participate meaningfully. Some students reported that they feel embarrassed to constantly ask for help or explanation of visual content, which affects their confidence and classroom participation (Sharma et al., 2025).

3. Methodology

3.1 *Research Desgin*

In this study, the researcher explored the challenges impaired students face during online teaching-learning. A mixed-methods approach with a survey design is used for this research. Previous research recommended this approach (AbuHamda et al., 2021). The researcher struggled to collect the data since this is an online learning model. Due to the online learning mode, it was challenging to reach many visually impaired students. However, the researcher has tried to include participants from different academic backgrounds to understand various challenges. The survey method helped to collect both numbers and detailed experiences from the participants.

3.2 *Sample*

Eighteen visually impaired learners from various areas of India have participated in this study. Of these, fifteen participants are totally Impaired, and three participants are partially Impaired. The participants include students from B.A., M.A., B.Ed., and some research scholars. Hence, the researcher has included participants from the courses mentioned above to understand different academic experiences. Since this study is about online learning challenges, the researcher wanted to include students from different courses to know their problems. Many participants came from different states of India, which helped to understand problems from different perspectives.

3.3 *Data Collection*

The questionnaire includes three sections and is used to collect the data. The first section asks for demographic details such as name, age, course, and type of visual impairment. The second section focuses on closed-ended questions such as yes or no questions and multiple-choice questions. These questions ask about challenges faced by Impaired students with regard to accessibility, availability, and usability of different resources, platforms to attend lectures online, and interactive tools. The questions also asked about which online platforms they find easy to use, which MOOC courses they can access, and what problems they face with screen readers. In the last section (open-ended questions), the participants are told to write about the challenges they face while online learning and accessing material. Moreover, participants are asked to provide suggestions to improve their teaching-learning process. Google Forms was created and circulated to the participants through WhatsApp and G-mail. The researcher made sure that the questions were simple and clear for participants to understand.

3.4 *Data Analysis*

The data is analyzed by using a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative). For quantitative data, an Excel sheet is used to analyze the responses from closed-ended questions. The researcher calculated how many students chose each answer and made percentage calculations. For the qualitative part, the researcher carefully read all open-ended answers to find common problems that many students discussed. The suggestions given by students were also grouped to see what changes they wanted in online learning. This helped to understand both the number of students facing problems and the kind of problems they face in detail.

3.5 *Ethics*

Since this study focuses on visually impaired learners, the researcher made sure that the Google form was accessible with screen readers. The participants were first told about what this study is for and how their answers will be used. All participants agreed to be part of the study without any force. The researcher kept all personal information private and used the data only for research purposes. No names or personal details are shared in the study results. Moreover, participants were told they could leave the study at any time if they wanted.
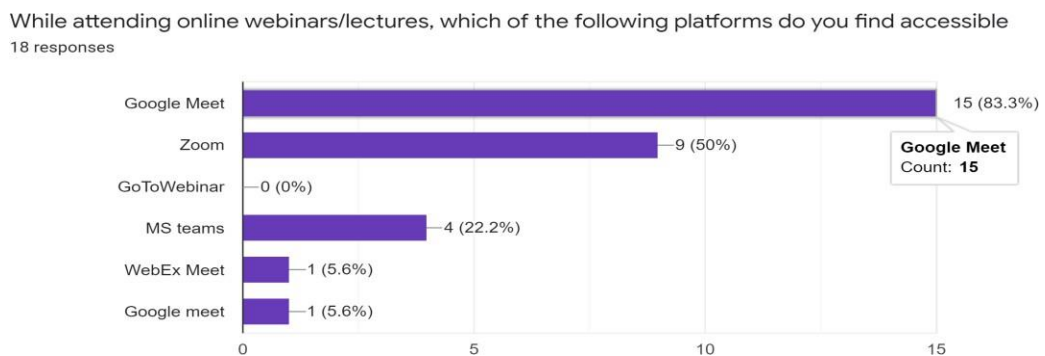
4. RESULTS

Eighteen Visually Impaired participants participated in this survey. Of these, fifteen are totally Impaired, and three are partially Impaired. The data is analyzed only from the 2nd and third sections. Wherein participants are asked descriptive/open-ended questions and closed-ended questions such as multiple-choice, yes, or no these types of questions are asked. The data from the 2nd section is analyzed using a quantitative approach, and for the third section, a qualitative approach is used.

4.1 *Demographic Details and Students' Profiles*

A total of 18 participants participated in the survey; 11 were male, and 7 were female participants. 83.3% belong to the category of total Impairedness, and 16.7% are partially Impaired. The majority (55.6%) responded that they use Laptops to attend online classes. Each of them responded that they use assistive technologies to complete peer assignments. To write exams in online mode, 77.8% use assistive devices. At the same time, 88.9% of them are unfamiliar with online writing tools such as Grammarly or Hemingway Editor.

4.2 *Accessibility*

4.2.2 *Accessibility of Different Online Platforms.*

While attending online webinars/lectures, which of the following platforms do you find accessible
18 responses

Platform	Count
Google Meet	15 (83.3%)
Zoom	9 (50%)
GoToWebinar	0 (0%)
MS teams	4 (22.2%)
WebEx Meet	1 (5.6%)
Google meet	1 (5.6%)

Graph 1: The use and accessibility of various online platforms.

Most of them find Google Meet (83.3%) as the most accessible online platform for learning. At the same time, they also use other platforms such as ZOOM(50%) and MS Teams (22.2%).

4.2.3 Accessibility of MOOC Platforms to do Online Courses

Which of the following online course platforms (MOOCs) are accessible to you?
18 responses
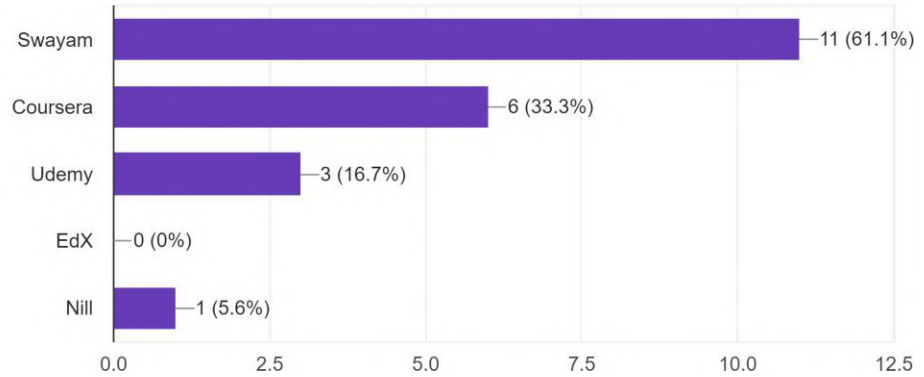
Graph 2: The accessibility of online courses

The majority responded that the most used online course platform is SWAYAM (61.1%). Followed by Coursera (33.3%) and Udemy (16.7%), the number of participants using Edx is Nil.

4.2.4 Accessibility of Different Online Tools

Of the following digital interactive tools, which tools have you either used or come across?
18 responses
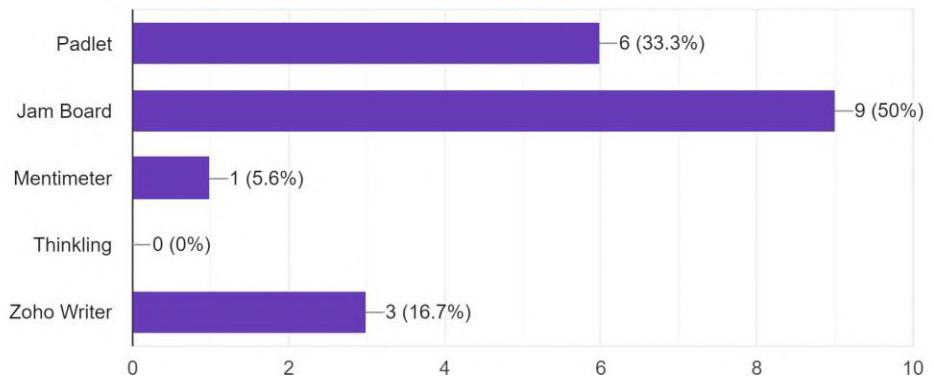
Graph 3: The accessibility of online tools

The most frequently used online tool is Jam Board (50%), followed by Padlets (33.3%), Zoho Writer (16.7%), and Mentimeter (5.6%).

4.3 *Teacher Support*

4.3.1 *Attention*
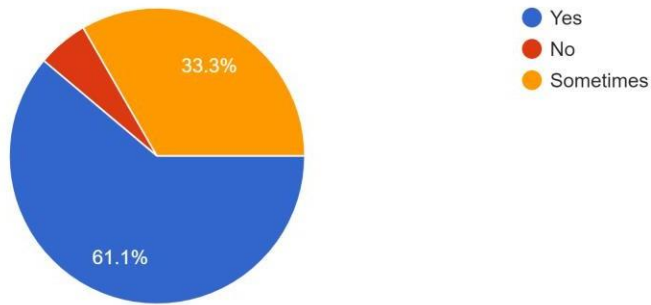
Graph 4: The teacher's attention to VI learners

Most learners responded that teachers provide proper attention (61.1%). Only a few responses marked NO(33.3%) are significant in an Online teaching scenario.

4.3.2 *Materials*
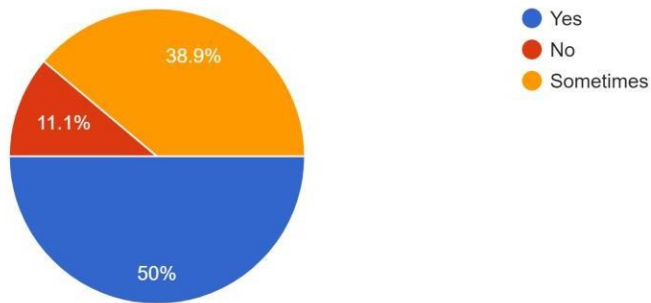
Graph 5: Teacher support for material accessibility in online classrooms.

Teacher support in providing materials is significantly high (50%) compared to those who responded NO was negligibly low (38.9%). At the same time, 11.1% responded that they only receive it sometimes.

4.3.3 *Learners' Perceptions*

Three questions are asked in this section, through which we try to analyze learners' perceptions of the challenges faced by Impaired students.

The first question is, *What are the challenges that Impaired students face during online learning?*

Many participants have talked about the lack of internet connectivity, peer interaction, and inaccessibility of material such as image-based PDF, PPTs, etc. One participant said there is a lack of awareness among the teachers, compounded by a lack of face-to-face interaction. Often, teachers fail to understand the problems of accessibility and do not design class activities keeping accessibility in mind. Another participant said that following the teachers' pace and accessing tools like the jam board during class were some of the difficulties I faced.

The 2nd question is asked about challenges faced by Impaired students while accessing material from various sources. The question states: *What are some of the problems/challenges you face while trying to access materials from online sources such as websites?*

Many students have emphasized the lack of accessibility, availability, and usability of the material from various sources, such as websites where most of the PDFS will not be in an accessible format. Most of the PDFs consist of visual elements like graphs and images, which remain inaccessible for impaired students due to the low comfort of screen-readers like JAWS and NVDA. One of the respondents claims, "Sometimes, it was tough for me 2 read the website material, and I had to read some digital books. As for the digital books, I could not download them in any of the formats. Neither could read them on that particular website because of the font size of the text provided on the website".

One more participant stated, "Some of the websites are not screen reader-friendly, and I depended on my sister to click the download button to download the book. I faced problems with websites that show free download titles on their title page, which will have some other content instead of my requested content on the main page".

In the last question, participants are asked to provide a minimum of three suggestions to improve teaching-learning experiences for IMPAIRED students. The question states: *How can we improve the online teaching-learning process for the Visually Impaired?*

Many participants have suggested providing material in an accessible format. Applications like Word, PDF, E-pub ETC. PPTS should be accessible with screen readers. Sharing PPTs after or before the class would be helpful, too. Homework should be circulated in digital documents. One participant suggested that teachers and online course designers should be aware of the training. It is an excellent opportunity to interact with the teacher during and after class. Flexible deadlines for those assignments which require substantial reading and writing. Another participant said that instead of taking more exams or assignments, taking or conducting more presentations might help increase the online teaching mode. Further, another participant suggests that Teachers have to circulate accessible books. Forming a particular group for the visually impaired by the teachers for performing pad let and jam board tasks. Teachers have to spend some extra time with

visually impaired students after or before the class, which would be helpful for both students and teachers to understand the requirements of specially-abled students.

Finally, at the end of the questionnaire, participants are asked about the usefulness of the questionnaire. Out of eighteen participants, sixteen participants felt that this questionnaire had been useful.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the data collected from participants, many important things have been found about the online learning experiences of visually impaired students. Most visually impaired students (83.3%) said they can use Google Meet easily. However, they still face many problems in getting study materials and doing online activities properly, which aligns with Varnikar's (2020) findings about accessibility issues with educational platforms. Based on the responses of participants, some suggestions are provided for the betterment of teaching-learning experiences of the Visually Impaired. Web accessibility should be met, and the government should take the initiative. Apart from web accessibility, the actual impediment to inclusion in the classroom lies in the curriculum. Therefore, more inclusive teaching materials should be used (Horn et al., 2012). If Impaired students are present, oral instructions and activities should be given more preference, or such activities should be specifically assigned to them. Government and school or university authorities should ensure the availability of online scribers. This is particularly important as Sharma et al. (2025) found that visually impaired students, especially in rural areas, face significant difficulties in finding writers for online exams. A tap recording facility should be provided so that students with visual disabilities can record lectures and, if necessary, transcribe the address into Braille.

The study shows that teachers try to help, but sometimes they cannot. Around 61.1% of students said teachers give them proper attention, but only 50% of students get materials they can read with screen readers. This means teachers must learn how to improve their teaching materials for visually impaired students. Universities should train teachers on how to use assistive technologies and make accessible content, supporting earlier findings by Courtney & Keith (2017). Also, the study found that most students (88.9%) do not know how to use online writing tools. This aligns with Ravichandran et al. (2022) findings about the challenges students face with online writing tools. This shows they need more training in using technology. Universities should have regular classes where students can learn to use different online tools. Other visually impaired students who know these tools can also help teach their friends. The study also shows that more students can use SWAYAM (61.1%) compared to Coursera (33.3%) and Udemy (16.7%). This means Indian platforms are trying to help visually impaired students. However, more work still needs to be done to make all platforms easy to use.

PPTS should be accessible and comfortable for screen readers. So that IMPAIRED learners can follow the lectures. If the teacher uses visual aids like images, posters, and graphs to convey ideas in the classroom, the teacher should briefly describe them. It could be done by adding Alt-Text. Incorporating more assistive technologies: Technology training: There is a gap in the depth of technology and movement around the use of access technology for youth who are Impaired or have low vision. At least one computer training

centre is necessary for IMPAIRED learners in every district. The accessibility of online learning labs should be improved. There should be proper connectivity between the various schools, colleges, universities, and libraries specially designed for disabled students. Two digital libraries already provide books in an accessible format for all differently-abled students. Book Share is an international library. Various countries have been involved and are working tremendously to avail the material for such learners. On the contrary, Sugamya Pustakalaya is an Indian initiative. Several universities prepare material in accessible formats such as Daisy, E-Pub, and daisy-audio, which benefits Impaired learners by reducing dependency. Hence, if every institution joins these initiatives, the dependence on Impaired learners will be diminished as early as possible. Muthuprasad et al. (2025) have found similar problems in their studies. However, our study shows that these problems have become bigger because of sudden online learning during a pandemic. To solve these problems, everyone needs to work together - government, colleges, teachers, and technology companies.

6. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have discussed the challenges impaired students face while learning online. These challenges are identified with the help of the literature review discussed above and based on self-experiences. Our study with eighteen visually impaired participants found that problems like inaccessible study materials, lack of proper online platforms, and difficulties with screen readers are common. Most participants said they face problems with PowerPoint presentations and PDF files during online classes. Based on the findings, the researcher has tried to develop some solutions. For example, making materials screen-reader friendly, providing proper training to teachers, and ensuring the availability of online scribes for exams. Our study shows that platforms like Google Meet (83.3%) and SWAYAM (61.1%) are more accessible for visually impaired students, but many improvements are still needed on other platforms. The problems discussed above are essential for Impaired students. Most of the time, these issues are overlooked. More research should be done in this area, especially about how to make online learning platforms more accessible and how to train teachers better for teaching visually impaired students online. The government should take the initiative to encounter these issues. For example, they can make rules about the accessibility of educational websites and provide funds for assistive technologies. These problems could be tackled and should be tackled only with the proper coordination between the stakeholders - educational institutions, teachers, technology developers, and government authorities. Only when everyone works together we can make online education truly inclusive for visually impaired learners.

7. RECOMMENDATION

1. Teachers should be given proper training about how to make their teaching materials accessible for visually impaired students.
2. Every district should have at least one computer training center for visually impaired students.
3. Universities and colleges should provide online scribes for exams.
4. All educational websites and platforms should follow web accessibility guidelines. PDF files and study materials should be made screen-reader friendly, and proper Alt-text should be added for all images.

5. Digital libraries like Book Share and Sugamya Pustakalaya should be connected with more colleges and universities.
6. Teachers should record their online lectures so that visually impaired students can listen to them again..
7. Regular feedback should be taken from visually impaired students about their online learning problems.

8. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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9. DECLARATION

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Education for Peace and National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract- Education is fundamental for fostering peace and driving national progress in a developing nation like Nigeria. This qualitative paper examined the critical role of education in addressing the dual challenges of promoting social harmony and achieving sustainable development in the country. It also aimed to assess the contribution of educational policies and programs to peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria and their role in national development. It explores the work that in the Nigerian context, where historical, ethnic, and socio-political tensions abound, education is uniquely positioned to bridge communities and catalyze equitable development. The results found immense disarticulations in Nigeria's education, peace, and national development. Additionally, the results identify the key challenges facing the educational sector as policy gaps. The paper concludes that education must be crucial in Nigeria's peace and development agenda. It recommends a nationwide integration of peace education into the country's curriculum.

Keywords: Education; Education for Peace; Development; National Development; National Development in Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Early work, as well as recent research, indicated that education is crucial to national development (Zheng & Huang, 2025; Abdugani et al., 2021; Okeke, 2001, p.292). It is the foundation upon which nations are built. It is also a powerful tool for shaping individuals, fostering societal cohesion, and driving development (Hughes & Loader, 2023; Tariq, 2023). Muoghalu (2013, as cited in Okeke and Chukwudebelu, 2014, p. 182) states, "opines that education is a tool for empowerment, emancipation, and national development and that education constitutes one of the critical foundations for any meaningful socio-economic transformation of any country." Education it is further defined, "is is central to the progressive advancement of every civilization" (Okeke et al.; 2016). Recent researchdefines it as "education stands as a cornerstone in the development journey of any nation, acting as both a catalyst and a consequence of progress" (Okeke, & Chukwudebelu, 2024, p. 270). Then, in the context of Nigeria, a country marked by its diversity and complexity, education is highly likely to hold the potential to bridge divides, promote understanding, and pave the way for peace and sustainable progress. Hence, at its core, education is about imparting knowledge and instilling peaceful values in the learner (Ngwacho, 2024). Moreover, education is a key driver of national development. It equips individuals with the skills and innovation required to tackle economic, social, and political challenges.

Consequently, a well-educated populace can enhance productivity, reduce inequality, and contribute meaningfully to the progress of a nation (Zheng & Huang, 2025; Tariq, 2023; Walker, 2012). However, this potential can only be fully realized when education systems are designed to address the unique challenges of peacebuilding and inclusive development. This discourse, therefore, invites us to evaluate how education can be leveraged as a transformative force in Nigeria. This challenges us to explore integrating peace education into the curricula while fostering a culture of lifelong learning that aligns with national needs and situations.

Based on the short preview above, this qualitative study reviews the existing literature to obtain knowledge on the relationship between education, peace, and national development in the Nigerian context. It entailed the review of academic books, journal articles, government reports, and other documents on peace education and national development. The qualitative methodology further focused on evaluating historical and contemporary studies of education's role in fostering peace in Nigeria and other locations. The document analysis examined national policies, government reports, and sundry literature related to education for peace and national development. It focused on educational policies and development plans and on how education is positioned or not positioned as a tool for peace and development in Nigeria. Therefore, this study explores the dual role of education in cultivating national peace and propelling national growth.

2. THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION: A SPECIFIC FOCUS

Fafunwa (1974, as cited in Ali, 2015) perceived education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child develops his abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behaviours that are of positive value to the society in which an individual lives. According to Moore (1982), as cited in Aghenta (2001), education is the total of a person's

experiences. Then, in his notable study of the Nigerian education system's past, present, and future. Early work by Taiwo (1980) emphasized the importance of education in societal development and individual empowerment. Furthermore, Ehiametalor (2003, p.43) has described education as an "organized system of learning." In a different dimension, education has also been described as a progressive discovery of our ignorance (Will Durant in Covey, 2004). This view essentially resonates with Socrates' idea that "the only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing." Hence, Socrates believed that recognizing one's ignorance is the beginning of true wisdom. The problem with this depiction of education is that some otherwise educated persons hide under such erroneous canopies to manifest abject timidity and palpable cowardice. So they see nothing and say nothing under the guise of how educated individuals are to behave. Consequently, a counterpoise to this school of thought is that education should imbue the spirits of courage and boldness to the educated person.

2. EDUCATION CONCEIVED AS SOCIALIZATION

Under this conceptual framework, education is believed to shape the individual to integrate effectively into society. Through this socialization process, education imparts norms, values, behaviours, and knowledge necessary for individuals to thrive within their cultural and societal context. Education as socialization emphasizes the role of education in individual development, cultural transmission, and societal cohesion. Culture is about how people do their thing, whatever they do, how they do it. Are they peace lovers? How they propagate the imperatives of peace.

In Ancient Greece, divisible into Athens and Sparta, Athens, often regarded as the cradle of Western civilization, greatly emphasized intellectual and artistic development. The Athenian education system, therefore, focused on nurturing free citizens who could actively participate in democratic governance (Acheampong et al., 2022). In contrast to Athens, Sparta's education system was heavily focused on military training and discipline (Halkos et al., 2022). The goal was to produce warriors capable of defending the state and maintaining its militaristic society. At the age of seven, boys were removed from their families and placed in state-run training schools. They underwent rigorous physical training, including endurance exercises, combat practice, and survival skills. Intellectual education was minimal and focused on practical skills, such as basic literacy and military tactics. Unlike in Athens, Spartan girls received formal education, though their training emphasized physical fitness and strength. They participated in sports like running and wrestling, preparing them to bear healthy children and support the state's militaristic ideals (Acheampong et al., 2022; Halkos et al., 2022; Parpiev, 2023; Sahibzada et al., 2021).

In other words, education in ancient Greece was all about socialization. It was the type of education that emerged out of the needs of society (Siddiqui, 2008). Beyond ancient Greece, Ehiemetalor (2003, p. 143) has argued that "every country establishes its system for the induction of the young to learn the morals and values of the society....through the imparting of new ideas and knowledge which is expected to remain relatively permanent". There is a palpable absence of peaceful tendencies in the morals and values that young Nigerians young Nigerians learn in the educational system established by the country.

3. CONCEPTUALIZING PEACE IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Peace and national development are two intertwined concepts that have significant implications for the progress and stability of any society (Amadei, 2021). Peace provides the foundation upon which development efforts can thrive, while development addresses the root causes of instability and conflict, thereby sustaining peace in a nation. Peace is often conceived as the absence of war or conflict, but in the context of national development, it is a more comprehensive concept that is reducible to positive and negative peace. Positive peace extends beyond the mere absence of violence to include conditions that promote justice, equity, and human flourishing (Ghafouri, 2024). Positive peace fosters an environment where individuals and communities can thrive without fear or deprivation, creating a solid foundation for development. In contrast, negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence or overt conflict but may coexist with structural violence such as poverty, discrimination, or social exclusion (Richmond, 2023; Watene, 2021). While negative peace is necessary to prevent immediate harm, it is insufficient for achieving long-term stability and development.

Peace and national development are, accordingly, mutually reinforcing. Peace creates the stability necessary for investments, innovation, and productive activities that drive economic growth. It enables governments to focus resources on developmental initiatives rather than on conflict resolution or military expenditures. Conversely, development addresses the root causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and marginalization, thereby promoting peace. Conceptualizing peace in the context of national development thus reveals the profound interconnectedness of these two variables. Peace provides the stability and security needed for development efforts to succeed, while development addresses the structural inequities that undermine peace.

4. MEANING OF DEVELOPMENT / NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Development as a concept is subject to diverse interpretations. It is considered an essentially contested concept (Connelly, 2007; Gallie, 1956). However, it may fundamentally signify the enhancement of the material well-being of all citizens (not just the affluent and the most powerful) in a sustainable manner, ensuring that present consumption does not jeopardize the future. It also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. Development aims to enhance personal and physical security, improve livelihoods, and expand opportunities for individuals. At its core, it involves growth and progressive transformation. A developed nation is characterized by minimal poverty, hardship, and insecurity among its population. Ideally, development should be a process that elevates people's material and living standards (Gboyega, 2003; Idike, 2014; Lawal & Oluwatoyin, 2011; Noyoo, 2000; Okeke, 2015; Ozigi & Canham, 1979). But at the end of the day, development is about freedom after all is said and done (Mbonu et al., 2024; Sen, 1999).

National Development, therefore, refers to nationwide development in a nation-state. It implies the well-being of a covert majority of the citizens in material terms. It implies

decreases in inequality levels and guarantees of security of lives and property in the nation-state. It is not denoted in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) paradigms that leave the average citizen bewildered and even neglected. The occurrence of national development should not be disputable. When debates arise over the progress of this process, it often signals underlying issues of underdevelopment. It entails an indisputably evolving process (Idike, 2014; Okeke & Ifeagwazi, 2018).

National development thus encompasses a nation's economic, social, political, and cultural progress. It involves improving citizens' quality of life through better access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, and opportunities for economic advancement. It also requires robust institutions that uphold justice, promote good governance, and foster accountability. A holistic approach to national development recognizes that economic growth alone is insufficient. Social equity, environmental Sustainability, and cultural inclusion are equally important for ensuring that development benefits all segments of society (Hariram et al., 2023). Development efforts may exacerbate inequality without these elements, leading to tension and unrest that undermine peace.

5. THE PLACE OF PEACE IN NIGERIA'S EDUCATIONAL AMBITIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Peace has no place in Nigeria's educational ambitions. The national policy on education references the nation's overall philosophy, including the promotion of world peace, but there is no reference to peace in Nigeria. Ironically, a nation whose national ambitions negate the propagation of peace is claiming readiness to champion the course of peace at the global level. But this has always been the attitude of the Nigerian state towards international affairs. Nigeria was at the forefront of the national independence struggle, championing the courses of self-determination and democracy in Southern Africa. However, at home, the country could not truly pride itself as a place where the notions of self-determination and robust democracy thrived. Hence, the same country that expended national fortunes leading military operations for the enthronement of democracy in the West African sub-region later became classified as the world's poverty capital. The government has always seen itself in highly delusional terms as its leaders and some of the citizens call the place the giant of Africa.

Achebe (1983) further illustrates that "in June 1979 former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of the then West Germany made this comment about his country: Germany is not a world power; it does not wish to become a world power. Then, in August of the same year, General Olusegun Obasanjo, as Head of State of Nigeria, declared that Nigeria would become one of the ten leading nations in the world by the end of the century". Under similar mentalities, the nation's putative national policy on education would allude to the promotion of world peace without any reference to domestic peace as a precondition. In the national policy on education, there are actually all those "unity and progress, unity in diversity," etc. However, there is no specific reference to peace in the nation as a goal of education or as an aspect of the philosophy that drives educational goals in the country.

In similar veins where Nigerian leaders currently talk about building Smart Schools as their flagship educational programs, it would appear as if they are saying something spectacular. In the current circumstances of monumental insecurity in the nation (with endless possibilities of multiplier effects), the introduction of peace studies into Nigerian schools at all levels is a loftier educational goal than the building of Smart schools. Under

an atmosphere of national peace and security, Nigerian children will create smart villages independently without being led by any putative Smart schools.

More fundamentally, therefore, as posited by Fafunwa (1974), education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child (a citizen) develops his abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behaviours that are of positive value to the society in which an individual lives. A critical question for us is: How can our education promote peace and national development in Nigeria? The extent to which we are unable, as individuals, to respond positively to this question is the extent to which our education is needless.

The national policy on education acknowledges that education is an instrument for national development. It is, however, contradictory that the same document shies away from boldly announcing national peace as a goal of education or an aspect of its philosophical foundations. Invariably, national development has remained a mirage in Nigeria. In place of national development, national insecurity is currently generic in Nigeria. When we look at the Nigerian scenario, argues Okeke et al. (2016, p. 240), "the generic role of education as a catalyst for national progress appears cloudy." Okeke & Chukwudebelu (2024, pp. 270-271) further add that "in the case of Nigeria, a country rich in human and natural resources, the linkages between education and key indicators of national development such as human capital development, economic growth, social cohesion, and democratic governance are debatable."

From north to west, east, and south, insecurity has become a pandemic in Nigeria, and this widespread insecurity is highly attributable to the absence of peace as a core value in the nation's educational designs. From the butchery occasioned by the first military coup and subsequent counter-coups, the monumental killings attendant to the Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-1970), the truth is that no spirited national attempt was made at education for social reconstruction through the incorporation of peace studies in the curricular at every strata of education. Because peace is lacking as a fundamental principle of education in Nigeria, products of the contradictory educational system (and the school dropouts among them) are the ones that engage in murder, arson, kidnapping, electoral campaign violence, election rigging, ballot snatching, occultism, petroleum pipelines vandalism, and terrorism. Okeke et al.'s (2016, p. 248) findings have consequently "led to the conclusion that the state of education in Nigeria has remained perilous."

6. CONCLUSION

Education is vital for promoting peace and driving national progress, especially in a diverse and developing nation like Nigeria. It is the bedrock of peace and national development, offering a pathway to a harmonious and prosperous society. The paper has accordingly highlighted the transformative potential of education in shaping a peaceful and progressive nation. It has explored the essential role of education in addressing the intertwined challenges of fostering social harmony and achieving sustainable development within Nigeria. It has highlighted how education can catalyze equitable growth in the Nigerian context. The work stresses the need to incorporate peace education into the national curriculum in Nigeria and identifies policy gaps as a key challenge facing the educational sector in the country. The study concludes that a reimagined education system centred on peace-oriented learning can lay the groundwork for a more progressive Nigeria. In this contribution, it is submitted that by leveraging the transformative power of education, Nigeria can work towards a more peaceful and sustainable future for the nation.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reduce the National Policy on Education to a one-page document. According to Okeke, 2014, p. 814) "a major problem of state policies in the Nigerian state is in their verbose documentation." Indeed, when national policies become long-winded, they appear like programs.

2. Hand over education from pre-nursery, nursery, and primary to post-primary levels to local governments. Make peace education compulsory at these levels of education (pre-nursery, nursery, primary to post-primary levels) as to be enforced by the Federal government. Incorporating peace education into curricula helps instil tolerance, empathy, and conflict resolution values in future generations.

3. Exclude the Federal and State governments from owning and operating educational institutions at this level (pre-nursery, nursery, primary to post-primary levels)

4. Hand over the so-called Unity Schools to the Local Governments of their domicile

5. At the post-secondary level, the national policy on education shall emphasize intellectual and scientific rigour and peace education while preparing the individuals for contribution to both national progress and global dialogue.

6. State and federal governments can continue to own and operate educational institutions at the post-secondary level, but the overarching philosophy of education must always be based on education for peace and national development.

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Intercultural Communicative Competence: Definition, Models, Measurement Instruments, and Empirical Practice in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract- Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) connects language with culture. Its pioneering writer was Byram, and many scholars had also approached it. ICC basically helps avoid any conversation breakdowns in a culture other than the individual's. Thus, the study addressed the ICC and its implications in the EFL classroom. The researcher defined ICC, and many models of ICC were surveyed and explained. Moreover, the study suggested many instruments to measure how individuals move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelatoivism. EFL classroom strategies were also included, and selected empirical studies in the fields of ICC and classroom were approached. The study concluded that this study's theoretical and empirical implications would improve EFL teaching in the classroom and dispel cultural misconceptions. These aspects will help improve EFL classroom teaching consequently, dispel cultural misconceptions about other cultures.

Keywords: Bennet; Byram; EFL; Ethnocentrism; Ethnorelativism; Intercultural communicative competence; Intercultural sensitivity.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1989, Hantrais noted that culture is a set of beliefs and practices that govern any society, and language is used as the vehicle of expression. He, therefore, regarded language as culture and culture as language. Furthermore, in 1996, the Council of Europe approved some Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standards. The council issued guidelines for language competencies that learners must acquire to become proficient in them. Therefore, the preamble of CEFR affirmed that language learning should "promote mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication" (p.3). Consequently, ELT researchers and teachers are focusing more on the capacity to employ language resources to communicate effectively in a variety of socio-cultural contexts. Thus, "to avoid becoming a fluent fool, there is a need to understand more completely the cultural dimension of the language" (Bennett, 1997, p. 16) and "intentionally addressing intercultural competence development at the post-secondary level through programs, orientations, experiences, and courses–for both our domestic and international students–is essential if we are to graduate globally-ready students" (Deardorff, 2006a, p. 2). Some scholars argue that culture is the fifth skill to be incorporated in a language classroom apart from the LSRW skills (Larson-Freeman, 2000). Similarly, Giri (2006) reiterated the context of the previous definitions and underlined the need for language to communicate with other cultures.

Based on this rooted and close connection between language and culture, promoting intercultural communication ability has become a priority in the EFL classroom after ages of solely focusing on grammatical and lexical teaching and learning. Therefore, Kumaravadivelu (2008) suggested a cultural transformation based on a pedagogic program to encourage the students to negotiate meanings and values. This, in turn, opens numerous possibilities for the students to investigate cultures and promotes intercultural communication. By the same token, Banks and Banks (2010) proposed integrating a multicultural content curriculum into the ESL environment. In this curriculum, the teacher must play different motivating roles: dispelling stereotypes through situations, promoting cultural sensitivity, and sharing intercultural stories and experiences. University graduates can learn to interact and communicate effectively with other cultures only if they are presented with intercultural materials to practice and produce L2. Accordingly, this study will address the issue of ICC and its impact on improving cultural literacy and cultural sensitivity.

This study aims to answer the following main question:
1- How does integrating ICC into EFL classrooms impact students' cultural literacy and sensitivity compared to traditional grammar and vocabulary-focused approaches?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Implementation of ICC in the EFL classroom*

Alptekin (2002) argued that communicative competence continued to adhere strictly to the norms of the target language culture. Alptekin criticized the idealized figure of the native speaker created in the British and American textbooks. Alptekin noted that promoting communicative competence in the EFL classroom would not help to achieve intercultural communication. Indeed, Alptekin suggested that this would be inappropriate and hinder international and cross-cultural communication. Instead, he was in favour of the ICC. Also, Alptekin pointed out that English was a lingua franca for professional

contacts and academic studies. This involves much communication among non-native speakers. Hence, strengthening ICC would be more appropriate.

Promoting ICC in the classroom does not mean relinquishing the usual methods of teaching L2; teachers can still use role-playing, miming, group work, and other collaborative activities. The difference will lie in the new roles of the teachers and students and changing their attitudes toward whether ICC should be an integral part of the L2 classroom. The teacher's role will also be that of a mediator or facilitator. Teachers also teach their subject knowledge and are expected to develop new attitudes, skills, and critical thinking. In the long run, the students should become competent enough to build on their own cultural beliefs and behaviors to explore other cultures and compare them with their own culture (Aguilar, 2008).

### 2.2 *Intercultural, cross-cultural, multicultural communication*

The terms intercultural, cross-cultural and multicultural communication may appear synonymous but are different concepts. To begin with, multicultural communication involves many cultures living together in one country; however, each has its own identity and entity; interaction and communication among these communities are not evident and even unnecessary. On the other hand, cross-cultural communication involves a comparison of different cultures, and a dominant culture stands out as the standard or norm against which to compare. Each culture identifies and understands the differences. Therefore, communication and interaction are limited since the main purpose is to acquire knowledge of the other and behave accordingly.

Conversely, intercultural communication deeply enhances cultural interaction, and communication is a central feature. No one is left behind or unchanged in this kind of communication since everyone learns and grows in a consolidated interactive society (Fries, 2003; Schriefer, 2016).

2.3 *Communicative competence components*

The term was coined by Hymes (1972) in reaction to Chomsky's linguistic or grammatical competence. Chomsky (1965) underlined that "A grammar of a language purports to be a description of the ideal speaker-hearer's intrinsic competence" (p. 4). Almost all theoreticians have agreed that the communicatively competent user should possess knowledge of the language and how to use this competence in communicative situations (Bagaric, 2007). Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980) agreed that the components of communicative competence should be:

1- Grammatical or linguistic competence refers to knowledge of and the ability to use language resources to form well-structured messages.
2- Sociolinguistic competence refers to possessing knowledge and skills for appropriate language use in social contexts, including social relationships, rules of appropriate behavior, and expressions of people's wisdom.
3- Strategic competence is knowledge of how to use communication strategies to handle breakdowns in communication.
4- Discourse competence refers to the knowledge of achieving coherence and cohesion in a spoken or written text.
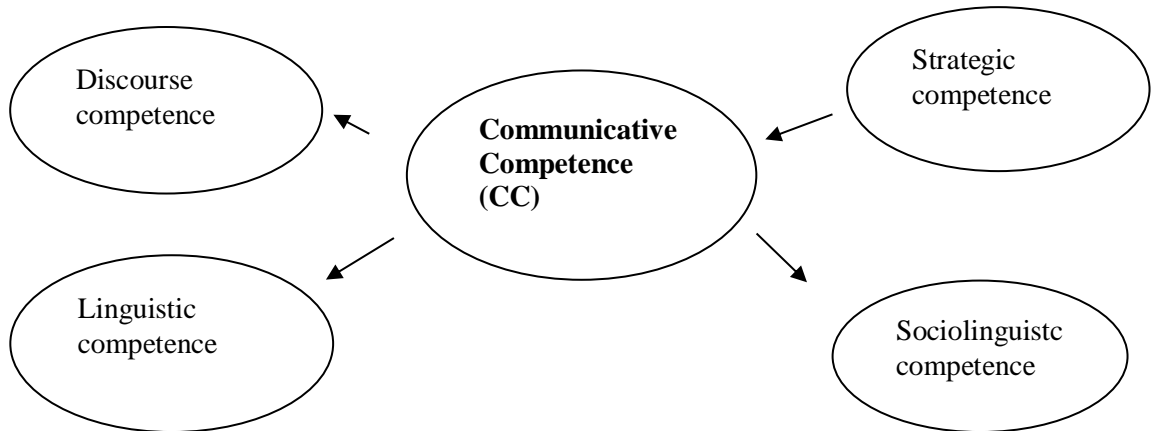
However, some scholars believe that promoting communicative competence in the EFL classroom is insufficient to develop intercultural communication. Alpetkin (2002) considered promoting it inappropriate and hindering international and cross-cultural communication. Alpetkin claimed that communicative competence is strict and adheres to the norms of the target language culture. Alpetkin also criticized the idealized figure of the native speaker created in the British and American textbooks. Alpetkin argued that while English is the lingua Franca for professional contacts, academic studies involve much communication among non-native speakers.

2.4 *ICC*

However, The pioneer of ICC, Byram (1997), proposed the following five components of ICC.
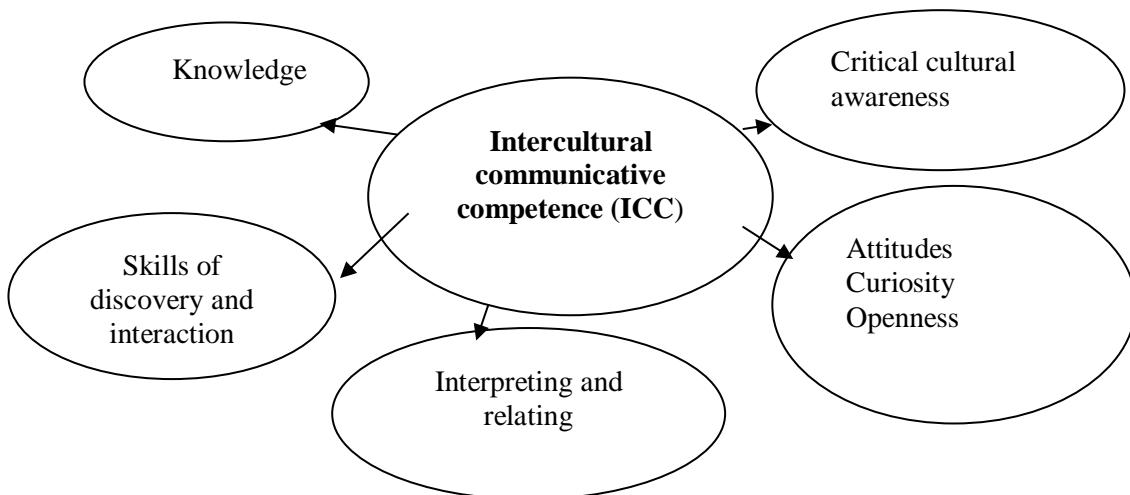
Many scholars are in favour of the ICC. Aguilar (2002) and Alpetkin (2002) applauded ICC. They contended that it was a new step forward in strengthening language proficiency. Alpetkin suggested that ICC should be developed among EFL learners by equipping them with linguistic and cultural behaviour, which will enable them to communicate successfully and fruitfully with others. Similarly, Aguilar confirmed the necessity of adopting Byram's model of ICC as a replacement for communicative competence.

2.5 *Intercultural sensitivity*

Intercultural sensitivity is a participant's "active desire to motivate oneself to comprehend, respect, and accept differences among cultures" (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 231). It is a requirement for intercultural communication competency. People with a higher level of intercultural sensitivity are thought to become more confident global citizens as their grasp of cultural differences improves (Chen & Starosta, 2000).

Intercultural sensitivity, according to Bennett (1993), has six stages: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration of cultural diversity. On the other hand, Hammer et al. (2003) claimed that as one's experience of cultural difference becomes more nuanced and sophisticated, one's prospective competence in intercultural relations grows. Anand and Lahiri (2009) distinguished between ICC and intercultural sensitivity; the former was regarded as acting properly in any intercultural situation; the latter was defined as the competence to differentiate, experience, and address cultural differences properly. Thus, intercultural sensitivity (IS) preceded IC.

2.6 *Implementation of the ICC in the classroom*

According to researchers, promoting ICC in the classroom does not mean relinquishing the common methods of teaching L2. Teachers may continue to use role-playing, miming, group work, and other cooperative activities. The difference would lie in the new roles of the teachers and students and changing their attitudes toward whether ICC should be an integral part of the L2 classroom. Additionally, the teacher's role is seen as more of a mediator or facilitator; teachers are entitled to teach knowledge and develop new attitudes, skills, and critical thinking. In the short and long run, students should be competent enough to build on their own cultural beliefs and behaviours to explore other cultures and compare them with their own culture. In this respect, a competent teacher is not a native or non-native speaker but a person who can influence the learners' perceptions of their culture and those of others (Aguilar, 2008).

2.7 *Strategies for promoting intercultural communication*

Oxford (2001) and Celce-Muricia (2008) agreed on three learning strategies regarding ICC. They are classified as cognitive, metacognitive, and memory-related. With respect to cognitive strategy, students usually learn by outlining, summarizing, note-taking, organizing, and reviewing. In addition, metacognitive strategies are developed through noting errors, feedback from peers and teachers, guessing the meaning of words from contexts or grammatical functions, etc. The third strategy—memory-related—helps learners recall words using certain clues like acronyms, images, and sounds. Further, Celce-Muricia (2008) highlighted that to develop communicative skills, teachers should use certain lesson plans whose components are drawn from linguistics, sociolinguistics, and culture. These lesson plans may include activities such as using mobile phones or writing e-mails to cite opinions, summarizing the main idea of the discourse, role-playing, and writing newsletters about cultural differences.

2.8 *Models of ICC*

Many scholars and researchers have scrutinized the concept of ICC; each proposed model has its merits and drawbacks. According to Spitzberg and Cupach (1989), no model of ICC may be considered perfect since "most existing cultural communicative methods have been fairly fragmented" (p. 344).

2.9 *Development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS)*

Bennett (1986) created the development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS)

to illustrate how people adapt and integrate with cultural differences. Bennett (1986, 1993) proposed and outlined six stages of the development of intercultural competence, in which learners move from ethnocentrism (three stages) to ethnorelativism (three stages). Ethnocentrism is the attitude of the learners who regard their own cultures as superior to others. According to the DMIS, ethnocentrism goes through three stages:

1- Denial: People refuse the existence of cultural differences. They believe their culture is right, cultural differences are unacceptable, and their values should be prioritized.

2- Defense: People recognize the existence of cultural differences, but they regard them as invalid. Specifically, people believe that it is difficult to cope with cultural differences, and they tend to avoid dealing with other cultures because they feel threatened. •

3- Minimization: People in this stage are still obsessed with the threat of cultural differences but try to make it less acute; they adopt certain ideas, such as people being more similar than different. They no longer describe other people as inferior or unlucky (Nadeem et al., 2018; Vegh & Luu, 2019).

Bennett (1993) explains ethnorelativism thus: "Cultures can only be understood relative to one another and that a particular behavior can be understood within a cultural context" (p. 46). Ethnorelativism is comprised of the following stages.

First,

1- Acceptance: The cultural differences are recognized and accepted but with no adaptation. More specifically, people accept the values and behaviors of other cultures.

2- Adaptation: In this stage, the cultural differences are viewed as positive. Consequently, people tend to change their behavior to suit those of different cultures. People also tend to view cultural differences as invaluable resources.

3- Integration: In this last stage, the movement from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism is achieved. People become satisfied that identity is not exclusive to one culture.

2.10 *Spitzberg's model*

Spitzberg (1997) defined ICC as communication that is appropriate and effective. That is, appropriateness means the rules or values are not clearly broken. Effectiveness is the achievement of goals in terms of successes and failures. Spitzberg suggested an interactional process between motivation, knowledge, and skills. All these components are interacting with what the interactant expects of the others. If the expectations are fulfilled, then the interactant is interculturally competent and vice versa. Spitzberg also identified conditions that tend to increase communicative competence. That is, when motivation increases due to confidence, the interactant will be more culturally literate and knowledgeable, identity and diversity will increase among cultures, communicative skills will be enhanced, and relational competence will increase in terms of the accomplishment of the autonomy needed.

2.11 *Cultural intelligence (CQ) model*

In 2003, Earley and Ang proposed the construct of cultural intelligence as "another complementary form of intelligence that can explain variability in coping with diversity and functioning in new cultural settings" (p. 23). This new framework of cultural intelligence was based on Stern's framework of 1986. Sternberg (1986) identified four dimensions of intelligence: metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behaviour (as cited in Ang et al., 2007, p. 337). The metacognitive dimension includes all

mental processes the learners employ to attain more information about other cultures, like self-monitoring, planning, and awareness of other cultures and their interaction preferences. Cognitive CQ displays an understanding of different cultures' values, beliefs, and practices—in other words, how cultures are similar and distinct. Motivational CQ is the ability to focus one's attention and energy on cultural differences and adapt to them. Finally, behavioral CQ refers to the use of appropriate verbal and nonverbal acts in intercultural relationships (Ang et al., 2007).

2.12   *The pyramid model of ICC*

Dreadroff (2006, 2009) proposed the pyramid model of ICC (ICC). The ICC elements included in this model are:

1- Desired external outcomes, which were to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately;
2- Desired internal outcomes such as adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative views and empathy;
3- Knowledge and comprehension, such as having information about one's culture and other cultures;
4- Skills, such as listening and analysis, and the ability to analyze, evaluate and relate;
5- Requisite attitudes include mutual respect, openness, curiosity, and discovery.

2.13   *Integrated model of ICC (IMICC)*

Arasantam et al. (2010) proposed a comprehensive, integrated model of intercultural communicative competence (IMICC). This model was designed to be general and cross-cultural. It includes motivation, empathy, attitudes, interaction involvement, and intercultural experience. The above discussion of various models also brings to attention the significance of culture in the EFL classroom and the need to integrate modes of developing intercultural communicative competence and strengthening language skills.

2.14   *Instruments of measuring ICC*

Klemp (1979) pointed out that "competence can be measured. But its measurement depends on its definition" (p. 41). Similarly, Kuada (2004) stated that for ICC to be assessed effectively, "there is a need for a clearer definition of the concept of international competence" (p. 10). Although ICC assessment is not easy, it is fruitful since it provides immediate feedback to the teachers and decision-makers on how much intercultural knowledge and experience the learners have, according to which the teaching methodologies, curricula, and extracurricular activities, policies, and procedures may be either sustained or modified (Skopiskaja, 2009).

2.15   *Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)*

This instrument is theoretically based on Bennett's DMIS (Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity), which was explained in the previous section. As mentioned earlier, DMIS involves six stages of intercultural development, from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Hammer et al. (2003) proposed an ICC measurement tool called the intercultural development inventory (IDI) to measure the three stages of ethnocentrism (denial, defense, and minimization) and of ethnorelativism (acceptance, adaptation, and integration). They claimed that this 50-item instrument, in which respondents are scored according to a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to agree strongly), can be used with confidence since it is valid and reliable. According to Paras et al. (2019), Lebak

(2012), Hammer (2003), and Paige et al. (2003), this scale is valid and accurately predicts attitudes toward cultural differences.

2.16   *Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)*

This scale is based on the cultural intelligence model developed by Earley and Ang in 2003, discussed in detail in the previous section. As explained earlier, the CQ model comprises four dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivation, and behavior. Accordingly, this scale is composed of these four areas, each of which includes five items. In addition, this measuring instrument is scored using a 7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Ang et al. (2007), Gozzoli and Gazzaroli (2018), and Wright (2016) stated that this 20-item model can be used with confidence since it is valid and reliable.

2.17   *Intercultural Readiness Check (IRC)*

This scale was developed by scholars at the universities of Groningen, Amsterdam, Gent, and Toronto. The IRC model is comprised of four behavioural dimensions: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, building commitment and preference for uncertainty. The ultimate purpose of these four competencies is to build intercultural effectiveness. This scale is scored using a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). It is a 60-item instrument that can be used with confidence (Brinkman &Wink, 2007; IRC).

2.18   *The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)*

Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee developed the scale between 2000 and 2001. It is comprised of five personality components: cultural empathy, emotional stability, flexibility, open-mindedness, and social initiative. The ultimate purpose of these five dimensions is to measure cultural effectiveness and assess the behavioral dimensions of intercultural competence. This scale is rated using a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). It is a 9-item instrument to be completed within 15 minutes (Popescu et al., 2014; Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee, 2002).

2.19   *Cross-cultural adaptability inventory (CCAI)*

Kelly and Meyers developed and revised this scale in 1992. This scale includes four cross-cultural subscales: emotional resilience, flexibility and openness, perpetual acuity, and personal autonomy. The ultimate purpose of these four dimensions is to identify a participant's strengths and weaknesses in the four areas of cross-cultural communication and interaction. This scale is rated using a 5-point Likert scale (definitely not true to definitely true). It is a 50-item instrument to be completed within 20 minutes (Davis & Finney, 2003; Kelly & Meyers, 1992).

2.20   *Intercultural sensitivity index (ISI)*

This instrument is based on Bennett's DMIS (Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity), which involves six stages of intercultural development, starting from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism, which the researcher explained in the previous section. Olson and Kroeger (2001) developed Bennett's tool for measuring DMIS IDI and developed a 48-item scale called the Intercultural Sensitivity Index (ISI). This scale is comprised of nine intercultural competence components, six of which are modified from IDI (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, integration). The others are:

1- Substantive knowledge: It measures the world's interdependence, knowledge of other cultures, linguistic, and cultural competence besides using another language.

2- Perpetual understanding: It measures the mutual understanding of differences between

cultures, knowledge, appreciation of one's culture, and resistance to stereotypes.

3-   Intercultural communication: It measures cross-cultural communication and awareness of cultural differences. (Brinkman & Wink, 2007; Fantini & Tirmizi,2006; Olson & Kroeger, 2001; Schnabel, 2013).

This instrument measures almost all the components of ICC and its stages. The first stage is ethnocentrism, which is comprised of the following levels or dimension:

1- Denial: Its main theme is that cultural differences are neither existent nor noticeable.

2- Defense: It highlights that cultural differences exist. However, they are threatening one's culture.

3- Minimization: The individual minimizes the cultural differences, saying that people are more similar than different.

The second stage is ethnorelativism, which includes the following dimensions or levels:

1- Acceptance: This dimension focuses on the respect of diverse cultural values and behaviors.

2- Adaptation: This level focuses on seeing the world with different eyes and adapting behavior.

3- Integration: It mainly aims to promote and maintain one's culture and integrate other cultures.

The third stage is global competence, which entails the following three levels:

1- Substantive knowledge: This level addresses the need for more substantial cultural knowledge.

2- Perpetual understanding: It measures the open-mindedness that promotes universal worldviews.

3- Intercultural communication: It measures intercultural engagement and mediation. The improvement in ICC is measured in terms of the shift from one level to another in the same stage or from one stage to another.

4- For this purpose, an ISI questionnaire was developed and included 48 items measured according to a 5-point Likert Scale (Never Describe Me to Describe Me Extremely).

2.21   *Global perspective inventory (GPI)*

This instrument is theoretically based on two intercultural concepts: cultural development and cultural communication. Cultural development is defined as the awareness of feelings and relating to others and the ability to reflect on experiences. It is classified into three categories: cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal (Kegan, 1994; King & Magloda, 2005). Comparatively, communication in an intercultural context requires holistic interaction between the three dimensions: the cognitive (how do I know), the affective (how do I feel), and the behavioral (how do I relate to others) (Chen and Storosta 1996). This instrument is composed of 32 items and scored using a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) (Braskamp et al., 2014; Research Institute for Studies in Education, 2017).

2.22   *Assessment of intercultural competence (AIC)*

It is a multidimensional scale that measures knowledge, attitudes, skills, and critical awareness. It consists of 54 items and is rated using a 6- 6-point Likert Scale (not

at all competent to extremely high competent) (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). The new component here is critical cultural awareness, which is defined as managing stereotypes through intercultural teaching and experience (Nugent & Catalono, 2015).

2.23   *The behavioural assessment scale for international communication (BASIC*

The behavioural assessment scale for international communication (BASIC) was developed from Ruben's scale (1976), which included intercultural behavioural assessment indices (IBAI). However, BASIC added one more dimension to become eight instead of seven, as in IBAI; the added dimension is relational role behavior. The eight dimensions are rated using a 4-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The scale measures display of respect, orientation to knowledge, empathy, interaction management, task role behaviour (getting involved in group discussion), relational role (group harmony), and interaction postures (judgmental way of dealing with others) (Koester & Olebe, 1988, 1989).

2.24   *The Intercultural Awareness, Sensitivity, and Effectiveness Scales*

Portalla and Chen (2010) have created three tools to measure intercultural competency holistically: intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural effectiveness. Intercultural awareness represents the cognitive dimensions of intercultural competence in Chen and Starosta's (1996) approach. It is the ability to comprehend different cultures, which depends on self-awareness and cultural understanding. To assess this, the Intercultural Awareness Scale was developed. On the other hand, intercultural sensitivity refers to the affective aspects of intercultural competence. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was developed by Chen and Starosta (2000).

3. EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

This section will discuss some of the studies that used these tools and models in their experiments that offered results of interest for the present study. Li-Hua and Shu-sing (2010) examined Project Based Learning (PBL) using intensive reading to promote ICC at a Chinese university among students whose major was English. The sample was 80 students divided evenly into two experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught intensive reading using PBL, in which the role of the teacher was a facilitator. However, the control group was taught intensive reading using the traditional way of teaching, which was teacher-centered and did not involve any PBL. The experiment lasted for nine months. The intervention was represented by introducing reading texts and teaching them intensively.

Therefore, the students chose a project, which was a reading text through brainstorming, like "Hitler's speech on the invasion of the USSR." To assess this intervention, the researchers used two pre- and post-questionnaires, English proficiency tests, self-assessment sheets, and open-ended questions attached to the questionnaires. The results found that integration of intercultural dimension into intensive reading through PBL is essential and profitable. Also, the results revealed that the students' attitudes towards other cultures were positive. PBL is effective as it connects language learning with intercultural experiences. Wright (2016) organized a workshop to examine the effectiveness of document-based questions (DBQ) in promoting the ICC of An-Najah University, Palestine undergraduates. This experiment was carried out in a workshop, and the students were distributed into two control and experimental groups, each of which consisted of 21 female and male students from all years and disciplines of the university.

The control group had training in professional English language skills like writing a CV and cover letter, speaking on the phone, job interviews, etc. The experimental group was trained using DBQ. Consequently, the researcher recommended that teachers always seek proper intercultural teaching methods to develop the students' intercultural content with language-related ones, and while teaching intercultural objectives, teachers should avoid building up stereotypes and intercultural misunderstanding.

In this paper, Nie (2017) experimented to study the impact of promoting intercultural communication through the intervention of novels using the journal teaching method. The participants were 69 undergraduates in a Chinese university, 48 of whom were females and 21 were males from various university disciplines and years. The experiment lasted for a semester, in which the students attended two hours of English classes a week. To achieve the purpose of the study, the students were given a 320-page novel called Veil of Roses by Laura Fitzgerald to read at home extensively. The participants were pre-tested and post-tested using two questionnaires before and after reading the novel and journal intervention. The results showed that using the novel to promote ICC was effective since the texts involved authentic experiences.

Bouhidel (2018) conducted a study for her MA thesis. Her main purpose was to promote ICC at a sophomore university level at the University of Batna, Algeria, by integrating literary texts. The research design was experimental, which involved the mixed method. Therefore, the data were collected using quantitative tools, i.e., a pre-test and a post-test, and qualitative tools, i.e., two questionnaires for both teachers and students. The experimental intervention lasted for a whole year, in which literary texts from British literature were introduced. The sample consisted of 90 students in experimental and control groups. The results showed that the introduction of literary texts enhanced ICC, which is students' understanding of the target culture.

Rezaei and Naghibi (2018) investigated the impact of the intervention of teaching short stories in the EFL classroom using intensive reading in promoting ICC among Iranian undergraduate students at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. To achieve this purpose, 14 intercultural texts were designed and then taught using intensive reading, cross-cultural discussions, role-plays, and critical thinking activities in the classroom. Reflective journals and semi-structured interviews were used as assessment tools. The researcher concluded that positive attitudes and a wider understanding were developed as a result of using intercultural texts to promote ICC through intensive reading.

Yu and Maele (2018) studied the effect of integrating intercultural awareness in an intensive English reading class in a Chinese university, where 77 undergraduates were involved. The experiment lasted for a semester. During the experiment, the participants were taught to read texts intensively using the reading strategies of scanning, comprehending and summarizing, analyzing and comparing, reflecting and evaluating, and finally, empathizing and respecting. The researchers concluded that intensive reading raises intercultural awareness.

Gunes and Mede (2019) conducted action research to examine the impact of integrating ICC teaching into an EFL class. The sample was composed of 20 female and female students A1 level students in Istanbul, Turkey. During the 1st semester of 2019, the participants were taught through some ICC tasks like multicultural texts, role-playing, and interactive cultural activities. To assess the impact of ICC inclusion into an EFL classroom, the researcher used the mixed method, which utilized 28 item pre and post-questionnaire designed according to a 5-point Likert scale, quantitative tools, and semi-structured interviews and teachers' reflective journals as qualitative tools. The student concluded that the sample's views were significantly different after the ICC was

integrated. The participants showed more development in their perceptions of their culture and other cultures. They also became aware of the presence of differences between cultures, which should be respected and promoted. In terms of pedagogy, integrating ICC tasks into the EFL classroom will definitely help students communicate more effectively in cultures other than their own, improving students' attitudes, reactions, and communicative skills.

Imamyartha et al. (2019) investigated the engagement of EFL readers in literature to enhance ICC. The study targeted first-year Indonesian university students. The sample comprised 34 freshmen students who received four weeks of intercultural learning and cultural awareness in the first semester of 2019, 75 minutes a week. The participants were provided with diversified reading texts explaining certain intercultural concepts in situations. Those texts were taught using intensive reading, which included three phases: teaching the reading text for 30 minutes, doing the related tasks for 30 minutes, and organizing a group discussion for 15 minutes. To assess the experiment, the researcher implemented a pre-experiment ICC questionnaire, a during-experiment ICC questionnaire, and an open-ended post-ICC questionnaire. As a result, the participants' intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes were improved. In addition, reading texts greatly increased the students' ICC, with intercultural understanding being the most important factor in determining ICC. Those intercultural reading texts inspired first-year university students to be open-minded and accepting of cultural differences.

Upton and Kassim (2019) applied an intercultural education training program to university students in Japan to increase the ICC in the EFL Japanese classroom. The sample was comprised of 18 junior students who received one semester of intercultural learning and cultural awareness, 90 minutes a week. To implement this experiment, the researcher used mixed methods research that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative tools. The quantitative tool was a questionnaire rated using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly disagree to strongly agree). However, the qualitative tools included reflection journals and semi-structured interviews with five volunteering students. The participants were provided reading texts explaining certain intercultural concepts in different situations. To assess the experiment, the researcher implemented the following instruments: pre- and post-questionnaires, weekly reflection journals, and interviews. As a result, the participants' intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes were improved together with a decrease in the fear of the unexpected.

Maghsoudi (2020) compared the English textbooks used in Iran and India. The study's main purpose was to investigate the percentage of ICC-inclusive content in the textbooks used in the two countries. Therefore, in the academic year of 2019-2020, the Iranian English curriculum (Prospect & Vision) and the Indian English curriculum (Standard English) at the high school level were analyzed. Qualitative analyses were duly conducted. As a result, the researcher concluded that the Indian English textbooks minimally and to a small extent promoted ICC, especially at the upper level, and specifically enhanced critical cultural awareness. However, the Iranian textbooks were totally deprived of any ICC context. Thus, the researcher was dissatisfied with the negligence of ICC contexts in these textbooks. He stressed that ICC teaching through multicultural material should be explicitly, but not implicitly, included in the English teaching material since the world is now a global village.

Arvelo and Nocito (2021) conducted a training course for lecturers at two public universities in Spain. The purpose of the study was to investigate the beliefs of the participants about the inclusion of ICC teaching in English medium instruction. The study sample was comprised of 21 female and male lecturers. The sample partook in a

four-module training program, each lasting four hours a week. Interculturality was one of the topics in which the participants were intensively involved. The researcher used the mixed method, where pre- and post-questionnaires were used as quantitative instruments and self-reflective reports as qualitative tools. The 20-item questionnaire was designed according to a 5-point Likert scale. The analysis of results showed that cultural awareness through intercultural in-class tasks should be included in English teaching, and internationalization of English teaching should be enhanced. They conceded that the participant's beliefs about the inclusion of ICC tasks before the training developed into more supportive stances in favour of ICC after the training.

Tambunan et al. (2021) investigated the ICC (ICC) level among university students in the northern universities of Indonesia. The instrument of the study was a 20-item questionnaire which made use of a 5-point Likert- scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The sample consisted of 89 participants; the females were 28, whereas the males were 61. The age of the sample ranged between 18 and 20. The participants were enrolled in an EFL course and tested for their cross-cultural understanding during the survey. This quantitative survey concluded that students lacked knowledge about cultures and how to understand intercultural communication. The study demonstrated the need to develop and enhance students' ICC in a language course. Multicultural activities incorporating ICC in the EFL classroom would develop intercultural awareness and reduce barriers to mutual understanding. The researchers recommended the inclusion of an intercultural curriculum in universities teaching English as a foreign language. The survey of empirical studies presented above suggests that using multicultural narratives to strengthen language skills in EFL classrooms has effectively promoted ICC among learners to varying degrees. Such texts have also been quite effective in developing language skills due to the involvement and motivation of learners, as well as collaborative learning techniques used in the classrooms.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explained in detail the ICC, its models, assessment tools, and implications in the EFL classroom. It also reviewed several empirical studies that integrated intercultural content through various approaches, such as project-based learning, document-based questions, novels, and intensive reading of multicultural texts. The research clearly distinguished between communicative competence and ICC. It also highlighted how the latter extends beyond language skills, including cultural awareness, sensitivity, and adaptability. The findings suggest that incorporating multicultural materials into EFL teaching promotes language development and helps students progress from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism and global competence. These highlighted aspects will guide teachers in improving EFL classroom practices and, consequently, help dispel cultural misconceptions about other cultures.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Between Innovation and Tradition: The Impact of AI on Literature Education

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Abstract- The integration of AI is a central consideration in English-medium instruction. This research investigates the improvement of integrating AI in the literary study field. The study utilizes a qualitative research method that examines 30 postgraduate students and reflects on their experiences using AI tools in learning literature. The data of this study was gathered through interviews with 30 students who specialized in English literature, and the aim was to investigate the influence of using AI on their understanding of literature. The results of this study indicate that AI helps improve students' analysis of literary texts and presents innovative strategies to engage with them, and that allows students to maintain genuine literary interpretation. Notwithstanding, the study brings to light ethical concerns like academic integrity and the challenge of extensively relying on AI interpretation. The study concludes that AI can be a valuable resource for active interaction with literature while keeping a critical awareness of its challenging implementation..

Keywords: AI interpretation; AI in teaching literature; AI in education; AI ethics; student critical interpretation.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most innovative technological developments in the rapid advancement of technology is AI (AI). Research indicates that AI has become indispensable in the education scale (Ismail, 2025). It reshapes different aspects of education, including disciplines of literary studies. AI tools provide a profound contribution and radical transformation in literary and educational processes that substantially drive the creativity and interpretation of literature to a distinct change (Abdulrahman, 2024). Recent work completed by Biagini (2025) believes that literature education under AI application has gained significant momentum. AI has expanded the opportunities of automated evaluation and learner-canter approach. In an innovative digital period of creative literary analysis, the fundamental assumption of blending AI in making literary creativity is challenging. It presents a transformative shift in how literature has been viewed and evaluated, which indicates a significant progression in the field of literature.

According to Jebaselvi et al. (2024), modern AI platforms enhance and improve the analysis and provide personalized learning that meets students. Jebaselvi et al. added, "AI (AI) has completely changed the literary landscape by introducing sophisticated machine learning algorithms and natural language processing techniques. These algorithms have changed the creation of new works and their interpretation and distribution" (p. 53). The rapid advancement of natural language processing, machine learning, and adaptive learning systems has created unprecedented opportunities for personalizing literature education while simultaneously generating concerns about preserving human-centered literary discourse (Supriyono et al., 2024). Moreover, AI technologies, such as AI-powered close reading tools, which identify patterns across huge corpora to intelligent tutoring platforms and systems that can easily adapt to individual learning styles, are more than supplementing traditional teaching methods; they fundamentally transform the landscape of literature education (Kabudi et al., 2021). Despite its potential, AI integration in literature education raises ethical concerns (Ismail & Aloshi, 2025). Scholars argue that AI improves engagement; however, it cannot the human qualities of interpretation and critical thinking, which are crucial in literary studies. Once confined to the pages of science fiction, AI is now stepping cautiously into the author's domain, blurring the lines between human and machine-generated narratives. This burgeoning relationship raises intriguing questions about the future of storytelling and its impact on both writers and readers" (Selvi & Ramya, 2024, p. 347).

Therefore, AI-powered tools, such as natural language processing systems, can offer insights into textual themes, stylistic characteristics, and character development, but they fail to understand the deep emotional and cultural that literature embodies (Zhao, 2024). Based on the short preview above, integrating AI in literature education has advantages and disadvantages that should be closely investigated. It provides practical strategies for students to develop their creative literary analysis and personalized learning, yet some concerns are raised about avoiding balancing technological advancement and conventional humanistic approaches. Based on the foregoing, this paper investigates the impact and transformation of integrating AI in literature education.

Thus, this study aims to answer the following main questions:
1- How can AI be integrated into improving literature education?

2- How can students effectively integrate AI into learning literature without over-relying and maintaining a genuine sense of literary analysis?

3- What is the impact of integrating AI in learning literature?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 AI's Impact on Education and Learning

Many challenges have been resolved by using AI, significantly impacting personal and educational levels. Mohebbi (2024) investigates how AI can boost autonomy and self-discipline among students. The article examines available research on AI usage in language education, shedding light on various applications in AI like chat, generated educational feedback, and presumptive environment. The results indicate that AI tools reinforce fundamental language proficiency considerably and help students become more self-sufficient. Furthermore, the benefit and efficiency of using AI tools by learners depend on their motivation, literacy, and digital level, and this indicates that not all students may have the same level of benefit from using AI language learning tools. Similarly, Grájeda et al. (2023) examine the perception of students using AI tools in their higher education knowledge. The authors constituted a Synthetic Index of the Use of AI Tools (SIUAIT) to assess and measure the effectiveness of using AI tools among learners. They conducted the study at a private university in Latin America and collected data based on the interaction of students with AI tools and their sentimental feedback. The study's findings demonstrate that the overall perception of the student's usage of AI is positive, observing benefits like boosting learning efficiency.

However, researchers have found many challenges, notably the privacy of data and the excessive and over-reliance on AI tools in analyzing data. Most early studies and current work focus on using AI tools in education. For example, Akgun and Greenhow (2022) analyze the incorporation of AI in both primary and secondary education. They analyze various AI functions, like personalized learning platforms, to foster students' education, emphasizing their capability to improve their learning and teaching. Nevertheless, the researchers determine substantial ethical worries, such as reducing human engagement in learning action; to tackle these issues, they suggest using pedagogical resources from facilities like Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Media Lab and Code.org in order to help students deal with AI involvements.

2.2 Literary Devices and Language Development

Early work built the basic development of literary devices in literature. Thompson (1973) analyzes how literary devices improve students' fluency and reading experiences. Thompson asserts that though literary devices are significant for profound comprehension, teaching them should be incorporated into the reading process instead of teaching them in isolation. Thompson criticizes the traditional approach, favoring only repetition and memorization of the terms, indicating that teachers should motivate students to find literary devices while reading the text naturally. Thompson highlights the significance of the context, arguing that students are involved with literature through rich discussions and analyses that show the way literary devices deliver meanings and stir up responses. Thompson thinks that this method allows learners to build a profound appreciation for literature and improve their skills in analyzing and synthesizing any literary text. In a study conducted by Lengyel (1975), Lengyel investigates how literature represents a magnificent

space for acquiring language, not solely regarding grammar and vocabulary, but more likely for establishing a solid basis in terms of the ability of critical thinking and analysis. Lengyel asserts that literary text provides an immense linguistic context, giving the students a chance to expose themselves to the structure of complex sentences, metaphorical language, and more cultural contexts in different methods than the traditional ways do. To get deeper into the nuances in the text, Hossain (2024) concluded that students must learn literary devices such as irony, metaphor, and symbolism; they significantly enhance their ability to analyze more critically. Eventually, Hossain asserts the indispensable role of literature in foreign language education and as a constituent of the language. Literature becomes a magnificent means of enhancing both linguistic skills and expanding the intellectual capacity of the learners.

2.3 Teacher-Student Dynamics and Engagement

A study conducted by Cents-Boonstra (2021) examines the role and attitude of teachers in the classroom and how it impacts students' perspectives on the learning process and engagement in the classroom. The scholar analyzes the samples on teachers' motivating and demotivating behaviours and their relationship with students' engagement status in the classroom. The findings indicate that while teachers reveal and deal with students through motivational behaviours, such as giving students positive feedback and supporting them in their activities, students are more likely to get the chance to engage more in the classroom. On the contrary, neglecting the needs of the students or controlling their language are demotivational activities that are connected with a depleted engagement in the classroom environment. The teacher's motivational behaviours are the main factor that enhances the role of the students in constructing a profound trust in themselves and boosting their engagement in the classroom. Li and Xue (2023) examine the approaches students usually follow in the classroom and how these approaches could affect their learning process. The researchers collect data from many studies, including 93,188 participants and 148 certain impacts. The scholars' main aim is to identify the key factors that influence students' activities in higher education environments; the analysis shows 14 considerable aspects that highly affect the performance of the students in the learning process, especially elements that have specific impacts, such as learning scores, colleagues backup to each other, and family support we well. The study demonstrates the crucial role of students' involvement in reaching success in education and points out the significant and enduring impact that shaping factors could have on academic efficiency and learning conclusions.

Research on student engagement has a long tradition in the academic field; for example, Mebert et al. (2020) indicate effective strategies to enhance students' engagement through integrating collective genuine problem solutions into the schoolwork. Throughout the Flint water crisis, they created a project where students from four colleges in Flint, Michigan, implemented their classroom experiences to deal with this urgent local issue. Students from different disciplines and institutions get into the methodology, which leads to a profound engagement with their colleagues and the subject matter. The collected data indicate that students' engagement significantly increases through this approach.

3. METHODLOGY

3.1 Research Desgin

This qualitative study analyzes how AI tools are becoming part of literature education and their effect on teaching and learning in the classroom. Previous work completed by Abuhamda et al. (2021, p.71) stated, "Quantitative and qualitative methods are the engine behind evidence-based outcomes." Understanding and concentrating on teachers' and students' experiences, perceptions, and perspectives when using AI tools enhances the opportunity to use them correctly. This approach leads to understanding these tools' contribution to the classroom. This method corresponds with the primary goal of this study, which is to analyze the challenges between technology and teaching traditions in teaching literature. The qualitative approach comprehensively explores how AI tools significantly shape new teaching and learning styles, unveiling distinctions and insights that could be ignored in exclusively qualitative studies. This method would facilitate adaptations in teaching methods and give a deep understanding of AI tools in learning and teaching. Moreover, the qualitative approach adapts an interpretive method for data analysis and collection, taking into account academic transparency while obtaining information from participants, which is a purely subjective process. This methodology allows for determining running themes and perceptions in their responses, giving a profound comprehension of the opportunities and challenges of adapting AI in literature education (Landøy et al., 2020).

3.2 Participants

The sample of this study is 30 postgraduate students divided into (18) male and (12) female (See Table 1). All selected participants are from the English department at the English and Foreign Languages University. The participants pursued their high studies in English literature and had an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. The educational level of the participants is 11 doctoral students and 19 master's students, selected based on their experiences in traditional literary analysis and using AI tools to improve their literary study. The participant's backgrounds in literary studies made it an ideal sample, as it turned out that all the participants knew about AI's impact on literature education. All participants are actively enrolled in their programs and intensely engaged with literary analysis and interpretation in their coursework and research. The following table shows that all participants were from the English department, actively enrolled in their respective programs, and engaged with literary analysis and interpretation in their coursework and research.

Table 1: Study Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	18	60%
	Female	12	40%
Total		30	100%

Characteristic	Category	Number	Percentage
Education Level	Doctoral Students	11	36.7%
	Master's Students	19	63.3%
Total		30	100%
Background	English Literature	30	100%
Institution	English and Foreign Languages University	30	100%
Experience	Traditional Literary Analysis	30	100%
	AI Tools for Literary Study	30	100%
Enrollment Status	Active	30	100%

3.3 Data Collection

The primary data for data collection is conducted through a semi-structured interview method. The scholars depend on the leading guide of the interview through open-ended questions; they can examine the students' experiences with AI tools in literary analysis and education. To check the relevancy of the questions and match them with the research primer goals. The questions were modified by specialists and checked in a pilot survey before conducting the interviews.

The interview protocol's validity has been checked to ensure accuracy and credibility by consulting with three experts in the qualitative research approach and literature education. Although they were excluded from the final study, the researchers conducted pilot interviews with five postgraduate students who fulfilled the participant criteria and efficacy standards in order to offer high effectiveness. The questions are made more straightforward due to these students' input. This approach was recommended previously (Baugerud & Johnson, 2017) and proved effective.

Each interview lasts between 45 and 60 minutes and is conducted in a personal setting at the college. The interviews were recorded with the student's permission and then transcribed for evaluation. The semi-dependent format enables the researcher to be regular throughout all interviews while keeping the flexibility to adapt and deal with emerging issues participants face.

3.4 Data Analysis

The study employs thematic analysis constructed through a comprehensive two-stage validation process. The researcher analyzed the interview transcripts through systemic coding to identify the initial themes. Once the initial themes were generated, the researcher availed ChatGPT as a supplementary analytical tool, introducing the interview responses

for comparative analysis. This method enabled cross-validation of the manually identified themes with ChatGPT thematic interpretation.

The comparative analysis between the researchers' manual coding and ChatGPT's analysis offered enhanced insights and contributed to refining the thematic framework recommended by Naeem et al. (2023). The study's findings gained reliability by integrating diverse perspectives in the data and employing both analytical methods. The final themes were derived from a meticulous synthesis of both analytical processes, merging human interpretive insights with AI-assisted pattern recognition.

The researcher developed a strong and comprehensive thematic framework by seamlessly integrating this methodology based on what previous work recommended in similar studies (Naem, 2023). The framework captures the core patterns and insights from the interview while maintaining rigorous analytical standards. The themes vividly represent the participants' experiences and perspectives on integrating AI in literature education. The following table (Table 2) explains the paper's thematic analysis methodology. This two-stage validation process combines traditional qualitative research methods with innovative AI applications.

Table 2: Thematic analysis methodology

Analysis Stage	Process	Purpose	Outcome
Stage 1: Manual Analysis	Systematic coding of interview transcripts	Identify initial patterns and themes	Preliminary thematic framework
Stage 2: AI-Assisted Analysis	Introduction of interview responses to ChatGPT	Gain an alternative analytical perspective	AI-generated thematic interpretation
Comparative Analysis	Cross-validation between manual coding and ChatGPT analysis	Enhance reliability through methodological triangulation	Identification of consistencies and divergences
Theme Refinement	Synthesis of human and AI analytical insights	Strengthen thematic framework	Refined themes with increased validity
Final Integration	Merging human interpretive insights with AI-assisted pattern recognition	Establish a comprehensive thematic structure	Final thematic framework representing participants' experiences

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study followed up with accurate, ethical instructions to prevent technical problems and protect all participants' rights and privacy. Permission was obtained from each student by the researcher before conducting the interviews to sustain confidence; nicknames were used in all the research records in the final documentation instead of the original names. The accumulated data, interviews, and transcripts were carefully stored with a strong password and used only for research objectives. Additionally, students have the right to withdraw anytime they want without ramifications, and they have the chance to review the conversations to seek accuracy.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After completing the thematic analysis of interviews with 30 postgraduate students, the researchers identified four themes of using AI in literature education. This section includes and elaborates on each theme in detail and discusses the effects of teaching methods.

4.1 AI-Enhanced Textual Analysis and Interpretative Practices

The meticulous evaluation suggests that students, as a first step, employ AI equipment sufficiently while encountering challenging literary textual content to comprehend. Contributors indicated that AI evaluation substantially enhances their skills in figuring out and handling literary styles and devices. One PhD student provided this experience: "Implementing AI gear enables the identity of problematic styles inside texts, offering a foundation for subsequent in-depth analysis. However, verifying and interpreting these styles always stays within the domain of human scholarly engagement."

Other participants emphasized the complementary nature of AI tools in their analytical practice. A master's student noted: "In my analysis of modernist literature, AI assistance in pattern recognition facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of recurring motifs, though the interpretative process remained fundamentally human-centered." These results, coupled with Jebaselvi et al.'s (2024) research on the converted turn of AI tools in literary analysis, concurrently back up Selvi and Ramya's (2024) insights into the changing dynamics between computational and human analysis methods.

4.2 Preservation of Human Interpretative Authority

The results indicate that organized techniques are enhanced with the students' help, which supports students' autonomous interpretation of AI tools. Participants developed methods to use AI support without sacrificing critical thinking abilities. Generally speaking, these tactics were used systematically. First, read the text, use AI-assisted analytical support and critical thinking, synthesize the results or perceptions, and expand your unique perception of the literary text.

An MA student describes: "AI tools play an important position in supporting and facilitating paragraph evaluation rather than changing or fully reading it. At the same time, while ensuring that the system of essential questioning remains in the middle of literary evaluation, era and AI are used as mediators to assist and to make literary evaluation less difficult. This method aligned with Mohebbi's (2024) results concerning the preservation of students' autonomy amid technology-enhanced educational environments.

4.3 Personalization of Literary Engagement Through AI Integration

The analysis shows developed AI tools and apps for personalized literary analysis. Students show their ability to adapt their analytical approaches by strategically using AI. The collected data demonstrated many key areas for customization. The first one is the systematic exploration of specific literary themes. Then comes the development of individualized analytical frameworks. Finally, the enhancement of comparative literary analysis

One scholar added, "The aggregate of AI helps the advancement of customized analytical methods, taking into consideration an in-depth examination of specific literary elements whilst upholding educational rigour. The findings returned to Grájeda et al.'s (2023) paragraph on the high-quality effect of AI overall performance in higher education, mainly in strengthening individualized getting-to-know methods.

4.4 Ethical Responsibilities and Critical Understanding in AI Integration

Theme four shows the students' awareness and perceptions of the advanced understanding of ethical concerns of I usage. Participants demonstrated well-crafted structures for ethical AI incorporation in their academia. Their methods mirrored thorough analysis of the maintenance of academic integrity, appropriate attribution of AI-assisted analysis, and balance between technological assistance and scholarly independence. A doctoral candidate noted: "The performance of AI tools necessitates careful consideration of ethical implications, particularly regarding the maintenance of scholarly authenticity and appropriate attribution of analytical processes."

This realization matches Akgun and Greenhow's (2021) research on ethical issues in educational AI implementation, extending their findings to the precise context of superior literary research. Cents-Boonstra et al.'s (2021) research has the same results as these findings on the upholding of students in technology-enhanced learning environments, with significant expansion in specific terms of advanced literary studies. The results show that AI integration maximum effectively helps literature training. It can enhance analysis as a crucial tool, encourage individualized efforts in academic exploration, adhere to ethical guidance, and support critical thinking and analysis.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

A meticulous examination of these themes illustrates the efficient incorporation of AI in literature education. Necessitates a cautiously balanced technique that preserves scholarly integrity while maximizing technological advantages. The findings indicate that successful AI implementation depends on:

1- Keep a safe distance between AI analysis, demonstrations, and human interpretations.

2- Establishing structured methods for AI incorporation

3- Build solid ethical frameworks

4- Maintaining independent examining and analytical skills

These findings offer a foundation for developing comprehensive frameworks for AI integration in literature schooling while preserving the crucial elements of scholarly literary evaluation and interpretation.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper discusses integrating AI in literature education by examining postgraduate students' experiences. The study's findings largely contribute to answering how AI tools effectively help students interpret and critically analyze literature while preserving the human sense of interpretation. The research questions guiding the study are addressed through four primary themes. The findings show that students developed strategies to preserve their unique analytical interpretation while relying on AI assistance. Therefore, these strategies prove the importance of human autonomy in literary analysis, with AI functioning as a supporting tool rather than a substitute for critical analysis. Additionally, the study reveals that AI integration enhances textual analysis and strengthens students' engagement with literary texts. Further, students meaningfully use AI tools to engage with the text to analyze the themes and recognize the literary patterns while maintaining their roles as the foremost analyst of literary meaning. The results also show that students obtained skillful ways of studying literature through the integration of AI. Students personalized their approach to systematically engaging with literary themes, making their distinct methods in reading and analyzing literature that helped them improve their comparative analysis of different literary works.

The paper calls for a balance between students' integration of AI and the ethical implementations of this integration, and it is revealed that students identified and developed frameworks that emphasize academic integrity, preserve scholarly independence, and enable them to integrate AI into their studies while carefully considering the pursuit of ethical scholarly practice. This paper contributes significantly to the significance of integrating AI in literature education as it recognizes its ability to boost literary analysis while stressing the substantial meaning of preserving genuine human and critical interpretation in literature and humanities. Based on the advancement of AI, it is essential to maintain a serious balance to preserve the value and academic integrity of the field of study while integrating AI and any other advanced technological tools. As a result, the findings of this study conclude that integrating AI in literature education is booming and requires serious preservation of genuine human sense that maintains a thoughtful implementation availing the capabilities of advanced technological tools in the learning and analytical process. This balanced framework ensures that literature education continues building critical thinking and boosting interpretation skills with the assistance of AI.

7. LIMITATIONS

Although the study provides interesting views on how to integrate AI into literature education, some limitations should be highlighted. First, the study represents the postgraduate level from one institution, which might not reflect on the experiences of other educational levels like BA, MPhil, EdD, or other institutional contexts. Second, the rapid development of AI technology means that some findings might become outdated as new AI tools emerge. While the study sample, 30 postgraduate participants, is adequate for qualitative analysis, it might serve a large scale of students' experiences with AI in literature

education. Finally, the study focuses on English literature students, so it does not consider students in other specializations.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1- Establishing and developing a concise system for integrating AI in literature education.
2- Creating specific training that prepares teachers to incorporate AI as teaching methods.
3- Systematic monitoring and updating of AI technical methods in learning literature.
4- Studying the impacts of AI integration on students' abilities in analyzing literature over the long term.
5- Establishing assessment methods for AI integration.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

10. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that this research is conducted without external funding or commercial or financial support, which might be seen as a potential conflict of interest. The students who voluntarily participated in the research were informed that their participation would receive no compensation. The authors' academic positions at The English and Foreign Languages University did not influence the gathering, analysis, or interpretation of the data. The authors have no affiliations or involvement with internal or external organizations, nor have financial or non-financial interests in this research.

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Developing Advanced Reading Skills Through Extensive Reading: Findings from Palestinian schools

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Abstract- The paper in hand aims to investigate the relationship between using the Extensive Reading (ER) approach to improve students' reading ability. The researcher conducted this study on school students in Palestine, implementing a controlled experimental design with both male and female school populations. Pre-tests and post-tests were used to evaluate students' vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. Results showed extremely statistically significant improvements in the experimental groups (p<0.0001), with female students' mean scores increasing from 60.81 to 83.50 and male students improving dramatically from 33.17 to 77.50. Post-test comparisons revealed the experimental groups significantly outperformed control groups in both female schools (83.50 vs 52.94, p<0.0001) and male schools (77.50 vs 49.43, p=0.0066). Students exposed to ER showed measurable advantages in vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and overall reading skills. The study concludes that ER serves as an effective approach for enhancing students' language development and recommends implementing the ER approach to improve reading proficiency. School teachers are advised to encourage extensive reading of books and stories in foreign language instruction..

Keywords: ER; school students; reading comprehension; English reading skills; vocabulary acquisition; Palestinian education; EFL teaching methodology.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is the most used language in the world, and its significance is evident in its role in several fields, such as education, tourism, business, and medicine. English is taught at every single school in Palestine, with the aim of enabling Palestinian students to gain the basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to help students acquire knowledge of Palestinian curricula (Naqib and Ismail, 2020; Ismail, 2020). According to Suryani and Siminto (2023), ER is a very helpful method of learning for students who also have specific English skills, and they suggest using this method to achieve the aims of the learning process. However, creating a student-centred class and encouraging students' active engagement is challenging.

Palestinian schools are rich in culture and are known for their diverse educational institutions. Thus, it seems to be an ideal setting to explore the effectiveness and impacts of using ER in English language instruction. Modern learning theories emphasize activity-based learning, such as the constructivist theory. The constructivist theory focuses on practice to gain language proficiency and knowledge and build upon them to enable Palestinian students to overcome challenges, especially for those who struggle with English and reading outside of the curriculum (Hamed, 2023; *TEAL Fact Sheet No. 12*, 2013)

Research shows that students are becoming demotivated in secondary education. Therefore, English teachers must seek out new methods and activities to stimulate students and increase their motivation to learn a new language (Wang and Littlewood, 2021). Using ER is an important method in teaching a second language to practice reading comprehension and to achieve the learning needs, values, and objectives to identify the obstacles students might face before or after reading (Tanaka, 2017; Jumiati, 2014). According to Yamashita (2008), ER means that students read a lot of material and a very large range of material to understand which areas they want to develop their knowledge in. Using ER will enable students to use their English appropriately in real situations and conversations to evoke emotions and ideas about their feelings.

This brief introduction shows that there is not enough research on the influence of using ER on improving students' reading skills for EFL/ESL learners. There is a gap in research specifically examining the effects or implementation of ER for improving students' reading skills regarding EFL/ESL students in particular contexts and/or reading comprehension. The researcher also found that there are several reading problems among Palestinian students. Most students have some difficulties in understanding the texts. This is due to the use of traditional ways of teaching the reading texts, which create a boring classroom environment by lacking engaging reading material and social interaction with others, affecting students' English language performance. Therefore, this study investigates the improvement of the student's reading skills by using an ER teaching strategy, which gives the learners the chance to read correctly and easily. The significance of this study emerged from the importance of using ER in teaching reading skills to Palestinian students of both genders.

Thus, this study aims to answer the following main questions:
1.   What are the effects of ER on improving students' reading skills?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cultural and contextual factors affecting Palestinian students' reading development

Teaching English as a foreign language involves teaching the four main skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Thus, in every English lesson, students should be able to read and engage in various activities that combine their main skills (Pardede, 2020). When students solely learn the grammar and vocabulary of the English language, it is not enough to read in this language as it is not the same as being entirely fluent (Burns & Siegel, 2017). In fact, teaching reading skills is like providing a guide and helper for English students in schools in their learning journey and facilitating the handling of comprehension and reading in English. Reading thus leads to ER, which must be acquired by reading a lot in order to read more effectively and gain knowledge. Palestinian students face challenges whenever they want to read because they only practice reading for a limited time, almost 45 minutes and only inside the classroom. There are a lot of English teachers who neglect this significant skill in their English lessons. Some issues surround the use of the extensive strategy to improve readers' comprehension and for the facilitation of effective understanding (Ng et al., 2019).

2.2 Cross-skill development through ER

During the past decades, there has been a great deal of discussion between researchers on how ER positively impacted other aspects. In addition, numerous studies discussed the relationship between ER and intensive reading. According to de Lozier (2029), intensive reading allows the students to deeply analyze the class material set by the teacher, in which grammar and vocabulary are studied in short passages. Furthermore, intensive or "narrow reading" allows students to analyze texts on different or related topics. Also, the dialectical relationship between ER and intensive reading focuses on the structure and the content, so teachers can take some of these skills like reading aloud, asking some questions, and the student's prediction from the text. Using intensive reading, students can discover the hidden meaning and be more in contact with a text (Cárdenas, 2020).

Hence, ESL/EFL teachers try to achieve a comfortable level of intelligibility for their students by engaging them with both skills. Some researchers, such as Widodo and Rozak (2016), say that extensive listening refers to all types of listening that allow learners to gain comprehensible input. While using this strategy, the teachers can direct dictations and allow self-directed listening for enjoyment, which can be done inside or outside the classroom. In their study, the researchers shed light on how learners gain many meaningful listening practices that affect ER and their results, which aligns with our research's ideas. A burgeoning interest in this area of research has led to discovering more about the relationship between speaking skills and ER. This is evidenced by Zarei (2013), who examined the relationship between two important skills in the English language: reading and speaking. The effects of their impacts on each other were identified and discussed, particularly regarding the key role of the connection of vocabulary in improving ER and its importance. The study found that students build a strong vocabulary from ER, which is one of the most important factors in achieving speaking fluency.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research used quantitative methods to achieve the study goals. Previous research completed by AbuHamda et al. (2021, p.71) stated, "Quantitative and qualitative methods are the engine behind evidence-based outcomes." This study aimed to determine the influence of using ER on improving students' reading skills in Palestinian schools. The data was gathered through experimental methodology. This was done to identify the influence of ER on improving students' reading skills after reviewing the studies related to the topic in order to solicit the effects on students.

The researcher conducted the study by dividing the sample into two groups, the male group (which had an experimental and control group) and the female group (which also had an experimental and control group), during the second semester of the scholastic year 2023/2024. In addition, the researcher collected the data by giving the control and experimental groups pre-post tests to try to achieve the pre-determined questions of the study.

3.2 Sample

The researcher used a random sample from the whole population of the study to gather data for both genders holding differences in academic qualifications. The researcher attended various training courses to teach distinct classes. The random sample was very helpful, and the population had an equal chance of being chosen by the researcher and having a very good mix of perspectives in any class. The process of collecting information and data only begins with determining the population of this research. Thus, the targeted population of the study consists of school students from different cities in Palestine during the second semester of the scholastic year 2023/2024. Previous work followed similar sampling methods, such as Ahmed (2024) and Kandasamy (2020), and suggested considering this method in similar research.

3.3 Instrumentations

The researcher designed six pre-test and post-test instruments to collect data and answer the research questions. The researcher applied them at the semester's beginning, middle, and end. The table of specifications for the English curriculum was used in detail to construct the questions that are related to ER tests.

The pre-test and post-test consist of the questions as follows:

1- The first question is to decide whether the statement is true or false.
2- The second question is to complete the statements from the paragraph.
3- The third question is to find the meanings of the words from the passage.
4- The fourth question is to find the opposites from the text.
5- The fifth question is to look at the pictures, analyze them and name the animals.
6- The sixth question is to circle (from 3 choices) the correct answers based on the passage.

3.4 Variables of Study

The independent variable is the use of ER as a strategy in teaching reading. The independent variables for the students are related to the respondents of the pre-test and post-test.

- Gender variables consist of females and males.
- The type of school consists of governmental schools.
- The background consists of normal families living in the West Bank.
- Students' education consists of: Seventh-grade students
- The method of teaching consists of teaching reading, including the ER strategy.

Regarding the dependent variable, the achievements from the pre-post tests on enhancing extensive reading strategies for seventh-grade students' reading skills are discussed.

3.4 Validity of the pre-test and post-test

The researcher presented the questions of the tests to two experts at the English Language Department at An Najah National University to evaluate them. The experts suggested simplifying the language since it is presented to Seventh-grade students.

3.5 Reliability of the pre-post test

To measure the tool's reliability in this research, the researcher applied the tool to a similar study completed by Raissi and Roustaei (2013). This study has similar characteristics, such as using the pre-test and post-test. This study focuses on reading strategies similar to our study. This study had 60 undergraduates take part in the pre-test and post-test, whereas our study had 29 students undertake the pre-post tests. In this study, the students were divided into control and experimental groups. The results of this study are trusted and correct because they show a significant effect of the reading strategy on the performance of reading comprehension in the experimental group, similar to ours. Hence, after showing the similarities between both tools and the research, the tools of our study can be said to be reliable. Likewise, the recommendations showed that teachers should use new teaching methods like ER to improve their reading skills. This tool is trusted and reliable, as shown above, and it establishes how we can use the tools from another body of research to measure it.

3.6 Procedures of the Study

The research procedures used in this research consist of many stages. The researcher took the agreement of the title from the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Teacher Training to start the research study. Then, the researcher identified the research problems and built the research questions(pre-post tests) to get the required data. After that, the researcher reviewed the literature associated with the topic of the study by checking books, scholarly articles, surveys, and other resources relevant to reading skills and, more specifically, to ER. Hence, the researcher held the pre-post tests for students and prepared the ER material.

The researcher took the role of teacher and gave the students the material. The researcher then explained to them what they should do and observed the progress and outcomes of the ER strategy throughout the second semester. Finally, the researcher designed different reading activities that applied the same ideas as the reading comprehension texts from the

seventh pupil's book and assigned weekly time slots to apply the ER activities. The data was collected at the end of the activities and the application of the ER strategy.

3.7 Data Analysis

After collecting and receiving the answers to pre-post tests, statistical packages (SPSS) were used to analyze the results, and the following measure was used to answer the questions. The researcher used descriptive statistics (Standard Deviation, Frequencies, Means, and Percentages) to discover the differences between the results of the pre-post tests.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The researcher has informed the study sample of the purpose of this study. Then, they explained the aims and how the results would help them improve their academic progress. Equally important, the researcher informed them they could withdraw from the study at any time, which would not affect their semester evaluation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to investigate the influence of using ER on improving students' reading skills for school students in Palestine. The following sections show the results according to the statistical analyses. The findings of the research are tackled with regard to the research questions. Therefore, the researcher employs different statistical formulas, such as means of frequencies and percentages, to show the final results of the collected data, especially the t-test.

4.1 Homogeneity of groups

To ensure valid results and avoid any possible external interference, the researcher tried to control some variables that would affect the research results. In each school, the two groups were homogenous because they had similar characteristics, such as level, age, and gender. Students are from the same grade and section, which is the 7 grade, but they are heterogeneous in terms of knowledge.

4.2 Data analysis

This study used a T-test to calculate the P-value. The T-test is conducted as a pre-test and a post-test. These consisted of a text and some vocabulary and comprehension questions. The study was conducted in the second semester, 2023-2024. There were three sub-questions to answer the main question.

Answers to the vocabulary questions:

"What is the effect of using ER in improving the students' vocabulary?"

To answer this question, the researcher tested the following null hypothesis:

There is no relationship between using ER and improving students' vocabulary.

To examine this hypothesis, the results of the experimental and control groups' scores were computed. Study Table 1.

Table (1): The results of vocabulary questions in pre-test and post-test for the experimental group in the female school

Group	Exp.voc.pre-test	Exp.voc.post-test
Mean	66.81	85.94
SD	13.64	11.17
SEM	3.41	2.79
N	16	16
P value	0.0001	

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0001

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp.voc.pre-test minus exp.voc.post-test equals -19.13 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -28.13 to -10.12 Intermediate values used in calculations:

t — 4.3396

df= 30

standard error of difference — 4.407

The mean of Exp.voc.protest vs. Exp.voc.post-test

The T-test findings show that using ER enriches students' vocabulary in the experimental group in female Schools. The result is significant at the level of ($p \leq 0.05$), which is 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' vocabulary. Previous work completed by White (2007) conducted a study to understand whether female students are better than male students. This is similar to Yamashita (2008). Yamashita shows that ER helps students read a wide range of materials and develop their knowledge in specific areas. The results are also in line with Zarei (2013), who found that students build strong vocabulary from ER, which is important for language development. See Table 2.

Table (2): The results of vocabulary questions in the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group in male schools

Group	Exp.voc.pre-test	Exp.voc.post-test
Mean	29.167	72.500
SD	20.412	30.326
SEM	5.270	7.830
N	15	15
P value	0.0001	

Value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp.voc.pre-test minus exp.voc.post-test equals -43.333, 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -62.667 to -23.999.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

t= 4.5911

df=28

Standard error of difference = 9.439

The T-test findings show that using ER enriches students' vocabulary in the experimental group in male schools. The result is significant at the level of ($p \leq = 0.05$), which is 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' vocabulary. The researcher thinks that ER is an effective approach to enriching students' vocabulary. These results are similar to previous work by Umam (2013). The results agree with previous work completed by Tanaka (2017) and Jumiati (2014). These studies show that ER is an important method for achieving learning needs and objectives in second language acquisition. See Table 3 below.

Table (3): The results of vocabulary questions in the post-test for experimental and control group in Nablus Girls School

Group	Exp.voc.pre-test	Exp.voc.post-test
Mean	85.94	62.75
SD	11.17	11.63
SEM	2.79	2.91
N	16	16
P value	0.0001	

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value is less than 0.000. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp. voc. post-test tninus cont.voc.post-test equals 23.19 95% confidence interval of this difference.- From 14.95 to 31.42.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

t = 5.7522

df= 30

standard error of difference = 4.031

The T-test findings show that using ER enriches students' vocabulary in the experimental group exceeded the students in the control group in female Schools. The result is significant at the level of($p \leq = 0.05$), which is 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It was found that there is a Relationship between using ER and improving students' vocabulary. See Table 4 below.

Table (4): The results of vocabulary questions in the post-test for experimental and control group in Nablus boys school

Group	Exp.voc.pre-test	Exp.voc.post-test
Mean	72.500	36.667
SD	30.326	27.737
SEM	7.830	7.162
N	15	15
P value		0.0022

P Value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0022. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp voc. post-test minus con.voc.post-test equals 35.833 95% confidence interval, and this difference is from 14.097 to 57.570.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

t = 3.3769

df= 28

standard error of difference = 10.611

The T-test findings show that using ER enriches students' vocabulary in the experimental group exceeded the students in the control group in male schools. The result is significant at the level of ($p \leq = 0.05$), which is 0.0022. Consequently, the null hypothesis

is rejected. It was found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' vocabulary. ER seems to be an effective way to increase students' vocabulary. These results are similar to Suryani and Siminto's (2023). They found that ER is a very helpful method for students to develop their English skills, such as vocabulary acquisition.

Answers to the comprehension questions:

"What is the effect of using ER in improving the students' comprehension?" To answer this question, the researcher tested the following null hypothesis:

There is no relationship between using ER and improving students' comprehension.

To examine this hypothesis, the results of the experimental and control groups' scores were computed. See Table 5 below.

Table (5): The results of comprehension questions in the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group in Nablus female schools.

Group	Exp.voc.pre-test	Exp.voc.post-test
Mean	61.44	79.69
SD	9.76	8.46
SEM	2.44	2.11
N	16	16
P value		0.0001

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp.com.pre-test minus exp.com post-test equals -18.25

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -24.84 to -11.66

Intermediate values used in calculations:

t = 5.6530

df= 30

standard error of difference — 3.228.

The T-test findings show that using ER develops students' comprehension in the experimental group in female schools. The result is significant at the level of (p 0.05),

which is 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It was found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' comprehension. This result is in line with Ng et al. (2019). Their study discussed how extensive reading facilitates effective understanding and comprehension. Study Table 6.

Table (6): The results of comprehension questions in the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group in Nablus boys schools

Group	Exp.voc.pre-test	Exp.voc.post-test
Mean	35.867	80.800
SD	23.033	26.176
SEM	5.947	6.759
N	15	15
P value		0.0001

Value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp.com.pre-test minus exp.com.post-test equals -44.933 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -63.374 to -26.492.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

t = 4.9912

df= 28

standard error of difference = 9.003

The T-test findings show that using ER develops students' comprehension in the experimental group in male schools. The result is significant at the level of (p ñ 0.05), which is 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It was found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' comprehension. ER seems to be an effective approach to increasing students' comprehension. These results agree with several previous work (Hamed, 2023; *TEAL Fact Sheet No. 12*, 2013). These studies found that the constructivist theory helps students practice to gain language proficiency. They also add that ER provides students with the practice needed to build comprehension skills. See Table 7 below.

Table 7: The results of comprehension questions in the post-test for the experimental and control group in female Schools.

Group	Exp.voc.pre-test	Exp.voc.post-test
Mean	79.69	56.00
SD	8.46	10.44
SEM	2.11	2.61
N	16	16
P value	0.0001	

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp.com.post-test minus cont.com.post-test equals 23.69 95% confidence interval of this difference: From 16.83 to *30.55.*

Intermediate values used in calculations: t = 7.0499, df=30

standard error of difference = 3.360

The T-test findings show that using ER develops students' comprehension in the experimental group and exceeds the students in the control group in female schools. The result is significant at the level of (p ≤0.05), which is 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It was found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' comprehension. Raissi Roustaei (2013) found similar results, who proved that there is a relationship between reading strategies and ER, which can improve students' reading skills. See Table 8 below.

Table (8): The results of comprehension questions in the post-test for experimental and control group in male school

Group	Exp.com.pre-test	Com.com.post-test
Mean	80.80	55.93
SD	26.18	30.65
SEM	6.76	7.91
N	15	15
P value	0.0238	

Value and statistical significance

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0238

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp.com.post-test minus con.com.post-test equals 24.87 95% confidence interval of this difference: From 3.55 to 46.18 Intermediate values used in calculations:

t = 2.3895

df= 28

standard error of difference = 10.407

The T-test findings show that using ER develops students' comprehension in the experimental group and exceeds the students in the control group in male schools. The result is significant at the level of(p ≤0.05), which is 0.0001.

Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It was found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' comprehension. ER seems to be an effective way to increase students' comprehension. These results align with previous work completed by Pigada and Schmitt (2006) that students can develop vocabulary acquisition from ER.

5. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

"What is the effect of using ER in improving the students' reading skills?"

To answer this question, the researcher tested the following null hypothesis:

There is no relationship between using ER and improving students' reading skills. To examine this hypothesis, the results of the experimental and control groups' scores were computed. See Table 9 below.

Table (9): The results of the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group in female schools

Group	Exp.pre-test	Exp.post-test
Mean	60.81	83.50
SD	11.67	6.48
SEM	2.92	1.62
N	16	16

P value	0.0001

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp.pre-test minus exp.post-test equals -22.69

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -29.50 to -15.87

Intermediate values used in calculations

t = 6.7964

df= 30

Standard error of difference = 3.338

The T-test findings show that using ER develops students' reading skills in the experimental group in female schools. The result is significant at the level of ($p \le 0.05$), which is 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' reading skills.

Table (10): The results of the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group in Nablus boys school

Group	Exp.pre-test	Exp.post-test
Mean	33.167	77.500
SD	20.018	25.478
SEM	5.169	6.578
N	15	15
P value	0.0001	

Value and statistical significance

The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval

The mean of exp.pre-test minus exp.post-test equals -44.333

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -61.470 to -27.196

Intermediate values used in calculations

t = 5.2992

df — 28

Standard error of difference = 8.366

The T-test findings show that using ER develops students' reading skills in the experimental group in female schools. The result is significant at the level of ($p \leq 0.05$), which is 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' reading skills. ER seems to be an effective approach to developing students' reading skills. See Table 11 below.

Table (11): The results of the post-test for experimental and control groups in female Schools

Group	Exp.pre-test	Cont.post-test
Mean	83.50	52.94
SD	6.48	7.86
SEM	1.62	1.97
N	16	16
P value	0.0001	

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001

by conventional criteria; this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of exp.post-test minus cont.post-test equals 30.56 95% confidence interval of this difference: From 25.36 to 35.76 Intermediate values used in calculations:

t = 11.9994

df= 30

standard error of difference = 2.547. The mean of Exp.post-test vs. Cont.post-test

The T-test findings show that using ER develops students' reading skills in the experimental group and exceeded the students in the control group in female schools. The result is significant at the level of (p ≤ 0.05), which is 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is found that there is a relation between using ER and improving students' reading skills. See table 12 below.

Table 12: The results of post-test for eaperimental and control group iii boys School

Group	Exp.pre-test	Con.post-test
Mean	77.500	49.433
SD	25.478	26.916
SEM	6.578	6.950
N	15	15
P value	0.0066	

value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0066

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant.

Confidence interval

The mean of exp.post-test minus con.post-test equals 28.067 95% confidence interval of this difference: From 8.465 to 47.668

Intermediate values used in calculations:

t = 2.9330

df= 28

standard error of difference = 9.569

The mean of Exp.pre-test vs. Con.pre-test.

The T-test findings show that using ER develops students' reading skills in the experimental group and exceeds the students in the control group in male schools. The result is significant at the level of ($p \leq 0.05$), which is 0.0066. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. It was found that there is a relationship between using ER and improving students' reading skills. ER seems to be an effective approach to developing students' reading skills. These results are in line with Khoshsima et al. (2014), who found that summarizing strategies are helpful in improving students' reading skills.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of the post-test were statistically significant. The results were significant at the level of($P \leq 0.05$). This means that ER developed students' reading skills in the experimental group, exceeding the control group. The results of vocabulary questions were statistically significant. The results were significant at the level of ($p \leq 0.05$). This means that ER enriched students' acquisition of vocabulary in the experimental group and exceeded the control group. Additionally, the results of the study show that the student's comprehension was statistically significant. The results were significant at the level of ($p \leq 0.05$). This means that ER developed students' comprehension in the experimental group and exceeded the control group.

The findings of this study show the effectiveness of ER for language development. Statistical analysis shows that there is a significant result in all measured areas at the level of ($p \leq 0.05$). The experimental group were better than the control group in reading skills, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension. These results prove that ER serves as an effective approach for enhancing students' language level.

7. LIMITATIONS

The results of this study cannot be generalized because it is limited to the Palestinian community. Additionally, the period during the semester was quite short, so other studies should conduct similar research for a longer period. Also, the researcher conducted the study during the midterm exams; thus, students' engagement during the experiment may not be the same as on normal school days.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1- The curriculum should be supported with different texts and stories to improve students' reading skills. Therefore, teachers should use audio material in the reading classes.
2- Provide teachers with training to apply the ER strategy. So students can get enough time to apply for ER in classes.

3- Further research should be conducted about the influence of ER on improving the student's speaking and writing skills.
4- Teachers should be aware of the needs of their students, as well as their abilities, at the beginning of the semester so they can use the correct teaching methods when they are teaching English.
5- Teachers should avoid teacher-centred classes and encourage student-centred classes.
6- Using ER enables students to develop their attitudes and increases motivation towards learning English.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Appendix A

The results of experimental group for females

	Voc. Pre-test	Com. Pre-test	Pre-test	Voc. Post-test	Com. Post-test	Post- test
1	60	59	60	75	79	70
2	47	61	65	77	87	85
3	85	69	65	90	85	80
4	40	45	30	65	65	70
5	60	59	55	85	80	85
6	70	52	50	100	79	85
7	65	69	60	100	87	90
8	87	75	75	100	90	92
9	72	75	70	89	85	86
10	57	71	65	69	88	85
11	57	59	60	76	79	80
12	75	52	56	86	75	85
13	72	59	75	84	69	80
14	60	51	50	90	72	84
15	75	52	60	89	65	86
16	87	75	77	100	90	93

Appendix B

Results of the female control group

	Voc.pre-test	Com.pre-test	Pre-test	Voc. Post-test	Com. Post-test	Post-test
1	55	60	55	60	55	55
2	50	65	60	45	65	55
3	75	60	67	80	65	70
4	45	40	44	40	45	42
5	55	30	45	50	40	44
6	75	40	60	75	45	50
7	70	60	65	65	65	60
8	80	65	70	75	63	60
9	70	70	70	65	72	55
10	60	65	62	65	67	60
11	50	50	50	53	55	50
12	70	50	60	74	53	45
13	65	55	60	69	56	50
14	50	30	40	53	40	42
15	60	50	55	65	45	49
16	75	70	70	70	65	60

Appendix C

Results of experimental group for males

	Voc. Pre-test	Com. Pre-test	Pre-test	VovPost-test	Com. Post-test	Post-test
1	37.5	33	35	100	92	95
2	37.5	67	55	100	100	100
3	62.5	67	65	100	100	100
4	0	17	10	25	79	57.5
5	12.5	17	15	75	71	72.5
6	50	75	65	100	100	100
7	37.5	46	42.5	100	100	100
8	25	31	29	37.5	58	50
9	12.5	37.5	27.5	100	100	100
10	62.5	44	51	100	100	100
11	37.5	8	20	50	71	62.5
12	12.5	50	35	75	83	80
13	37.5	37.5	37.5	62.5	79	72.5
14	0	8	5	37.5	0	15
15	12.5	0	5	25	79	57.5

Appendix D

Results of males control group

	Voc. Pre-test	Com. Pre-test	Pre-test	Voc. Post-test	Com. Post-test	Post-test
1	0	8	5	12.5	46	32.5
2	12.5	50	35	50	67	60
3	12.5	21	17.5	0	29	17.5
4	0	8	5	12.5	25	20
5	50	58	55	100	100	100
6	12.5	42	30	37.5	25	30
7	12.5	33	25	37.5	42	40
8	25	46	37.5	62.5	92	82.5
9	37.5	58	50	50	100	80
10	37.5	29	32.5	37.5	19	42.5
11	37.5	25	30	37.5	58	50
12	12.5	17	15	12.5	17	15
13	25	46	37.5	75	92	85
14	37.5	33	35	12.5	81	54
15	12.5	27	21	12.5	46	32.5