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Highlights

- Inquiry-Based Online Learning
- The Book The Everyday Imaginary
- Inclusion in Higher Education
- Environmental Chemistry Education

Discovering Thoughts, Inventing Future

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Environmental Chemistry Education using Inquiry-Based Online Learning

By Maria Wendy M. Solomo

Abstract- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educators worldwide are challenged to prepare instructional materials in a virtual environment to ensure learning and enable learners to take active and influential roles in addressing environmental challenges. This study used inquiry-based online learning (IBOL) in teaching environmental chemistry to enhance the performance and attitude of graduate students in an online setting. The one-group pretest-posttest design was employed in the investigation. Mixed methods were utilized in data gathering and analysis. The designed learning modules were tried in MAED Science - Environmental Chemistry class (n=18) in the 1st semester, AY 2022-2023. The designed modules were assessed and rated "exceeds criteria" based on content, instructional design, organization, equity and accessibility, and presentation. Using IBOL has significantly improved the academic performance of students based on their pretest and posttest results.

Keywords: inquiry-based learning, environmental chemistry, online learning, one-group pretest-posttest design.

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Maria Wendy M. Solomo

Abstract- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educators worldwide are challenged to prepare instructional materials in a virtual environment to ensure learning and enable learners to take active and influential roles in addressing environmental challenges. This study used inquiry-based online learning (IBOL) in teaching environmental chemistry to enhance the performance and attitude of graduate students in an online setting. The one-group pretest-posttest design was employed in the investigation. Mixed methods were utilized in data gathering and analysis. The designed learning modules were tried in MAED Science - Environmental Chemistry class (n=18) in the 1st semester, AY 2022-2023. The designed modules were assessed and rated "exceeds criteria" based on content, instructional design, organization, equity and accessibility, and presentation. Using IBOL has significantly improved the academic performance of students based on their pretest and posttest results. However, students cited that technological impediments and coordination with the community to conduct research were some of the challenges they encountered. The highlighted IBOL benefits are practical applications of concepts towards sustainable development, cognitive skill development, and producing more autonomous and environmentally responsible learners.

Keywords: inquiry-based learning, environmental chemistry, online learning, one-group pretest-posttest design.

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the educational system, shifting from traditional face-to-face delivery to flexible delivery modes. As a result, teachers across the globe are challenged to prepare modules and other instructional materials (IM) that will be delivered to their students. First, however, it is necessary to determine whether these learning materials and resources develop students' higher-order thinking skills and improve their academic performance. Second, determine if these designed learning resources will enable learners to take active, accountable, and influential roles in addressing environmental challenges.

Even before the pandemic, various international, national, and local examinations revealed that several students from different countries got low scores in chemistry, indicating their poor academic achievement, which could be attributed to various factors.

The caliber and efficiency of educators in higher educational institutions affect the students' cognitive performance (Makondo, 2012; Bolshakova et al., 2011). Students perform better if their instructors can present the course content comprehensively and efficiently. Teachers should be well-trained and fully master the course content to deliver it to their students efficiently. In Nigeria, the poor academic achievements of Nigerian high school students and negative attitudes toward Chemistry are attributed to teaching problems (Nbina, 2012). Similarly, many students in Cross River State got low scores at senior secondary certificate examinations in Chemistry and other science subjects, indicating that Science education could be more successful in attaining its objectives with good instruction (Adalikwu & Iorkpilgh, 2013).

Students experience hardships in understanding some concepts due to the complexity of Chemistry, such as organic chemistry, nuclear chemistry, salt analysis, particulate nature of matter, molecular polarity, and stoichiometry (Oladejo, 2020; Schurmeier, 2011; Musonda, 2021). Musonda (2021) claimed that some reasons for the challenges encountered are a lack of teaching and learning materials, a lack of practical activities, and teachers' incompetence. Chemistry educators are truly challenged to design learning resources that will be provided to their students where topics are presented considering the nature of the students and the teaching and learning process are contextualized.

Furthermore, even if teachers mastered the subject matter, they deliver their lessons using the traditional method, which is teacher-centered, leading to little class interaction (Essiam, 2023). Introducing various teaching strategies, such as cooperative learning, inquiry-based instruction, visualization, and differentiation, could address these difficulties. Students' academic performance could be enhanced using more effective teaching strategies. One of the strategies/ approaches proven effective in residential education is utilizing an inquiry-based approach. Edelson et al. (2011) claimed that providing learners with inquiry experiences could help them deepen their understanding of concepts, theories, and practices in Science. The current study designed a learning resource in Environmental Chemistry focusing on applying the concepts using IBOL as a teaching strategy to present the theories, ideas, and concepts understandably.

A more structured, supervised inquiry should be developed to gradually advance students' inquiry

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abilities (Spronken-Smith & Walker, 2010). Additionally, based on their experiences, students create or comprehend the world in different ways. They try to overlay these patterns onto new backgrounds when they come across them. For instance, individuals know from experience that they should stop when approaching a red traffic signal. The key is that their environment does not explain them; instead, they build their own ways of viewing it. Compared to students exposed to teacher-centered activities, individuals who participated in inquiry-based learning (IBL) demonstrated greater involvement and comprehension of their environment. However, there was a marginally statistically insignificant decline in their positive attitudes toward Science (Maxwell et al., 2015; Şimşek & Kabapınar, 2010).

Inquiry-based learning can inspire learners who are unmotivated by science and math (Harlen, 2023). They will be more engaged in the learning process, which could result in a better understanding of the concepts. Additionally, inquiry-based pedagogy supports the growth of teacher confidence in the science classroom, and the approach effectively fosters conceptual knowledge and inquiry skills (Sawyer, 2006; Davis et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2010; Abdi, 2014). Moreover, numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of using IBL in the teaching and learning process to raise student achievement (Duran & Dokme, 2016; Akkus et al., 2007; Spronken-Smith & Walker, 2010; Suarez et al., 2018; Huber & Moore, 2001). While the present study is meant to occur in a virtual setting, similar studies examined are conducted in a standard face-to-face setup and basic education. Therefore, educators must investigate cutting-edge and efficient online teaching alternatives to enhance learning outcomes during a pandemic or calamities.

This study aims to help graduate students improve their critical thinking abilities and enhance their attitude by employing an inquiry-based online approach in the designed resource for teaching environmental chemistry. The hope of the study is also to produce more responsive educators to social and environmental challenges.

II. Framework of the Study

The Philippine educational system constantly calls for the development of new and innovative methods of instruction to improve students' academic achievement. Furthermore, education is a crucial tool for transforming society towards sustainable development. Educators must offer them learning opportunities and resources to aid learners in developing their cognitive abilities, skills, and attitudes necessary to comprehend the natural world in which they live.

In order to deliver the course content, the current study uses an inquiry-based methodology based on constructivist principles. It is based on Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, which holds that students actively create and restructure their knowledge based on their formal educational experiences, tidbits of their personal background, their social and cultural contexts, and various other factors that influence their thinking. Vygotsky considered social interaction the central area of a person's cognitive development and saw students as active organizers of their experiences (Kurt, 2020). Inquiry-based learning, according to Vygotsky, is crucial to creating a social constructivist classroom environment. As a result, learners are active, meaning-seeking beings rather than passive consumers of information. learners actively engage in investigating questions, problems, or scenarios, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and curiosity. In an online setting, this involves creating opportunities for students to explore environmental chemistry concepts through hands-on experiments, virtual simulations, case studies, or interactive modules. They are seen as self-organizing and self-reproducing beings through social interaction since they actively create knowledge. Social engagement is scarce during this pandemic, and most students communicate online through social media sites. However, students need more interaction during actual data gathering in conducting their Research and between them and their families and communities.

This Research is also grounded in Dewey's educational theory, which views the classroom as a social environment where students can collaborate and solve problems as a group. They are provided learning opportunities to apply the concepts to real-world problems and learn by doing. Rather than the traditional teacher-imposed curriculum and teacher-directed exercises, in this kind of learning environment, students will be considered distinct and engaged individuals actively constructing their knowledge through personal meanings (Schiro, 2013). Dewey's theory will be demonstrated in this Research by creating instruction and learning resources that will meet the cognitive and social demands of the learners.

Moreover, making active learners and encouraging them to ask questions can help students feel more empowered and autonomous. According to Calkins (1986), teachers in typical classrooms do not teach their students how to ask questions; instead, they only expect them to provide answers.

Nowadays, teachers realize the importance of encouraging students to ask questions. Raising queries is challenging and crucial to thinking and learning, particularly if students are constantly urged to formulate more incisive, pertinent, and efficient questions. Students gain greater consciousness and control over their thoughts when they ask questions. In this study, students are required to formulate questions, including research problems and objectives. They are also encouraged to ask provoking questions.

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In an inquiry-based online approach, students build knowledge using problem-solving strategies and a questioning framework. With this method, students will gain the autonomy and empowerment they need to develop their higher-order thinking abilities. Depending on its role in the educational process, inquiry-based learning can be at several levels (Banchi & Bell, 2008):

Confirmative Inquiry: Questions have already been provided to the students. The methodology and the findings are already known. At this level, the inquiry aims to validate the outcomes through actual practice.

Structured Inquiry: Students develop an explanation of the observed occurrence after the teacher announces the question and methodology.

Focused Inquiry: It entails the teacher posing a research question, the students developing a methodology, and responding to the question by going through the predetermined steps.

Open Inquiry: This is when the students pose the subject independently, consider many approaches, carry it out, and form their conclusions.

Several sorts of inquiry were considered when creating the lesson plan and learning modules used in this study. Lesson progression will adhere to Merrill's structure (2002). He offers the most modern, thorough approach to creating courses that are largely focused on cognitive learning. It has a diverse perspective and makes an apparent effort to incorporate the recommendations of numerous educational ideas.

The instructional process is divided into four phases according to Merrill's framework, which is also known as the "First Principles of Instruction": "(1) activation of prior experience, (2) demonstration of skills, (3) application of skills, and (4) integration of these skills into real-world activities."

Based on these ideas, inquiry-based online learning could enhance students' attitudes and achievements in environmental chemistry (Figure 1).

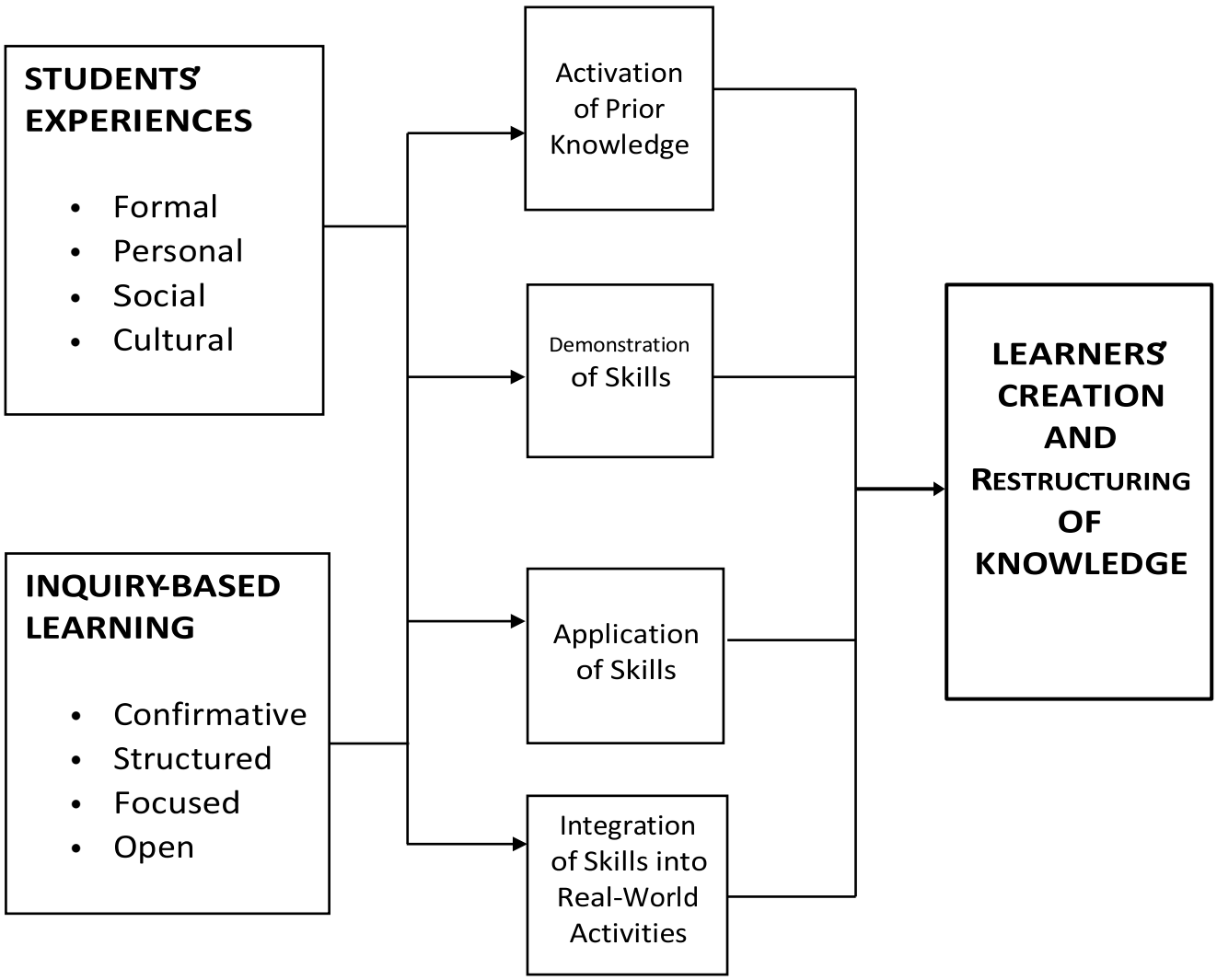


Fig. 1: Theoretical Paradigm of the Study

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III. Methodology

The one-group pretest-posttest design was used in the research. The environmental chemistry class handled by the researcher for the 1st semester, Academic Year (AY) 2022-2023, was considered the experimental group. Figure 2 illustrates the research design.

$$O_1 \longrightarrow X_1 \longrightarrow O_2$$

Fig. 2: Pretest-Posttest One Group Quasi-Experimental Design

Where:

O_1 – pretest
O_2 – post-test
X_1– treatment 1 (inquiry-based online learning)

The student's cognitive skill levels were assessed using the pretest and posttest before and after the treatment. The Environmental Chemistry pretest and posttest findings were used to collect the quantitative data. The pretest was given to the group to determine the initial performance of the students. After 15 consecutive sessions using the treatments, the experimental group was given a posttest to assess their level of achievement. The significant variation in mean scores across different cognitive skill levels, specifically: a. understanding, b. applying, and c. analyzing before and after exposure to the inquiry-based approach was determined. At the end of the treatment, the IBOL Evaluation Form was also given to the experimental group to determine if the employment of IBL lessons significantly enhanced the students' attitudes. To deepen the analysis, the inquiry-based checklist responses from students and their comments on applying the inquiry-based approach described the students' general attitudes toward the course, the inquiry-based approach, and their learning in a virtual environment. In addition, the challenges, and benefits of using the inquiry-based approach, as perceived by the learners, were presented in a thematic format.

Before the treatment, the following research instruments were developed and validated in the previous academic year (AY 2021-2022): the achievement test, the IBOL evaluation form, and the IBOL learning modules. Then, experts reviewed, approved, and verified the instruments' content validity. After giving comments and recommendations, full consideration, modifications, and improvements were made. Then, it was pilot tested on another group of MAEd students to measure the instrument's reliability through Cronbach alpha.

The instructional materials evaluation form from the university's Instructional Material Development Manual, used for internal evaluation, was used for evaluating the designed learning modules. The modules were crafted using the Environmental Chemistry learning syllabus. The lesson's topic, objectives, key concepts, and assessment tasks are all included in the module. In addition, the class size, time, availability of resources, and the nature of the learners were considered when designing the instructional material (IM). The following criteria were used to assess it: presentation, organization, equity and accessibility, instructional design, and content. Experts rated the IM using the Likert scale below:

1. Does not meet criteria
2. Partially meets criteria
3. Meets criteria
4. Exceeds criteria

The Achievement Test is a 50-item test with four-option, constructed by the researcher for the entire Water Environmental Chemistry units. It is a multiple-choice test designed to measure the level of achievement in chemistry regarding the following cognitive skills: a. understanding, b. applying, and c. analyzing. The test was taken from different sources such as books, booklets, test banks, and the researcher herself. The experimental group received the test, which could be completed in one session, both before and after the study (pretest and posttest). The results of the experimental groups' pretests and posttests were tabulated and compared, and the mean gain was calculated by taking the difference between the pretest and posttest means. In addition, a t-test was used to examine the significance of the mean gain. The levels of achievement, classified as high, average, and low, were determined arbitrarily. The total number of items divided by the three levels of achievement also served to establish the overall level of achievement.

The evaluation form was administered to the group to determine if the employment of IBOL lessons significantly enhanced the students' attitude as perceived by the respondents. The evaluation form was categorized into four parts where each category consisting of five (5) items:

- Part A is on students' involvement during synchronous and asynchronous discussions.
- Part B is on the employment of inquiry-based strategies in Environmental Chemistry Lessons in an online setting
- Part C is on the use of IBOL designed activities in the developed instructional material.
- Part D is on environmental sustainability integration.

The checklist was given to the experimental group after the treatment. The respondents rated themselves using a five-point Likert-type scale from 1 to 5. The gathered data were subjected to descriptive analysis: frequency, median, and mode to assess the extent of the effect of IBOL on students' attitudes.

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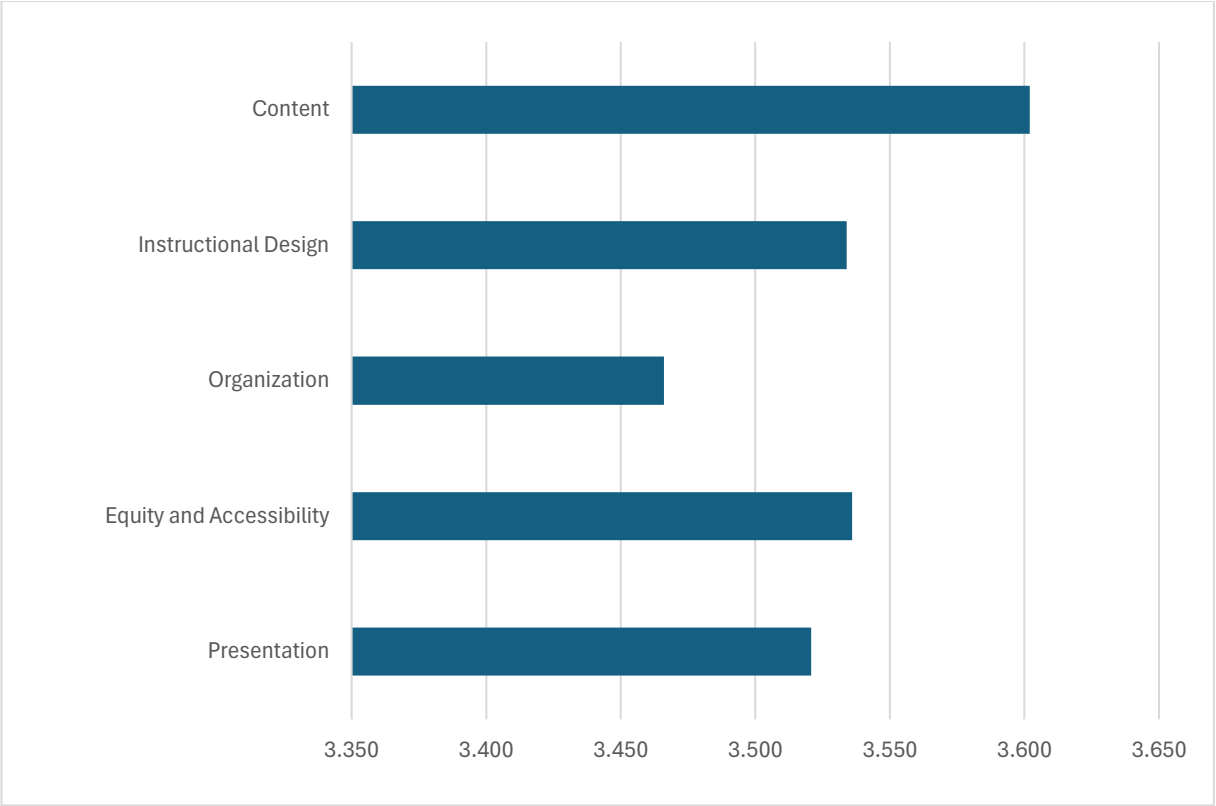
IV. Results and Discussion

a) Development and Assessment of the Learning Modules on Water Environmental Chemistry

The learning modules were designed based on the syllabus prepared for Environmental Chemistry. The objectives, learning activities, and assessment tasks in the module were aligned with the learning competencies written in the syllabus. Inquiry-based online learning (IBOL) is integrated into water environmental chemistry lessons.

The experts evaluated the designed learning module, exceeding the criteria (overall rating = 3.52), where the content obtained the highest rating of 3.60 (Figure 4). Under content, the IM was rated highest in the following parameters: reflects a logical content instructional framework that is aligned with curriculum policies such as CMOs and syllabus; develops higher-level thinking skills; helps achieve the program's educational objectives and student outcomes; and intended learning outcomes specified in the course. Integrating sustainability and using localized or contextualized situations in teaching Environmental Chemistry are some highlights of the designed IM.

Furthermore, regarding instructional design (rating = 3.53), it is highly evident that the instructional framework is aligned with the curriculum designed in Environmental Chemistry since the learning outcomes, lessons, and activities in the developed modules are parallel with the syllabus. It is observed that the content matches the stated objectives, and the assessment matches the objectives.



Legend:

3.26 – 4.00 Exceeds criteria; 2.51 – 3.25 Meets criteria; 1.76 – 2.50 Partially meets criteria; 1.00 – 1.75 Does not meet criteria

Fig. 3: Ratings of the Designed Modules

Based on the criteria, the modules in water environmental chemistry exceed the established criteria and, therefore, could be used as teaching aids. Copyrighting the designed IM and including a reflection at the end of each lesson is highly recommended.

b) Levels of Achievement before and after Exposure to the Inquiry-Based Approach

In-depth analyses of students' responses were done to determine the improvement of students' understanding, application, and analysis of the concepts, ideas, and principles of Water Environmental Chemistry. The data were analyzed using the experimental group's pretest and posttest results. Table 1 shows the summary of weighted means in each cognitive skill of the experimental group in the pretest and posttest results.

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Table 1: Cognitive Skills before and after IBA Exposure

Level	Understanding				Applying				Analyzing				Overall			
	Pre-test		Posttest		Pre-test		Posttest		Pre-test		Posttest		Pre-test		Posttest	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
High	5	28	14	78	7	39	15	83	6	33	18	100	5	28	15	83
Average	8	44	4	22	9	50	3	17	10	56			12	67	3	17
Low	5	28			2	11			2	11			1	5		
Overall	18	100	18	100	18	100	18	100	18	100	18	100	18	100	18	100
Mean	7.8		11.1		8.3		11.3		14.4		19.8		29.5		42.2	
Interpretation	Average		High		Average		High		Average		High		Average		High	

Legend:

Level	Understanding		Applying		Analyzing		Overall	
High	9.35	14.00	9.35	14.00	14.67	22.00	33.35	50.00
Average	4.68	9.34	4.68	9.34	7.34	14.66	16.68	33.34
Low	0.00	4.67	0.00	4.67	0.00	7.33	0.00	16.67

It is worth noting that after the exposure to IBOL, students improved their performance from average to high in all cognitive skills based on their mean scores: understanding (from 7.8 to 11.1), applying (from 8.3 to 11.3), and analyzing (from, 14.4 to 19.8). Considering that all MAED students are young professionals taking post-graduate studies, specifically a Master of Arts in Education major in Science Education (MAED - Science), they still have a higher capacity to comprehend, apply concepts, and analyze situations. Several mentioned that they could understand the lessons and answer and formulate questions quickly. All of them could formulate research questions and conduct their research successfully despite the challenges they experienced. The students have already reached the Open Inquiry level, which is highly evident in the research conducted and the coming up of a terminal report.

According to Baltes and Kliegl (1986), younger adults are more efficient, adaptive, and intelligent than older persons. Considering that the subjects are all young professionals, using an Inquiry-Based Approach in a virtual environment makes them inquisitive, efficient and autonomous. They successfully assessed some water bodies' biological, physical, and chemical properties in Partido District in Camarines Sur, Philippines. The research they conducted is essential in monitoring the water quality of rivers. The open-inquiry approach in higher education is effective in enhancing the students' learning and attitudes. Dah et al. (2024) reviewed the positive impact of an open-inquiry approach on students' academic performance and was.

The difference in the means in various cognitive levels before and after IBL exposure in water environmental chemistry is determined using a t-test. Table 2 shows the t-test results determining the significant difference in the pretest and post-test achievement levels in each cognitive skill. Along with understanding, the pretest has a mean value of 7.78 with a standard deviation of 2.90, while the control group has a mean value of 11.11 with a standard deviation of 2.49. With a computed p-value of 0.0016 compared with 0.05 p-value, the achievement level in the pretest and post-test and understanding have a significant difference. The same trend will be observed along with the application and analysis skills. The t-test results revealed a significant difference in the cognitive levels before and after the treatment. It indicates that the employment of IBOL significantly enhanced students' academic achievement in Water Environmental Chemistry. The results of the study are in conformance with the studies of Duran & Dokme (2016), Shih et al. (2010), and Suarez et al. (2018).

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Table 2: Paired t-test Results before and after IBOL Employment

Cognitive Level		Mean	StDev	Variance	t-test	p-value
Understanding	Pretest	7.78	2.90	8.42	0.00116	
	Posttest	11.11	2.49	6.22		
Applying	Pretest	8.33	2.09	4.35	0.00129	
	Posttest	11.33	2.38	5.65		0.05
Analyzing	Pretest	14.44	2.43	5.91	8.315E-09	
	Posttest	19.78	2.16	4.65		
Over-all Achievement	Pretest	30.56	4.59	21.08		
	Posttest	42.22	5.08	25.83	287E-06	

Legend: p-value < 0.05 – significant
p-value > 0.05 – not significant

Integrating inquiry-based online learning in water environmental chemistry significantly improved the students' cognitive levels, specifically in the following domains: understanding, applying, and analyzing.

c) Students' Attitude towards the Inquiry-Based Learning in a Virtual Environment

The employment of inquiry-based learning (IBL) in a virtual environment could affect the student's attitude as perceived by the student respondents. Along with students' involvement in a virtual environment, many respondents strongly agree that IBOL enhanced their involvement/participation and actively engaged them in learning (Mode= 5). In the developed learning modules, the teacher or the students pose guide questions, tasks, or problems that engage the learners in the learning process. It is proven that this approach makes learning meaningful and decisive even in a virtual environment, regardless of age; thus, educators are urged to design learning resources that could be delivered in an online or flexible environment. These instructional materials will engage students in intellectual tasks and opportunities where they can create knowledge, Darling-Hammond, 2008; Jardine, Friesen & Clifford, 2008 (in Friesen & Scott, 2013).

Similarly, most respondents viewed that (Mode = 5) using inquiry-based strategies affects the students' attitudes. Regardless of the student's age and status, the IBOL improves their cognitive skills and attitude toward the approach and course, even in a virtual environment. Although there was no face-to-face interaction with their professor, MAED students successfully assessed a water body located in Camarines Sur, Philippines, as one of the main tasks of the course. They become more empowered, motivated, and independent learners using IBOL to learn environmental chemistry concepts. It aligns with Sandika & Frihidajati's (2018) study that inquiry-based learning in the introductory biology lecture significantly improved students' scientific attitudes. Thus, designing more instructional materials utilizing inquiry-based learning in other Science disciplines is highly recommended to improve students' academic achievement and attitude.

Most students perceived that the designed IBOL activities positively affected the learners' behavior. They claimed that they became more curious and inquisitive when they are empowered to raise questions Remarkably, exploring new ideas (Mode= 4) implies that the designed learning materials could be further improved by including more activities to make the students generate new ideas by finding new connections, looking at new perspectives, breaking old thinking patterns, and challenging preconceived notions.

Since the topic is water environmental chemistry, principles on environmental sustainability are integrated into the developed IM since some questions posted by the teacher and formulated by the students are in line with sustainability. Graduate students agreed that sustainability integration helped develop essential values such as displaying concern, promoting sustainable development, and becoming responsive to environmental issues (Mode= 4). All respondents recognized the significance of research in solving problems (Mode= 5). It is unsurprising because students were required to conduct a bio-physico-chemical assessment of rivers in Camarines Sur to determine their current conditions. They realized the importance of research in monitoring water bodies and determining the cause/s of pollution. However, it is worth noting that most learners rated promoting resource conservation with 3, indicating that this indicator did not fully contribute to the values formation as deemed by the respondents. It could be attributed to the designed IM needing to focus more on resource conservation. It is

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therefore suggested that similar studies be conducted focusing on education for sustainable development.

d) Benefits and Challenges of Utilizing IBOL in Environmental Chemistry

Sixteen (16) out of eighteen (18) MAEd students asserted that the use of inquiry-based online learning (IBOL) in water environment chemistry is effective in improving the student's academic performance and attitude. They mentioned some of the advantages of IBOL by learning essential concepts on environmental sustainability and assessing a body of water in Camarines Sur (Table 3). Most respondents claimed that the significance of the concepts to real-life scenarios towards sustainability and the development of cognitive skills are the top two benefits of IBOL in learning water environmental chemistry.

Table 3: Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) Benefits

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage
An effective tool for a more improved learning	1	6.25%
Real-life application towards sustainable development	6	37.5%
Acquire knowledge and information through learning by doing	1	6.25%
Make the learner autonomous, highly motivated, & responsible caretaker of the earth	3	18.75%
Develop curiosity, critical thinking skills, and reasoning abilities.	5	31.25%
Total	16	100%

Some of the student-participant textual responses include: *I like the Inquiry-based Approach. It allows us- MAEd students, to engage in the real world through different field activities; we are also given a chance to acquire knowledge and information through learning by doing.; Group learning and real-life application are evident.; Inquiry-based approach is suitable in our subject - Envi Chem. since it allows us to explore things and connect them to real-life experiences.; Using an inquiry-based approach, especially in online teaching, helps students develop their cognitive and reasoning skills. This approach is timely and significant in teaching science subjects since it develops curiosity and learners' critical thinking skills.*

Seven out of eighteen MAEd students mentioned that they did not experience any difficulty using IBL in their lessons, and it was easy to do the assigned tasks. Eleven students shared that they encountered several challenges while implementing the inquiry-based approach (IBL) in water environmental chemistry in a virtual environment; however, they managed to understand and apply the concepts and principles as revealed in their post-test results. Thirty-six percent (36%) of the graduate students described technological barriers such as internet connectivity problems and technology literacy as the main challenges in online learning. Intermittent internet connection is a common complaint of students living in rural areas. It is consistent with Solomo (2022) study that poor/intermittent internet connection is one of the identified barriers to online learning.

Twenty percent (20%) honestly admitted that the most difficult part in conducting research was formulating a research question in a virtual setting. Conflicting ideas were encountered and needed to be resolved; hence, they had virtual meetings.

Furthermore, thirty percent (30%) mentioned that coordination with the barangay officials to conduct the water assessment entailed time and effort. The COVID 19 restrictions were already lifted in some areas, and they were already required to physically report to their institutions/schools. Nevertheless, they mentioned that they were able to find ways to solve the issue to comply with the requirements. Teachers/mentors should continuously provide academic support to students, even in post-graduate studies, so that they can overcome these challenges and achieve academic success.

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V. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the educational system from traditional face-to-face to flexible learning. Teachers worldwide are challenged to prepare modules and other teaching materials to ensure student's learning and enhance their attitude in a virtual environment.

An instructional material in Environmental Chemistry, integrating the inquiry-based approach in an online environment, was developed and utilized in instruction. The module's objectives, learning activities, and assessment tasks were in congruence with the learning competencies written in the syllabus. The designed modules were assessed based on content, instructional design, organization, equity and accessibility, and presentation. It was rated "exceeds criteria"; therefore, it could be used as a teaching aid in SCI 207: Environmental Chemistry.

Exposure to IBOL improved students' performance from average to high in all cognitive skills based on their mean scores. The t-test results revealed a significant difference in cognitive levels before and after treatment. It indicates that using IBL has significantly improved students' academic performance. This result is consistent with the previous research findings (Duran & Dokme, 2016; Akkus et al., 2007; Spronken-Smith & Walker, 2010; Suarez et al., 2018; Huber & Moore, 2001).

As perceived by the MAED students, using IBOL in the designed instructional material helps improve their academic achievement and attitude toward the approach in an online platform. They claimed they become more autonomous, independent, inquisitive, and motivated. Although the impact of an approach to attitude could not be determined in a short period, the result of the study is limited to the respondents' perception only.

Moreover, most respondents claimed that the significance of the concepts to real-life scenarios toward sustainability and the development of cognitive skills are the top two benefits of IBOL in learning concepts and principles in Environmental Chemistry. On the other hand, student participants encountered challenges such as technological barriers and coordination with local officials to conduct the research. However, as mature professionals, they overcame those difficulties to attain academic success.

Similar instructions and learning materials using IBOL could be designed in other fields of science to improve students' academic performance and enhance attitudes at all levels of basic and higher education. In addition, similar studies focusing on education for sustainable development could be conducted to promote resource conservation further. To overcome learning barriers, teachers/mentors, even in post-graduate studies, should continuously provide academic support to students.

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From Homo Sapiens to Homo Excultus: Stages of Development and Formation

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Abstract- The study considers the stages of culture formation through the comprehension of the term Homo excultus. We define the role and place of Homo excultus in the formation of the value space of culture. An attempt has been made, using the latest research in neuroscience and other related disciplines, to explain more fully the reasons for the emergence of Homo excultus. We propose a new vision on the formation of the value system of culture, which began to be created from the moment of uniting people into small communities. The distinctive features of each culture were laid down in these communities in the process when the image of the surrounding world began to be created in the human psychic field. Culture and its values were formed simultaneously. Cultural codes emerged on the basis of values that had already been formed.

Keywords: stages of culture formation, homo excultus, biological and psychic factors, event-interval space, cognitive reality, cultural codes.

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From Homo Sapiens to Homo Excultus: Stages of Development and Formation

Oksana Leontyeva

Abstract- The study considers the stages of culture formation through the comprehension of the term Homo excultus. We define the role and place of Homo excultus in the formation of the value space of culture. An attempt has been made, using the latest research in neuroscience and other related disciplines, to explain more fully the reasons for the emergence of Homo excultus. We propose a new vision on the formation of the value system of culture, which began to be created from the moment of uniting people into small communities. The distinctive features of each culture were laid down in these communities in the process when the image of the surrounding world began to be created in the human psychic field. Culture and its values were formed simultaneously. Cultural codes emerged on the basis of values that had already been formed.

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I. Introduction

The cultural diversity of modern civilization raises a very important issue of finding optimal ways of harmonious coexistence of cultures and their mutual understanding. This issue is related to the realisation and acceptance that any culture is self-sufficient and has its own authentic vector of development. Any cultural otherness enriches civilization, bringing new knowledge of the world, making the human community more adaptable to it. The development of civilization with a focus on the dominance of one culture and its ideological templates leads humanity to a dead end and makes conflicts inevitable. Humanity loses the opportunity for its best development in an environment that is unsafe for it.

Cultures differ not only in language and conceptual picture of the world, but also in an almost elusive individual type of thinking, which probably has a stronger influence on these differences. The environment surrounding a person is different, hence the perception of it is different. 'Evolution is a change in the genetic constitution of a population. It is through changes in the types of genes that living things adapt to changes in the environment. Cognition is the process of forming representations, and with representations come language, knowledge, tools and fire. Thus, in the developmental history of living beings, culture appears as a new way of adapting to the environment, and living beings begin to adapt to changes in the environment through the development of culture' (Yuan 1987: 307).'(Yuan 1987: 307). Although language does not reflect the full reality of the world in which a culture develops, it remains the only tool for understanding its authenticity. Language, due to its limited resource, cannot accurately convey the semantic nuances of reality. The semantic nuances of cultural authenticity are revealed by its various non-linguistic means, such as intonation, tempo, melody, voice pitch, etc.

The term Homo Excultus introduced in the study demonstrates a new approach to understanding culture as a space of man-made values. Any knowledge gained by an individual becomes valuable to him or her because it makes the world around him or her safer. We assume that the values created by culture bearers as images of psychic reality that are encoded in language will help to better understand the authenticity of culture. This realisation and understanding of cultural authenticity will be a step towards deeper and better intercultural interaction.

II. Main Part

a) Stages in the Development of Homo Excultus and the Culture his/her Created

i. Stage One: The Emergence of Supra-Instinctive Emotions

The need to create a safe space for their existence gradually led Homo sapiens to discover a unique ability to generate values. The conditions for this were: a) the need for biological adaptability, b) the need for intra-tribal (social) adaptability, c) the need for adaptive connection of man and community with the surrounding world. The study introduces the concept of Homo Excultus as the quality of Homo sapiens to create values. Homo Excultus appears when the accumulated knowledge about nature created conditions for Homo sapiens to go beyond its biological and instinctive nature. This became possible due to the complexity of his psychic activity.

The psyche emerged to ensure the survival of living organisms and its development is associated with the increasing complexity of the environment (Shadrikov 2014: 45). The instincts of survival and self-preservation determined its psychic development. Sensory perception was the impetus for the

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development of more complex mental activity. Man 'observes' nature, tries to 'feel' it, and the instinct of curiosity (cognition) is activated. 'Obtaining information is the primary evolutionary goal of the senses and it has been the primary driver of evolution for millions of years' (Kidd, Hayden, 2016: 5). This instinct could only be activated in community, allowed humans to observe nature, 'study' it and react quickly to irritating (threatening) factors. The constant urge to explore something and make sense of one's surroundings is evolutionarily regarded as the ability that allowed humans to be highly adaptable and survive in challenging environments (Forss, Ciria, 2024: 980).

Curiosity has cognitive (cognitive), emotional and behavioral components (Le Kunff 2024). Being in a 'community' allowed humans to transfer an overactive (constantly aroused) sensory system (survival and self-preservation instinct) into a state of sensory deprivation (partial or complete cessation of external influence on one or more sensory organs, which leads to a reduced flow of nerve impulses to the central nervous system). The alternation of states of sensory excitation and sensory deprivation created conditions for the 'start' of psychic processes to 'create' a person's psychic reality and allowed to 'launch' elementary processes of subconscious 'analysis', in particular the processes of sorting the received information. Ivan Pavlov wrote: 'when the mind is directed towards reality, it receives from it various impressions, chaotically formed, scattered. These impressions must be in constant motion in your mind, like pieces in a kaleidoscope, in order to form in your mind that figure, that image, which corresponds to the system of reality, being a faithful imprint of it' (Pavlov 1927: 2).

Thus, the instinct of curiosity, the manifestation of which became possible only in community, launched the processes of 'constructing' the human psyche. This was the first 'product' of more complex processes taking place in the human brain. 'The reality which that the mind sets out to understand is largely hidden from it. Between reality and the mind stands and must stand a whole series of signals which completely obscure this reality' (Pavlov 1927: 3). Although there is evidence of similarities in cross-cultural exploratory behaviour based on the instinct of curiosity, according to Susan Edelman, 'cultures tend to differ both in their attitudes toward exploration and information seeking and in the range of situations that allow for the expression of different expressions of exploration, which is particularly true of the sensation-seeking motive' (Edelman 2007).

Supra-instinctive emotions were the first emotions that man expressed with the help of sounds imitating the sounds of nature and the world around him. The supra-instinctive emotion is the 'first' basic psychic emotion a person can express either being alone or in a human community. The exchange of supra-instinctive emotions became the primary communication within the human community and the first stage to the creation a better communication system - language. The activation of the articulatory apparatus of Homo sapience also led to the complication of brain processes. The first simple sound imitations of the sounds of nature caught by the human ear and attempts to reproduce them were the first building blocks of language. The human ear picks up sounds and sorts them out. Sound imitation allowed man to receive the first emotions, which involve body motor skills, including the activation of mimic processes. Obviously, that being in different biological natural environment, the man 'heard' different sounds, so he reproduced them differently.

Thus, in the processes of sound imitation the first 'rudiments' of culture are born, the natural process of gradual transition of Homo sapiens into Homo excultus is launched.

ii. *Stage Two: Creating an Event-Interval Space*

It should be noted that supra-instinctive emotions fulfilled two functions related to different instincts. The instinct of curiosity has been linked to sound imitation and perhaps gaining man's first 'pleasure' from such an activity. 'Even the simplest organisms exchange information for rewards. The results support the idea that novelty seeking displays an injection into the choice of motivation provided by the brain's reward system' (Kidd, Hayden 2015). The instinct for self-preservation, which was important not only to the individual but also to the community it belonged to, was also realised through sounds. 'Impulsivity (intrinsic to the survival instinct - author's note) and curiosity are highly contiguous in terms of their neural substrates and the ways in which they are behaviorally measured. The potential link between impulsivity and interest is indicated by the overlap of neural circuits that underlie them. The link between curiosity and impulsivity is seen through a developmental lens' (Marvin, Tedeschi, and Shohami 2020: 93).

Supra-instinctive emotions were accompanied not only by sound expression, but also created certain internal states, which, in most cases, were related to pleasure. Take as an example the sound 'om' in Hinduism and Vedic tradition. Its importance is great because pronouncing this sound stabilises the nervous system, calms a person's psyche and clarifies their mind. It is considered a sacred sound, a source of power. Today, this sound is only manifested in the practice of Hinduism and is considered one of its fundamental elements. In Judaism, it is believed that it was this sound that triggered the birth of everything in the world.

Different sounds formed (let's call it conditionally) a 'map' of supra-instinctive emotions and, accordingly, certain states. By means of sounds a man realized his basic instincts and was/is not rewarded in the form of a special brain state. Over time, sounds

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began to express human pleasure or displeasure and became manifest in the instinct to fulfil needs. It is likely that receiving pleasure or displeasure 'pushed' humans to create their own 'space' that would create more pleasure, i.e. be safe. Studies by neurophysiologists have shown that 'optical information from an external object is turned into a nerve impulse by a person's eyes, and when the nerve impulse is transmitted to the brain, it is turned into something that is identical to the external object. This identity allows the person to 'recognise' the external object instead of actually seeing 'it'. What is registered in the brain is something definite, which is different from the environment, which is composed of random factors, Because it has the properties of three-dimensional space, it is called the biological or psychic field, which is a field of certainty' (Yuan 1987: 285). Therefore, human beings strive to create a space of certainty that is safe for them and creates conditions for their further development.

Creating such a space became possible only in the human community. Being in nature and observing its statics or dynamics, man, imitating it, tries to create a similar space, which was limited by the possibilities of his sensory system, in particular the visual one. This space becomes a space of adaptability to the limitless world around man. Although 'the mind comprehending reality requires absolute freedom' (Pavlov 1927: 5), the recreated reality must be certain. The space of certainty is preferred as safer. But the instinct of curiosity forces man to make a constant choice between certainty and uncertainty. 'The results (of the research - author's note) demonstrate the power of the desire for a temporary solution to uncertainty as a motivator of choice' (Kidd, Hayden 2015).

Thus, the whole boundless space of nature becomes the biological-sensory (psychic) space of human habitation, while the regularities of the natural environment are preserved in it. The withering and rebirth of nature, or rainy season and drought season, etc., its alternating phenomena are repeated in the form of real events in the space of a person's location - birth and death, hunting/gathering and recreation, etc. The repeated events are fixed and fixed in the form of real events in the human space. At the same time, the repeated events are fixed and fixed in the mental space of a person as definite and recurring with clear intervals. A derivative of the human sensory system, the fixation field helps humans focus on events and the intervals at which those events recur. All complex processes leading to certainty are anchored in the human psychic field in the form of event-interval space. Despite the fact that 'vision is crucial to everyday life, but the mind is not always focused on what the eyes see. Mind wandering occurs frequently and is associated with impaired visual and cognitive processing of external information.' But 'observers are constantly and appropriately paying attention to their visual environment' (Krasich 2020). This proves the fact that each culture filled its event-interval space differently.

Repeated events at intervals become an essential part of human life and community, are endowed with a special status and become a cult. For example, this is how the cult of ancestors emerged, which has existed and still exists in all cultures without exception. Event intervals allowed us to 'anticipate' the processes occurring in life and react to them, which made the event-interval space more holistic and safe. And so, each formed community creates within its life activity its unique event-interval space as a space of safety. In each isolated event-interval space, a different understanding of recurring events emerged, that were essential to community resilience. Both external (natural environment and community location) and internal human factors influenced the determination of intervals at which events recurred. Therefore, it is not surprising that different cultures today have a different system of spatial eventuality and a completely different concept of time. For example, in Persian culture the festival of fire and the tradition of jumping over fire are associated with Nowruz - the first day of spring, which occurs on the first day of the zodiacal sign Aries. In Russian culture and tradition the fire festival is linked to Maslenitsa, fire being a symbol of the burning of the old and the arrival of the new, associated with the coming of spring. It is tied to the Easter holiday and is usually celebrated 56 days before Easter. In Chinese culture fire is one of the 5 basic elements by which the world was created. It is especially revered with red as a symbol of fire to demonstrate the birth of the new. For example, it is the main colour of traditional Chinese weddings.

The event-interval space created by man gradually 'fills up' like the filling of his natural environment. The complication of psychic processes leads man further and further away from his instinctive actions and his wandering mind 'creates' the invisible. And the same mind tries to explain the invisible created by it and to make the psychic reality of man as safe and definite as possible. This is how the first division of the event-interval space into the visible, fixed by vision, and the invisible, created by the mind, is obtained. The invisible is a) the hidden, which the human eye cannot see; b) the perceptible - hearing, touch, taste and smell.

Thus, the creation of event-interval space was a necessary condition for the better adaptability of man to the environment and his development on the way to becoming a human being as Homo excultus. This was possible only in community. In the psychic field of certainty, on which the psychic reality of a person is built, the event-interval space is divided into components - the visible space and the invisible space created by the mind.

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iii. *Stage Three: Complication of Emotions*

It is supposed that the stage of appearance of human event-interval space and the stage of emotional reproduction of cognised 'objects' in human psychic reality are interconnected and may have arisen approximately in the same time period. According to the James-Lange theory, emotions arose as a result of the human awareness of reflex physiological changes in the body in response to an external stimulus that was either satisfactory (bringing pleasure) or unsatisfactory (causing displeasure), such as cold and heat, sun and rain. The physiological sensations experienced by man became the prototype of the first 'physiological' human emotions - human satisfaction or dissatisfaction. M. Oggiano, referring to existing research, concludes that 'emotions predispose the organism to recognise and respond to specific circumstances in a timely manner. Situations define ancestral problems, and the responses illustrate solutions that were more better to evolutionary success' (Oggiano 2022). Somehow the first basic 'emotions' are related to environmental influences and are present in the event-interval space created by humans. A brain modulates primary emotions and associated behavior (Romanchuk 2023: 164). 'Such 'emotions' are basic and universal to any culture, but they are non-identical. Over time, this non-identity will become more complex and entrenched in the language of any culture.

With the complication of psychic reality, basic emotions also become more complex, and state emotions appear - fear, joy, aggression, fright and others. With the emergence of complex emotions, the life of the man himself becomes an event for him, because the emotions of the state are directly connected with the man himself, as if 'born' by the human body. The man begins to 'feel' these emotions, to feel them in himself. 'Emotional states have evolved to allow us to deal with environmental challenges in a more flexible, predictable and context-dependent way than reflexes, but this does not yet require the full flexibility of volitional, planned behaviour. They evolved to deal with specific, recurring themes in our environment; and because most of the specific sensory features of these themes vary widely, they are also critically related to learning' (Romanchuk 2023: 168).

These complex emotions require a more complex form of expression, they are not satisfied with single sounds. Man begins to construct these emotions by combining different sounds. Apparently, this is how the roots of words began to form. With the emergence of complex emotions, a 'map' of emotions emerges, in which supra-instinctive emotions, experienced equally by the whole community, and complex emotions as emotions of eventuality (the author's term), which arise as a consequence of some internal event experienced by a person. Similar internal events experienced by members of a community are conveyed by the same sound construction.

This is further reflected in the language of the culture, on the basis of which an emotional map of the culture is formed. Emotional maps of cultures differ from one another. There are no cultures in the world with identical emotional maps (emotional pictures). Such maps (pictures) are very persistent and closed, i.e. a culture cannot 'borrow' a fragment of its emotional map from another culture. We cannot claim that a person with the emotion 'radost' (Russian), a person with the emotion 'joy' (English), a person with the emotion of 喜悦 (Chinese), a person with an emotion **ọ́ṅụ** (Igbo, Nigeria) etc., experience the same reaction to the same internal state or external event and understand it in the same way. In addition, the same event can evoke different, sometimes completely opposite emotions in people, according to the emotional maps of their cultures.

The fixation of emotions in the psychic reality of man and their expression in the form of already coherent sounds and elementary words become a prerequisite for the beginning of the formation of man as Homo excultus. In this case, instinctive patterns of behaviour receive an emotional impulse and become more diverse. At the same time there is an emotional filling of the event-interval space, it becomes 'speaking' or 'emotionally expressing itself'. We assume that the appearance of rock painting is connected with this stage of Homo sapience development. At this stage, a 'shift' of the developmental axis of Homo sapience as a biological species to Homo Excultus as a 'cultured' biological species becomes noticeable. Rock art demonstrates the stages of 'adaptability' of Homo sapience to the environment. While in the first drawings we see very simple depictions of animals or birds, in later drawings they are depicted in the likeness of some kind of 'deity'.

Thus, the emergence of more complex emotions triggered the formation of complex sounds, resulting from the combination of simple sounds with each other, which became the prototype of words. Emotions also began to 'anchor' in psychic reality the connections correlated with the object world. Thus, the event-interval space created by the human psyche is gradually filled.

iv. *Stage Four: Filling of Parts of the Event-Interval Space. The Emergence of the Sacred*

With the emergence of event-interval space in the mental field, the necessity of filling it as a need arose, which consolidated the established links within the space and thus formed its definiteness. The question of what is primary - thinking or emotions, did not arise at this stage of Homo Excultus' development. Recent scientific studies show the interest of different sciences in this issue and try to explain the connection

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between thinking and emotions not only from a psychological point of view, but also from the position of neuroscience (Zhou etc.) and physics (E.Deli, L. Perlovsky etc.). 'Real human intelligence runs through the whole process of emotion. The core and motivation of rational thought are derived from emotion. Intelligence without emotion does not exist or make sense. Emotional thinking involves complex emotional factors during cognitive processes the ability to process information and use emotions to integrate information to make good decisions and reactions' (Zhou 2021).

Primary supra-instinctive emotional states were the basis for the generation of more complex emotions. According to Zhou, emotion is a complex and largely automated programme of action that includes specific ideas and patterns (Zhou 2021). Emotions condition human behaviour (Beck 2015). Ancient man explored the natural world, making connections with the world around him and sought safety (self-preservation). The world for man was one, indivisible. It was felt, sensed and understood at the same time. Therefore, all the connections that man made with the world around him were indivisible - they were both thoughts and emotions at the same time. Much later, these established bonds became sacred as it was necessary to maintain safety. This allowed people to further explore and adapt to the world around them. Thus, the connections created in man's psychic field that could support him in the surrounding world of uncertainties were sacralised by man. At the same time, the event-interval space was sacralised.

a. *Totemism as the First Sacred Connection between Man and the Natural World*

The world around man was dynamic and constantly changing, it could not be static. The objects and implements of labour that man produced were static, but everything that man used to make them was in motion. Nature around man was animated, its spoke to him with her natural elements, its was stronger than man. The world that surrounded him was also stronger. Man had to either submit to the elements of nature or absorb all their power. The animals (birds) that lived in his neighbourhood had strength, according to man. The animals were strong, uncontrollable and therefore posed a danger to humans. Man needed to establish a connection with the animal world. Man made an animal (bird) the ancestor of his tribe (family). Obviously, the first rock paintings depicting animals (birds) belong to this period of human development. The drawing was to fix, to make static, the animal in motion, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the drawing indicated the place of worship as a place of connection with the ancestor of his tribe. 'The liveliness and expressiveness of the wall paintings and the lack of composition in them probably indicate that the main task of the Palaeolithic artist was to convey in the image precisely the strength and power of animals' (Kuzmina 2007; 4). This is how the sacred began to emerge as a special link that would connect man with the natural world and make his life more secure

Rock art depicts the earliest cult that emerged in the human community. This first fixed connection of man with the natural world was reflected in his psychic reality. Man honoured the animal (bird) as the ancestor of the tribe and tried to inherit its qualities and strength. In ancient Egypt, the pharaoh was depicted as a man with the head of an animal. This emphasised the fact that the Pharaoh's lineage was derived from his ancestor, which was believed to be a totem animal. These very first beliefs become relic supra-biological cultural programmes. These ancient ideas turned out to be so stable that they set strong spiritual guidelines even today (Kuzmina, 2007). To this day, we find traces of the early totem cult in the family coats of arms of ancient aristocratic families. They can also be found on the coats of arms of many countries and cities.

The image of animals or birds became the first established fixed connection with the visible world. Having established fixed connections with the surrounding world, man began to fill his event-interval space. It may seem interesting that in many cultures, deceased ancestors resided high in the mountains. The notion of mountains as a place of ancestors' stay can be found in the Indonesian cultural community and in African tribal cultures. In addition, the rock divided the world into two parts - the world of the living and the world of ancestors. On this side of the rock, on which the ancestral totem is depicted, is the human, on the other side of the rock, behind the depiction of the ancestral totem, is the ancestor. No less significant were the caves in the mountains (e.g. in Spain), which divided the world into the manifest and the secret (underground) world. To this day, in some cultures, particularly in Indonesia, cemeteries are set up in the forest, where the body of the deceased is hung from a tree. There are also cemeteries in the mountains, where the body of the deceased is placed on a rock. This does not testify to the 'backwardness' of the culture, but, on the contrary, proves that these cultures have preserved strong primary sacred ties established in deep antiquity. It is these sacral ties that determine the value system of the community.

In the Igbo culture of Africa (Nigeria), the cult of the animal still exists. The cult became a motif for proverbs and was preserved in them. What is also interesting is the fact that these are the kind of proverbs that are good for developing the mind of a child. These proverbs have a double meaning, they contain value orientations and reflect the value system of the Igbo people formed in ancient times. The new proverbs are also built on this ancient model, thus supporting and preserving the value system of the Igbo culture. And so, the totem ancestor was the 'guardian' of the whole tribe

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- both the living and the dead. We assume that it is from these first totem beliefs that the modern concept of ancestral bond, i.e. the bond between the living and all the dead, originated. In the Abramist religions, all the dead go to heaven. And so, the totemic cult became the first sacral connection between man and the natural world. The same cult became the first image for the emergence of a system of values that was adhered to by a large clan (nation) after many centuries. And it wasn't just animals that could be totems. According to W. Hopkins, the same role could be fulfilled by the sea, sun, wind, rain, thunder, plants, for example, in Peru - the sea and corn (Hopkins 1918:147) or celestial luminaries, especially stars, in Semitic cultures. In any case, the totem was supposed to secure a person's life and help him adapt to the ever-changing world around him.

These first and most ancient sacred connections are preserved not only in the traditions of cultures, but also in the earliest proverbs and fairy tales that have survived. In them, irrespective of culture and language, the life of the animal world, or the elements of nature, or the world of plants is reflected. And they are the ones that contain the main sprouts of value orientations that exist in a culture. A child, listening to fairy tales and repeating proverbs and sayings, 'plunges' first of all into the value world of his culture. These values seem to enter into him. And the whole further life a person lives in this value system, he is its carrier. It is the value system that ensures the life of culture.

Thus, the first established sacral connection between man and the natural world was the cult of totemism. The semantics of this connection demonstrates the human desire to receive certain help from the totem animal (bird), the desire to obtain the qualities possessed by the animal (bird) for better adaptability to the environment or the need to expand the emotional background in connection with nature through the totems of elements or plants.

b. *Animism as the Next Sacral Connection of Man with the Natural World*

Man saw how the animal adapted to the elements of nature and tried to understand how he (man) could do the same. So his first established connection allowed him to 'nurture' the power the animal possessed. 'Nurturing' such qualities triggered psychic processes to create more complex emotions. But man was still establishing connections only at the level of his sensory system. The development of his psychic processes occurred gradually through an understanding of the object world. The object world provided him with security - dwelling, tools of labour, etc. The elements of nature required a completely different connection. Man perceived the various states of nature and the world around them through the prism of complex emotions and complex concepts. Man 'tried on' their state to himself and looked for similarities with his inner state. This was a more complex system of interaction with the natural world. Nature became part of man's inner state. The number of elements and phenomena of nature depended on the place of human habitation. The proof is found in the root bases of languages. So, for example, the word 'dusha (soul)' in Russian is etymologically related to Sanskrit *dhe-'wind, earth, breathe, gasp' and goes back to older and simpler linguistic roots: *dъ 'to make, divide' and *hъ 'to move, set in motion'. In Arabic, the meaning of the ancient root denotes spaciousness and stability, derived from the older root yaa - wind. Yaa is the sound that man hears. Yaa has been reversed to signify كسرة (kasnah/(soul)) - crumb, grain of sand, what was before it. In Chinese, 'soul' comes from combining the sounds (syllables) for 'ghost' and 'cloud'. It also refers to the spirit or emotions of people. Each human community was content with the most 'necessary' elements and states of nature that directly affected its life.

Thus, at the stage of the emergence of animistic beliefs, the individualisation of communities intensified. The same elements of nature in each community had different names, they could cause different emotions and could have different manifestations, they already initially had functional differences, which were reflected in the rudiments of language as a more complex means of communication. Through the animal-totem (or bird-totem) man makes a more complex connection with the surrounding world, which becomes sacred through the ritual of sacrifice. Animal sacrifice helped to strengthen this connection and 'calm' the elements or 'strengthen' their help. We assume that an animal was sacrificed, which was used by their totem in its natural environment. It was a tasty animal for the totem. So the human community showed their submission to the power of the totem. It was the first step towards the emergence of hierarchy.

Emotional states become an important part of the human psychic world. Probably, the ritual of sacrifice, which was accompanied by human movements (dance), sound rhythm (drumming, music) brought a person to a certain psychic state - ecstasy. Ecstasy not only caused one to feel joy and lightness, but also gave one a special power. It was another power, invisible to man, which was separate from the power he had inherited from the animal. Imitating the sequence of the movements of nature and 'feeling' the elements gave him a different power that he had not experienced before. The state of this special strength was obtained by man through a ritual in which sound and movement were united, allowing man to form another connection with the world of the ecstatic. This was the first non-object connection with the world of sensation and it was sacred. In the human psychic world, this connection mapped the 'psychic' of nature into the psychic of man. This is how the gods of nature

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and its elements came into being. They already existed in the psychic and were felt by man in his emotional states. The emotional state became sacred. In languages we find many examples of this. So the name of all natural deities consisted of several sounds with meaning or roots of future words. Writing in ancient cultures was semantic (sacred). Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, Chinese hieroglyphs, runic writing, cuneiform, and kipu were sacred. In non-written cultures, which still exist today, it is preserved in the lengthening of sound, doubling of syllables, joining of inverted syllables, etc.

The emotional state contained a reference - a sound or name, usually one-syllable - to the highest governing deity. The supreme deity appears in all pre-written cultures. Despite all the individual differences in it, what is common is that it bridges the two worlds - the human psychic world and the natural world. The name of the supreme deity concealed all the object and 'spiritual' part of the cult and community Each community created its own sacred connection. Many African tribes are examples of this. Being in territorial proximity to each other these tribes have different sacred and their languages express it differently. These languages are quite different in sound structure and grammatical structure, and they lack both common lexical units and associatively similar lexical units. This suggests that language and culture were shaped around the sacred.

Thus, emotional states become an important part of human adaptation to the world around him. Formed sacral connections are very stable, as they are fixed in the psychic reality of a person and are able to cause certain emotions. The world is invisible, but we feel it through sound, touch, etc.

c. *Separating Sacred Connections in Psychic Reality to Create a Value System*

Culture was formed around sacred connections, a cult that displayed those connections, and a language that became the guardian of the sacred. Culture can be considered formed when the event-interval space is sufficiently filled with sacred connections and the images they create that help the individual and the community adapt to the rapidly changing world around them and provide certainty within the community itself. In addition, a system was formed that traces the interdependence of the sacral connection and the image built on its basis and fixed, their semantic correspondence and mutual sub-ordination. Culture emerged as a consequence of the display in the mental reality of man of the unity of man and the world around him. The connections a person makes with the world around them are individualised. They ensure his inner security, are valuable and are defined as sacred. From these connections, which are of value, a picture of the world is formed. According to neuroscientists, only 25% of value connections are formed in response to a brain signal of reward. This signal is associated with a person receiving the emotion of satisfaction. This fact demonstrates the correlation between action, thinking and emotion in the human psyche. It can be considered as a proof that the event-interval space of a person was holistically filled. The primary roots of languages also reflect this correlation, namely the relationship between action, thought and emotion (see examples b).

All members of the community create in the process of their collective cognitive and psycho-emotional life a cumulative world of value. The way of expressing such a world is language. All cultural communities that exist today have retained early sacred connections in their languages. In written languages, in which individual letters, syllables or lettering already contain a certain meaning and words are constructed by adding existing meanings, value meanings are on the surface. This creates a general atmosphere of certainty in society. Such languages include languages with hieroglyphic writing (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.) and languages with ornamental writing (Arabic, Hindi, etc.). Languages that use the alphabet are sign languages. The letters do not carry any meaning. The native speakers of such written languages experience a kind of disconnection from the original sacred source. This leads to existential crises within the society. Non-written cultures also retain ancient value meanings in their language. Both written and unwritten cultures have formed philosophical systems. In both written and unwritten cultures, they are practical and adapted to man's understanding of the connections between himself and the world around him. In alphabetic cultures, philosophical systems are more theoretical, and there is usually no or little connection between man and the world around him.

Let us give some examples. The teachings of the Buddha (and Buddhism itself) arose from the 'fusion' of the philosophical systems of cultures and civilizations that had existed before. Apparently, the philosophical systems on which the Buddha relied were similar. This syncretic teaching demonstrates a value - the unity of man and the world around him. In practice, it displays the sacral connection of man's reunion with his psychic reality and the possibility of transcending its certainty. The value system is built on man's ascent to his natural beginning through transcending certainty.

Confucius, a contemporary of Buddha, also created his teachings based on the 'fusion' of philosophical systems of different tribal cultures. His teachings are also syncretistic. Obviously, the philosophical systems of the cultures that Confucius united in his teachings were different. The teachings of Confucius reflect the sacred connection between man and the world through the unity of society and nature.

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The value system created by him shows man as a part of the community. Human development is inherent in the development of the community: the path of all together. Confucius' system also suggests the individual's transcendence of certainty, but through understanding and acceptance of the other. There is a hierarchy in this value system.

Thus, the philosophical systems of Buddha and Confucius point to different directions of human development and represent different value systems.

Cultures that embraced the Abrahamic religions created something different. For example, modern Arabic writing emerged at the same time as the teachings of Muhammad. Although Arabic has an alphabet, but the representation of letters is reminiscent of ancient cuneiform writing which was meaningful. Ancient cultures that used cuneiform script created their own value systems. The Arabic literary language embraced many ancient cultures whose languages are now part of the Semitic language family. The Qur'an has preserved the ancient meanings of these cultures. Obviously, this is why Arabic literary language as the language of the Qur'an is considered sacred. The extension of the ancient meanings recorded in the Qur'an to cultures that belong to other language families have not been able to assimilate into the meanings of their value systems. For example, the Pashto people who practice Islam and their language belongs to the Indo-European language family. Even in ancient times, before Islam, Pashto had established its value system, which is prescribed in Pashtunwalai. In cases where the honour and dignity of a person is at stake, Pashtuns refer to Pashtunwalai. The Igbo people of Nigeria, who are Catholics, actively use animal proverbs in their daily lives to reflect moral values. These values were formed in ancient times.

The above examples show that the sacred connections formed in antiquity are very persistent. Although cultures and their languages may be assimilated in the process of long contact, the sacred ties they built before remain. These links are present in rituals, myths, legends, proverbs, etc. and thus the value system is preserved.

Thus, any culture fills its event-interval space with meanings on the basis of created sacral connections. These connections are reflected in the value system of culture by means of language. The value system built on sacral connections does not disappear even in case of complete linguistic assimilation.

d. *Values as a Foundation for Shaping the Cognitive Reality of Culture*

Filled with all sacral connections and images created with their direct participation, the event-interval space, despite its definiteness, gradually turns into a space of knowledge accumulation. The ways of accumulating knowledge differ across cultures. Each person has his/her own special 'way' (method) of accumulating knowledge and receiving 'reward' for it. Obviously, the search for the next 75% of knowledge takes place in a way that is already habitual for the human brain, as it has already received 25% of knowledge for 'reward'. This is the biochemical nature of sacral connections. Filling images created through sacred connections with meaning is a unique way of adapting to the ever-changing world around us and creating value.

Thus, the event-interval space becomes a space of value creation, in which knowledge itself is a value. Event-interval space constantly filled with knowledge becomes a cognitive reality.

Cognitive reality imposes certain frameworks on the space of culture, Cognitive frameworks are individual. They include the codes of culture, built on the oldest sacred connections and correlated with the oldest archetypes, and the symbolic system, created on the basis of images and their meanings. Symbolic systems attempt to 'preserve a fund of shared meanings through which each person interprets his or her life experience and organises his or her behaviour' (Geertz 2004: 150). Differences between cultures consist of differences in cognitive frameworks, differences in the image of the world, its expression and its symbols, and differences in psychological reality that depend on the form of expression of perception (Jaballah 2006). This explains why similarly functioning phenomena take different forms in different cultures. Understanding a culture is possible only through immersion in its 'imaginary universe', through dialogue with its representatives, which allows us to find mutual understanding (Kovalenko, 2010: 18).

Thus, the cognitive reality of culture is built on the basis of an already formed system of values. The decisive factor in the emergence of cultural diversity was the sacred links built by man with the diverse world around him.

v. *Stage Five: Formation of Culture: Formation of Culture Codes*

a. *Codes and Stages of Cultural Development*

Of course, every culture has been shaped by the value system that its community has created. Modern science distinguishes three stages of culture formation, based on the division of time frames:

1) *Material:* Adaptation to the surrounding world began with the creation of tools for biological survival;
2) *Institutional:* Creating ethical and social norms for comfortable living within the community,
3) *Spiritual:* To stabilise internal emotional and psychological balance.

The existing scientific approach to the formation of culture does not reflect the fact of human psychic

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development. First of all, culture emerged in the psychic field of man and found its reflection in the material and immaterial world. Consequently, all three stages of cultural development were in close connection with each other at each stage of the formation of man as Homo excultus and improved simultaneously with it. Such a close connection was able to ensure the maximum adaptability of man to the conditions of the constantly changing world around him and make him more stable in the internal and external reality.

The event-interval space was filled with values created on the basis of sacral connections and knowledge obtained on their basis. Values became a determinant for obtaining knowledge. Subsequently, values and knowledge formed a system of symbols by means of which the received knowledge was transmitted, stored and conceptualised. Symbolic forms are endowed with more archaic meanings. They correlate with the processes of conceptualisation, i.e. the generation of new meanings. 'The symbol, write M. Mamardashvili and A. Pyatigorsky, is 'such a strange Thing, which at one end "appears" in the world of things and at the other end "sinks" in the reality of consciousness' (Mamardashvili Pyatigorsky 1999: 26). 'The concept is the flip side of the symbol, because, unable to be expressed in a sign and having no meaning, the symbol gives rise to the concept - the act of grasping a holistic spiritual experience, the experience of understanding or silence' (Fadeeva 2014).

The primary amount of knowledge that a person acquired through life experience is small. Therefore, no extensive system was required to describe them. With the accumulation of knowledge, a system of their regulation was required, the result of which led to the creation of a system of culture codes. Culture codes were formed throughout the formation of man as Homo excultus. Cultural codes are a product of human emotional and cognitive activity and differ in each culture. The very concept of 'cultural code', according to Goodova and Yuan, is historically formed and changing in time, expanding with the growth of knowledge in applied sciences, philosophical sciences determine the order of analysing the phenomenon of 'cultural code' from the level of sign system to cultural tradition, and then the semantic structures of the text in each culture (Goodova, Yuan 2022). Cultural codes are defined as symbols and systems of meanings that are relevant to a representative of a certain culture (Hyatt, Simons 1999).

Thus, the codes of culture are the product of human emotional and cognitive activity, they are formed historically and can partially change in time. At each stage of its development culture 'compacted' its codes by creating symbols and concepts.

b. *Ornament as a Material and Spiritual Code of Culture*

One of the codes of culture is drawings and ornaments. There is an opinion that ornaments preceded writing. 'Originally writing was of a drawing nature, later pictography appeared, which evolved into modern writing systems. However, it is not always clear how to draw the line between the drawing and pictographic stages of the development of writing, what is considered a drawing and what a pictogram. An important link in this chain is missing - ornament, the inclusion of which may help to draw this boundary' (Samzhiev 2002). In ornamentation it is not only the colour used and applied that is important, but also the lines and curves that resemble a hologram. The ornaments of each culture are different. For example, the ornaments of a Greek amphora and a Chinese vase, dated at the same time, are different. These differences initially appeared in small, sometimes almost invisible, details, as each emerging culture made 'assembly' of the material world according to its own 'scale': the natural environment and human needs differed. According to T. Chernigovskaya: 'We face a paradox: the brain is in the world, and the world is in the brain and to a greater extent determined by it' (Chernigovskaya 2012: 41).

Most ornaments resemble a hologram. Such ornaments is possible only when the world is indivisible, exists as a whole, and is perceived holistically overnight. Everything, including matter and consciousness, functionally influences the whole, and through the whole, all components. Everything, including thoughts and actions, grows from a unified basis, causing any change in one part to be immediately accompanied or reflected in corresponding changes in all other parts (Belokopytov 2012: 2). Preserving the integrity of the world through the integrity of its perception, ornament became the basic code of the emerging culture. Obviously, ancient ornament contributed to the birth of the form of writing. Today we can see it in the pictorial calligraphy of Arab culture, Persian culture (Shekaste) and Chinese culture. Calligraphic (ornamental) writing is an ancient way of comprehending the world and reflects all the processes occurring in it. Probably, further mastering and 'assembling' of the material world was based on the pattern of ornament. Ornament became one of the first spiritual values of culture 'imprinted' on a material medium (vases, dishes, etc.).

In addition, the ornament had a certain power and this power influenced the person. 'Infinity creates its dynamic character. Stopped ornament, ornament without dynamics gives us, for example, the swastika or the five-pointed star, also being elementary units of influence' (Potsetsov 2001: 18). The stopped ornament is a stable symbolism. The stable symbolism became the first, fixed in language, codes of culture. These are basic codes, and they are unchangeable.

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With the emergence of language, the picture of the world began to be 'reproduced fragmentarily in the lexical units of language, but language itself does not directly reflect this world, it reflects only the way of representation (conceptualisation) of this world by the national linguistic personality' (Wierzbicka 1999: 434). Symbols were a response to the fragmentation of language's representation of holistic reality. Language could not work with wholeness because it is dynamic. Ornament as a hologram is dynamic. A stopped ornament is fragmentary. But a symbol stores dynamics, so it is multivalent. Torn ornament testifies to the closing of the code of culture on itself.

Thus, ornament becomes the first and one of the oldest codes of culture. It expresses the value of the integrity of the world, is a 'way' of building a value system and a way of influencing the person of culture, and also serves as a marker (pointer) of the unfolding of the cognitive reality of culture and the boundaries of its cognitive framework.

c. *The Regulative as an Institutional and Spiritual Code of Culture*

Regulations are a special kind of fixed meaning associated with values. These are the rules of harmonious life and human development. Examples are Sanskrit Vedas, Avesta of Zoroastrians, Pashtunlai of Pashtuns, 'Six Classical Works' of Confucius, Bible, Koran, etc., which have attained the status of sacred. Regulators are the basis for the institutional life of society. They also regulate its spiritual life and represent value-based worldviews. For example, both the Avesta, written by Zoroaster, and Pashtunvalai, the unwritten code of Pashtun rules, derive from one ancient Indo-Iranian source, the Rigveda. This indicates that the ancient system of values, formed within one cultural environment, is still preserved as its members disperse. Despite the creation of their new communities and cultural environments by the representatives of archaic culture, the primary system of values remains the regulator of their lives. Proverbs and sayings, fairy tales, bylinas and other folklore forms that contain value meanings can act as regulators.

Language, reproducing in a fragmentary way the picture of the world, 'protects' the value sense, fixes one meaning for it and regulates its use. Man's knowledge of the surrounding reality and the way he categorises the world are expressed in language. 'Language is the only means capable of helping us to penetrate into the hidden sphere of mentality, for it determines the way the world is divided in a particular culture' (Maslova 2001: 8). Language constructions (e.g. kulturams), lexical units themselves and their meanings can also act as regulators.

Let us consider the example of the word 'prophet' and the regulative semantic series 'prophet-sage-saint'. The Christian religious tradition uses its ancient Greek meaning 'diviner', which is the meaning assigned to Jesus Christ. In early ancient Greece, philosophy and mathematics were inseparable. Number '3' at Pythagoras was considered sacral as was a symbol of triunity of the person in this world - birth, life, death - and correlated as birth - soul, life - body, death - spirit. Jesus is the manifestation of God in a human body. The sage as a man endowed with the highest knowledge (wise and correct life) in his behaviour should be guided not by the orders established by people, but by the laws of virtue. Later philosophers (lover of wisdom) began to be called sages. Saint - religiously revered, divine, possessing the highest divine perfection, highly honoured, relating to the dearest and most cherished. The root of the word was sacredly marked as far back as pre-Christian times. Holiness is transferred from nature to the human, because it originally referred to nature and had the meaning of blossoming, fruition. In Christianity, however, it is meant as growth, blossoming of the spiritual.

In Arabic culture, 'prophet' is one who delivers news from a third source and denotes truthful news of great importance. The word refers to worldly knowledge and important worldly news of great importance received by a person who has attained the exalted spiritual position of prophethood - truthfulness, honesty, nobility, moderation, etc. In Islam, Mohammed is honoured as a prophet who brought important news about the spiritual development of man. Actually about the development of his virtues which are values. The Quran is a book about the formation and maintenance of the sacred connection between man and God, that is, about values. Jesus, according to the Arabic regulative, is a prophet but in no way a son of God. Mohammed is a prophet and a sage because he comprehends knowledge of the principles of things and their consequences, abounding in his grace, insightful. Holiness, a saint is a general state of honour (perceived by believing people as connected to God), worthy of spiritual respect or devotion, or inspiring awe and reverence among believers.

In Chinese tradition, a 'prophet' is a philosopher and questioner with excellent human qualities. The prophets in China were Confucius and Zhuangzi. The word is also correlated with 'saint' (sage) as a person of great goodness whose thoughts can influence the whole country or even the whole world. In traditional Chinese culture, 'sage' refers to a person who knows and performs well, and is a limitless existence in a limited world. All talents and morals are the source of holiness as a personal pursuit of the great good and beautiful, that is, it is the perfection of man.

Thus, regulatives can be considered as codes of culture. Regulatives express value meanings and support the value system of culture.

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d. *Concepts as Codes of Cognitive Reality*

Cognitive reality can be conceptualised. A concept is a micro-model of culture, and culture is a macromodel of a concept' (Zusman 2001: 41). Concepts are capable of reducing the diversity of observed and imagined phenomena to something unified, bringing them under one rubric, which facilitates the processing of subjective experience by bringing information under certain categories and classes developed by society' (Kubryakova 1996: 90).

Homo excultus gradually cognised the world and systematised the new knowledge gained. Any new knowledge that filled the event-interval space became part of the human cognitive reality. Since man's psychic field was defined, his cognitive reality also gravitated towards certainty. Only systematised meanings, which scientists would later call a conceptual system, could provide certainty. ''A concept is a mental formation that replaces us in the process of thought an indefinite set of objects of the same kind',' writes S. Askoldov. The scientist distinguishes cognitive and artistic concepts. The main function of a concept is substitution. Its nature is such that it is conceptual, schematic. Such concepts substitute, process the area of substituted phenomena from a single and at that general point of view, whereas artistic concepts are individual. Any work of art contains fewer meanings than the author would like to put in, at the same time the perceiver reveals and speculates the work in his or her own way, which sometimes gives rise to completely unexpected interpretations even for the author. Hence the conclusion that the concept is not a reflection of the replaced set, but 'its expressive symbol, revealing only the potency to do this or that' (Askoldov 1997). As a result, the concept is revealed as a 'marked possibility', a prefiguring symbolic projection, a symbol, a sign, potentially and dynamically directed towards the sphere it replaces. Dynamism and symbolism define the potential nature of a concept from different angles. The cohesion of concepts generates a meaning that surpasses the meaning of each element taken separately (Askoldov 1997). Concepts represent a linked emotion and thought. Different manifestations of mentality generate different types of concepts (Sorokina 2011). According to Y.S. Stepanov, a concept is the basic cell of culture in the mental world of a person, a clot of culture in human consciousness, it is not so much thought as experienced (Stepanov 2001).

As an example, let us consider the concept 'joy' in Russian, Arabic and Chinese cultures. These cultures belong to different language families. In Russian culture the concept 'joy' includes: cheerful, great, inner, feeling, sensation, mental, pleasure, satisfaction. Arab culture views the concept 'joy' as vigour, satisfaction in the heart, happiness, pleasure, fun. Chinese culture does not conceptualise the word 'joy' and considers it only as harmony, happiness and cheerfulness. The semantic rows of the concept 'joy' in Russian, Arabic and Chinese cultures are presented in the order of their importance for the representatives of these cultures. As the examples show, each culture has its own scale of concept evaluation. 'Evaluation is a special cognitive act, as a result of which the subject's attitude to the evaluated object is established in order to determine its significance for the subject's life and activity' (Karasik 2010: 47).

Thus, concepts can be considered as cultural codes that have become the quintessence of values developed by the cultural community. Cultural codes are a systematised 'reservoir' of cultural values.

b) Homo Excultus as the Highest Stage of Development of Homo Sapiens

Man creates values and culture through his activities. The introduced concept of Homo excultus, as a man of values, a man of culture, is a characteristic of Homo sapiens.

Homo excultus, adapting to the world around it, represents itself through the value systems it has created. Homo excultus creates a space of values and reflects it through music, dance, drawing, and words. In the process of development of Homo sapiens, values began to fulfil the role of guiding factors in the life of man and society. The system of values makes sense only in relation to human activity. Modern civilisation has been created and exists due to different value systems.

i. *Why Homo Excultus?*

At the first stage of development, the elementary activity of Homo sapiens was a way of biological survival. Homo sapiens is characterised by a biological vector of development, which differs little from the biological development of the surrounding world. Homo excultus is the highest stage in human development. To preserve itself as a biological species and to better adapt to the surrounding world, Homo sapiens had to actively explore the world and 'adjust' to it. This conditioned his transition to a higher stage of his development. In the process of exploring the world and himself, man is constantly creating values. Cognition of the world becomes a value for man, as the world within and the world around him was already valuable in itself.

Thus, Homo sapience's activity of cognition of the world becomes an activity of value creation. Homo excultus is a product of community and civilization. This becomes important when Homo excultus cognition is centred on an antropological approach to understanding the development of civilisation and culture in particular. Homo excultus is the value-creating quality possessed by Homo sapiens born into human society.

Homo excultus is characterised by criteria such as:

1. Presence of socium as a group - large or small (tribe, nation, people).
2. Presence of cultural and social environment comfortable for human development. While man is

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at the stage of development of Homo sapiens he is interested only in instinctive needs, as the needs of the community are limited by the biological survival of the species. Over time, deeper connections develop in the human psychic field that are sacralised and become valuable to the individual. It is through these value sacralised connections that man is able to further cognise the world beyond his biological needs. By creating a culture based on the formed values Homo sapiens acquires the quality of Homo excultus.

3. The ability to create value.
4. Willingness to pass on the values of one's culture from generation to generation.
5. Protects its value system and the culture built on it from destructive factors (understands the necessity of its preservation) and preserves the values of its culture.

Homo excultus is characterised by moral-ethical and aesthetic criteria of cognition and all its activities are aimed at creating the good. The good as security becomes a kind of cult (etymologically correlated with the English word 'noble', 'to be in a state of value') with a moral-value paradigm. Thus Homo excultus creates both value and good at the same time.

ii. *Homo Excultus as a Value Creator*

The unconscious and preconscious reflexions of a person reproduce the value models of the world formed in his psychic field. 'Everything that a person considers correct, in fact, is nothing but the clichés accepted in a given society. Everything that does not fall under these clichés is excluded from social consciousness and remains in the unconscious mind' (Mitkina 2018. 100). According to A. Voskoboynikov, "the unconscious is a specific fundamental form of value-motivational, cognitive and motivational activity of a person (and social groups), which has the most diverse manifestations, its own way of expression, which is not under the direct control of consciousness and is associated with the special nature of behaviour and activity" (Voskoboynikov 2012: 123).

Values have become a need capable of ensuring the emotional and psychological security of both the individual and the entire society. Values unite members of society and become spiritual wealth. 'In the common space of spiritual culture at all stages of its evolution there are values and ideals that regulate human social behaviour' (Gorelov, Gorelova 2015:31). 'The world in which we live is driven not only by unconscious forces but also - and more decisively - by human values... The struggle to save the planet becomes ultimately a struggle for higher-order values" (Sperry 1983: 21).

The activity of Homo excultus is aimed at creating and preserving values. The creation of value is a function of the highest order in the cognitive activity of Homo excultus. Values contribute to the constant development of man and are an inherent attribute of human consciousness and its need at the level of being. Values do not exist outside culture. 'A person's value orientations are laid down by the culture of the society in which he dwells. Thus, values, being created by the public culture, are then under its protection, thus different cultures can give rise to a completely different set (and sometimes even opposite) of values. (Mitkina 2018:101). According to G. Rickert: 'in all cultural phenomena we will always find an embodiment of some value recognised by man, for the sake of which these phenomena were either created or, if they already existed before, nurtured by man...The phenomena of nature are not thought of as goods, but out of connection with values, and if we take away any value from the cultural object, it will become a part of simple nature' (Rickert 1998: 57).

Values give meaning to human life. It is up to the individual to determine what is valuable to him. However, many spiritual absolutes are identical among people. The system of values determines many features of culture and creates its foundation. Being the foundation of culture, values 'always connected with a certain view of the past and future (Zagirnyak 2012: 45), since "the essence of any culture is that " the past in it ... does not "go back in time", that is, does not "disappear"' (Vendina 2022: 153).

Values as a cultural phenomenon are conditioned by the cultural context. They are universal and significant for the members of society, as they form the basis of the cultural picture of the world as an image of the authentic reality of human existence. 'Any universally significant value becomes truly meaningful only in an individual context' (Bakhtin 2003: 18).

Different cultures represent different value systems. Depending on the culture, our proposed term Homo excultus will be understood and perceived differently. The term Homo excultus as a person of values will connect organically with American and European cultures. For Chinese culture, the term 性格文 man Wen (person of art, where art is the virtues of a person) would be more organic, for Arabic culture شخصية متحدة في الله man righteous (person united in God). This is an example of how different cultures perceive and understand value.

Thus, having passed through millennia of development Homo sapiens became the embodiment of values, formed as Homo excultus and approached its, to date, the highest point of development.

III. Conclusions

Adaptation to the surrounding ever-changing world required Homo sapiens to undergo a complex journey of several tens of millennia to become a social being and to develop the quality of value creation.

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Sound imitation and supra-instinctive emotions were prerequisites for the development of the human psychic field. Trying to make the world safe for himself, man in this field was able to construct his event-interval space, which he filled with connections and knowledge significant for himself. The first sacred connections established with the world were unprecedented for man and became his first values. The value system of the individual and the community began to be built around these sacred values. The values and culture of the community were created simultaneously. The system of values determined the direction of culture's development and the peculiarities of its cognitive reality. The systematised knowledge of the world was fixed in the codes of culture, which became an expression of its values.

Thus, the values created by Homo excultus allowed the community and the individual to adapt to the world around them, to make it safe, to develop and to create a culture.

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The Image of the Teacher in the Chronicles of the Book *The Everyday Imaginary*

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Abstract- This article aims to show the image of the teacher in the chronicles of Moacyr Scliar's *O imaginário cotidiano*, relating the way the teacher is seen in the author's texts when he relates fiction to reality.

Keywords: *education, teacher, image.*

GJHSS-G Classification: *JEL Code: I29*



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The Image of the Teacher in the Chronicles of the Book *The Everyday Imaginary*

A Imagem do Professor nas Crônicas do Livro *O Imaginário Cotidiano*

Bianca Nantes Nunes [α], Flávia Cavalcante da Silva [σ], Soraia Geraldo Rozza [ρ] & Lemuel de Faria Diniz [ω]

Resumo- **Este artigo tem como objetivo mostrar a imagem do professor nas crônicas do livro *O imaginário cotidiano*, de Moacyr Scliar, relacionando a forma como o professor é visto nos textos do autor quando este relaciona a ficção com a realidade.**

Palavras-chave: educação, professor, imagem.

Abstract- **This article aims to show the image of the teacher in the chronicles of Moacyr Scliar's *O imaginário cotidiano*, relating the way the teacher is seen in the author's texts when he relates fiction to reality.**

Keywords: education, teacher, image.

I. O Escritor Moacyr Scliar

Moacyr Scliar nasceu em Porto Alegre em 23 de março de 1937. Seus pais vieram da Europa para tentar uma vida social e econômica mais estável na América. Sua vida literária começou desde cedo influenciado por sua mãe que era professora e mostrou a ele um mundo de boas literaturas. Scliar formou-se em Medicina em 1962 na Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, exerceu a profissão no Serviço de Assistência Médica Domiciliar e de Urgência (SAMDU), publicou seu primeiro livro no mesmo ano, sob o título *Histórias de um médico em formação*. Depois desse livro, suas obras literárias não pararam mais, no conjunto da produção literária do escritor Moacyr Scliar (1937-2011) figuram mais de setenta livros de gêneros diferenciados, tais como romances, ensaios, crônicas, ficções infanto-juvenis e contos, escreveu crônicas por mais de quarenta anos.

O escritor gaúcho teve suas obras publicadas em mais de vinte países e foi laureado quatro vezes com o "Prêmio Jabuti" (em 1988, 1993, 2000 e 2009), respectivamente, pelas obras *O olho enigmático* (categoria Contos), *Sonhos tropicais* (categoria Romance), *A mulher que escreveu a Bíblia* (categoria Romance) e *Manual da paixão solitária* (categoria Romance, também escolhida obra de Ficção do Ano). Além de colaborador em vários órgãos da imprensa no país, como a *Folha de São Paulo* e o Jornal *Zero Hora* (RS), Scliar foi membro da Academia Brasileira de Letras a partir do ano 2003.

Segundo Manuel da Costa Pinto, a obra de Scliar é perpassada por duas influências: uma é sua condição de filho de emigrantes o que o torna um grande conhecedor de um alegórico humor judaico, o que o torna um "exímio contador de histórias" com "um pendor para a oralidade, a galhofa e o erotismo que lhe dá uma identidade genuinamente brasileira". A outra influência advém da sua formação como médico de saúde pública, porta de entrada para a realidade social do Brasil (PINTO, 2004, p. 108-110). O escritor porto-alegrense é autor da tese de doutorado *Da Bíblia à psicanálise: saúde, doença e medicina na cultura judaica* (1999). Nisso se verifica que, em muitas ocasiões, Scliar valeu-se de seus conhecimentos médicos como materiais para as suas criações literárias, o que se nota no fato de o escritor gaúcho ser autor de vinte e uma obras com temática médica.

Ao que parece, Scliar tinha orgulho de também ter sido professor. Isso se verifica no final de *A linguagem médica* (2002), que traz a seção "Sobre o autor". Nesse segmento do livro, o próprio Scliar se apresenta com todas as suas credenciais: escritor, médico, doutor em ciências e professor de medicina preventiva da Faculdade Federal de Ciências Médicas de Porto Alegre (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 78-79). No ano de 1993, por um semestre, Scliar também foi professor na Brown University, em Providence, Rhode Island. Ele narra isso com muita satisfação em sua autobiografia, intitulada *O texto, ou: a vida*: uma trajetória literária. Na ocasião, ele ministrou um curso sobre medicina e literatura, sendo muito bem recepcionado, inclusive sendo "convidado a participar da cerimônia de abertura do ano letivo, em que professores usando a tradicional toga desfilariam diante dos alunos" (SCLIAR, 2007a, p. 25).

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II. A Crônica e o Cronista Scliar

Prefaciando o livro que contém as Melhores Crônicas de Scliar (Editora Global), o professor Luís Augusto Fischer explica que a palavra crônica é derivada do latim *chronica*: relativo a tempo, traduz o relato ou narrativa de fatos dispostos em ordem cronológica, histórias escritas conforme a ordem do tempo. Essa foi a primeira definição, já que o termo "crônica" migrou desde o domínio do relato histórico até o domínio do literário, logo depois passou a ser utilizado com sentido generalizado na literatura em um gênero especifico ligado ao jornalismo. Mencionando outros estudiosos, Fischer comenta que, para alguns, essa mudança é posterior a 1985, já para Afrânio Coutinho a alteração ocorreu no século XIX, não havendo certeza se em Portugal ou no Brasil. Para Afrânio Coutinho, a crônica brasileira começou com Francisco Otaviano de Almeida Rosa em um folhetim do *Jornal do Commercio* do Rio de Janeiro, depois dele vieram grandes cronistas da história brasileira entre eles estão José de Alencar, Machado de Assis, Olavo Bilac, etc. (FISCHER, 2004, p. 7-10).

Fischer pondera que a crônica, no entanto, não se encaixava em nenhum gênero definido por Aristóteles (o épico, o lírico e o dramático). O que ocorria é que ela era praticada em diários, literalmente e impressas em jornais onde eram lidas e abandonadas em seguida. Com o decorrer dos tempos, escritores como Rubem Braga, Paulo Mendes Campos, Nélson Rodrigues, entres outros impuseram uma alteração de como a crônica era tratada, então surgiram dois movimentos que redefinem o quadro da crônica na cultura brasileira, um deles tem a ver com a frequências em que grandes nomes da literatura a utilizavam e outro porque a crônica sendo diária teria um papel enorme no amaciamento da língua preparando-a, assim, para maiores capacidades da cultura. Considerado um filósofo da crônica, Nélson Rodrigues assegurou a importância desta por ressaltar que esse gênero está relacionado com a domesticação da língua o adestramento do português – é por tudo isso que a cultura brasileira incorporou a crônica fazendo com que não ficasse somente nos jornais diários e também fosse parar em livros, chamando-a, assim, de crônica moderna (FISCHER, 2004, p. 9-11).

Após a inserção da crônica na cultura brasileira poderia ela ser considerada um quarto gênero literário, irmão do épico, do lírico e do dramático, incorporando assim uma grande quantidade de textos já escritos aparentados da crônica, textos estes utilizados escritos para relatar e comentar a vida real. (FISCHER, 2004, p. 7-11).

Dentre os escritores das crônicas modernas está Moacyr Scliar, praticante do gênero há mais de três décadas. Considerado um dos maiores cronistas, escrevia regularmente em jornal, primeiramente escrevia em jornais importantes de Porto Alegre, cidade de seu nascimento, até chegar aos jornais da grande metrópole São Paulo. Com o passar dos anos aprimorou a mão, o poder de síntese e o seu olhar crítico, mas a alma do cronista permaneceu a mesma do começo ao fim de sua carreira. O escritor também era um grande defensor da crônica na literatura brasileira. Para Scliar, a crônica era sim um gênero literário importante; seu uso, contudo, era mais ou menos imediato, diferente da ficção, gênero no qual uma boa ideia pode ficar amadurecendo por anos (FISCHER, 2004, p. 7-17).

Os cronistas eram considerados poetas do que acontecia no dia-a- dia, inspirados pelos eventos do cotidiano, dando-lhes um toque próprio, incluindo elementos de ficção, fantasia e criticismo. Moacyr Scliar vai mais longe: convida o leitor a refletir e buscar respostas, o escritor também põe em evidência a literatura e as artes como meio de suas críticas, escrever para Scliar era indagar uma busca por respostas muitas vezes não existentes, escrever para que seus leitores fossem cúmplices de suas interrogações. De acordo com Nubia J. Hanciau, "a partida de Scliar abriu uma lacuna difícil de ser preenchida por outros cronistas" restando aos leitores "o consolo da (re) leitura da variada abordagem e multiplicidade de assuntos que [Scliar] tratava, publicados em livros" (HANCIAU, 2012, p. 116-117).

As crônicas escritas por Moacyr Scliar foram inspiradas nas notícias do jornal *Folha de São Paulo*. Antes de serem compiladas no livro *O imaginário cotidiano,* as crônicas foram publicadas originalmente na seção "Cotidiano" do referido jornal. O processo de criação de Scliar precisa de um elemento desencadeante e, nesse processo, a notícia publicada no jornal é importante, conforme ele mesmo admite numa entrevista concedida à professora Regina Zilberman:

> *No meu caso o processo criativo começa com algum "fator desencadeante", que pode ser* um episódio histórico, uma pessoa que conheci, uma história que me contaram, *uma notícia de jornal...* Daí em diante é uma incógnita. Sou muito rápido escrevendo para jornal, mas quando se trata de uma ficção mais longa é diferente; aí períodos de rapidez se alternam com outros de muita lentidão, resultante de dúvidas que vão desde a questão do foco narrativo até a incerteza quanto à validade do projeto (não foram poucos os que abandonei). No caso de *Vendilhões*, foram dezesseis anos desde a ideia inicial até a conclusão; reescrevi muitas vezes. Mas isto é normal numa tarefa que, afinal, implica uma aventura no desconhecido de nossas mentes... (ZILBERMAN, 2009, p. 118, grifo nosso)

O fragmento supracitado é referente a uma entrevista concedida pelo escritor gaúcho em 2009, quando para ele já era comum elaborar textos a partir de notícias de jornais. Ocorre, porém, que há muito tempo Scliar escreve para jornais. Em sua

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autobiografia, intitulada *O texto, ou: a vida*: uma trajetória literária, Scliar afirma:

> Em 1974 comecei a escrever para o jornal *Zero Hora* de Porto Alegre. É uma experiência no mínimo curiosa passar da página do livro para a página do jornal. Sim, em ambos os casos trata-se de texto impresso, destinado a um público, mas as diferenças são grandes, e históricas. Para começar, o livro, tal como o conhecemos, surgiu antes do jornal; é do século quinze, enquanto o jornal só aparece no começo do século dezessete. [...] Os escritores escreviam para a eternidade; os jornalistas estavam presos aos assuntos do momento, nem sempre agradáveis. Escritores falavam mal do jornal [...] Os escritores podiam fazer pesquisas formais, mesmo que estas resultassem em textos obscuros; os jornalistas tinham, e têm, a obrigação da clareza. (SCLIAR, 2007a, p. 237-238)

Esse fragmento é parte do sexto capítulo da autobiografia scliariana. Na sequência da explanação acerca do embate entre o livro e o jornal, Scliar pondera que em nosso país "surgiu um gênero que se tornou o elo de ligação entre literatura e o espaço jornalístico: a crônica". No jornal, a crônica é "um respiradouro, uma brecha na massa não raro sufocante de notícias" (SCLIAR, 2007a, p. 239). Nesse contexto, reafirma-se que Scliar tinha como hábito compor suas obras a partir de outros textos já existentes: além de utilizar os textos publicados em jornal o autor também utilizava textos de passagens bíblicas (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 05)[1].

Nas obras escritas pelo autor fica evidente que ele utiliza os acontecimentos cotidianos, suas lembranças de infância e textos teóricos e históricos como "inspiração", dando a estes acontecimentos um toque de humor, deixando claro que todo autor tem um jeito próprio de escrever. Perguntado em uma entrevista sobre qual seria o seu jeito de escrever, Scliar respondeu:

> Um conto, ou uma crônica para o jornal, eu os escrevo de uma sentada; não só porque são textos mais curtos, como também para transmitir intacta ao papel a carga emocional que os gerou. No caso do romance é diferente: ideias vão me ocorrendo ao acaso, sobre o tema que escolhi, e então vou escrevendo cenas ficcionais, sem nenhuma ordem: um trecho do meio, o final, o começo. Uso para isso qualquer pedaço de papel que me caia nas mãos. Depois que os fragmentos se acumularam em quantidade suficiente, procuro, através deles, encontrar o fio da história, à qual dou então uma redação – mas que ainda é provisória, e escrita à mão. Só depois é que vou datilografar. O que não encerra o processo; depois vem cortar fora, reescrever, colar por cima. (SCLIAR, 1988, p. 5)

[1] Considerando esse contexto da pesquisa, também é importante se observar que os primeiros livros de Scliar têm muito a ver com os acontecimentos relacionados ao seu Estado, o Rio Grande do Sul, conforme se verifica com a publicação de seu primeiro romance, *A guerra no Bom Fim* (1972) (DINIZ, 2015, p. 24).

III. Textos Com Personagens Professores

Desde sua infância o escritor Moacyr Scliar teve o papel do professor muito presente em sua vida, pois sua mãe era professora e o estimulava desde cedo à leitura de bons livros (SCLIAR, 2007a, p. 36-38, 40). Isto levou o escritor a se acostumar com a literatura e despertou-lhe a fantasia pela ficção, o escritor fez parte da geração de judeus brasileiros, cujos pais deixaram a Europa buscando uma melhor oportunidade de vida na América. O escritor escreveu crônicas por aproximadamente quarenta anos, sendo considerado "um dos mais importantes cronistas da literatura brasileira das décadas finais do século XX e primeira do século XXI" (ZILBERMAN, 2012, p. 10). Algumas crônicas do livro *O imaginário cotidiano* trazem o professor como personagens que representavam alguns aspectos da sociedade, visto às vezes como personagem principal, outras vezes como personagens secundários.

Das crônicas que trazem professores como personagens, destacam-se "Os estranhos caminhos da Internet" e "A ilegível caligrafia da vida". Nessas, os docentes são universitários, mas suas enraizadas formações não os impedem de se verem em situações difíceis de se resolver, situações em que os conhecimentos acumulados não trazem solução para as crises que surgem na vida deles. A primeira crônica mencionada tem como texto motivador a notícia "Aluno compra trabalho escolar da Internet". Seu enredo pode ser resumido assim: cansado da carreira na universidade e se sentindo insatisfeito com seu baixo salário, um professor decide pedir demissão e instalar um site na Internet com o objetivo de fazer trabalhos acadêmicos por encomenda. Isso "era uma coisa que muita gente estava fazendo e na qual ele esperava sair-se bem". (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 55). A princípio, a iniciativa dele não estava tendo êxito, já que os pedidos de trabalhos que recebia eram pequenos e quase não rendiam financeiramente. Ele estava ficando desanimado quando "veio uma encomenda grande: um estudante de uma obscura faculdade do interior precisava de um trabalho de mestrado – e deveria ser entregue com urgência: cinco dias". O cliente era filho de um próspero industrial e "estava disposto a pagar uma substancial quantia, muito maior que o preço de tabela" (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 55-56). Entusiasmado com a proposta, o professor se lançou ao desafio, mas logo percebeu que não daria conta, pois "se tratava de missão impossível" e o seu "nervosismo" era dominante. Na sequência, o narrador aponta o desfecho:

> De repente, [o professor] lembrou-se de algo.
>
> Sua tese de mestrado. Tinha-a pronta, guardada na gaveta. Nunca chegara a apresentá-la – não valia a pena, já que

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> não pretendia continuar ensinando. Pensara até em jogar fora aquele erudito, e, a seu ver, inútil estudo. Agora, porém, poderia aproveitá-lo. Antes que os remorsos o acometessem, colocou a tese num envelope e enviou-a ao aflito mestrando.
>
> Na semana seguinte recebeu uma carta. Continha o polpudo cheque, tal como havia sido combinado, e uma cópia do parecer da banca sobre o trabalho: entusiastas apreciações, rasgados elogios.
>
> O professor suspirou. Ao fim e ao cabo, tinha encontrado uma espécie de glória. E teve de concluir: são mesmo muito estranhos os caminhos da Internet. (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 56)

O final da crônica se contrapõe ao início desta. O professor que estava desiludido com sua carreira soluciona o problema do mestrando e agora "tinha encontrado uma espécie de glória", além de uma soma vultosa de dinheiro. Ele encontrou satisfação e realização não numa sala de aula, mas nos "estranhos caminhos da Internet". Ou seja, sua satisfação veio do mundo virtual, não do real. O mundo virtual trouxe o retorno financeiro que o mundo real não lhe proporcionou. Por outro lado, surgem duas indagações: se, no decorrer da sua vida, o professor tivesse apresentado sua tese de mestrado, será que ele não teria conseguido mais reconhecimento profissional e financeiro em sua carreira universitária? Por que ele se absteve de apresentar suas pesquisas anteriormente? Numa outra perspectiva, duas qualidades desse docente são constatadas no texto: ele tem coragem para tentar algo novo e ele tem um diálogo com sua companheira. Quando decide deixar de lecionar e fazer trabalhos sob encomenda ele compartilha essa decisão com ela: "Finalmente vou tirar algum proveito do meu conhecimento, disse à esposa" (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 55).

Segundo Diniz (2015, p. 65-67, 115), no conjunto da obra de Scliar a temática de professores insatisfeitos com sua profissão e em busca de outra fonte de renda não é incomum. Nos romances *A mulher que escreveu a Bíblia* e *Os vendilhões do templo* há professores de história que decidem mudar de profissão. Na terceira parte de *Os vendilhões do templo* há um docente que se torna um comerciante popular. Armando ensinava História, tinha publicado um livro sobre a fundação da cidade e por isso tinha prestígio. Mas "ganhava muito pouco no colégio público em que lecionava; mal conseguia sustentar a família, mulher e quatro filhos, um deles doente. Depois de relutar muito, decidiu mudar de profissão". Essa mudança a princípio trouxe revolta, porém em pouco tempo ele passou a ser um entusiasmado vendedor, pois via utilidade em tudo que vendia – como os relógios – ao mesmo tempo em que se sentia feliz quando explicava para o cliente como funcionavam os objetos comercializados (SCLIAR, 2006, p. 226, 227). Comentando essa mudança ao narrador, ele diz:

> Quando estou vendo um relógio, quando explico como funciona, estou ensinando, como ensinava história aos meus alunos. Só que agora ensino para gente que quer aprender, e não para garotos indiferentes que bocejavam e olhavam pela janela enquanto eu me esgoelava por um salário de merda. Meu livro sobre a fundação da cidade, que aliás não vendeu nada, custava mais que um Casio com calculadora. E com esse relógio o cara vê a hora, o dia, e pode fazer cálculos, pode descobrir que percentagem de seu salário vai para comida, para vestuário, vai para o aluguel. (SCLIAR, 2006, p. 227)

O resultado dessa boa vontade para trabalhar é que nesse segmento do romance Armando é o personagem que vai mais longe. O narrador o apresenta como um ex-professor de História que ganhando muito pouco na docência se torna um camelô. Com isso, Armando não fica rico, ganha apenas o suficiente para sustentar sua família com dignidade. De modo semelhante, no livro *A mulher que escreveu a Bíblia* há um prefácio ficcional, composto de oito páginas, nas quais o narrador rememora como se tornou um professor de História por influência de seu pai. Logo após concluir o curso, ele se tornou um profissional frustrado, cansado do baixo salário e do desinteresse dos alunos. Comenta Diniz (2015, p. 68-69) que esse narrador-docente decidiu tomar uma última tentativa antes de desistir da profissão: propor uma atividade, "uma encenação na qual cada aluno deveria representar um personagem histórico" (SCLIAR, 2007, p. 8). A ideia atraiu a atenção dos discentes e um deles – outrora muito humilde – continuou a agir como um príncipe mesmo depois do término do trabalho de representação na escola. O professor de História acabou agindo semelhantemente ao aluno, pois se acreditou ter as qualificações para ser um terapeuta de vidas passadas e abriu um consultório para atender pessoas, obtendo muito êxito nessa nova profissão (SCLIAR, 2007, p. 10-14).

Diferentemente dos professores que mudam de profissão, a obra de Scliar tem seus contrapontos. Trata-se de mais uma personagem anônima – "uma professora universitária, com doutorado na França e livros publicados" (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 179). Aqui é bom salientar que praticamente todas as personagens do livro *O imaginário cotidiano* são anônimas e nessa obra há muitas crônicas que abordam personagens exercendo diversas outras profissões. Há o técnico de futebol ("O futebol e a matemática"), os executivos ("O beijo no escuro"); o entrevistador ("Fantasias no banheiro"), o vendedor ("A cor dos nossos juros"), o artista plástico ("O mistério do cemitério virtual"), os cientistas ("A prova do amor"), a faxineira ("Sonho ovular"), editor e repórter ("Uma história de Natal"), cobrador ("Cobrança"). Todavia, os únicos personagens que são explicitamente mencionados como sendo bem-sucedidos financeiramente são o casal formado por um executivo de uma grande

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multinacional e uma gerente de uma cadeia de lojas ("A agenda do sexo"), o marqueteiro ("O Outro") e o médico de "A ilegível caligrafia da vida". Esse médico, além de próspero, é famoso e é o marido da docente universitária mencionada no início desse parágrafo. Eles estavam enfrentando uma crise conjugal, conforme assinala o narrador: "a verdade é que não se entendiam. Nas festas, nas recepções, nos jantares com os amigos, tudo bem; mal chegavam em casa, porém, as máscaras caíam e começavam as brigas" (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 179). Além disso,

> Ele a acusava de hipócrita, de falsa esquerdista; ela sustentava que o marido não passava de um arrogante, de um autoritário. Mas uma noite, depois de uma discussão particularmente amarga, ele perdeu a paciência e desafiou:
>
> – Você diz que sou autoritário. Você diz que sou arrogante. Muito bem. Prove. Prove o que está dizendo e prometo que nunca mais agredirei você.
>
> Dias se passaram, dias de tenso silêncio entre os dois. Então, uma noite, voltando para casa, ele encontrou-a radiante, um brilho de triunfo nos olhos:
>
> – Veja o que chegou para você.
>
> Era uma receita dele. Junto, um bilhete do paciente a quem se destinara a prescrição. Um bilhete desaforado: o homem dizia que, com a tal receita, percorrera várias farmácias sem que ninguém – ninguém – tivesse conseguido decifrar o que estava escrito ali. E concluía: "Escrever de maneira que não se possa entender é uma manifestação de arrogância".
>
> – Viu? – disse ela, deliciada. – Você é arrogante. Não sou eu quem o diz, é o seu paciente. (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 179-180)

Com essa afirmação, o marido – caracterizado como charmoso, elegante, famoso e culto (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 179) – se sente muito humilhado e sai de casa sem dizer uma única palavra. Ele faz as malas e foi para um flat. A esposa fica com muita saudade e pensa em telefonar para ele, mas tem receio, "afinal, saíra de casa ofendido, magoado. Poderia até bater o telefone". Quem toma a primeira iniciativa para reatar é o médico, que lhe envia uma carta reconhecendo sua arrogância e a sua conduta autoritária. Ele declara que "estava disposto a se tornar outra pessoa". A mulher fica impressionada não só com o conteúdo comovente do texto, mas principalmente com a letra bonita e caprichada da carta. Desconfia que a letra não seria dele, a menos que tivesse treinado no flat e tivesse conseguido aperfeiçoar sua escrita. Essa situação a faz lembrar daquelas situações em que o aluno capricha na caligrafia para impressionar o professor. Ela conclui que não conseguiria saber a "autoria" da letra, pois o que lhe importava era ter o marido de volta. Ela "tinha certeza agora de que a vida escreve bonito, mesmo com letra muito feia. E isso era tudo o que lhe importava saber" (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 180). Ou seja, a professora percebe que no seu trabalho ela até poderia cobrar uma caligrafia bonita e legível dos seus alunos, mas no casamento era melhor não se fixar nesse detalhe visto ter sido esse elemento o propulsor da sua pior crise matrimonial. Aqui é importante destacar que o texto do jornal que motivou a escrita do texto literário não foi propriamente uma notícia, mas sim uma sugestão feita por um cidadão na seção "Painel do leitor": "Gostaria de que o ministro da Saúde, José Serra, exigisse dos senhores médicos a prescrição de receitas escritas a máquina, pois existem receitas ininteligíveis" (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 179). A leitura dessa reclamação deve ter chamado a atenção de Scliar assim que ele a viu, pois Scliar era médico e, como observa Zilberman, tinha muito interesse nos assuntos relacionados à Medicina (ZILBERMAN, 2012, p. 10).

Se se equiparar essa crônica com o texto anterior ("Os estranhos caminhos da Internet"), nota-se que ambos os docentes conseguem solucionar seus impasses. O professor insatisfeito com sua carreira e remuneração consegue se sobressair por meio da ousadia com a qual se lança a um novo desafio profissional; a professora universitária decide ser humilde para conseguir recuperar o marido que havia deixado o lar. Ambos os personagens demonstram preocupação com a manutenção dos seus respectivos casamentos. Aqui cumpre lembrar que a temática do casamento é cara ao escritor gaúcho, que, segundo Zilberman, é um cronista que tem como uma das suas "virtudes destacadas" a "variedade dos assuntos, sem que se mostre superficial ou frívolo" (ZILBERMAN, 2012, p. 10). Essa mesma variedade de assuntos se estende ao restante da sua obra, sendo isso percebido quando personagens enfrentam dilemas em seus matrimônios, como o vendilhão do templo da obra homônima, ou ainda, nas reflexões scliarianas que antecipam o conjunto de citações colecionadas pelo escritor gaúcho e publicadas em livros. No início do livro *Se eu fosse Rothschild*: citações que marcaram a trajetória do povo judeu, Scliar explica sua predileção pela citação, considerando que esta é "não apenas a síntese de um pensamento", mas também a "expressão de uma época". Por isso, para o gaúcho "colecionar citações é uma arte" (SCLIAR, 1993, p. 09). Nessa esteira de pensamento, na obra *A língua de três pontas*: crônicas e citações sobre a arte de falar mal, Scliar há vinte e nove páginas contendo citações sobre o casamento, sem deixar de apresentar a ponderação do escritor: "O casamento feliz existe. Depende de maturidade e até de sabedoria" (SCLIAR, 2001, p. 122). Nesse mesmo livro há citações de professores (SCLIAR, 2001, p. 92, 109, 123). *Se eu fosse Rothschild* também traz citações de mestres (SCLIAR, 1993, p. 53, 64-67), o que comprova que a figura do professor interessa Scliar em diversos textos e contextos.[2]

[2] Em sua tese, Lemuel Diniz investiga três obras contemporâneas de Scliar: *A mulher que escreveu a Bíblia*, *Os vendilhões do templo* e *Manual da paixão solitária*. Em todas elas há personagens professores de História. No *Manual da paixão solitária* há os docentes Haroldo

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A crônica "A ilegível caligrafia da vida" não apresenta a professora universitária tendo nenhum tipo de problema em seu trabalho, muito embora se saiba que de um modo geral o trabalho docente é muito exaustivo, conforme explica Boing acerca da sobrecarga que o professor enfrenta no seu dia-a-dia:

> a preparação das aulas de hoje envolve, além do levantamento do conteúdo e da escolha de alguma dinâmica para a interação em sala, a pesquisa na internet e a atenção aos fatos e notícias, publicados nos jornais e revistas, que possam ser utilizados para a contextualização em sala ou trabalhado como um novo conteúdo. As aulas em si estão mais complexas pela diversidade maior dos alunos, resultados das políticas de inclusão social e de expansão do ensino. (BOING, 2008, p. 107-108).

Se a professora universitária casada com o médico aparenta ter uma profissão tranquila, o mesmo não ocorre com o docente da crônica "A força da lei", inspirada na reportagem "Policiais se disfarçam e vão para a sala de aula". Nesse texto, Scliar retrata o medo e a violência dentro das salas de aulas. Faltando uma semana para o final do ano letivo, o professor de Matemática é procurado em particular por "um aluno relapso e de ar insolente" que, sabendo da sua iminente reprovação, alega que é um policial disfarçado investigando uma quadrilha de traficantes que tem um agente infiltrado na escola, "um rapaz desta turma. Ele passou de ano, e eu tenho de passar também, para vigiá-lo". A ameaça se completa quando o pretenso aluno abre a camisa e mostra uma pistola automática, exclamando: "Esta arma é só a polícia que usa. Sorriu, um sorriso eu era tão cúmplice quanto ameaçador. – E o senhor pode acreditar que sei usá-la" (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 40). Nesse texto, mais uma vez se comprova o que Zilberman afirma a respeito das crônicas do escritor gaúcho: "a linguagem límpida, com toques de humor, além de simples e moderna" (ZILBERMAN, 2012, p. 10). No livro *O imaginário cotidiano* há crônicas nas quais o professor é brevemente mencionado. Todavia, mesmo assim, é possível pensar a importância desse profissional mediante suas atitudes. É o caso de "Quanto valho?": um homem é preso por forjar seu próprio sequestro. Tentando dar uma explicação ao delegado, o homem conta que a frase "você não vale nada" o acompanha desde criança, primeiro pelo seu pai, quando roubava doces e seu pai o repreendia com esta frase, depois pelo professor que o pegava colando e usava a mesma frase. Nessa crônica, aqui o professor retratado como um papel secundário, numa situação em que leva o garoto a acreditar que ele não valia nada, pois concordava com seu pai. Isto leva a acreditar que a opinião de um professor, suas palavras, têm um grande peso na vida de uma criança, que leva estas palavras positivas ou negativas para toda sua vida (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 33-34).

No livro há um personagem que trabalha a prática do ensinar, embora o texto não diga que ele seja um professor de Educação Física. Na crônica "O futebol e a matemática", um técnico de futebol diz aos seus jogadores que eles passarão a atuar diferente, de acordo com uma série de tabelas e gráficos feitos em computador. Anunciando a novidade, ele afirma: "Até agora, cada um jogava o futebol que sabia. Eu *ensinava* alguma coisa, é verdade, mas a gente se guiava mesmo era pelo instinto. Isso acabou" (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 51, grifo nosso).

"A vida em *fast-forward*" expõe o relato do sonho de um menino que dizia à professora que ao crescer seria.... Antes mesmo de terminar a frase viu que a vida saíra bem diferente do seu plano, sua vida passará como um filme rápido demais para pensar em seus sonhos de crianças. Nessa crônica o autor traz a professora como um papel secundário, mas não menos importante, ao relatar seus sonhos a sua professora de infância. O escritor sugere a questão da qualidade de vida nesta crônica, quando fala que, ao perceber que a vida passa tão rápido, e muitas vezes os sonhos são deixados para trás, a professora aqui é vista como uma pessoa que transmite confiança a seu aluno, para quem o mesmo relata seus sonhos (SCLIAR, 2002, p. 95-96).

IV. Conclusão

As crônicas analisadas englobam diversas problemáticas sociais envolvendo a figura do professor: os baixos salários, a insatisfação profissional, o medo da violência que o acompanha na sala de aula. A formação profissional do docente e os relacionamentos também são mencionados. De um modo geral, os conflitos são resolvidos. É essa a mensagem que Scliar parece querer demonstrar: o professor deve ser uma pessoa equilibrada emocionalmente para lidar com os problemas cotidianos. Com muito humor e com uma linguagem leve, Scliar demonstra por que é considerado um dos grandes cronistas da literatura brasileira contemporânea, sendo as notícias de jornais o ponto de partida para a composição dos referidos textos ficcionais.

Veiga de Assis e Diana, os quais se diferem dos demais professores das outras obras mencionadas pois possuem excelente condição financeira, sem terem de cogitar a mudança de função. Haroldo lecionava numa importante universidade norte-americana e cobra caro por suas palestras, ao passo que Diana era "professora universitária". Ambos eram muito conhecidos no meio acadêmico, mas Haroldo tinha mais prestígio do que Diana pois enquanto ele "fora o único brasileiro a fazer parte do grupo de especialistas que estudara o Manuscrito de Shelá, recentemente encontrado numa caverna em Israel", Diana era famosa "por suas teorias heterodoxas e sobretudo por seu gênio rebelde" (SCLIAR, 2008, p. 9, 10, 135). Por fim, o *Manual* traz o professor Haroldo e a pesquisadora Diana como grandes conhecedores da *Bíblia* que preferem dessacralizar Jeová a crer nEle e obedecê-lo. Haroldo, por exemplo, "citava de memória qualquer trecho do Antigo Testamento", mas, ainda assim, teve uma experiência homossexual com um servente da universidade e traiu sua esposa com Diana (SCLIAR, 2008, p. 10, 213-215).

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Book Review for Assessments for Inclusion in Higher Education - Promoting Equity and Social Justice in Assessments

By Joy. J & Sen. A
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Abstract- This review examines "Inclusive Assessment in Higher Education: Promoting Equity and Social Justice in Assessment," edited by Rola Ajjawi, Joanna Tai, David Boud, and Trina Jorre De St Jorre. The book, comprising 21 standalone chapters from 35 contributors, explores inclusivity in higher education assessments through societal, institutional, and interpersonal perspectives. It emphasizes the need for assessment practices that cater to diverse student populations, considering factors beyond traditional demographics. The review highlights the book's strengths, including its multi-author approach, practical examples, and incorporation of indigenous knowledge. However, it also notes weaknesses such as a lack of field-specific guidelines and limited practical narratives. The book contributes significantly to assessment literature, offering valuable insights for researchers, educators, and policymakers seeking to develop more inclusive assessment practices in higher education. This review analyzes the book's main arguments, strengths, weaknesses, and potential audience, providing a comprehensive overview of its content and relevance in the field of educational assessment.

Keywords: *higher education assessments, inclusion, book review.*

GJHSS-G Classification: *LCC: LC5803*



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Joy. J [α] & Sen. A [σ]

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Keywords: higher education assessments, inclusion, book review.

I. Introduction

This book has 21 standalone chapters discussing inclusivity in assessments, specifically in higher education. The authors explained inclusivity through three lenses: societal & cultural perspectives, institutional & community perspectives, and educators, students, & interpersonal perspectives. There are 35 contributors to this book, and the editors Rola Ajjawi, Joanna Tai, David Boud, and Trina Jorre De St Jorre have condensed multiple critical issues in assessments through the three different lenses.

II. Summary of Main Arguments

This book acknowledges that higher education has a diverse set of students and requires a pedagogy that caters to diversity. It informs educators that diversity is not just in the race, ethnicity, or gender but also in career aspirations, personal goals, prior experiences, and expectations. The authors make us aware that instructors should consider these disparities when they create assessments, especially in higher education. Assessments should not be advantageous or disadvantageous towards one particular group of students. The book chapters provide many examples where assessments can be partial to one group of students. For example, a traditional closed-book exam will be advantageous for students who are good at recalling under pressure. Similarly, rigid deadlines can disadvantage students with work commitments, chronic medical conditions, or personal issues. The book highlights these issues and makes professors aware of these issues. The book also explains how the term "inclusion" has different meanings in different contexts.

The book refers to the universal design for assessment (UDA) to inform readers about the shortcomings of assessments in higher education. The book argues that using UDA is not fair for all students, especially when used for sustainable assessments. Sustainable assessments are when students carry their understanding beyond the targeted assessments. The chapters suggest that the first step to create social justice in assessments is by being open to new ideas in assessment practices. The book encourages educators to discuss including social justice in their assessments by being vocal about these issues in faculty meetings. The chapters emphasize that we must act on our students' differences by enabling them to achieve their academic goals. The chapters also talk about how disability can be viewed as a discriminator, and as assessors, we should be considerate towards disabled students. The book emphasizes that disabled students should be treated equally with other students, and instructors should make arrangements to cater to disabled students. The book also outlines how pedagogy can be modified to cater to students with diverse identities.

The chapters guide us not to make assumptions about students, especially students who are marginalized in higher education. It is essential to understand that inclusive assessments are an ongoing process, and instructors need to modify their instructions based on their students' diverse identities. The book provides a culturally inclusive assessment model that explains how curriculum and assessments can be culturally relevant. It discusses social justice and fairness for all students, especially marginalized ones. The chapters provide thoughtful questions for readers

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to ask while developing an inclusive curriculum. The chapters also tell us that assessments are situational and cannot be standardized. This means that, as researchers, we need to create guidelines and policies that instructors can modify as required.

The book also expands on technological usage in assessments and the disparities artificial intelligence brings about in education. The chapter on artificial intelligence focuses explicitly on the hazards of AI. One of the key takeaways from this chapter is that, as educators, we need to understand how AI is being used and critically evaluate the outcomes or reports it generates. The book does not suggest that we should not use AI in pedagogy, but it advises on how artificial intelligence is used to improve student learning. Another important aspect of the book is its emphasis on student voice and agency in assessment design. Several chapters discuss the value of involving students as partners in creating more inclusive assessments. This approach not only ensures that diverse student needs are considered but also empowers students to take an active role in their learning. The authors argue that this collaboration between educators and students is crucial for developing truly inclusive assessment practices that cater to the varied needs and experiences of the student population.

Throughout the book, various theoretical frameworks are explored to inform inclusive assessment practices. These include critical disability studies, decolonial approaches, and social justice theories. By grounding the discussion in these theoretical perspectives, the authors provide a robust foundation for understanding and addressing the complexities of inclusive assessment in higher education. The book demonstrates how these frameworks can be applied to challenge traditional assessment methods and develop more equitable practices. The authors also delve into the policy implications and institutional barriers that often hinder the implementation of inclusive assessment practices. They highlight the need for systemic changes within higher education institutions to support and promote inclusive assessment. The book argues that while individual educators can make significant strides in their classrooms, true transformation requires institutional commitment and policy changes that prioritize equity and inclusion in assessment.

Lastly, the book concludes on how socially and economically backward students (SES) have an inherent disadvantage in higher education with reference to the opportunities they have, internships and networks they can use, and even their employment outcome gap. The book explains how current research targets getting low SES students into colleges but not improving their chances for better employment and reducing the employment gap, thereby ensuring students' success. This book has interesting insights into understanding the needs of diverse students in a higher education setting.

Strengths

A significant strength of this book is its comprehensive coverage of diverse student groups. The authors don't limit their focus to a single demographic but instead address the needs of various student populations, including students with disabilities, international students, and those from low SES backgrounds. This approach provides readers with a holistic view of inclusivity in higher education, acknowledging the complex intersections of identity and experience that shape students' educational journeys. The book also offers a critical examination of AI and technology in assessment, which is particularly relevant in today's rapidly evolving educational landscape. Rather than simply advocating for or against technological solutions, the authors present a nuanced perspective, highlighting both the potential benefits and risks for equity and inclusion. This balanced approach helps readers navigate the complexities of integrating technology into assessment practices.

A noteworthy aspect of the book is its strong focus on student agency. By emphasizing the importance of student voice and involvement in assessment design, the authors promote a more collaborative and empowering approach to education. This aligns with contemporary pedagogical philosophies that view students as active participants in their learning rather than passive recipients of knowledge. The book's strength also lies in its multi-level analysis of inclusive assessment. While it provides valuable insights for classroom-level practices, it doesn't stop there. The authors extend their discussion to broader institutional and policy contexts that impact inclusive assessment. This comprehensive approach helps readers understand the systemic nature of the challenges and opportunities in creating more inclusive educational environments.

By drawing on various theoretical frameworks such as critical disability studies and decolonial approaches, the book offers a rich, interdisciplinary understanding of inclusive assessment. This inter-disciplinary approach allows readers to engage with the topic from multiple perspectives, fostering a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. Lastly, the book introduces and explores the concept of 'assessment for social justice,' which goes beyond traditional notions of fairness in assessment. This forward-thinking approach encourages readers to consider how assessment practices can contribute to broader societal equity, positioning education as a powerful tool for social change. This perspective makes the book not just a practical guide, but also a catalyst for reimagining the role of assessment in creating a more just and equitable society.

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Weaknesses

One of the significant weaknesses in this book is the lack of practical narratives and examples of student outcomes in a diverse classroom. The authors provide guidelines regarding making assessments inclusive but haven't offered practical examples of the benefits of using inclusive assessments. This absence of concrete case studies or success stories makes it challenging for readers to envision how these inclusive practices might play out in real-world settings. Additionally, the book falls short in exploring the long-term impacts of inclusive assessment practices on students' future careers and life outcomes, leaving readers to wonder about the broader implications of these approaches.

The authors have not distinguished between the fields of education they studied. Since the mission of each university department is different, we cannot generalize the guidelines in all departments. For example, the inclusive assessment guidelines for medical science cannot be the same inclusive assessment guidelines for the general education department. This lack of specificity is compounded by the book's limited acknowledgment of the practical constraints educators might face when implementing inclusive practices, such as time limitations, resource scarcity, and potential institutional resistance. Future research can aim to expand on the extent of generalizability and the differences in assessment's inclusivity across a different subject domain, as well as strategies for overcoming these practical hurdles.

The book chapters also confuse readers in how the assessments can be fair for all students when making assessments for students with different academic needs. The authors tried to generalize but did not expand on the practical ways to generalize inclusive assessments. This lack of specific guidance is particularly problematic when considering the potential tension between maintaining academic rigor and implementing inclusive assessment practices - a common concern among educators that the book doesn't adequately address. While the book does a commendable job of discussing various theoretical frameworks, it could have provided more guidance on how to integrate these different approaches into a unified, actionable framework for inclusive assessment.

The book starts with the American higher education system but diverges into the Australian higher education system in the second half. This is confusing for readers, especially within the American education system. Furthermore, the book's treatment of technology in inclusive assessment could be more comprehensive. While it discusses artificial intelligence, it doesn't fully explore other technological tools and platforms that could support inclusive assessment practices, missing an opportunity to provide a complete picture of technology's role in creating inclusive educational environments.

Contributions

This book has a literary contribution to the body of assessment literature. It enlightens researchers and practitioners to improve the current assessment strategies and make them more inclusive toward all students. By bringing together diverse perspectives and theoretical frameworks, the book offers a comprehensive overview of the current state of inclusive assessment in higher education. This book is an excellent source of information for inclusive assessment practices and inculcating student needs and voices in creating appropriate tests for diverse students. The book's exploration of "assessment for social justice" is particularly noteworthy, as it extends the conversation beyond mere inclusivity to consider how assessment practices can contribute to broader societal change.

Its interdisciplinary approach, drawing on critical disability studies, decolonial theories, and social justice frameworks, provides educators with a rich theoretical foundation from which to inform an educator's practice. The book's emphasis on student voice and agency in assessment design promotes a more collaborative and empowering approach to education, offering practical suggestions for implementing student-centered assessment practices. Additionally, the book's critical examination of universal design for assessment (UDA) and its exploration of the role of technology and artificial intelligence in assessment offer timely insights into both established and emerging approaches to inclusive assessment. By addressing these topics, the book contributes to the ongoing dialogue about how to create assessment practices that are truly inclusive and equitable in the rapidly evolving landscape of higher education.

Appropriate Audiences

This book is appropriate for budding educational researchers, educators, policymakers, or any enthusiastic practitioner. This book draws from various sources and summarizes the need for having inclusive assessment practices. And hence, this book can be used as a source of reference for creating inclusive assessments.

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The Pedagogy of Skills in the 21st Century: Practices for Integrating them into the Teaching Process

By Dimitra Kafka & Theodora Papageorgiou
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Abstract- The paper aims at the educational priorities and teaching practices implemented in the Greek school that support the development of 21st century skills. The approach to this central issue is attempted in the context of a global perspective. In specific, we focus on curricula, subject areas, the school's mission and the learning environments. In our analysis we draw on the KSAVE model (Binkley et.al., 2012) and argue that any educational endeavor to cultivate skills at the school level should be an outgrowth of organic interconnection and alignment of the above factors rather than a decontextualized practice.

Keywords: 21st century skills, ways of thinking, ways of working, learning tools, teaching practices, KSAVE model, ICT, cognitive skills, metacognitive skills, social skills.

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Dimitra Kafka [α] & Theodora Papageorgiou [σ]

Abstract- The paper aims at the educational priorities and teaching practices implemented in the Greek school that support the development of 21st century skills. The approach to this central issue is attempted in the context of a global perspective. In specific, we focus on curricula, subject areas, the school's mission and the learning environments. In our analysis we draw on the KSAVE model (Binkley et.al., 2012) and argue that any educational endeavor to cultivate skills at the school level should be an outgrowth of organic interconnection and alignment of the above factors rather than a decontextualized practice.

Keywords: 21st century skills, ways of thinking, ways of working, learning tools, teaching practices, KSAVE model, ICT, cognitive skills, metacognitive skills, social skills.

I. Introduction

Educational policies in various countries, as well as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), have prioritized the acquisition of skills in their agendas for the future of education, enabling students to tackle complex future challenges. In this context, the design of learning environments should start from questions such as: What knowledge and skills do students need for the 21stcentury? What educational practices encourage 21st-century learning? How can technology support the pedagogy of collaborative learning? How can the classroom and the school in general foster 21st century skills? (https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report)

It is clear that modern schools must use practices for creating "critically and creatively thinking citizens" who can evolve, adapt, and think critically beyond dysfunctional views and perceptions. Therefore, the role of teaching becomes central, as it serves as a recognized, institutionalized and systematized environment for acquiring knowledge and developing skills. The goal is not merely for students to possess knowledge, but to utilize that knowledge to think critically, use appropriate learning tools, coexist and collaborate effectively.

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II. The Concept of Skills and their Typology: The KSAVE Model

For over two decades, researchers, educators, and policymakers have emphasized the need to cultivate the 21st century skills (Kasimatis, Kouloumpis, & Papageorgiou, 2019). Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Communication, known as the 4Cs, are the learning skills of the 21st century that enable us to adapt to the characteristics of our world and express our innovative ideas (http://users.sch.gr/hgoutsos/files/dejiotites/2-6a.pdf).

Skills are usually treated as individual characteristics. In the educational context they are described as part of learning objectives (knowledge-skills-statistics/behaviors) and/or learning outcomes and are acquired through formal education and vocational training rather than through more specific training and informal learning (Krasadaki et al., 2023: 23).

According to Krasadaki et al. (2023) *skill* is the application of knowledge in practice in order for a person to meet the requirements and goals in his/her professional, social and personal life. In the New Skills Agenda for Europe (Lintzeris, 2017), the term *skills* is used to describe what a person knows, understands and can do. According to the OECD (OECD, 2019:16), a *skill* is defined as the ability of an individual to use acquired knowledge in a responsible way in order to achieve a goal. *Skill* is, also, described as the competence to complete a knowledge-based process to achieve a goal but enriched with the moral value of responsibility. With regard to the 2030 competences, the OECD advocates their holistic dimension, which consists of the activation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in order to tackle complex problems.

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A *skill* is the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to perform tasks and solve problems (Cedefop, 2010). Skills help individuals to participate in social and political life and have a direct link to their daily life and the problems they are asked to solve (OECD, 2019). Karanikola and Panagiotopoulos (2019)

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describe skills as a set of knowledge, personal characteristics and achievements that make individuals able to be employed and succeed and in this sense they are linked to employability. Finally, Javrh, Mozina and colleagues (2018:7) use the term *basic skills* to describe an individual's ability to effectively use acquired knowledge and skills in complex and unpredictable situations.

In texts we find three types of skills (Krasadaki et al., 2023; Haste, 2018; World Bank, 2018): a. basic skills (writing, reading, reading, text comprehension, numeracy and digital literacy); b. technical-vocational skills, related to specific job functions; c. horizontal skills or life, personality, socio-emotional or soft skills. These skills are transversely related to all professional-social and personal activities. Such skills include cooperativeness, adaptability, time management, empathy, problem solving, leadership, etc. (Krasadaki et al., 2023: 24). In 2018 the "Updated European Reference Framework for Key Competences in Lifelong Learning" emphasizes (as mentioned in Krasadaki et al, 2023) on life skills that help people to adapt to today's multicultural environment and to cope with modern life challenges and demands. In EU texts of recent years, soft or social skills have been replaced by the term life skills.

The OECD (2017, as cited in Krasadaki, 2023) distinguished skills into a. cognitive and b. non-cognitive, while their combination constitutes techniques. Cognitive skills include literacy, numeracy and problem solving, while non-cognitive skills include our behavioral and technical characteristics. Finally, technical skills are the combination of cognitive and non-cognitive skills and are used to accomplish a task.

Another classification of skills is the distinction between hard skills and soft/social/transversal/horizontal skills. Hard skills are associated with specific technical skills or knowledge required to perform a job and can be defined by the phrase 'what one knows' (Hunt, 2007). Soft skills are difficult to measure and refer to an individual's personality traits such as communication, creativity, teamwork, time management, conflict management, empathy and leadership. Personal characteristics also include personality, empathy and organizational skills (Parsons, 2008). Soft skills can be classified as a subset of generic skills and are transferable between different occupations.

In the DeSeCo project, skills theory is based on three areas of action a. knowledge, b. skills, c. attitudes and values. The learning of competences takes place in appropriate learning environments, with appropriate actions and goes through existence itself. Knowledge can be about a field, science or process. Skills can be divided into cognitive, metacognitive, social/emotional and practical/physical. Regarding attitudes and values, these can be personal or related to the national and international environment (Krasadaki et al., 2023).

Many organizations and researchers have focused their studies on the importance of defining 21st century skills (Voogt & Pareja, 2010), attempting to cover a broad range of knowledge and skills that are not easy to define, codify, or categorize precisely. This paper utilizes the 21st century skills framework presented by Binkley et al. (2014) as a reference point.

Binkley et al. (2012) developed the KSAVE model which is an acronym of the initial letters of the words Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Values and Ethics (Binkley et.al, 2012). Within the model they identified ten core skills necessary for 21st century education, considering for each skill the dimensions of Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Values and Ethics.

The 21st century skills, according to the KSAVE model, organized in four categories of ways of thinking, ways of working, learning tools and social life skills, (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Values, & Ethics), are interconnected with the modern school's educational mission, constituting an undeniable challenge and need for both students and teachers (Figure 1).

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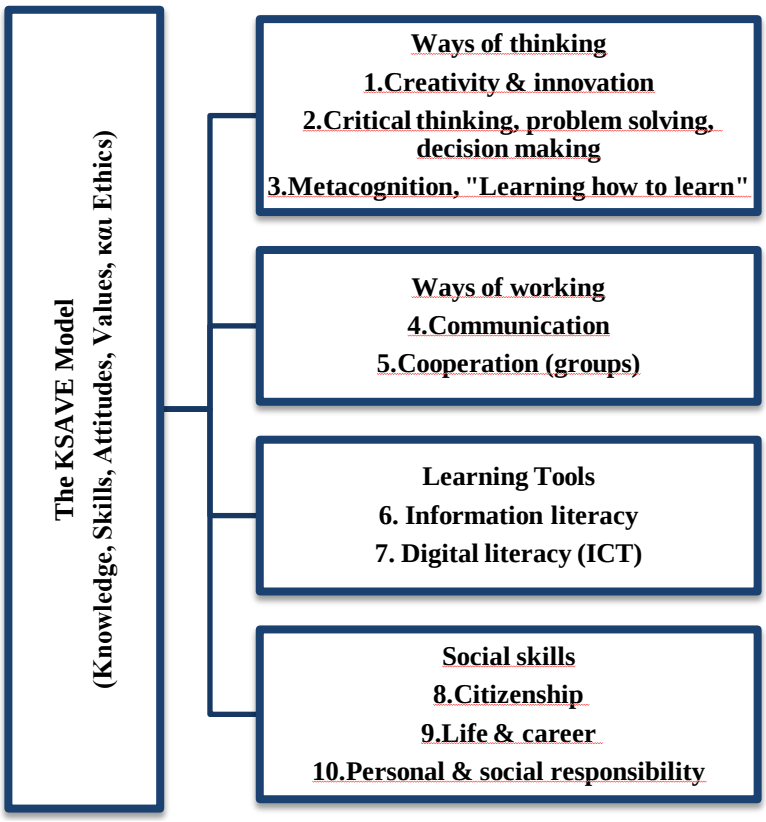


Figure 1: The KSAVE Model
(Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Values, & Ethics)

Binkley et al (2012) pointed out that the 21st century skills should be taught in order for learners to develop new ways of thinking, learning, working and living in the modern world.

III. Curricula and the Educational Process

The ongoing public dialogue regarding 21st century skills highlights the need for a systemic perspective on the structures and practices that can support skill development. This approach ensures that skill-oriented education is not just rhetoric added to the educational intentions of the modern school but represents a core connection between the teaching system, structures and practices.

The goal of contemporary teaching practices and curricula has been to create appropriate learning environments that foster open learning. A review of new curricula (iep.edu.gr) reveals their underlying philosophy. They aim to establish an effective, innovative, and creative school that promotes quality education, adapting to societal changes, new cultural conditions, and scientific advancements, while connecting theory with practice through systematic and effective work.

The objective is for students to acquire reflective skills, learning how to learn, how to research and how to become creative and effective. Students are encouraged to develop skills to apply their knowledge, make science-based decisions, take initiative, and act independently both in the classroom and in life. Furthermore, they should gain self-esteem, confidence, empathy and resilience, enabling them to communicate effectively, recognize values and principles develop a sense of responsibility, and prepare as active citizens who participate in addressing significant challenges facing contemporary societies, such as pollution, migration, epidemics etc.

Additionally, active participation and cooperation among all students are encouraged through environments and practices that foster self-directed learning, teamwork, inquiry-based learning, experiential approaches, collaborative problem-solving, communicative approaches, and transformational logic. These approaches promote metacognitive and reflective skills and encourage students to envision the future by exploring issues such as sustainability and citizenship in response to rapid technological growth and the ever-evolving social environment. However, given the skills focus of the new curricula, certain questions arise.

- How can these goals be translated into teaching practice?
- Do these curriculum directives focus on pedagogical interventions and practices so that skills education spans across subject areas?

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For this reason, we sought institutional educational initiatives supporting the integration of skills into the school system. Our research showed that these practices are supported primarily by "Skills workshops," the only formalized framework for skill integration. This framework includes guidelines for each school unit's action plan, specifying the inclusion and development of an action plan by each school, the purposes and methodology of the action plan, the steps preceding the faculty's planning session for the annual action plan and references to documenting the school's actions.

As can be seen, the innovation of institutionalizing skills workshops operates in a context of autonomy, as it is developed at specific times beyond the subject matter. At this point, a reflection on the continuities and discontinuities that may arise in the context of this educational practice emerges, given that the specific educational activities are distinguished by a framed process of educating students on a number of issues such as: Nutrition, Mental Health, Sex Education, Self-care, Safety and Prevention, Road Safety, Prevention of Addictions; 2. Caring for the Environment: ecological awareness, Climate Change, Prevention and Protection from Natural Disasters, Global Natural Heritage and Sustainability, Cultural Heritage. 3. Interest and action: Human Rights and Inclusion, Volunteering, Respect and Diversity; and 4. I create and innovate: Create, Innovate, Entrepreneur, STEM/STEAM, Robotics, Entrepreneurship, New Technologies, Learning about Professions (OPS Training - IEP: All actions).

- But how could educational continuity be ensured so that skills training is organically integrated into everyday educational practice, so that the learner effortlessly acquires the necessary skills?
- In the context of a teaching unit can the teacher highlight skills and lead students to master them and how?

The answer to these questions is related to teacher education and training, flexibility and the possibilities of overcoming entrenched and inflexible teaching practices. The teacher, aware of current development and educational requirements, should draw up a list of skills to be trained, identify themes for reflection and organize a portfolio of activities. Moreover, the teacher should formulate a teaching method based on the principles of pedagogical and teaching methodology.

If we really value as important the integration of skills into everyday teaching practice, we must go beyond the narrow content coverage and move to skill-oriented teaching processes. We need to set specific and clear teaching goals, inform and train our students in ways of working that promote skills and cultivate their sense of belonging by organizing communities of interest and learning (Kafka, 2022).

IV. Consideration of Teaching Integration

The educational function of the school today shifts the focus from the possession of knowledge to the all-round development of the student. In this context, the school is called upon to create learning environments that place the learner at the center of the learning process (Wiater, 1999:50).

In the context of teaching, the cultivation and acquisition of skills is a long-standing issue for the scientific community. Their identification is related to the particular socio-cultural context with its respective goals and educational priorities. Despite its timelessness, the issue of skills remains topical because of the need for constant updating and their interconnection with teaching and learning.

The role of teaching therefore becomes central, since it is an identifiable, institutionalized and systematized environment for the acquisition of knowledge and the cultivation of skills. In the spirit of post-modern pedagogy, the concept of autonomous learning becomes a matter of interest and priority. According to Simon (1992) students should:

- Play an active role in learning, engaging their attention and taking advantage of every learning opportunity offered to them.
- Understand and retain new knowledge, be able to monitor the learning process and verify learning outcomes.
- To choose appropriate strategies that lead to learning.
- To monitor and evaluate their learning progress.

A learning environment, in order to be effective and able to respond to contemporary reality, should provide opportunities for the learner to utilize his/her 'cognitive load', to enrich and transform it in challenging learning conditions.

We therefore conclude that, the acquisition of skills is related to and dependent on the learning environment, the educational experiences provided by the teaching environment, the continuous engagement of students in purposeful practices leading to the acquisition of skills. Equally important, however, is the role of the teacher, who must be creative, reflective and self-evaluative.

In his study on reflection, Lee (2005) makes a three-level categorization. The recall level in which the teacher, by recalling his/her experiences, tries to interpret situations and express general concerns about his/her teaching task. The justification level (rationalization level), in which the teacher, seeking the "why", tries to interpret situations based on cause and effect in order to formulate new instructional principles; and the reflective level (critical analysis level) in which the teacher analyzes his/her experience and action and

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makes appropriate changes and improvements where necessary (Lee, 2005).

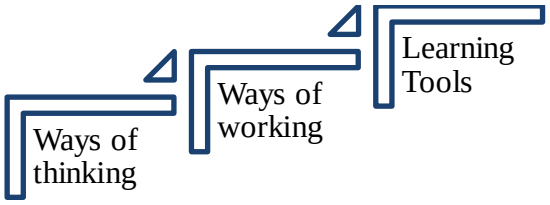
It is therefore evident that the teacher's reflective process shapes a broad framework of positive consequences for education and the effectiveness of the educational work, as through reflection he/she observes, reflects, makes corrective interventions in his/her teaching behavior and makes informed decisions in order to meet the needs of his/her students (Lee, 2005). Utilizing Lee's categorization of the three levels, we note that, also in the case of the integration of skills in the educational process, the teacher, by recalling experiences, interprets learning situations that focus on skills, justifies situations and formulates guiding principles that lead to the acquisition of skills, and finally makes a critical analysis about how and to what extent skills are acquired in the educational process. On this basis, we formulate indicative indicators of teacher reflection with the aim of activating the teacher in the direction of "Skills Education" (Figure 2).

Indicator 1:	Have I integrated 21st century skills into my educational agenda?
Indicator 2:	Based on the assessment of my students, what should my goals be in terms of cultivating skills?
Indicator 3:	Are the subjects I teach suitable for the cultivation of skills?
Indicator 4:	In the context of the subjects, which ways of thinking, of working and learning tools do I focus on?
Indicator 5:	Do the teaching practices I use contribute to the cultivation of skills?
Indicator 6:	Do I assess the acquisition of skills?

Figure 2: Indicative Indicators of Teacher Reflection

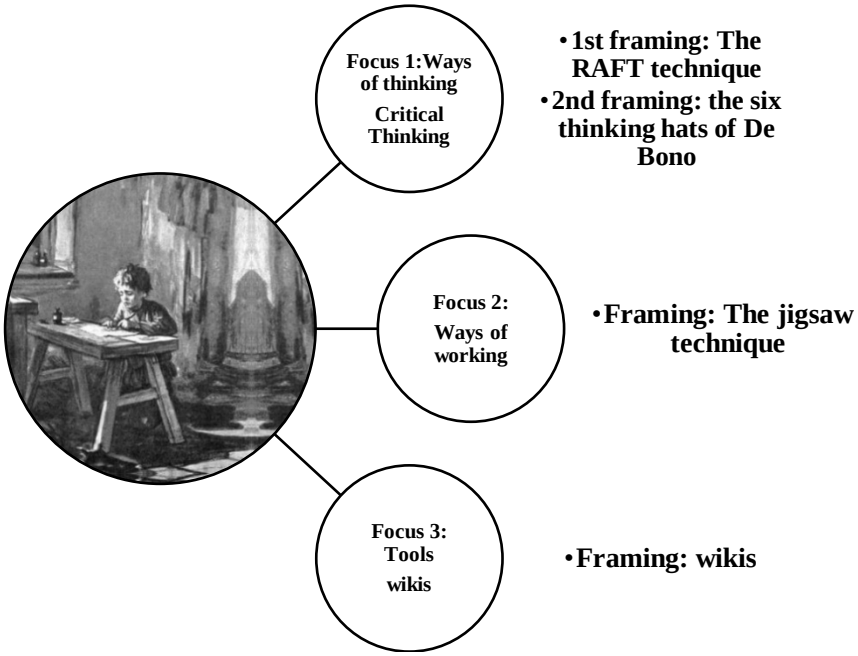
V. Indicative Teaching Environment[1] for Cultivating and Promoting Skills Based on the KSAVE Model

The Focus of the Teaching Intervention



[1] The Teaching Proposal is based on Material used in the Greek School.

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Implementation Environment

⊙ *1st focus: Ways of thinking. Critical thinking: Problem solving, decision making.*

Theme: Child Labor

Reference: Modern Greek Literature Texts for 7th Grade, "Vanka" by Anton Chekhov

Summary of the Text: In this story, Anton Chekhov presents the issue of child labor with realism and sensitivity. Vanka, a nine-year-old orphaned boy, experiences the hardships of life away from his beloved grandfather, enduring social injustice and the harshness of survival, all through his innocent perspective.

The teacher presents the theme of child labor, highlighting the issue through Chekhov's text as a foundation. They guide students to formulate and analyze questions, such as:

- *What problem do you identify in the text?*
- *What other issues arise from this problem?*
- *Does the issue of child labor exist nowadays?*
- *Can you explain your thoughts?*
- *How would you suggest addressing this problem?*

Students discuss and analyze the issue of child labor based on their experiences and prior knowledge. Moreover, they examine sources provided by the teacher. Each student individually or as a member of a group suggests solutions, and these views are synthesized and presented to the class. Additionally, students may engage in activities such as writing letters to relevant authorities, thereby acting as active citizens.

🗁 *2nd Framing the theme using the RAFT Technique*

The RAFT technique (Table 2) encourages the organization of evidence-based discourse. It helps students understand their role as writers by taking on roles, considering the audience they will address, the form of the text they will create, and the topic they will approach from a point of view. RAFT is the acronym for the words, Role: the role of the writer (journalist, observer, eyewitness, narrator, etc.), Audience: the audience (the one who will read the text, classmates, parents, people in the community, etc.), Format: the format of the text (letter, article, essay, poem, advertisement, etc.), Topic: the subject (the subject of the text, a theme, a concept, etc.), Theme: the subject of the text, a topic, a concept, etc. (Valianti & Neophytou, 2017).

In this case, the student taking on the role of a child worker, sends a letter to the Ministry of Labor exposing the issue of child labor, the conditions under which he/she works, his/her deprivations and issues related to the violation of their rights.

Table 3: Learning Activity

Role	Audience	Form	Topic
Child	**Υπουργείο**	Letter	Child Labour

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2nd Framing: Using De Bono's "Six Thinking Hats" Technique

The analysis of topics through the lens of the "Six Thinking Hats" highlights multiple perspectives, fostering divergent and creative thinking, enhancing interaction, and thereby maximizing the outcomes of the learning process. In the context of the topic "Child Labor and its Effects on Children," the teacher encourages students to argue about the issue.

Topic for Discussion: Child labor and its impact on children.

The White Hat represents neutral, objective knowledge. Users of this hat process available information, focusing on facts without drawing conclusions.

The Red Hat expresses emotional and intuitive thinking. The user reveals spontaneous, subjective emotional responses (fears, desires, etc.) without rational justification.

The Black Hat represents caution, highlighting the negative aspects of a decision (disadvantages, risks, consequences). The role relies on logic. The black hat balances impulsive subjectivity and strict logical reasoning, sparking the search for alternative solutions and thus promoting creative thinking.

The Yellow Hat represents an optimistic approach, projecting a positive and well-founded assessment of the problem's parameters.

The Green Hat symbolizes creative thinking and encourages the user to experiment and propose open, innovative solutions.

The Blue Hat expresses organizational thinking. The user comprehensively examines each problematic situation, identifies its aspects, defines the goals of the action plan, and organizes action steps.

⊙ *2nd Focus: Working Methods*

🗁 *Framing: The Jigsaw Technique*

The *Jigsaw Technique* (Aronson et al., 1978) is one of the most popular methods for promoting collaboration and discussion within a community. This method unfolds in seven stages, and as in a puzzle, each student contributes to completing the "learning puzzle" through individual, cooperative effort and study.

Steps

Step 1 Organization of groups that will serve as the foundation for the jigsaw.
Step 2 Selection of a topic and defining areas of study.
Step 3 Assignment of study-work areas to each group member.
Step 4 Formation of new groups, the "experts." In these new groups, students investigate, discuss, exchange opinions and thoughts and argue.
Step 5 Each member, as a representative of their team, must transfer the new knowledge acquired in the "experts" group back to the members of their original group.
Step 6 When the "expert" groups have completed their work, the students are brought back and reassembled in their original groups. Each student, returning to his/her original group, analyses the main points of the study topic that was the subject of work in the 'expert' group.
Step 7 The teacher, who monitors the development of the process and acts as a facilitator throughout the process, records the points made by the students, evaluates the main points of the presentation, poses questions, creates new concerns and synthesizes the axes of the topic (Kafka et al., 2015: 3-13, 2022).

In the context of the topic on child labor, the teacher asks students to study aspects of the issue, examining materials related to child labor in the past and today (https://foundation.parliament.gr/el/dimokratia-kai-ekpaideysi).

One member from each group is assigned to study an issue to be worked on in the "expert" group. When the study of the issues is completed, the members return to their original teams and communicate the research results. The activities are

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concluded with a paper in which each group will summarize its conclusions on the issues analyzed.

In the context of the thematic units, students are asked to distinguish between the causes and conditions of child labor in the past and in the present day, to recognize the rights that children who work are deprived of, to relate the phenomenon of child labor to the general socio-economic conditions of each era and to challenge the view that child labor only concerns children from the so-called third world or minority social groups such as migrants and Roma.

3rd Focus: Tools

Framing: Wikis

In wikis environments students develop language skills (Forte & Bruckman, 2006). The learning process expands across space and time, evolving in a familiar learning environment. In the open wiki environment, participants create content, share it, edit the work of others, and contribute to idea production. The teacher can trace each student's participation and contributions within this collaborative process.

In particular, the use of the wikis at the level of a learning community leads students to make the appropriate communicative adjustments and change their perspective, to operate in two-way transmitter-receiver environments and to be guided in self-evaluation and peer evaluation processes (Mazaraki, et al., 2017). In the context of the topic on child labor, the teacher asks students to write texts on child labor. They should intervene and add material, improve their text and creatively intervene in the texts of others.

In wikis environments students can, for example, take on the roles of: a. researchers on child labor, b. cartographers, representing the places with the highest increase in child labor, etc. In an initial phase, the students' assignments-roles and the time to complete their work are agreed upon. The students then co-construct a first draft of their text in the wiki environment. Through the development of asynchronous dialogue both with each other and with the teacher - a tool provided by the wiki platform - they reflect on the initial structure of their text, rework it and gradually work their way towards more complex forms of the initial text. In this way, students are engaged in a continuous process of collective reflection until the final version is produced. It becomes clear that in the wikis environments different perspectives and approaches are revealed and global approaches and mappings are created.

VI. Conclusions – Proposals

Cultivating 21st century skills requires a new approach. Integrating educational practices with institutional educational skill practices ensures that achieving 21st century competencies emerges from connected educational actions rather than isolated practices. In Greece the curricula aim at the acquisition of knowledge with the help of which students will develop cognitive, social and metacognitive skills, encouraging their active involvement in both individual and group activities. Learning environments should create the conditions for learning to be a social and group experience. New technologies, which are increasingly being used to create digital learning environments and simulate real-life situations, can contribute to this.

Skills workshops can be a place where modern teaching techniques can be applied and contribute to the development of skills in students, as through their participation in them students will be able to develop life, technology and science skills. In addition, students will practice learning through a collaborative, creative and critically reflective teaching methodology, where the aim is to enhance life skills, mediation and responsibility (Government Gazette B/3567/2021). Through learner-centred techniques that promote the active participation of learners and offer them the opportunity to discover, and above all to experience, change before being called upon to put it into practice, learners will be able to develop the skills necessary for their adult lives (Phillips, 2005).

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Challenges of English Language Teaching to Ethnic Students at the Secondary Level in Bangladesh

By Naiem Al Amin

Abstract- This study investigates the challenges and problems connected with teaching English to secondary-level Garo students in Bangladesh. The study investigates the perspectives of English teachers and Garo students, identifying the challenges encountered both in the context and the techniques used to address these issues. The study used a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection tools such as surveys, teacher interviews, class observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs) to arrive at a full understanding of the topic. The findings highlight the importance of using culturally responsive teaching methods, reducing class sizes, incorporating Garo cultural elements into the curriculum, and improving teacher education. Furthermore, the study reveals socioeconomic challenges and the need for more real-world language practice opportunities outside of the classroom. This study emphasises the importance of implementing inclusive, culturally sensitive, and effective English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching approaches, particularly for ethnic minority groups like the Garo, in order to improve their educational experiences and outcomes.

Keywords: *challenges, teaching english, garo students, perspectives, ethnicity, methods.*

GJHSS-G Classification: *LCC: PE1128.A2*



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Chapter One

I. Introduction

a) Overview of English Language education in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's educational landscape, with its rich cultural and linguistic variety, presents unique difficulties and opportunities for English Language Teaching (ELT). Among Bangladesh's diverse ethnic communities, the Garo community stands out for its distinct cultural and linguistic identity. However, socioeconomic factors and geographical disparities frequently impact the quality and effectiveness of English education. Given the global importance of English as a lingua franca, competency in the language is increasingly regarded as a prerequisite for gaining educational and professional possibilities. English is the compulsory subject from primary level to higher secondary level in Bangladesh, and it is also compulsory for the Garo tribe as there is no different education system for them.

This study examines the many facets of ELT among Garo students and the challenges faced by students and educators. It examines how ethnicity, language, culture, and pedagogy affect English language education. The study examines the multifaceted issues of teaching and learning English from the viewpoints of English teachers and Garo learners. It also investigates how educators overcome these problems through teaching methods.

This research is essential because it illuminates an understudied aspect of ELT in Bangladesh. It helps academics understand the challenges of teaching English to ethnic minority children and provides policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders with practical advice. The study promotes more inclusive, culturally relevant, and effective ELT approaches that can improve Garo students' educational experiences and outcomes by addressing their unique needs and obstacles. Thus, this research is crucial to educational equity and excellence in Bangladesh's varied and multilingual population.

b) Overview of Garo community

Bangladesh is prosperous in cultural and ethnic variety, home to over 50 indigenous communities and most Bengalis. The 2022 census shows the country's indigenous population is roughly 16, 50,159, accounting for 1.8%. The Garo (Mandi) Adivasi are a prominent matriarchal community in Bangladesh. There are around 76,846 Garos in Bangladesh, with many more living in Meghalaya, India.

Garo communities mostly inhabit in the country's northeastern regions, particularly in Gazipur, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Tangail, Sherpur, Jamalpur, and areas of Sylhet near the Indian border. The Garo's ancestral homeland is in the northwestern Chinese province of Xinjiang. They went to Tibet several thousand years ago from that location. Around 4500 years ago, they relocated to the northeastern Indian hill regions and northern Bangladesh.

Almost all Garos are bilingual because they must speak Bengali and their own tongue. The Garo community has their own language, Achik Katha or Mandi. Only a few Garo people in various locations still practice the traditional Garo religion, Sangsharek, which is almost extinct.

In their inheritance system, men do not inherit property from their parents. Because the husband moves to the wife's house after marriage, their residence pattern is matrilocal. Some Christian Garos are increasingly dividing land ownership and family wealth among both girls and boys, thus subverting the matriarchal family structure.

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Several serious barriers have been identified within the Garo community, including a lousy communication system, health issues, girl insecurity, early marriage, native dominance, a lack of educational institutions, a lack of pure drinking water, and so on. The fundamental issue in this area, however, is the issue of land ownership. There is an allegation that the native Bengali people took possession of the Garos' land and property.

However, indigenous people are frequently deprived of the fundamental rights and services guaranteed by the government under the constitution. As a result, they are viewed as the country's poor, illiterate, and backward population. Today, the Garos have enormous obstacles in adapting to this modern and national educational system while maintaining their ancient ways. They are exploited and denied access to high-quality education, especially English education. To summarize, this research aimed to identify the obstacles that students had in their English language education and offer ways to overcome those challenges.

c) Problem Statement

It is disappointing to see that, despite numerous government and educational initiatives over the past few years in Bangladesh to improve the English language teaching and learning environment in institutions serving Garo-occupied areas, a sorry state of affairs still exists with regard to teaching English to Garo secondary school students. English Language Teaching (ELT) to Garo students at the secondary level in Bangladesh faces challenges due to their sociocultural and linguistic differences that hinder effective English learning. Investigating the perspectives of English teachers and Garo learners, identifying specific challenges, and exploring teaching strategies is crucial for improving ELT quality and developing tailored education programs for Garo students.

d) Objectives of the Study

The primary goal of this paper is to investigate secondary-level Garo students' attitudes about learning English as well as the thoughts of English teachers on teaching English to Garo students. This study also will try to identify and understand the challenges that Garo secondary school students encounter when learning English as a second language and to look at the particular problems that English teachers run into when teaching Garo students English at the secondary level, as well as the particular problems that Garo students have when learning English at the secondary level. Finally, to find ways to deal with the challenges of teaching English to Garo students at the secondary level, this paper will look into methods applied by English teachers.

e) Research Questions

- What are the perspectives of English teachers and secondary level Garo learners towards English Language teaching and learning?
- What challenges arise for the English teachers and secondary level Garo students in teaching and learning English?
- What teaching strategies and techniques do the teachers employ to address the challenges?

f) Justification of the Study

The study is motivated by the lack of research specifically addressing the obstacles faced in teaching English to Garo students despite their struggles in achieving competency in the language. Although several studies have examined the overall difficulties in English teaching, there is a significant lack of study specifically focused on the Garo community at the secondary level. This study seeks to bridge the existing knowledge gap by examining the challenges encountered by Garo English teachers and students, as well as analysing the approaches used to overcome these difficulties. Enhancing the English proficiency of Garo students holds great relevance due to the global prominence of the language and its impact on educational and employment prospects. This objective is in line with the broader objectives of promoting educational equity and inclusivity in Bangladesh. Moreover, the results of the study can provide valuable insights for advocacy initiatives, educational restructuring, and allocation of resources, ultimately enhancing the language proficiency, educational attainment, and socio-economic advancement of the Garo community.

Chapter: Two

II. Review of Related Literature

a) English Language Education for Garo Community in Bangladesh

Research indicates that educational resources and opportunities are often unequally distributed, with urban areas having better access than rural regions *(BANBEIS, 2018)*. This urban-rural division particularly impacts Garo minority groups since they commonly live in remote and undeveloped areas (Little et al., 2012). Their lack of access to qualified English teachers and sufficient resources for learning limits their language development (Logan & Burdick-Will, 2017). Therefore, access to quality English language education is a significant concern for Garo minority communities in Bangladesh (Reza & Ullah, 2023). Additionally, the scarcity of resources and well-qualified teachers in the distant and rural regions of Bangladesh, where numerous ethnic minorities reside, exacerbates the situation. Moreover, the curriculum and teaching materials are not culturally responsive or linguistically inclusive for minority students (Singh, 2011).

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The experience of ethnic minorities in Bangladesh mirrors the challenges minority groups face in other multilingual countries (Paulston, 1994). Garo students frequently experience socioeconomic disadvantages such as deprivation and restricted access to sophisticated educational resources. These things may make it difficult for them to enroll in reputable English language programs or have access to additional learning resources (Heugh & Mohamed, 2020). Ethnic students in English language classes experience mismatch due to cultural disparities between ethnic minority populations and the Bengali culture, which makes up the majority of the population. This may affect their motivation and interest in studying English (Li, 2011).

Moreover, the government has put forward several policies and a measure to alleviate the difficulties experienced by students from ethnic minorities and has acknowledged the value of English language education (Alam, 2009). In order to ensure that all students, including those from ethnic minorities, have equitable access to high-quality education, Bangladesh implemented an inclusive education policy (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013).

b) *English Language Teaching in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts*

The role of English in multilingual settings varies significantly; it might be a second and third language for some or a foreign language with no official status for others (Crystal, 2003). The complexity of teaching English in multilingual settings is compounded by cultural diversity (Coelho, 2004). Each culture brings its own set of values, learning styles, and educational expectations. ELT teachers in such environments must navigate these cultural nuances to create an inclusive classroom atmosphere that respects and integrates diverse cultural perspectives (Economides, 2008). ELT approaches need to be more effective in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Instead, methods that encourage active participation, collaboration, and respect for diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are necessary (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Besides, teacher training is crucial in preparing educators for the complexities of teaching in multilingual and multicultural contexts (Assaf et al., 2010). Teachers need language proficiency, cultural competence, and an understanding of how to manage linguistic diversity in the classroom (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

c) *Perspectives of English Teachers toward English Language Teaching to Ethnic Students*

English instructors frequently demonstrate a deep commitment to their Garo students despite the difficulties. August and Hakuta (1997) see English teaching as a way to provide ethnic minority students with greater autonomy and boost social mobility. Some English instructors consciously try to include ethnic culture in their teachings. They favor preserving cultural identity while boosting English language competency (Raitapuro & Bal, 2016). English instructors who engage with ethnic students frequently express a positive mindset towards English and need specific training and materials to meet this student population's particular demands. Opportunities for professional development can aid instructors in changing their pedagogical approaches (Ahmed, 2012, p. 374).

Moreover, EFL teachers in Oman show a high degree of sensitivity towards linguistic diversity and favor diversity in teaching materials and as learning models. However, they also tend to have a stronger orientation toward inner-circle accents, particularly in British English (Al-Abri, 2021, p. 15). Additionally, Teachers with personal multicultural experiences are more likely to have a positive attitude toward teaching ELLs (Medina et al., 2015, p. 85). Studies by (Roshni et al., 2020) reveal that some teachers perceive tribal students as having limited language proficiency, leading to lower expectations and reduced support.

d) *Perspectives of Ethnic Learners in English Language Education*

Language acquisition is a complex, dynamic system where learners' perspectives and ideologies are crucial *(Larsen-Freeman, 2006).* Ethnic learners' perspectives and ideologies are linked to normativity and are connected to social factors, instruction, and input factors influencing their success in English oral production *(Paakki, 2020).* The choice and use of learning strategies, which affect language acquisition, are influenced by learners' perspectives and ideologies *(Liu Wei-jing, 2006).*

Bangladeshi ethnic students exhibited the lowest motivation for English learning in high school, with higher motivation in college and elementary years *(Kyung, 2011).* Based on research, ethnic students frequently do not consider highly learning English as an opportunity to increase their chances of finding a job and moving up the economic ladder (Awal, 2019, pp. 318–325). Also, ethnic minority students, including those in China's Guizhou Province, have been found to exhibit low English proficiency, weak motivation to learn English, and low frequency of English use. According to Cummins (2001), learners' ethnic and cultural beliefs negatively affect their educational experiences and outcomes. Students from ethnic minorities rarely prefer more engaging and effective learning environments. In order to connect with the larger community and maintain their Garo language and culture, very few Garo learners wish to gain English skills (Islam, 2008). Many ethnic learners are not motivated to study English because they want to interact with the global community (Islam & Hashim, 2019, pp. 247-255).

On the contrary, to access a more excellent range of academic and professional prospects, ethnic

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students desire to pursue further education in English-medium institutions (Nalla & Pani, 2018). Ethnic learners bring diverse cultural perspectives that profoundly improve their language learning styles, attitudes, and motivations regarding English language education (Oxford, 1996).

e) Challenges Faced by Teachers in Teaching English to Ethnic Students

Achik Katha, the Garo language, is the first language of Garo students. They frequently speak English as a third language in addition to Bengali, the national language of Bangladesh. In the ELT classroom, this multilingual setting creates significant language difficulties (Bahous et al., 2011). This community's linguistic diversity makes teaching English as a foreign language (ELT) more challenging (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2010, pp. 369–374). The linguistic divide is a significant barrier for English teachers (Rahman, 2010, pp. 341-359). English is taught in Bengali, so it might be challenging to understand and learn (Riad & Khashnabish, 2018).

According to Borah (2020), many schools in Garo-populated areas lack sufficient resources, including certified English instructors and suitable teaching aids. Because they frequently originate from low-income families, Garo students may have difficulty accessing high-quality instruction and other forms of support (Begum et al., 2019, pp. 7–22). Effective ELT in Garo schools is hampered by a lack of proper English language learning resources, including textbooks and additional materials. Moreover, the research of Akyeampong et al. (2020) highlights the negative impact of insufficient educational materials on teacher motivation. Similarly, studies conducted by Al-Sharhan (2016) illustrate the difficulties faced when limited access to projectors, screens, and audio equipment hampers the efficient implementation of multimedia teaching methods.

Class size affects classroom management, instruction, and student performance. Hossain (2016) found the negative impact of large class sizes (above 70 students) on teacher-student interaction, student engagement, and academic achievement in Bangladeshi secondary schools. Blatchford et al. (2007) and Çakmak (2009) found that larger classes can make it difficult for teachers to manage ethnic student conduct. Thus, classrooms promote student behavior over academic accomplishment. Large class sizes compel teachers to spend more time controlling the class than teaching, affecting classroom education. Class size affects teacher-student interactions, which affects classroom instruction. Studies by Finn et al., (2003) Smith et al., (2003) show that smaller classes increase student involvement and teacher-student communication.

Skilled English teachers are required at schools in regions of the Garo community. Teachers with inadequate English skills teach English, creating a poor learning environment for Garo students (Upadhyaya & Upadhyaya, 2016).

Additionally, Garo students usually come from economically underprivileged families which limit their access to high-quality instruction and other forms of assistance for their academic endeavors (Shields & Mohan, 2008).

f) Challenges Faced by Minority Students in Learning English

Achik Katha is Garo students' first language, and Bengali is their second. Language learning complications occur with the addition of English as a third language (Khubchandani, 1997, pp. 67–76). Garo students have trouble understanding lessons given in Bengali in the classrooms (Rahman, 2010). Weak language fluency in instructional language hinders learning English. (Wong, 2010). As they switch between Garo, Bengali, and English, Garo learners face linguistic interference. Errors and difficulty in learning the English language may occur from this interference (Burling, 1959).

García (2005) and *Brisk* (2006) illustrated the limitation of English exposure outside the classroom, resulting in rote memorization and difficulty with grammar and pronunciation.

Moreover, Meganathan (2019) and Hornberger & Link (2012) pointed out the significance of appreciating students' native languages and cultures, proposing strategies such as translanguaging and leveraging students' prior knowledge to enhance the meaningfulness and relevance of English learning with real-life experiences. Additionally, the study of Debnath (2010) in the context of the Santal community of Bangladesh advocates engaging indigenous voices. Nevertheless, Norton's (1997) research mainly promotes a national centralized curriculum, disregarding local values and traditions.

Moreover, ethnic learners in English Language Teaching (ELT) have distinct challenges, including structural obstacles, inequitable supply distribution, linguistic bias, and curricula that fail to incorporate their cultural backgrounds (Kazemi et al., 2017, pp. 223-246). These challenges affect learners' attitudes and achievements in English (Kazemi et al., 2017).

Additionally, language issues offer a significant problem. For individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, English is a supplementary language, requiring them to manage the intricacies of acquiring a new language while maintaining their original linguistic identities (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, pp. 9-27). This challenge is compounded if there is a significant linguistic distance between their first language and English. Baker (2011) emphasizes the importance of

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recognizing and supporting learners' first languages in ELT, as it can aid in English acquisition and promote a positive sense of identity.

Further, motivation is a crucial factor influencing ethnic learners in ELT. Dörnyei (2007) identifies various types of motivation, including integrative motivation, where learners are driven by a desire to integrate into the culture of the English-speaking community, and instrumental motivation, which is linked to practical benefits like employment opportunities. Garo learners may have diverse motivational drivers influenced by their cultural backgrounds and personal experiences.

Moreover, many schools in Garo-populated areas need more educational tools like additional books and other materials for studying the English language (Barman & Neo, 2014). The lack of such resources hampers the inability of students to practice and enhance their English abilities (Van der Berg, 2008). Students from socioeconomically challenged homes frequently experience poverty and other financial difficulties. Ethnic students' capacity to concentrate on their studies and actively participate in the learning process may be impacted by these elements (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011, pp. 37-52).

Further, some students experience discomfort due to cultural differences between the Garo group and the Bengali majority (Karim et al., 2023). It is difficult for students to interact with the subject matter since the content does not reflect their cultural background. Cultural differences impact the interactions between instructors and ethnic students (Cao & Philp, 2006).

g) Effective ELT Strategies and Pedagogical Approach for Minority Group Students

Practical English Language Teaching (ELT) strategies and pedagogical approaches for minority students are essential in addressing the unique educational needs and challenges these learners face. Tailoring ELT strategies to suit minority students involves understanding their linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds and incorporating this understanding into teaching practices (Canagarajah, 2002).

Sleeter and Zavala (2020) evaluate effective techniques for incorporating ethnic studies into school curricula, focusing on pedagogical approaches that encourage students to critically examine societal structures and histories.

Ethnic students' native languages and cultures are assets rather than obstacles to teaching English as it helps students connect learning with their cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Wright et al., 2015, pp. 1-16).

Expressively, culturally responsive teaching reflects the cultural backgrounds of students and integrates awareness into teaching methods (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Additionally, *Gay (2002)* argues that culturally responsive teaching not only acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups but also bridges the gap between students' home cultures and their academic experiences. It is essential to realize that incorporating students' life experiences and backgrounds into the ELT curriculum is another effective strategy. *Banks (2004)* suggests that integrating students' cultural references in teaching materials and classroom discussions makes learning more relevant and engaging for minority students. According to Salend (2010), this approach also helps build a more inclusive classroom environment where diverse cultural perspectives are valued. Kostikova et al. (2018) revealed that culturally sensitive teaching practices not only boost ethnic students' motivation but also create a learning environment that fosters curiosity.

Van Tartwijk et al. (2009) found that another component of creating a positive environment in a multicultural classroom should be built on establishing a cordial relationship between a teacher and students because pupils in authoritarian classrooms are more likely to give negative criticism or feel threatened for being different. To avoid this, a teacher should act in the classroom as a facilitator rather than an educator *(Lynch, 2015).*

Bilingual education models foster greater engagement and academic success among minority students by validating their linguistic and cultural identities (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Furthermore, English teachers promote using the local language as a transitional language for learning English. The mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE) initiatives seek to increase the effectiveness and accessibility of education for ethnic students (Jacob, 2016).

Significantly, differentiated instruction helps cater to the diverse learning needs of minority students. Tomlinson (2001) describes differentiated instruction as a teaching approach that involves providing different students with different avenues to learning, often in the same classroom. This method can be particularly effective in ELT by adapting instruction to students' varying levels of English proficiency, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds (Reid, 1987).

Chapter Three

III. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter outlines research methodology including the research sites, participants, data collection tools and procedures, schools selections and gaining access and data analysis strategies.

a) Participants

Only secondary level Garo students and English teachers, both Garo and non-Garo, who teach English subject to Garo students in high schools were participants in this research. It was tried to incorporate more Garo teachers as much possible.

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b) Study Area

Data was collected from four high schools of the Garo community living in the Madupur National Sal forest, located in the Arankhola, Dukhola, Jalchhatra areas of Madhupur Upazila, Tangail, Bangladesh.



Study Area Map

c) School Selection

The selection procedure considered several school features, including size, results, and location. In order to ensure a wide range of geographical representation, schools were selected from urban and rural regions. The researcher strived to balance several educational tiers, encompassing MPO, non-MPO, and private schools, to encompass a wide range of student experiences. Moreover, acquaintances from those areas were taken into account. Additionally, the ease of obtaining formal permission to conduct research influenced the choice of institutions. Additional pragmatic factors, such as ensuring safety, evaluating transportation alternatives, and assessing commute duration, were also crucial in determining the chosen school locations.

Table 1: Schools Profile

Schools	Status	Size of English Classes	Results	Gender of Students
Site 1	MPO	60+	Good-average	Girls
Site 2	MPO	70+	Very good	Mixed
Site 3	Non-MPO	50-60	Good-average	Mixed
Site 4	Private	20-30	poor	Boys

d) Access to Schools

The researcher chose three methods while engaging with the schools:

a. Identifying mentors to assist in gaining entrance
b. Use of previous connections
c. Physically submitting a letter of permission for data collection

Furthermore, using prior connections was helpful. The researcher went without assistance, and despite clearly explaining my visit's objective, he discovered his position was more awkward. Indeed, the researcher had a lengthy wait with the head teacher before getting a chance for data collection from students.

e) Sampling Methods

The survey employed stratified sampling. Stratified sampling is advantageous in educational research as proposed by Dörnyei (2007). The classroom observations followed an ethnographic tradition, as emphasized by *Marshall and Rossman (2016).* Purposive sampling was used to conduct interviews with ten high school English teachers, including both Garo and non-Garo individuals.

f) A Piloting

A pilot study included ten students and two teachers who filled out surveys and interviews. Student interviews began with survey talks, followed by dual interviews with teachers. All sessions were recorded with the participants' permission. The experience highlighted interview challenges, such as ambiguous questions and extended interviews. Several survey questions were redundant. As a result, questions were clarified and modified, and unnecessary ones were eliminated.

g) Data Collection Tools and Procedures

The research is mixed-method in nature. Both qualitative and quantitative were used to carry out the study. The process of triangulation is employed by utilizing a variety of tools, which serves to improve the accuracy and dependability of the results.

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Table 2: Data Collection Tools and Participant

Data Collection Tools and Participants	
Survey	80 Garo students
Classroom Observation	6 Classes
Interview	10 English teachers (Garo and Non-Garo)
FGD	10 Students

i. *Survey Questionnaire*

The survey included 80 students, 40 boys and 40 girls, from grades 6 to 10, from four separate schools, each contributing 20 students. The questionnaire's questions were written in the form of statements. The author chose a scaled framework. The researchers avoided asking leading, high-brow, complex, culturally biased, annoying, and double-negative questions. Moreover, the researcher led them through the questionnaire, explaining where necessary persuading them not to consult during the questionnaire. As before, the researcher described his position as non-judgmental and non-evaluative, assuring participants anonymity and confidentiality.

ii. *Classroom Observation*

Six English classes, three in grades 8 and 9, were observed across four schools. Observing many classes from different grades and schools enables a comparative investigation.

iii. *Teachers' Interview*

Interviews were done with ten high school English teachers, both Garo and non-Garo, from different schools. The interview was developed in a semi-structured form. Each interview began with a brief introduction and procedural description. Interview was recorded on a digital voice recorder, transcribed, and typed into Word documents. Occasionally, clarification or additional explanation was sought. Each interview lasted between 15 and 20 minutes and was conducted as a single interview. Interviews were conducted in various settings, most notably around lunchtime in a school classroom, though a few participants preferred the teachers' room and garden. The neo-positivist method permitted interviewees to wander off-topic or develop their opinions wherever they did so. As a result, the time allotted for each interview was variable.

iv. *Students' Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)*

Two FGDs were done, each with ten students. The students were divided into two groups, each consisting of 4-5 students. The FGDs involved students in grades 8 and 9 and were conducted across four schools. These data collection technologies are selected based on their complementarity, which guarantees a comprehensive perspective on the educational experience in Garo High Schools, as Creswell (2013) advised.

h) Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The researcher adhered to following three fundamental principles: a) condensing the data, b) presenting the facts, and c) making and confirming findings. Additionally, *Richards' (2003)* approach was followed, encompassing three key aspects: description, analysis, and interpretation. The quantitative data is analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and MS Excel due to a large sample size (n = 80). Questionnaires were checked to ascertain completeness, accuracy and uniformity. To improve comprehension, the data was transformed into a range of graphs and charts.

The qualitative data was analyzed using 'content analysis' and 'emerging themes.' The data is scrutinized for reoccurring problems, features, and events. The data is analyzed to uncover themes. At the same time, the questionnaire replies were reviewed, carefully looking for any inconsistencies. Finally, the analyses and interpretations are correlated to comprehend the challenges of teaching secondary Garo pupils English.

i) Ethical Consideration

The study prioritized ethical factors, such as informed consent and participant anonymity. Data was anonymized to comply with privacy rules. The research sought objectivity and diversity representation. The questions for students were non-invasive, promoting a courteous environment.

j) Validity and Reliability

To improve research quality, a variety of tactics were used. These included using numerous data sources and remaining objective while avoiding personal bias. The survey questionnaire was constructed with content validity in mind, spanning a wide range of student experiences. Established ideas and prior research ensured construct validity. Classroom observations ensured ecological validity. Teacher interviews increased practical expertise, improving face validity. FGDs gave deeper insights and cross-verification, which improved internal validity. Overall, triangulation and data cross-validation increased research validity.

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Chapter Four

IV. Data Findings and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents results from student surveys, teacher interviews, classroom observations, and FDG with students.

a) Findings from Questionnaire and Analysis

The findings of the questionnaire survey are presented in this section.

i. *Garo Students' motivation for learning English*

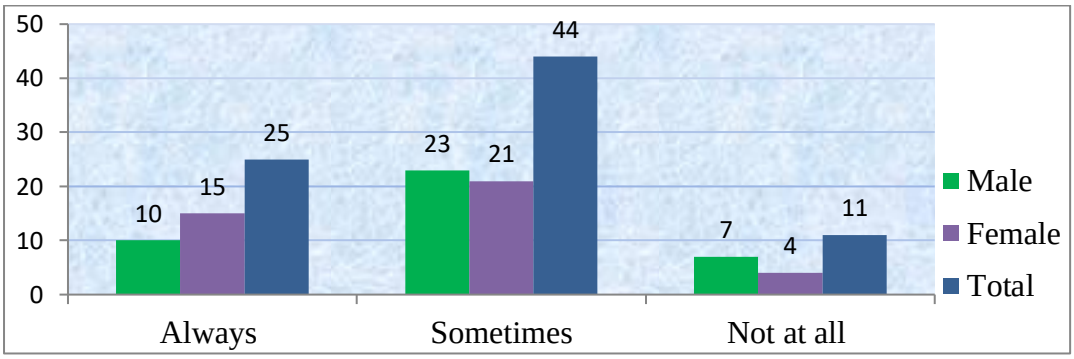


Figure 1: Motivation for Learning English Language

According to the statistics, 31.25% of students (25) (10 males, 15 females) always study English. Of the 55.00% (44) students, 23 men and 21 women occasionally study English. Last, 13.75% (11) students (7 males, 4 females) dislike learning English.

Analytically, females have a higher and more constant preference for English, whereas occasional English selections have a more balanced gender distribution. There is a noticeable lack of motivation among males in studying English, which may result in an imbalance in which Garo women achieve regularly while men exhibit less constancy in English competence.

ii. *Interest of Garo Students in Learning English Language*

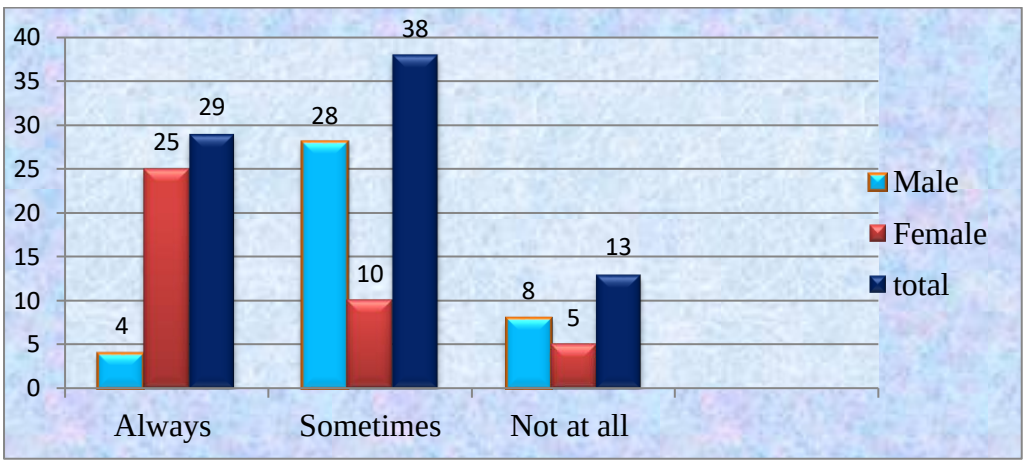


Figure 2: Interest in Learning English

The graph reveals 36.25% (29) students are interested in learning English, 4 of whom are male and 25 female. Additionally, 47.50% (38) students—28 male and 10 female—occasionally exhibit interest in learning English. However, 16.25% (13) students do not want to learn English. This group has 8 men and 5 women.

There is a significant gender discrepancy in English learning, with females consistently more interested than males who show inconsistent interest. This pattern implies that female students are more engaged and educated than male students, who stay indifferent. Gender expectations, culture, society, family, and learning styles are all important considerations.

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iii. *Garo Students' Perspectives on the Significance of English Proficiency for Higher Education*

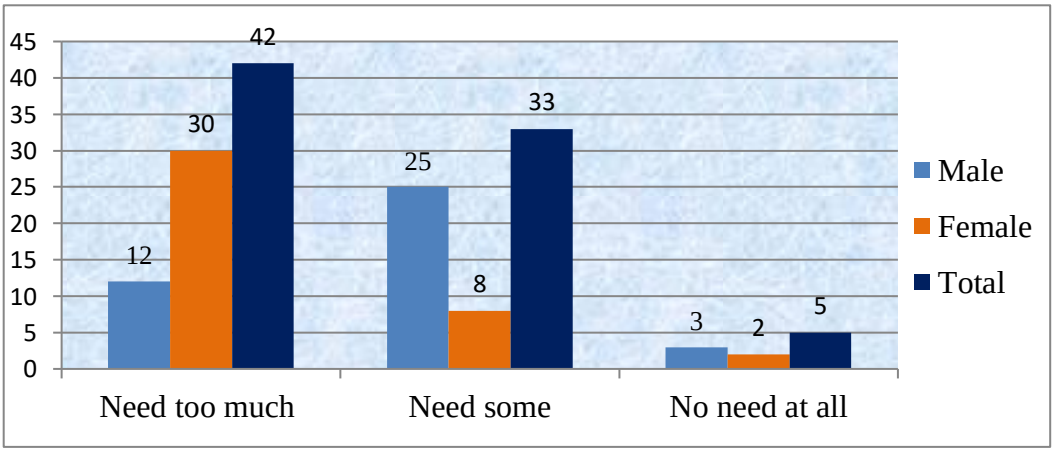


Figure 3: English Language Proficiency Needs for Higher Studies

52.50% (42) students, 12 male and 30 male, think they need English language proficiency too much. 41.25% (33) consider themselves in need, 15 male, and 8 female. Two female and three male Garo students believe they do not need English.

Garo students place a high value on English proficiency, owing to its global importance in education and career. This movement is projected to help Garo children by integrating their English education with mainstream Bengali learning and preparing them for national and international platforms where English is critical for social and economic success.

iv. *Garo Students' Perceptions of English Proficiency for Job Opportunities*

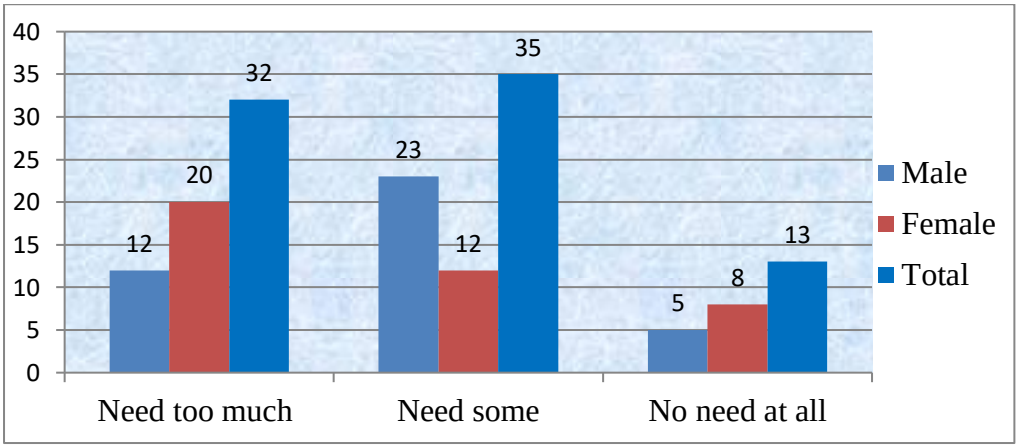


Figure 4: Importance of English Proficiency for Employment

Garo students, 40.00% (32), 20 females and 12 males, consider high English proficiency essential for their professions. For their occupations, 43.75% (35), 23 men and 12 women, need moderate English competence. Conversely, 16.25% (13), 5 males and 8 females, think English is unnecessary for their futures.

32 students prioritize English for their future jobs, with females showing somewhat higher interest. About 43.75% require moderate skills, yet 16.25% believe English is unnecessary, which is a worry to resolve. Cultural standards may lead some students to regard English as superfluous owing to physical labor requirements.

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v. *Emphasis on English Language Learning in Garo Schools*

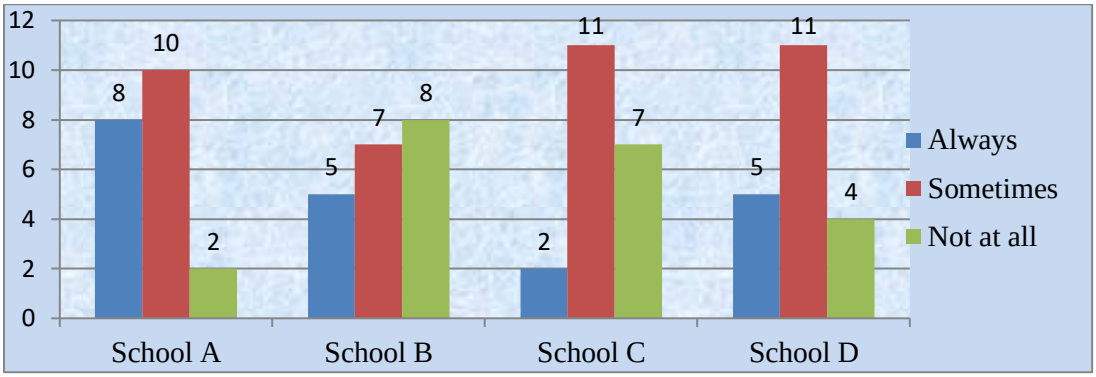


Figure 5: Emphasis on English in School

Eight students at school A receive continuous English teaching, 10 sometimes, and 2 none. 5 B-schoolers find regular emphasis, 7 irregular, and 8 none. 2 C-school students focus regularly, 11 on occasion, and 7 none. In school D, 5 pupils see constant emphasis, 11 intermittent, and 4 none.

Furthermore, a chi-square value of 14.9967 and a p-value of 0.2416 in the cross-tabulation table indicate no significant relationship between school and English concentration. Other factors, such as teaching methods or student preferences, are likely to influence the variation more than institutional differences.

vi. *Teacher Encouragement for English Language Learning among Garo Students*

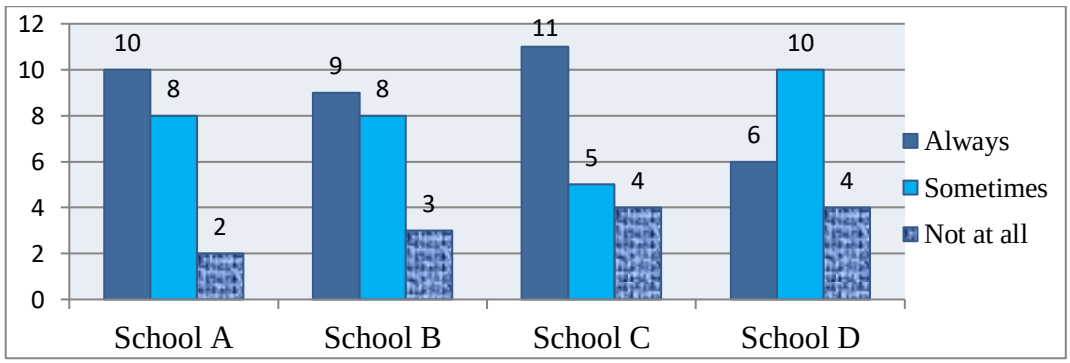


Figure 6: Teacher Encouragement

In school A, 10 students receive continuous English teacher encouragement, 8 occasionally, and 2 not. In School B, 9 students are frequently encouraged, 8 periodically, and 3 do not. 11 students in School C are consistently encouraged, 5 are irregular, and 4 desire more. In school D, 6 pupils receive continuous support, 10 receive sporadic, and 4 do not.

Critically, the data demonstrate a consistent and favourable pattern in the encouragement given to children for learning the English language across all schools. Specifically, there is a notable disparity in student perceptions of consistent and inconsistent encouragement, with an average score of 2.40 suggesting consistent support and an average score of 4.40 for sporadic encouragement, while an average score of 0.87 indicates infrequent absence of encouragement.

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vii. *Teacher Encouragement for Speaking English*

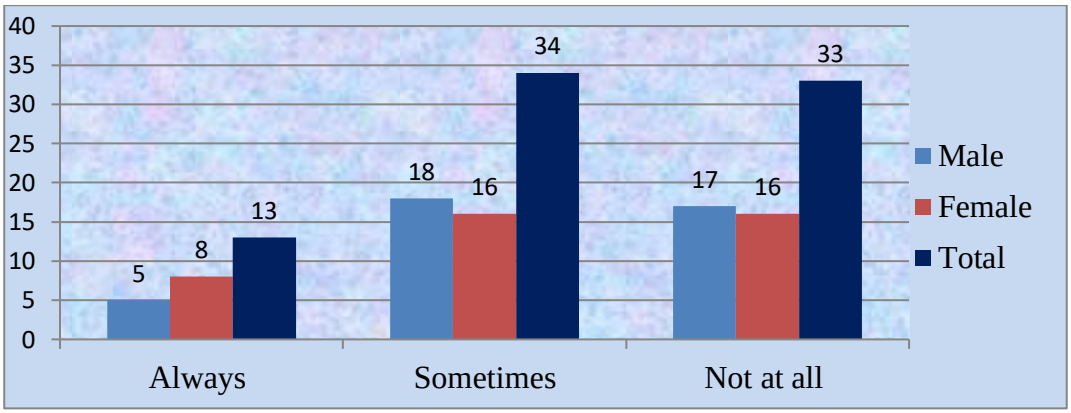


Figure 7: Teacher Encouragement for Speaking

16.25% of students (eight females and five males) responded their instructors constantly support English communication, 42.50% (18 males and 16 females) occasionally, and 41.25% (17 males and 16 females) never.

A portion of students do not receive any encouragement from their teachers. Moreover, teachers frequently lack support to encourage English usage due to insufficient training, limited resources, and cultural diversity. Their attitudes towards the importance of English and the quality of their training can impact their motivation levels.

viii. *Perceived Level of Difficulty of the English Subject among Garo Students*

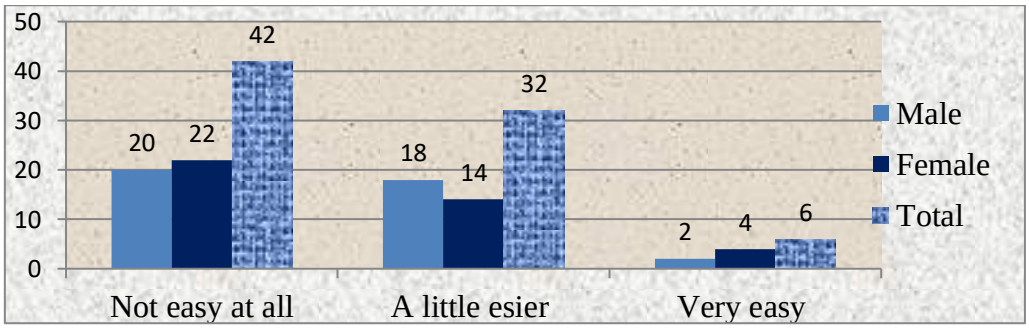


Figure 8: Perceived Ease of the English Subject

English is deemed the most difficult subject by 52.50% of students (42), including 20 males and 22 females. Meanwhile, 40.00% (32) find it easier, with 18 males and 14 females, and 12.50% (6) think it's as straightforward as other arts subjects, with two males and eight females.

The study found that more female students struggle with English, presumably due to learning styles or educational backgrounds. Teaching methods, instructor skills, and Garo students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds may affect perceived difficulty.

ix. *Garo Students' Bengali Language Proficiency*

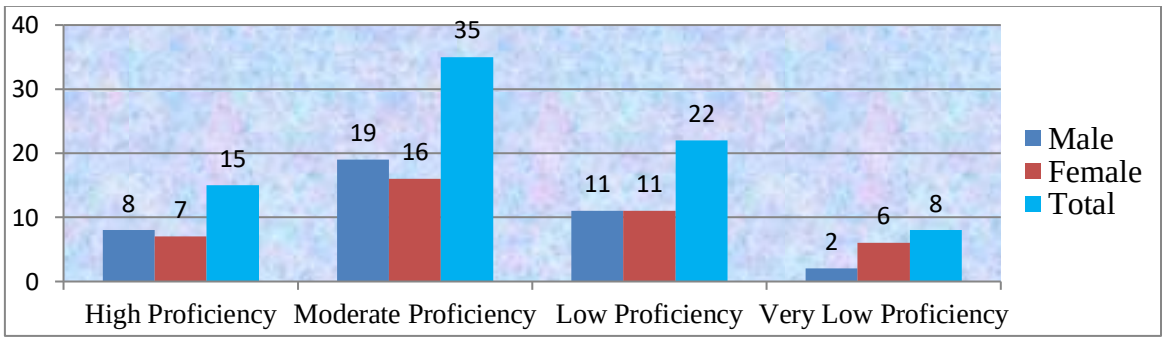


Figure 9: Bangla Proficiency of Garo Students

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Out of Garo students, 18.75% are fluent in Bangla (15 students), 43.75% have moderate-level skills (35 students), 27.50% have limited proficiency (22 students), and 10.00% have very low proficiency (8 students).

Since Bangla is the language of teaching, 50% of students have low Bangla proficiency, which may hinder their English learning. Female students are more likely than boys to have low Bangla proficiency. They may also struggle in English lessons or other academic settings and need extra help.

x. *Inclination of Garo Students towards using Bengali in English Classroom*

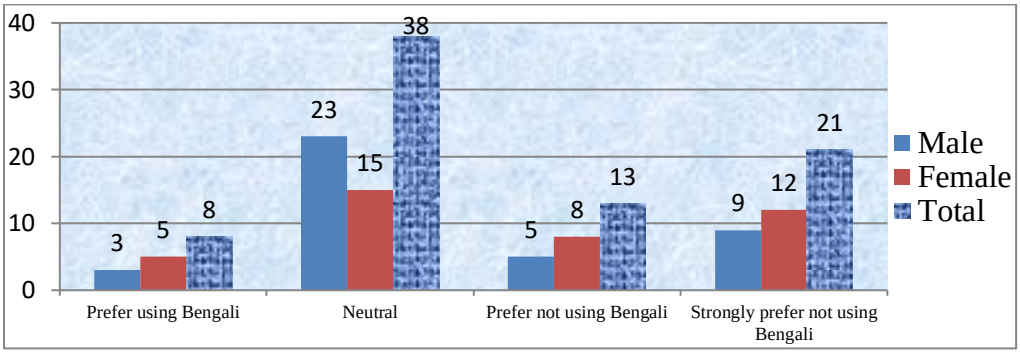


Figure 10: Bangla Proficiency

10% (8) of students, three men, and five women chose Bengali in English classes. Some 47.5% (38) have no choice, including 23 men and 15 women. In English lessons, 26.25% (21)—12 females and 9 males—dislike Bengali.

Analytically, over 40% of students, including neutrals, do not specifically choose Bengali. This may be due to worries about bringing Bengali into English classrooms, a lack of concrete information about its benefits, or societal and cultural limits in expressing personal preferences. People who prefer their mother tongue may need help learning Bangla while retaining their culture. They may benefit from specialized learning to combat hesitation.

xi. *Incorporation of Garo Language into English Teaching*

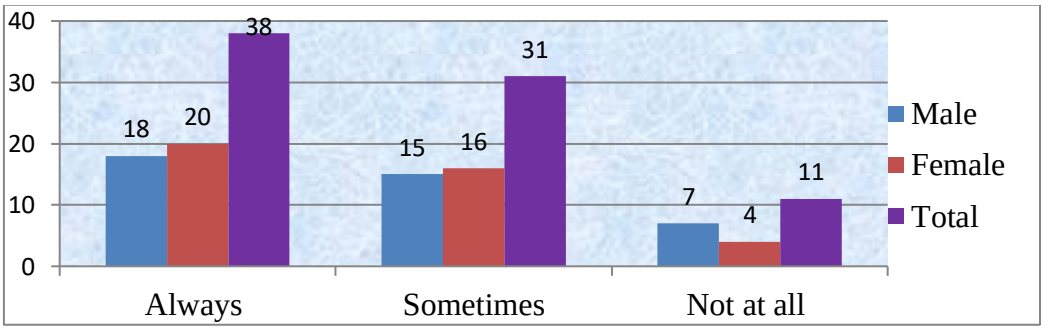


Figure 11: Student Perceptions of English Teachers' Use of Achik Katha in the Classroom

47.50% (38) always choose their native tongue for English instruction (18 men, 20 women). 38.75% (31) Garo pupils (15 males, 16 females) speak sometimes their native language in class. 13.75% of students oppose utilizing their native language in English classes.

A strong preference for native language indicates good and comfortable English acquisition. Possible causes include improved comprehension, less anxiety, and cultural familiarity. Certain students are adaptable. Opposition may originate from competency worries, prior experiences, or societal standards that favour English competence.

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xii. *English Reading Comprehension Level*

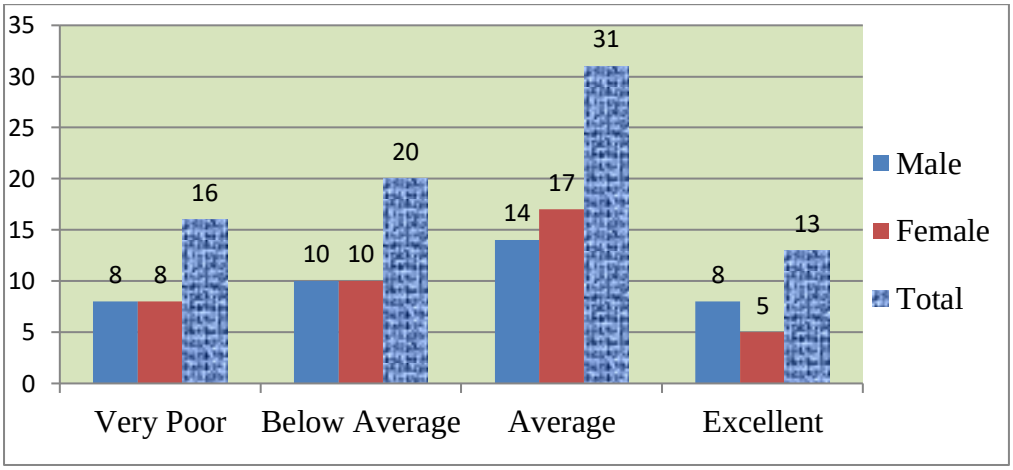


Figure 12: Reading Comprehension Level

The graph demonstrates that 20% of 16 students—evenly split between men and women—have low English reading comprehension. Additionally, 25% (20 students) show below-average comprehension, equally split by gender. Additionally, 38.75% (31 students) have average comprehension, 14 male and 17 female. Only 16.25% (13 students), 8 males and 5 girls, have exceptional comprehension.

xiii. *English Speaking Proficiency*

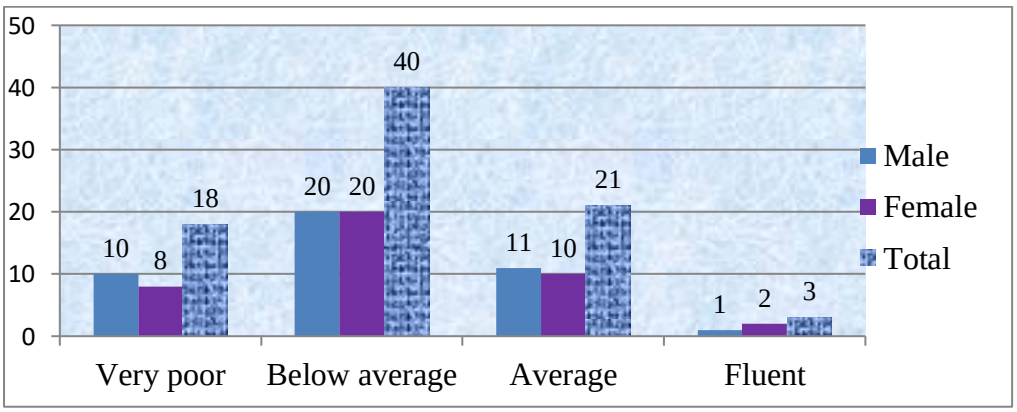


Figure 13: Proficiency in Speaking English

The graph shows that 10 male and 8 female students with low spoken English skills make up 22.50% (18). Additionally, 50.00% (40) of students talk poorly. Twenty male and twenty female students are equal. Average English proficiency is 26.25% (21) among 11 male and 10 female students. The 3.75% students include one man and two women who speak English well.

The statistics show that limited exposure and communication constraints pose challenges to spoken English competency. These concerns are independent of gender. To address these, targeted speaking exercises can benefit low-proficiency students, interactive activities such as role-playing for below-average students, discussions and presentations for average students, and mentorship by high-ability students can all contribute to a pleasant learning environment.

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xiv. *English Writing Skills of Garo Students*

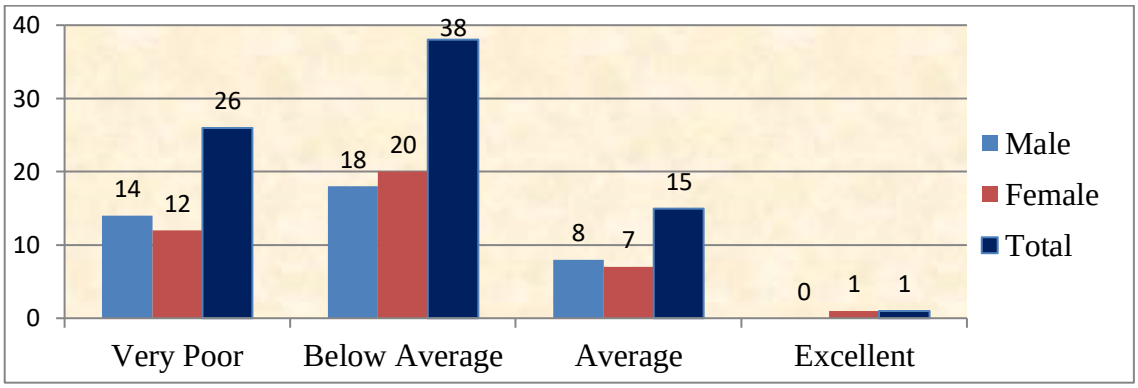


Figure 14: Ability to Express Thoughts in Writing in English

English writing skills are lacking in 32.5% (26) of Garo students, 14 males and 12 females. Also, 47.5% (38), 18 men and 20 women, have poor writing skills. Average writing talents are held by 8.75% (15), eight men and seven women. Finally, one female student believes in writing well in English.

xv. *English Listening Comprehension Level of Garo Students*

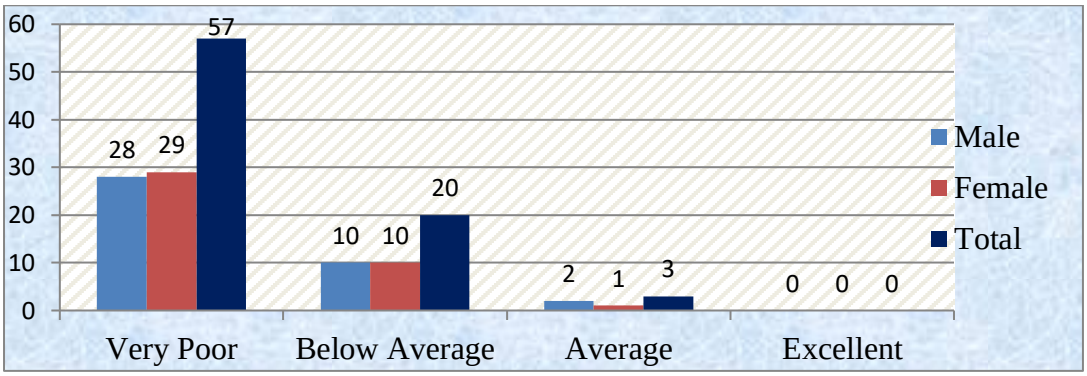


Figure 15: Listening Comprehension Level of Garo Students

71.25% (57) of Garo students have low English listening skills, 35.00% (28) are men, and 36.25% (29) are female. Additionally, 25.00% (20)—10 men and ten women—have poor listening abilities. Only 3.75% (3), two men and one female, have ordinary listening skills. None of them are exceptional or proficient.

xvi. *Garo Students' Studying English Outside of Classes*

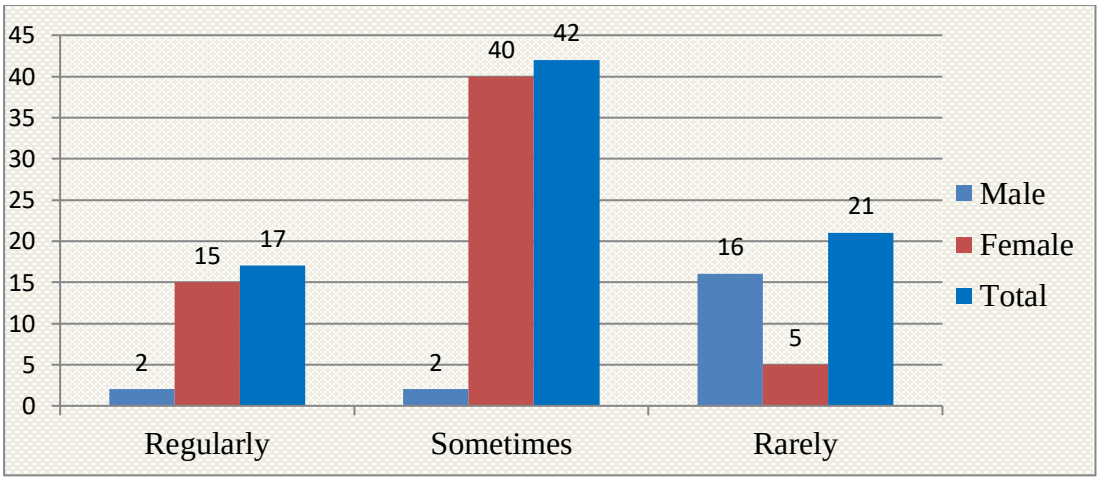


Figure 16: English Learning Habits Among Secondary-Level Garo Students

21.25% (17) Garo students, 2 males and 15 females, study English outside of class. 2 male and 40 female students study English outside of class among 52.50% (42). 16 male and 5 female students rarely learn English outside of class.

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The majority of students acquire English through classroom instruction, with a few females participating in regular individual study. Consistent outside-of-class study is essential. A few students who study less demonstrate significant support and motivation. Promoting regular study patterns and equal access to English resources might help Garo students engage. Involving parents in household English studies can improve academic performance.

xvii. *Role of Coaching/ Private/ Tuition in English Learning among Garo Students*

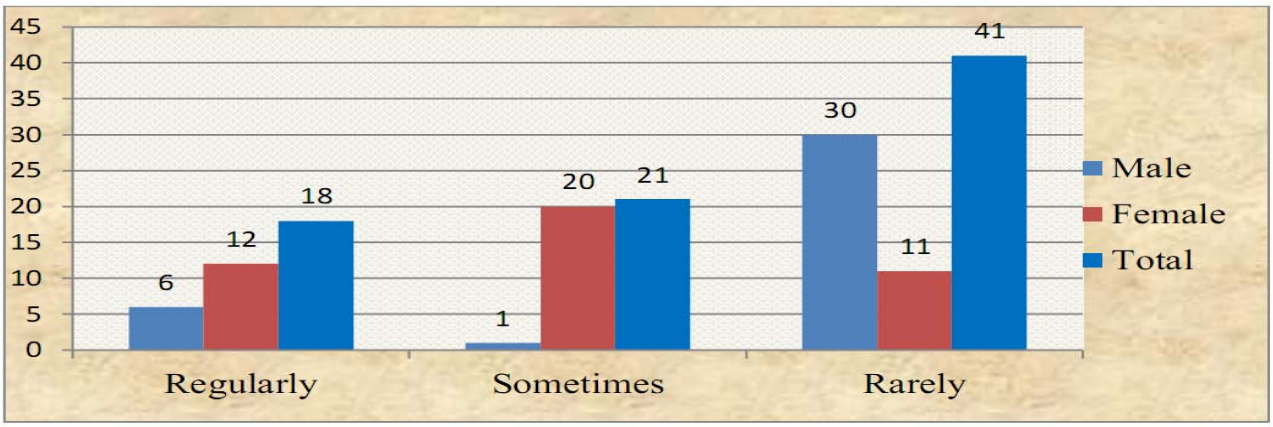


Figure 17: English Language Coaching, Private, Tuition Attendance

Daily or almost daily coaching is provided to 22.5% (18 males, 6 females) of students. 26.25% (21)—one man and 20 women—are occasionally coached. Additionally, 52.5% (41)—30 men and 11 women—seek tutoring periodically.

Garo students rely extensively on external English language coaching, demonstrating a need beyond the classroom. Concerns about poor school teaching and exam pressure make private tutoring popular. Students without tutors typically fall behind. Financial support for tutoring is limited.

xviii. *Availability of opportunities for English Learning for Garo Students*

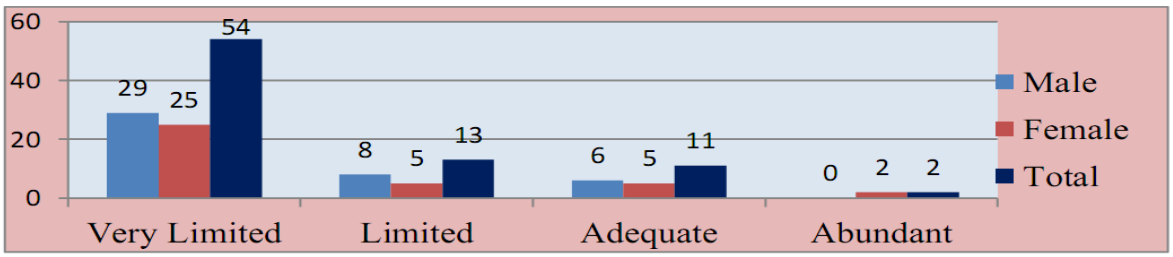


Figure 18: Perceived Opportunities for Learning English

The graph illustrates that 67.50% (54) students have a severely restricted chance to acquire and use English language skills. Out of the total, there are 25 female and 29 male students. Furthermore, 16.25% (13) students, 8 are male and 5 are female, have restricted access to English language instruction. 13.75% (11) students, 6 male and 5 female, have proper opportunities. Finally, there are two female students with enough opportunities.

Many Garo kids have limited chances to learn English owing to socioeconomic and cultural constraints. Socioeconomic restrictions limit access to high-quality English education and supplementary learning materials. Cultural traditions among the Garo culture may result in a decreased value placed on studying English.

b) Findings from Classroom Observations

This section presents the data collected from classroom observations conducted in four separate schools, encompassing a total of six classes in grade 8 and grade 9.

i. *Classroom Overview*

Lessons in Garo classrooms were mostly conducted in Bengali, resulting in little communication among Garo students. The high student-to-teacher ratio frequently approached 1:60, and educational aids and audiovisual equipment were never used. The teaching method was teacher-centered, with a focus on the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) and minimal use of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Activities like pairwork and group work were rare. Teachers' proficiency in English was inadequate, and class time was short.

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ii. *Addressing English Proficiency Levels of Garo Students*

Garo students struggle with English competency, particularly oral communication, sentence formulation, vocabulary, pronunciation, comprehension, reading, and writing. Common problems include sentence construction, grammar, and spelling, as well as faults with subject-verb agreement, particularly in personal narratives. In addition, Garo students exhibited a general hesitancy to engage in classroom discussions or group activities, which suggests the presence of language anxiety, especially among those with limited English skills.

iii. *Dealing with Pronunciation Issues of Garo Students within the Class*

Garo pupils struggle with English pronunciation because of underlying phonetic discrepancies between English and Garo, causing significant problems. Traditional educational methods have shown minimal effectiveness in addressing this issue. Some instructors have tried traditional methods such as smartphone audio exercises and peer evaluations, but more systematic ways are required to enhance pronunciation, boost confidence, and close the phonetic gap between English and Garo.

iv. *Vocabulary Learning and Teaching for Garo Students in the Class*

The findings revealed that Garo students exhibited a limited vocabulary. Most Garo students required assistance comprehending specialized terminology like 'philosopher.' in the 10th grade, the conversation about historical luminaries such as Mahatma Gandhi was unsuccessful due to the restricted vocabulary proficiency. In addition, one of the biggest challenges observed is rote memorization. Vocabularies are often presented quickly and without use. Passive learning has few benefits. Furthermore, etymology and word components are also crucially ignored. Students do not understand the roots of phrases or their meanings and associations. They are not given mnemonics, context clues, or word roots which prevents them from learning words extensively.

v. *Garo Students' Reliance on Translation Over their Native Language*

Based on my observations, using Garo translations in English class proves to be initially effective in captivating Garo students and enhancing their understanding, particularly when it comes to culturally relevant topics. However, this approach hinders their progress in acquiring precise English terminology and comprehending idiomatic expressions. Overly depending on translations impede complete absorption and mastery of the English language.

vi. *Cultural Appropriateness and Relevance in Classes*

The observations discovered a dearth of culturally relevant English instruction for Garo students, which led to disengagement owing to teachers' insufficient understanding of Garo culture. However, some teachers' efforts to incorporate Garo culture were successful in raising student engagement and reinforcing cultural identification. This emphasises the value of culturally aware education. To improve learning outcomes, English teachers should have a thorough awareness of Garo students' cultural backgrounds and tailor their teaching methods and resources accordingly.

vii. *Consideration for the Varied Learning Styles of Garo Students*

Observations identified notable variations in teachers' capacities for responding to the varied learning styles of Garo students. Visual learners encountered difficulties in the absence of visual assistance, while kinesthetic learners expressed dissatisfaction with prolonged lectures. Several classrooms made efforts to accommodate these differences. One teacher occasionally utilised visual aids such as posters, another employed diverse techniques like group projects and role-playing, and another integrated a combination of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities, such as combining documentary footage, group discussions, and creative writing. Classrooms using a flexible teaching approach saw better student engagement than those with a fixed style. This highlights the significance of acknowledging and addressing the diverse learning requirements of students in order to establish a more efficient and inclusive educational setting.

viii. *Teaching Methods And Strategies In Garo Classroom*

Observations show that the teaching style primarily revolves around the teacher, focusing on lectures and restricting interactive activities such as group work and debates. Student engagement in the learning process is limited, as there is a preference for teacher-led lectures rather than engaging in textbook activities. This tendency hampers student interaction and inhibits the development of critical thinking skills. There is an emphasis on translation and memorization rather than developing language abilities. An administrative approach to maintaining discipline characterizes classroom relationships. However, this method cannot engage students, resulting in their waning interest owing to the excessive focus on rote memorization rather than fostering creative comprehension. Teachers strongly emphasise exams, prioritising exam preparation over comprehensive language learning and critical thinking. Grammar and vocabulary are taught separately, indicating a need for a more engaging, student-centered teaching style.

ix. *Approaches of Teachers with EFT Textbooks in Garo Classrooms*

Observations reveal that teachers deviate from the prescribed guidelines of the textbook "English for

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Today" (EFT). Their primary activity involves reading and translating the textbook into Bangla, occasionally using the Garo language. The activities are restricted to reading, translating, practicing grammar and vocabulary skills, responding to questions, and rectifying grammatical problems in written work. The use of interactive discourse, as recommended by EFT, is not observed, with teachers primarily emphasising reading and writing proficiencies while disregarding listening and speaking aptitudes. The absence of skilled professors, interactive sessions, administrative assistance, and facilities exacerbates the hindrance to proper English learning for Garo students. The purpose of EFT is to facilitate the acquisition of functional language skills. This system emphasizes the need to engage students in various collaborative activities such as group work, pair work, role-playing, and other exercises that target all four language domains, enabling them to achieve a high level of proficiency in English.

x. *Problems of Teaching English in Garo Classrooms*

The schools are experiencing a lack of resources, such as materials, supplies, and audio-visual materials, which negatively affects the quality of language training. The substantial teacher-to-student ratio, frequently exceeding 1:60, impedes the teacher's capacity to deliver efficient instruction within the limited duration of 45-minute lessons. The inadequate outcomes in public examinations and insufficient pedagogical approaches generate anxiety among educators and learners, impeding the acquisition of English language proficiency. In addition, Garo learners are reluctant to engage in Extensive Reading (ER) and reading for enjoyment, resulting in restricted vocabulary and writing abilities. A significant number of English teachers in these institutions have difficulties stemming from their limited knowledge, inadequate training in English language teaching (ELT), insufficient supervision, or lack of dedication, resulting in their failure to put in the additional effort required for effective foreign language instruction.

xi. *Motivation and Confidence of Garo Students in English Classes*

Observations found that Garo students have various levels of enthusiasm and confidence. Some lacked confidence, while others demonstrated passion, particularly during participatory activities such as role-playing and debates. Motivation levels varied according to task complexity, with a decrease in enthusiasm for difficult tasks such as creative writing. Teachers used tactics such as positive reinforcement and collaborative work to increase students' excitement, confidence, and English language skills.

c) *Data Findings from Teachers' Interview and Subsequent Analysis*

This section encapsulates the findings derived from interviews with ten English teachers who are actively involved in educating Garo students at the secondary level.

i. *Teachers' Attitudes Towards English Language Teaching to Garo Students*

Teachers think that Garo students' English ability is critical for boosting their academics and job chances while also enabling global communication and cultural understanding. A young teacher emphasised that "*English is essential for worldwide communication, academic growth, and professional opportunities.*" Teachers consider English as a gateway to immense information and a means of linking students to a global society and opportunities. As one teacher stated, "*English is a tool for empowerment; its impact goes beyond academics; it's about cultural understanding.*"

Teachers in Garo missionary schools are genuinely concerned for their students' well-being since a scarce food supply has an impact on motivation, attendance, and learning. Many students from low-income families do not receive adequate nutrition or parental support for their education. Teacher A pointed out that parents frequently work long hours and are unable to supervise their children's academics. These teachers take on the task of looking after the students' well-being and encouraging them to study English. Teachers are under pressure from poor student performance and parental disengagement, with Rahim emphasizing the significance of student success, adding, "*Teachers are only successful if their students get the desired outcome.*"

ii. *Classroom Responsibilities*

Teachers recognize the need to provide varied activities to keep Garo students engaged and motivated. They begin new topics by preparing students, reviewing prior knowledge, and discussing previous lectures. Rabiya, an experienced teacher, employs various strategies to improve learning: "*I tell rhymes and stories, show pictures, and enable games that stimulate learning through amusement. I frequently assign assignments using a 'one day, one-word' approach; most pupils finish the tasks".* Garo learners favour group work over solo activities, pushing teachers to use interactive teaching methods. Another teacher emphasized the need for peer support: "*Peer assistance helps weak Garo learners learn better.*" Those who cannot finish problem-solving tasks should be permitted to read anything so that they are not left unattended," emphasizing the need to involve all pupils in learning activities.

iii. *Challenges Faced by English Teachers of Garo Students*

Teachers in Garo areas encounter a number of problems, including limited training opportunities and funding. One teacher stated, "*We don't have enough textbooks, computers, projectors, or even basic classroom supplies.*" Wahid, a young English educator,

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highlighted the disadvantages of translation approaches in the classroom, stating, "*To bring the lessons to life, we need more books, audiovisual aids, and technology tools.*" The little exposure to English outside of school is a big barrier, with one teacher stating, "*Students rarely get to practice English in their daily lives.*" Furthermore, the classroom environment, which is frequently overcrowded and underequipped, impedes learning, while big class sizes and short teaching hours exacerbate the difficulties. A senior teacher stated, "*Unfortunately, our time is insufficient to meet the specific needs of Garo students.*" Instructors also face a rigid curriculum, with one stating, "*As teachers, we are also struggling with an excessively inflexible curriculum that lacks contextualization for Garo students,*" emphasizing the need for more relevant and engaging educational content.

iv. *Influence of Culture and Socio-Economics on English Teaching among Garo Students*

Teachers acknowledged that studying and knowing Garo culture is beneficial while teaching English to Garo students. According to an experienced teacher, when selecting language resources, it is essential to consider the learners' cultural background. Additionally, teachers should be able to adapt to their cultural views, values, and practices. Learning English depends not only on pupils but also on teachers' knowledge of Garo culture and how they teach it. Before teaching, teachers should thoroughly understand politics, economics, geography, history, art, religion, literature, and other areas of social life. Furthermore, instructors help to alleviate the adverse effects of socioeconomic poverty by providing additional support to Garo students in their quest for educational equity and collaborating with community organizations to provide additional resources. A new teacher stated: "*Teachers in Garo schools must possess the requisite knowledge and abilities to negotiate the cultural and socioeconomic obstacles they encounter effectively.*" This involves teaching culturally relevant pedagogy, personalized instruction, and community involvement.

v. *Effective Teaching Strategies for Enhancing English Learning among Garo Students*

Teachers exchanged excellent English instruction strategies, emphasising the use of multimedia resources to make learning more engaging and context-rich. As one instructor said, "*Engaging students with diverse multimedia tools not only makes learning more enjoyable but also enhances their understanding of the language in different contexts.*" Interactive learning approaches were emphasised, with exercises and linguistic applications playing an important part. "*Games and apps make learning English less intimidating and more relatable for students,*" said one teacher, emphasising the advantages of current tools. Experiential learning through role-playing and inviting outside speakers were advised for practical language use. Classroom dynamics, such as smaller class sizes and culturally relevant curriculum, were considered crucial. Constructive criticism and extracurricular activities, such as English clubs, were suggested for improving language skills. The teachers also mentioned the difficulty of accessing resources, particularly in remote locations, as well as the significance of family support in developing an English-friendly home.

vi. *Innovative Approaches in English Language Teaching*

Teachers in Garo classrooms found project-based learning involving the community and family extremely effective, with kids enthusiastically incorporating their culture into class. One teacher used culturally sensitive methods: "*I have incorporated storytelling techniques in my classes, focusing on stories from Garo folklore.*" A multilingual method is also used, with instructions in both English and Garo, and another teacher employs English music with Garo themes to overcome cultural divides. Visual arts are used to teach vocabulary, with one instructor stating, "*I have found success by integrating visual arts in language lessons.*" Peer learning and role-playing with Garo customs improve confidence and make English learning more relevant. Grammar and writing exercises use culturally appropriate examples, with one teacher remarking, "*In my teaching, I relate to the Garo students' daily lives.*" Furthermore, the curriculum includes Garo historical figures and group activities commemorating Garo festivals, strengthening kids' connection to their culture while studying English.

vii. *Recommendations for Elevating English Education among Garo Students*

Nadia, a teacher, emphasizes the importance of smaller class numbers in providing personalized attention to Garo pupils who face linguistic barriers in English learning. Another teacher emphasized that "*it is vital to integrate Garo cultural elements into the English curriculum,*" calling for lessons that resonate with Garo students. As a young educator, Wahid puts it this way: "*I would urge institutions to provide continuous professional development focusing on cultural sensitivity and innovative methods for diverse classrooms.*" An experienced instructor suggests building community-based learning programs for practicing English in culturally relevant situations. Furthermore, the significance of technology in English education is emphasized, with a teacher stating, "*Incorporating technology with interactive apps and resources that celebrate Garo culture is crucial.*" Teachers argue for incorporating Garo stories into reading materials and increasing English immersion while respecting the native tongue, as well as bilingual classroom use and involvement in English-speaking groups or exchange

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programs. Parental involvement is also highlighted, with suggestions for workshops to promote English study at home. A high school teacher says, "*Assessment methods need to be more culturally inclusive, moving away from standardized tests to more practical, project-based evaluations that consider students' cultural backgrounds.*"

d) Findings from FGDs with Students

i. *Exploring Personal Experiences of Garo Students*

Student 1	For me, learning English has been a bit tough. I find grammar particularly challenging, especially tenses.
Student 2	It's fun to be able to express different ideas, but speaking in front of the class is intimidating.
Student 3	I like reading stories in English, but sometimes the vocabulary is too hard, and I don't understand the context because it's very different from our culture.
Student 4	English songs and movies make learning enjoyable for me. But, writing essays in English is difficult; I struggle to organize my thoughts.
Student 5	No response
Student 6	I feel motivated to learn English because it's important for our future. But, sometimes I feel shy to speak because I'm afraid of making mistakes.
Student 7	My experience is mixed. I like when we learn through games and interactive sessions. But, traditional lectures are boring and hard to follow.
Student 8	I think English is a useful skill, but I wish our textbooks included stories from our own culture. It would make learning more relatable.
Student 9	I enjoy learning English with friends, like in study groups. The hardest part for me is pronunciation and accent.
Student 10	No response

ii. *Cultural Relevance In English Language Education*

Student 1	Honestly, I don't see much of our culture in our English lessons. It's mostly foreign stories and examples.
Student 2	I agree. It would be nice to have stories from our own culture. It's hard to relate to foreign contexts all the time.
Student 3	There was one time our teacher used a Garo folk tale to teach English. It was really interesting and easier to understand.
Student 4	I think our textbooks don't reflect our culture. It's always about people and places far away, nothing familiar.
Student 5	Our teacher once asked us to write an essay about a Garo festival in English. That was a good way to connect our culture with learning the language.
Student 6	I feel our culture isn't represented much. Most examples in class are Western and unfamiliar, so sometimes I feel disconnected.
Student 7	No response
Student 8	I'd love to learn English through our local stories. It's more fun and meaningful that way.
Student 9	Our English classes are more about grammar and vocabulary. There's little focus on cultural aspects, Garo or otherwise.
Student 10	No response

iii. *Major Challenges in English Learning*

Student 1	My biggest challenge is vocabulary. There are so many new words, and it's hard to remember them all.
Student 2	For me, it's pronunciation. Some English sounds are not present in our language, so it's tough to pronounce them correctly.
Student 3	I struggle with grammar, especially the different tenses and how to use them in sentences.
Student 4	No response
Student 5	I find writing in English challenging. Organizing my thoughts and putting them into correct English sentences is not easy.
Student 6	I think the biggest challenge is the lack of practice opportunities. We don't speak English outside the classroom much.
Student 7	For me, it's the cultural difference. The content we learn in English doesn't always relate to our daily lives or our cultural context.

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Student 8	Reading comprehension is tough. Sometimes, the texts are too complex, or the topics are not interesting.
Student 9	Confidence is a big issue. I hesitate to speak in English because I'm afraid of making mistakes.
Student 10	I think the teaching methods are sometimes not engaging enough. It becomes monotonous and hard to stay focused.

iv. *The Role of Garo and Other Language Skills in English Acquisition*

Student 1	I think speaking Garo helps in some ways because I can translate English words to Garo, but sometimes it creates confusion, especially with grammar.
Student 2	I'm bilingual in Garo and Bengali, and I find it a bit easier to grasp English concepts. Maybe knowing multiple languages helps my brain adapt.
Student 3	For me, being proficient in Garo makes it difficult to pronounce English words. Our accents are very different.
Student 4	No response
Student 5	I feel that knowing Garo well doesn't directly help with English, but it gives me confidence to try learning another language.
Student 6	Sometimes I mix up the sentence structures of Garo and English. It affects my English writing and speaking
Student 7	I think my background in Garo limits my English vocabulary. There are English words that don't have direct Garo equivalents, which is confusing.
Student 8	I'm good at Garo, but I struggle with English. Maybe if English was introduced to us earlier, it would be easier.
Student 9	No response
Student 10	I believe being multilingual is an advantage. It makes learning another language like English less intimidating for me.

v. *Exploring Effective English Learning Methods and Activities*

Student 1	To start, I think watching English movies with subtitles really helps. It improves our listening and vocabulary.
Student 2	I agree. Even listening to English songs and trying to understand the lyrics has been useful for me.
Student 3	Reading storybooks in English has been my favorite. It helps with both vocabulary and comprehension.
Student 4	I find interactive activities like group discussions and debates helpful. They boost our speaking skills.
Student 5	Our English teacher often uses games and quizzes in the classroom. They make learning fun and engaging.
Student 6	No response
Student 7	Sometimes, our teacher brings in guest speakers who are native English speakers. That real-life exposure is great!
Student 8	No response
Student 9	I think having a language buddy, someone who speaks English fluently, to chat with regularly has been a big help.
Student 10	Writing essays and journals regularly has improved my writing skills.

vi. *Enhancing English Learning Through Improved Teaching Method*

Student 1	I think more interactive lessons would help. Sometimes, our classes are too passive, and we need more opportunities to speak and practice.
Student 2	Yes, I agree. Engaging activities like debates, group discussions, and role-plays would make learning more interesting.
Student 3	Our textbooks could be more relatable. It would help if they included stories or examples from our own culture
Student 4	Having more multimedia resources in the classroom, like educational videos, could be beneficial.

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Student 5	Perhaps having smaller class sizes would allow teachers to give more individual attention.
Student 6	I think our teachers could provide more constructive feedback on our writing and speaking.
Student 7	It would be great to have English clubs or extracurricular activities to practice in a relaxed setting.
Student 8	No response
Student 9	Encouraging us to read English books and novels outside of the curriculum would expand our vocabulary and comprehension.
Student 10	No response

vii. *Challenges in English learning*

Student 1	For me, the most challenging aspect is speaking. I often struggle with pronunciation and fluency.
Student 2	I agree with Student 1. Speaking is also my biggest challenge, especially when it comes to speaking confidently in front of others.
Student 3	I find grammar quite challenging. English grammar rules can be complex, and I often make mistakes in sentence structure.
Student 4	No response
Student 5	Vocabulary is my challenge. English has so many words, and it's tough to remember and use them effectively.
Student 6	Writing is my Achilles' heel. I often struggle with organizing my thoughts and expressing them coherently in written form.
Student 7:	Grammar is definitely my biggest challenge too. The rules can be quite confusing, and I make grammatical errors frequently.
Student 8	No response
Student 9	No response
Student 10	Writing is my main challenge. Constructing essays or reports in English feels like a daunting task.

viii. *Family's Encouragement and Support*

Student 1	My family has been really supportive. They encourage me to practice English at home and even help me with my homework.
Student 2	My parents always demotivate me to watch English movies and TV shows.
Student 3	My family emphasizes the importance of English in today's world.
Student 4	My family constantly reminds me of the opportunities that knowing English can bring, which keeps me motivated.
Student 5	Neutral
Student 6	No response
Student 7	Neutral
Student 8	Neutral
Student 9	No response
Student 10	My parents do not think about my study

Chapter Five

V. Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the research presented in Chapter Five. The chapter is organized based on the three research questions that formed the foundation of the study.

a) Perspectives of English Teachers and Garo Learners

This study primarily explored the positive perspective and passionate approach of English teachers in teaching English to Garo students, emphasizing their attempts to improve their academic and professional prospects. The teachers wished for instructional approaches that were simultaneously captivating and culturally sensitive. These observations are consistent with the findings of Medina et al. (2015), who also noted teachers' positive perspectives.

An essential discovery of this study is the higher level of motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm for acquiring English language skills among Garo students, particularly females. These students demonstrate a predilection for instructional approaches that are both engaging and culturally pertinent for them. This study

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offers a different viewpoint from earlier research by Larsen-Freeman (2006) which discovered that ethnic minority groups typically lack motivation and have negative perceptions toward learning English.

b) Challenges in Teaching and Learning

The difficulties English teachers and secondary-level Garo students face when teaching and learning English will be discussed.

i. *Challenges Faced by English Teachers when Teaching English to Garo Students*

This section will address the issues encountered by English teachers when instructing Garo students in the English language.

a. *Inadequate Resources*

The research has revealed the inadequate availability of crucial instructional resources, including books, audio-visual materials, and technology. The shortage of educational materials significantly hampers teachers' ability to deliver effective and engaging education, thereby impeding the educational progress of Garo students. The observations of Borah (2020) also noted these difficulties. Additionally, while a single institution has resources, they are insufficient to give adequate education to Garo students. The level of educational gain is strongly dependent on the teaching methods used by teachers, demonstrating that the sheer presence of resources in schools does not ensure success.

b. *Large Class Sizes*

This study revealed that effectively managing a classroom with a student population above 60 is challenging in terms of delivering individualised attention and performing interactive instructional tasks for Garo students. The study discovered that Garo student involvement tended to decrease in larger classrooms and it was surprising that those students who disengaged in classes frequently had more significant academic challenges. In addition, teachers in large classrooms faced a greater incidence of negative behaviours displayed by Garo students experiencing difficulties in their academic performance. The findings of Hossain (2016) and Cakmak (2009) support these outcomes. Moreover, these findings jointly emphasize classroom management difficulties, promoting engagement with Garo students and effectively engaging them in large class situations.

The research findings also demonstrated that large class sizes contributed to a decrease in Garo students' academic performance and an escalation in disciplinary issues. Conversely, smaller classes allowed instructors to develop a deeper understanding of Garo students and establish stronger connections with them, allowing for more focused attention on individual skills, potentially leading to improved academic achievements and language fluency. These findings are in line with the research by Lassen et al. (2006) and Best et al. (2021). Moreover, a Princeton study found that students in smaller classes consistently achieved higher exam scores, even after leaving a school with smaller class sizes (Ehrenberg et al., 2001, p. 15). In Garo areas, class sizes had increased due to a shortage of classrooms and teachers to manage rising student enrollment. This resulted in learning issues, frequent student absences, and insufficient teacher support.

c. *Limited Training and Professional Development*

The study revealed that the teachers in Garo schools frequently need more professional training, both in-service and pre-service, to engage with Garo students proficiently. They frequently lack competence, a well-organized classroom arrangement, and the capacity to guide students proficiently. Additionally, they need to adequately promote the development of Garo students to empower them as independent and self-reliant learners. This deficiency is evident in their capacity to execute multilingual teaching methodologies and demonstrate cross-cultural awareness. The studies undertaken by Sangma and Marak (2014), Momin and Bhutia (2019), and Diengdoh (2018) support the notion that teacher training in Garo schools in Meghalaya, India, is urgently required. Regrettably, teacher training institutes in Bangladesh frequently overlook addressing this disparity due to restricted funds, apprehensions, and insufficient facilities.

Ko and Sammons (2013) discovered that effective teachers in ethnic schools are enthusiastic about the subject matter, have competence and concern for ethnic students, use a variety of teaching approaches, and support tribal students in understanding the meaning of the material in their context. Furthermore, Spencer and Schmelkin (2002) discovered that good teachers, according to ethnic students, use a variety of teaching approaches and link classroom learning to real-world applications. Contrary, Pietrzak et al. (2008) identified competent teachers for ethnic minority students as highly skilled, organized, and diligent in using effective instructional methods and culturally appropriate homework assignments.

d. *Teaching Methodology*

This study found severe shortcomings in the teaching approach used for Garo students, primarily relying on traditional teacher-centered, lecture-oriented methodologies. Such an approach, in which teachers deliver lectures and students passively listen, discourages active student engagement and participation. This scenario leaves Garo students primarily as spectators with little involvement in extracurricular activities. Research of Nadeem (2013) supports the findings. Furthermore, the traditional practice of assigning and reviewing homework persists without adopting more effective, modern teaching approaches.

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It was observed that teachers frequently utilized text-related photographs without facilitating deeper discussions or student-led explanations. There was a noticeable absence of word cards, which are essential for teaching new vocabulary. Although worksheets are widely recognized as helpful in developing writing skills, they are rarely used. Furthermore, supplemental reading materials were frequently neglected in schools, and practical examples of language use, such as directives, directions, and discussions, were rarely displayed. Furthermore, pronunciation practice was limited, and images in speaking lessons were not fully utilized. In listening skills lessons, an overemphasis on reading and writing activities was seen, with exercises such as greetings and introductions sometimes overlooking real-life situations.

The research also discovered that grammar was taught using traditional techniques, with students focusing primarily on acquiring and applying logical grammar rules to their written work. Grammar principles were taught deductively, and students were expected to memorize them and word lists from books. Despite the potential benefits of interactive activities such as group discussions, pair work, dialogues, and presentations, they were used infrequently in English classes. Blair et al. (1998) criticized the traditional approach, highlighting its limitations for ethnic, multilingual students. Incorporating these exercises proved difficult due to huge class sizes and short class durations following lengthy explanatory lectures.

Multimedia projectors were only used once a week at one urban Garo school, and even then, they were not effectively contributing to language instruction due to instructors' lack of expertise in using such technology for educational reasons. Teachers were also constrained in their ability to create teaching materials due to insufficient time after class and inadequate training.

It recognizes that each method has advantages and disadvantages and those specific settings greatly determine a method's usefulness. Successful learning outcomes rely on teachers' ability to establish approaches that address their students' needs. Teachers' knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and beliefs are crucial in classroom instruction, emphasizing that the teacher is the essential component in any educational system.

In Bangladesh, secondary schools teach English as a topic rather than a language. While useful for exam preparation, it does not effectively aid in actual language acquisition. As a result, while Garo students may demonstrate mastery in grammar and exam performance, they need help with the core purpose of language learning: successful communication.

e. *Lack of Parental Involvement*

The research discovered that teachers in Garo schools encounter difficulties in effectively connecting with parents despite their crucial role in fostering a supportive educational environment beyond the classroom for Garo students. The study also uncovered that indigenous parents and schools lacked awareness of the significance of parental engagement in their children's education. Parents commonly believed that their sole responsibility towards their children was to send them to school. Consequently, they often did not participate in the school's arranged programs.

Promoting parental involvement and home-based learning can foster regular study habits and support the social and educational development of Garo pupils. Rozalia (2019) examines the relationship between effective communication, trust, and collaboration between parents and teachers in enhancing students' academic success from different ethnic backgrounds. Parental engagement in the educational setting enhances students' academic achievement. For at least 40 years, it has been regarded as a deficiency in students' education (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

ii. *Challenges For Garo Students*

This section will address the issues encountered by Garo students in the English language learning.

a. *Poor English Language Proficiency*

The study demonstrates significant obstacles that Garo students have when learning English, particularly grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. One considerable aspect contributing to these issues is their inadequate exposure to English in everyday life. Students not immersed in English outside academic contexts fail to understand and apply grammar rules, broaden their vocabulary, and pronounce words correctly. The majority of Garo students perform poorly in English on the S.S.C. examination. Despite passing, their grades are typically low, as Kalam (2003) also found in his study. Furthermore, those achieving high grades fail to exhibit practical language skills. This study discovered that Garo students suffer from fluency and spontaneity in English, making it challenging to grasp spoken language and written materials. They also struggle to articulate their thoughts and feelings properly, both vocally and in writing. A case study of ethnic students in Rangpur district by Islam (2023) resulted in a similar conclusion.

b. *Cultural Relevance*

The study disclosed that many Garo students have a sense of detachment from the lessons in English, primarily due to the frequent absence of content that reflects their cultural background. Norton's (1997) research has strongly contested this view. However, Meganathan (2019) also found these issues with

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ethnic students in India. Additionally, Debnath (2010) recommends using indigenous voices to make learning more inclusive and inspiring in the context of the Santal community in Bangladesh.

c. *Confidence and Anxiety*

The study indicated that Garo students often experience pervasive anxiety about using English and making errors in the classroom, which hampers their willingness to engage in classroom activities. Research has consistently shown that anxiety can impede the ability to effectively use a targeted language and succeed in foreign language acquisition (Mellah & Mezerreg, 2016; Toyama & Yamazaki, 2021).

The Garo tribe's language, lifestyle, and rituals differ significantly from mainstream culture. Garo students frequently experience prejudice in schools, where mainstream students consider their knowledge, habits, attire, and culture to be inferior and label them as backward. This perspective presents difficulties for Garo students in assimilating to the school environment. Furthermore, mainstream students often ignore or humiliate the Garo children, mainly when they speak their language. This humiliation makes Garo students hesitant to participate in class, driving them to leave school and underperform. Banu (2021) also found this. This attitude from mainstream Bengali students causes mental hardship for Garo pupils. As a result, students frequently feel alone in their classrooms and schools, retreating to their communities. Furthermore, the refusal to celebrate their culture in schools, as well as the biased recounting of their history, adds to the imbalances generated by structural racism in the educational system. This has resulted in poor academic performance and higher dropout rates among secondary-level Garo students.

d. *Lack of Practice Opportunities*

This study pointed out that students need more opportunities to study and practice English outside the classes. This leads to difficulties in developing comprehension, expanding vocabulary, and mastering pronunciation.

e. *Learning Styles and Needs*

This study figured out that the diverse learning styles and requirements of Garo students are not addressed in English classrooms. Furthermore, a similar situation was observed among Garo students in Meghalaya, India (Nautiyal et al., 2020).

f. *Socio-economic Factors*

The study highlighted that Garo students from disadvantaged homes usually lack educational assistance and resources. This situation profoundly impacts their academic progression and acquisition of the English language. Similarly, Sahariah (2012) found that the socio-economic background of Garo students significantly impacts their education. Thus, students from low-status families fail to perform effectively despite schools being adequately equipped with resources.

g. *Lack of Interaction*

Garo students have limited interaction and engagement with their Bengali classmates. They make an effort to sit together in the classrooms. Whatever their ethnic background, teachers assumed an authoritative role with all students. The study of Ghavifekr (2020) aligns with this.

h. *No Addressing the Four Essential Skills of the English Language*

The study found that teaching speaking and listening skills is nonexistent in Garo schools. Though the teachers' lectures aid in acquiring the listening part, they also fall short because the medium of instruction is Bangla and occasionally Garo. Furthermore, Garo students fail to understand fundamental English conversation, instructions and listening because the teachers focus little on them, which is also found in Tahereen's (2024) study. In addition, they cannot communicate in English after completing secondary school. Even they fail to introduce themselves to each other in English, which is also supported by the study conducted by Pokhrel (2023).

The study found that due to traditional teaching methods, instructional approaches, and an inadequate curriculum designed by the education board for Garo students, acquiring all four essential English language skills remains low, with students mastering fewer skills. However, the study indicates room for growth if teachers are trained in effective teaching methods and lesson design. This is in line with Ahmed et al.'s (2023) assertion that such instruction might result in more successful English language learning for both Garo and Bengali students. Surprisingly, the research demonstrates that Garo students had little passion for devoting significant time to school activities that might improve their language skills. Although these exercises considerably impact the development of all four language abilities, their use in the classroom is uncommon. Garo students frequently express their desire for instructors to prioritize completing the syllabus before exams. Furthermore, performances in English are commonly held in Bangla and, on occasion, in Garo, adding to the difficulty of mastering all four English language abilities. However, this data presents contrasting findings with those of Sadi (2021).

iii. *Lack of Proficiency in Academic and Instructional Language*

The survey discovered that many Garo students struggle to convey their thoughts and emotions in Bengali due to their inadequate ability. They frequently fail to understand Bengali texts that are culturally unfamiliar to them, and while they can decode Bengali writings, comprehension remains challenging. These

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findings are consistent with those made by Debnath (2020). Importantly, this poor Bengali foundation has a negative impact on their capacity to read English texts, hindering their progress in learning English. This emphasizes the profound connection between academic language, medium of instruction, and language education among Garo students.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the empowerment of Garo students when their native language is used, which is similar to the findings of Nguyen and Hamid (2021, p. 325). When pupils are not given the opportunity to utilize their mother tongue, they frequently feel embarrassed, inferior, and culturally marginalized. This can cause anxiety, disbelief, and trauma. Furthermore, the evidence shows that Garo students lose interest in English and eventually stop learning the language. Moreover, the research findings show that Bengali teachers cannot frequently appreciate diverse cultures or demonstrate respect for the Garo traditional way of life. They also lack knowledge of tribal languages, according to studies by Farooq et al. (2020) and Huq (2020, p. 123). The lack of teachers in the Garo community exacerbates the situation, creating an extra obstacle to successful education for Garo students.

iv. *Strategies and Techniques for Addressing Challenges*

This section will discuss the instructional techniques and strategies adopted by the teachers to teach English Garo students.

a. *Multilingual Approach*

The study discovered that English teachers allow Garo language in classroom to facilitate active engagement and participation of Garo students. This approach reduced the cognitive load of Garo students. Allowing Garo students to use their preferred language removes language barriers, enabling them to focus on learning, boosting motivation, and enhancing their self-esteem. It is also noted that teachers try to reflect the multilingualism and translanguaging in teaching in the classroom. Moreover, Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis also suggests this strategy in such context (Granados et al., 2022).

b. *Incorporation of Cultural Elements*

The study found that teachers seldom include Garo folk tales, local anecdotes, and cultural references in English classes to make language learning more relevant and engaging. They also rarely incorporate visual arts that reflect ethnic culture and use culturally pertinent examples of grammar practices and writing assignments to encourage students to participate. This promotes favorable self-regard, cultural appreciation, and a feeling of inclusion within the educational setting, ultimately inspiring Garo students to engage more actively.

The findings are further supported by Sleeter and Zavala's (2020) research, which advocates for culturally integrated teaching methods for ethnic pupils. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2021) proposes that the culturally responsive teaching (CRT) approach emphasizes incorporating students' cultural references throughout the learning process. Furthermore, as noted in the stated research, the CSP method goes beyond CRT by focusing importance on recognizing, affirming, and valuing students' cultural backgrounds.

c. *Implementation of Interactive Learning Approaches*

In this research, it was observed that some teachers make efforts to encourage the participation of Garo students in activities such as group discussions, debates, role-playing, and storytelling. These activities are intentionally designed to be interactive and engaging and suitable to their level with the aim of helping Garo students improve their communication skills and English learning. However, it was noted that many teachers face challenges in successfully conducting these activities due to a lack of appropriate approaches and skills. Interestingly, similar issues were highlighted by Oyen & Schweinle (2020) in rural America and Diem & Abdullah (2020) in Indonesia.

Furthermore, these exercises provided Garo students with valuable opportunities to engage in authentic English contexts, enhance their self-assurance, and develop a deeper understanding of the English language. Role-playing exercises were often conducted in pairs or small groups, while storytelling activities not only enriched their emotional intelligence but also expanded their vocabulary and exposed them to new language structures. Additionally, storytelling promoted a sense of satisfaction and harmony among students, encouraging them to express their thoughts and emotions more freely. Furthermore, group tasks played a significant role in improving Garo students' English language skills by facilitating authentic discussions, which are crucial for language acquisition. These group discussions also contributed to the development of critical thinking skills among Garo students, encouraging them to inquire and actively listen to others' responses regularly

d. *Home-school Collaboration*

It was discovered that English teachers and school administrators attempted to establish a supportive environment to aid Garo students' language development, albeit on a limited scale. Unfortunately, their attempts to develop cooperation with parents and the community frequently encountered considerable roadblocks, and meaningful collaboration for progress was rarely evident. Interestingly, this outcome varies from the findings of August and Hakuta (1997).

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Chapter Six

VI. Conclusion and Reccomendations

a) Limitation of the Study

In conducting this research, several challenges were encountered. Firstly, gaining access to Garo schools proved difficult. Despite extensive efforts to explain the study's intent, permission to observe classes was often denied. The hesitance was particularly evident among students, who appeared slightly intimidated and were initially shy and reserved. Additionally, coordinating interviews with busy and unwilling English teachers during school hours was difficult. Students and teachers were busy preparing for final exams when data was collected. Additionally, the sample size was small compared to the population being studied. Moreover, participants may have been subjected to social desirability bias, which caused them to respond in ways that they believed were consistent with societal standards or socially acceptable. Furthermore, the researcher's presence may have had an additional impact on the responses, jeopardizing the validity and dependability of the obtained data. Despite these challenges, efforts were made to ensure the research's validity and reliability.

b) Recommendation

The study provides the following suggestions to enhance the educational experience for Garo students.

To Policymakers and Relevant Authorities

1. Culturally appropriate educational materials and adept teachers for Garo students, including adapted English textbooks, must be available.
2. English teachers must be of Garo ethnicity or have a thorough understanding of Garo language and culture.
3. Clear teaching duties and a curriculum tailored to the requirements of ethnic minority students must be established.
4. Promoting English language acquisition through groups, discussions, and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is critical.
5. Collaboration efforts to reduce class numbers and maintain an ideal teacher-student ratio should be pursued.
6. Annual gatherings and cultural events involving parents should be planned to acquire insight into children' progress.
7. It is recommended that a specialised institute for teacher training in hill regions be established, with a focus on ethnic students' needs.

To Teachers and Educators

1. Comprehensive training in culturally sensitive instructional practices that create good attitudes towards ethnic students must be provided.
2. Garo language, culture, and customs must be incorporated into English Language Teaching (ELT).
3. Facilitating social relationships between Garo and non-tribal kids, as well as creating a welcoming school climate, is critical.
4. Instructional approaches should be tailored to Garo students' learning types and needs.
5. There is a need to emphasize the relevance of English language skills and provide more learning opportunities.
6. Active engagement with parents or guardians, including them in the educational process, is critical for student success.

c) Directions for Further Research

This study presents various avenues to consider for future exploration in ELT customized for the Garo populations of Bangladesh. Exploring these issues can significantly improve comprehension and efficiency on this subject.

Future research could gain valuable insights by comparing ELT experiences of the Garo community with those of other ethnic minorities in Bangladesh and in similar international settings. This comparison may uncover overarching trends and distinct obstacles in ELT for ethnic minorities. Researching the inclusivity and cultural sensitivity of the ELT curriculum for Garo students might be a substantial academic endeavour. An investigation into the psychological and sociocultural aspects that impact the acquisition of the English language by Garo students, including linguistic identity and cultural values, has the potential to enhance our comprehension of language learning dynamics. Researchers are encouraged to carry out longitudinal studies to track the development of Garo students over time. It could offer essential insights into the enduring impacts of different teaching methodologies and educational reforms on their English language competence and academic achievement.

d) Conclusion

The research examines Garo students' English language learning challenges and interactionsin depth. The study explores English teachers and Garo students' perspectives to identify the challenges in this environment. The statistics show that Garo pupils like learning English and teachers are committed. Culture, language, pedagogy, and resources present significant barriers to teaching and learning.

The study emphasises teacher education, small class sizes, and Garo cultural components in the curriculum as crucial for culturally sensitive and flexible teaching approaches. It also stresses resource shortages, overcrowded classrooms, and parental disengagement as major barriers to Garo students' English performance.

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The report also highlighted socio-economic issues and insufficient socialisation and practical experiences outside the classroom that hinder Garo students' language development. These challenges can be addressed by using bilingual methods, cultural elements, interactive learning, and more home-school collaboration.

This study can improve Garo students' education by influencing legislation, curriculum, and instruction. By focusing on a neglected sector and offering meaningful solutions for educators, legislators, and other stakeholders, this study fills a substantial gap in the literature. This research provides a platform for future research and efforts to improve ELT for ethnic minorities in Bangladesh and elsewhere.

This study emphasises the need for inclusive, culturally sensitive, and effective ELT methods. These approaches should address ethnic minority student issues like Garo ones. All parties must collaborate to ensure these students receive their due education, increasing their academic performance and opportunities.

Acronyms

1.	CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
2.	CRT	Culturally Responsive Teaching
3.	CSP	Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy
4.	DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
5.	EME	English Medium Education
6.	ER	Extensive Reading
7.	ESL	English as a Second Language
8.	GTM	Grammar Translation Method
9.	ICT	Information and Communication Technology
10.	MTB-MLE	Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education
11.	NC	The National Curriculum
12.	NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
13.	NEP	National Education Policy

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By Francisco Coelho de Carvalho

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Abstract- This article reports on a study on the inter- connectedness of academic development and academics' approaches to teaching and student learning. This study was based on qualitative interviews with 10 professors at a university in Mozambique. The results of the study show that participants understand the idea of 'good teaching' in higher education in different ways influenced by a wide variety of factors linked to an educator's background, professional development, teaching philosophy and understanding of the classroom environment. These elements influence how instructors develop their classroom teaching and how student concerns are considered. However, the impetus for changing towards a more student-centred learning approach was discussed whereby institutional conditions and the motivation for improvement move in opposite directions. Hence, there is more of a call for improving the quality of teaching and less effort towards ensuring that those implementing it have the right tools and motivation.

Keywords: academic development, teaching approach, student learning, student-centred learning, university teachers, pedagogical training.

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I. Introduction

High tertiary participation rates have led to larger class sizes and a more diversified student body, which has put more strain on university staff (Kálmán et al., 2020). In parallel, students' performance has been attributed to a wide variety of interacting factors, including teaching and learning pedagogies, classroom practices and students' readiness for university studies (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). Consequently, the effective development of academic staff is needed to meet these growing demands and challenges.

While many university teachers may possess a strong grasp of subject matter, they often lack the pedagogical abilities necessary for both effective teaching and skill development (Persellin & Goodrick, 2010). Thus, academic development is a key strategic lever for ensuring institutional quality and supporting institutional change in higher education (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013).

Another important feature is that the multiple competing roles of academic staff have become part of the higher education landscape (Chalmers & Gardiner, 2015). To be considered for a promotion or for tenure, academic staff are increasingly needed to demonstrate their ability in this field in addition to obtaining a qualification from university in teaching and research (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). Regarding tenure and promotion decisions, institutions seem to prioritise research to the detriment of teaching (Light et al., 2009). These conflicting expectations make the improvement in the quality of teaching an increasing concern (Yariv & Shelly-Huber, 2020).

With widespread criticism of the quality of teaching, many higher education institutions have developed staff and educational development centres to help academic staff enhance their teaching skills. Similar to many countries, in Mozambican higher education, the pedagogical training of university teachers was established and coordinated by a centre for academic development (Mendonça, 2014). As a feature of the development of established staff, professional training in teaching practice is mandatory for newly appointed or early-career academics (Cossa et al., 2016). This training serves both the objectives of enhancing teachers' pedagogical thinking and skills and fulfilling a requirement for promotion and tenure.

Nonetheless, there is little evidence concerning teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding the role of pedagogical training in their approach to teaching and, in turn, how it augments student learning. The present study attempts to explore this aspect at a university in Mozambique. Such evidence is much needed to guide educational development units and to provide teachers with additional tools to reflect on pedagogical practices in higher education. This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do academic staff perceive good teaching practices in a Mozambican higher education institution?
2. How do academic staff understand the role of academic development?

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II. Literature Review

a) Concept of Academic Development

In an organisational context, *development* is the intentional enhancement of an individual or a group of individuals to better support the goal of an organisation (Camblin Jr. & Steger, 2000; Clegg, 2009; Phuong et al., 2015). As a concept, academic development has existed in higher education literature since the 1960s (Clegg, 2009; Gillespie et al., 2010). While many definitions have been posited, *academic development* is commonly referred to as initiatives that facilitate the professional development of academic staff, particularly in their roles as instructors/teachers (Castañeda, 2004; McKinney, 2013).

There are similar overlapping concepts, including *professional development*, *academic development* and *educational development*, all terms related to *academic development* (Clegg, 2009; Stes et al., 2010). Some researchers have used these terms interchangeably (Geertsema, 2021; Ouellett, 2010). However, these terms have different meanings in different contexts. *Academic and professional development* is preferred in Australasian and British contexts, whereas *faculty development* is common in North America (Clegg, 2009; Stes et al., 2010). While *academic development* attempts to enhance academics in their role as teachers, *professional and academic development* focuses on university teachers' whole career development and surpasses teaching to include research and social services (Stes et al., 2010). The term *educational development* is also used to refer to the entire spectrum of activities and development initiatives that give greater consideration to the various roles that academic staff play within departments, faculties and the larger university community, including those of scholar, researcher and instructor (Amundsen et al., 2005; Stes et al., 2010; Taylor & Rege Colet, 2009).

Since the quality of teaching is inseparably linked to the quality of learning (Askerc Veniger, 2016), the efficacy of training for teachers in higher education in enhancing university instruction has been the subject of extensive enquiry (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). Subsequently, we present how academic development, the teaching approach and student learning are intricate aspects of teaching and learning in higher education.

b) Academic Development, Teaching Approach and Student Learning

For decades, teaching in higher education has been permeated by two main educational assumptions about the roles and responsibilities of academic staff. The first is that 'the expertise in one's own discipline has been the most respected feature of a university teacher' (Postareff et al., 2007, p. 557). The second is that 'the recognition that success for academic staff had been defined almost exclusively by research and publication success' (Ouellett, 2010, p. 4). Both ideas have made the ameliorating of the craft of teaching in higher education a great challenge for educational developers and educators alike.

The main goal of academic development is to support better responsive teaching practices for successful student learning (Feixas & Zellweger, 2010). In other words, research in this area seeks to understand 'the extent to which teachers' training contributes to the improvement of the quality of teachers' practices and, in turn, the quality of students' learning in higher education' (p. 94). However, researchers have not embraced the idea of effective teaching that works for all situations and student populations (Parsons et al., 2012). Factors such as context and teaching models applied in the classroom have become relevant (Donnelly, 2007), not to mention the role of the institutional actions and conditions that encourage and support academic development, which in turn reflect best practice in the classroom (Condon et al., 2016).

However, there is some evidence to support the idea that investing resources in quality enhancement processes, such as pedagogical training courses/ programmes, refines the teaching approach and student learning (Cilliers & Herman, 2010; Gibbs, 2010; Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Postareff et al., 2007; Stes & Van Petegem, 2011). For example, Gibbs and Coffey (2004) studied university teachers in the UK, illustrating that their training has resulted in positive changes, such as better teaching skills or the development of more sophisticated conceptions of teaching. In this study, trainees reported an increase in how much they adopt student-focused approaches to teaching. Moreover, a student-focus approach is known to be associated with students taking a deep approach to a greater extent and, hence, to better student learning outcomes. Aspects of teaching scored higher ratings on student evaluation questionnaires, including good teaching. This finding was later confirmed by Postareff et al. (2007) in a qualitative study with 23 teachers at a university in Finland, where teachers mentioned only the positive effects of pedagogical training on teaching. Accordingly, teachers who received most of their pedagogical training reported being more student centred and less teacher centred, which makes sense, given that the institution is pushing student-centred teaching.

The existing professional culture and teaching experience can affect the way teachers value teaching and change approaches to teaching because of pedagogical training. Kálmán et al. (2020) demonstrated that teachers experienced more teaching approaches when they perceived their professional culture as supportive and collaborative. In addition, the study demonstrated that 'the more experience teachers had,

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the more they found almost all types of teaching approaches relevant' (p. 611). However, researchers acknowledge that changes in teaching occur over time (Chalmers & Gardiner, 2015; Cilliers & Herman, 2010). For example, compared to shorter courses, longer-running programmes guarantee greater chances to influence educators' ideas about teaching, learning and pedagogy (Askerc Veniger, 2016).

Prosser and Trigwell (1999) have shown that higher education instructors have fundamentally distinct ideas about teaching and learning and that these ideas are connected to the disparities in the methods they use to educate. Teachers who believe that teaching is merely about imparting knowledge to learners from the curriculum, for instance believe in a teaching method that places the instructor at the centre of the learning process. This method of instruction is known as *information transmission/ teacher focused*. However, a teaching strategy that aims to alter students' perceptions of the studied subject matter is linked to a concentration on the student as the centre of attention. This is termed *student-focused/conceptual change*.

Notably, research on the impact of the academic development of the teaching approach has made clear its implications for students' approaches to learning (Condon et al., 2016; Stes et al., 2010). This is because teaching approaches can influence students' learning interests and, in turn, their learning (Condon et al., 2016).

Briefly, the scholarly literature-related interest in academic development and improvement in teachers' performance has declined in the West in the last 20 years. The reviewed studies in question were published in well-established international peer-reviewed journals in the English language. This trend suggests, first, that most of the response to the widespread need for change in higher education might have been addressed earlier because of increasing economic pressures and concerns about the quality of university teaching in Western countries. The fact that most recent studies were conducted in non-Western contexts confirms this argument (Askerc Veniger, 2016; Kálmán et al., 2020). Second, the dearth of research in this field was acknowledged by Postareff et al.'s (2007) study conducted in Finland concerning the impact of teachers' training on the teaching approach. However, in the context where universities, such as those in African countries, enjoy far fewer resources than North America or Europe, those concerns still shape the quality of teaching and learning. Because these institutions still struggle financially, they affect staff morale and commitment to teaching coupled with significant socio-economic disparities in society. Therefore, there is a need for research in this field that addresses how academic staff experience the need for change in teaching approaches that promote student learning vis-a-vis institutional factors that constrain the professional development of academics in their teaching roles.

III. Materials and Methods

This study focused on university teachers' perspectives of good teaching and the interconnected-ness between academic development, teaching approaches and students' learning in a university in Mozambique. The research approach adopted in this study is qualitative. Under the interpretative paradigm, a qualitative endeavour acknowledges the existence of different realities based on participants' multiple interpretations and perspectives (Cohen et al., 2018). The main emphasis of this study is to understand the how individuals (teachers) construct, alter and interpret meaning in their surroundings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), that is, classroom teaching. To make sense of participants' experiences, semi-structured interviews took place. Interviews enable subjects to discuss their interpretations of the world and to express how they regard situations from their own perspectives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). To complement the interview data, official documents were analysed with classroom observation notes.

a) Participants

Data were gathered through interviews, and the interviewees included 10 teachers (six males and four females) in three faculties in a university in Mozambique. The selected teachers came from different disciplines, including the social sciences (psychology and sociology), education and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (biology, chemistry, engineering and computer science). Respondents were purposefully selected for this study considering their diversity in terms of gender, field of study and years of experience. Most individuals fells into the category of 'experts' because most of their career was in teaching even before they became university teachers. Participation in the study was voluntary; this was explicitly written in the official document authorising the study that was explained to participants. Other ethical issues, such as confidentiality and anonymity, were also addressed during the interview.

All the selected teachers agreed to be interviewed after an invitation was sent to the department and through the emails of the potential participants. The interviews were conducted online over Zoom and lasted approximately 60 minutes each. Informed consent was read to each participant to confirm that ethical concerns with human subjects were respected. Interviews were conducted in Portuguese and later translated into English by a professional language editor. The interviews were semi-structured and targeted three broad areas. The first focused on the motivational factors for starting to build a teaching

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career. The second aimed to elicit the teachers' conceptions of 'good' teaching, teaching approaches and the role of pedagogical training. The third enquired into teachers' challenges to be 'a good teacher' and implement the 'right' approach to teaching, thereby ensuring the quality of the learning experience.

Table 1: Description of the Participants

Participants	Sex	Field	Experience	Degree
Teacher 1	Female	STEM – Computer Sciences	8 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 2	Female	Psychology	7 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 3	Male	Education	14 years of experience	PhD
Teacher 4	Male	STEM – Mathematics	28 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 5	Male	Education	16 years of experience	PhD
Teacher 6	Male	Psychology	6 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 7	Male	STEM – Engineering	15 years of experience	PhD
Teacher 8	Female	STEM – Biology	15 years of experience	PhD
Teacher 9	Male	STEM – Chemistry	30 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 10	Female	Sociology	24 years of experience	PhD

b) Data Analysis

A qualitative method was used in the data analysis for this study. *Thematic analysis* is a technique for finding, evaluating and summarising themes in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Every interview was captured on tape and accurately transcribed. To establish familiarity with the empirical material, the transcripts and recordings were read and listened to several times. Initially, the transcripts were categorised based on the main themes found (Patton, 2002). An inductive and data-driven analysis was performed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To protect the identities of the participants by ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, the interviewees were identified by pseudonyms.

IV. Findings

This study explored university teachers' perspectives of the role of academic development in teaching approaches and student learning. Moreover, as a follow-up, it investigates how academic staff construct the notion of 'good teaching' in higher education. From the responses provided by the informants, four themes emerged, as follows: (I) learning the craft of teaching: motivational drivers; (II) conceptions of 'good teaching'; (III) perceptions of the role of pedagogical training for teaching and learning and (IV) teaching and learning challenges. The representative interview excerpts illustrate how these themes were expressed.

a) Learning the Craft of Teaching: Motivational Drivers

The interviewees in the sample cited a variety of factors as motivating them to launch a teaching career at university. Participants also discussed their passion for teaching and student learning. Some had learned to teach before becoming university lecturers. Others had previous experience teaching or had worked in the education sector. After being hired as tutors at an early stage, some participants revealed how they learned to master the craft of teaching while still undergraduate students and how they gained inspiration to initiate their careers from more experienced academics:

> 'When I started teaching, I usually looked up to the senior professors, who were also my teachers'. (Teacher 1)
>
> 'Those who become tutors, obviously, can extend this passion for teaching, because they will learn from their teachers'. (Teacher 6)

An important element of building interest in a particular career is the role model effect. While attending courses, as students start observing and following examples of teachers' good practices and behaviours, they end up gaining inspiration to become one:

> I had different experiences […] while attending some classes. Each professor taught in his own way, and there was always one or another professor who stood out, as students say, who teaches well, who communicates well with the students. It was from then on that I began to see and look at teaching. (Teacher 3)

The key words here are *good communication skills* and *knowledge about people's behaviours*. These attributes can cultivate an interest in teaching.

> However, one participant had a different trajectory for becoming a lecturer. She revealed that teaching was not her first career choice:
>
> It was never my dream to be a teacher. I remember when I completed my bachelor's in psychology, one of the teachers in a subject where I had very good grades invited me to be a tutor, and I paused my decision. After that, I went to work for a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). So, at the NGO, there were some problems with funding, and I was in

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the process of looking for a job. That is when someone told me about the hiring for teachers at university. (Teacher 2)

b) Conceptions of 'good teaching'

Subjects discussed their conceptions of good teaching practice based on their experiences. For instance, respondents commented that good teaching is transmitting knowledge while meeting students' expectations and following their growth:

> To become a great professional, you must look at the classroom as a space of great opportunity to build or to enhance your profile as a professional. […] Each student brings their own difficulties. It is gratifying when you are able to meet the expectations of the student who, at the beginning of the class […], you were unable to see their potential, but over time, they improve, grow and meet expectations. (Teacher 3)

While creating opportunities for interactions, teachers can learn from their students:

> (…) [I]n my field, I have the opportunity not only to transmit knowledge but also to learn many things from the students. (…) It gives us the opportunity to explore both the teaching aspect, where we teach students, but also the particularity of having student-centred teaching, in which they build their own knowledge.[…] (Teacher 1)

These excerpts suggest that teaching is a two-way street while a teacher promotes student learning. Simultaneously, the teacher grows professionally by doing so.

Apart from valuing interactions with students, another teacher described how he enjoys teaching very much due to self-confidence and the possibility of improving his self-efficacy:

> I prioritise teaching so much that I do not teach for the money […] because I realised that teaching is the reason to be constantly updated, to be informed, so that you can teach with […] scientific support […]. On the other hand, you have the opportunity to interact with students and in this discussion process. (Teacher 4)

The quote above suggests that the teacher views teaching as an opportunity to stay current on developments in his field and to incorporate these developments into his instruction.

A good teaching approach can also be construed as an internal process of being good at a particular discipline and having that kind of ability to transmit or explain. One believes that one can perform that task easily to convince or make others understand a subject matter. One participant mentioned this in an enthusiastic way:

> That is where I have the most creativity. I sense that when I come home from a class I feel that this is an art. I mastered the art of summarising. Okay. In addition, this mastery arises, as you say, the inclination – I have already noted this inclination. Because I lived in a very small town that counted the number of people who made it to 12th grade, people came to me asking me to explain this or that to them. I explained it and always received this feedback (That I am good at it). I explain it well, and people understand the mathematics, the science that I explained and so on. (Teacher 7)

There were two main implications for when this teacher tried to make learning easier for students. Since the teacher viewed his role as the transmitter of knowledge, a teacher-centred approach to teaching was likeliest to be adopted in this case. Second, students' prior knowledge was not considered; they were viewed as essentially passive recipients of information.

c) Perceptions of the Role of Pedagogical Training in Teaching and Learning

The participants mentioned a few aspects of pedagogical training that indirectly or directly affected the way they approach teaching and learning. Moreover, some of them contained elements of student-centred learning and a teacher-centred approach. Both aspects were mentioned as resulting from pedagogical training courses. For example, one teacher described by comparison how pedagogical knowledge could make a difference in teaching.

> Because those teachers who do not have this pedagogical training have difficulty even starting a class, they have difficulty motivating the students. They teach in the same way. Depending on the content, depending on the level of difficulty, it is important to always find a way to motivate the students in such a way that they are interested in the class. (Teacher 4)

Student-centred learning has its advantages. Good teaching practice is also about how to manage situations that arise from giving students too much freedom and responsibility for their learning. For instance, treating students fairly should not be exaggerated, as one teacher indicated below.

> So, we have to consider this so that we don't let ourselves be influenced by the idea of, they come like this from high school, so we can't mistreat them too much. We really need to have excellent students, and we need to balance this. So, this exercise of balancing this idea of student-centred teaching, which I think, or for me at least, is quite challenging, knowing that the student I receive is this one, has these characteristics, has these shortcomings, these deficiencies. (Teacher 2)

Although the student-centred teaching approach is ideal, understanding students' behaviours concerning this approach and its limitations is also crucial because challenges may arise during implementation. One participant elaborated in detail on how he perceives the nuances of this approach:

> In the subject I am teaching, I have expected results, and I want the student to be able to do this […] at the end of the subject. How am I going to make sure he/she gets there, considering that teaching is student centred? It is very challenging. […] [W]hen the teacher demands, the teacher guides and tells them to go there to do research and everything, they think the teacher is boring, is very

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> demanding, and they always try to manipulate an attempt to get the best results with less effort. (Teacher 9)

Clearly, for learning to be student-centred, students also require some degree of understanding about their responsibilities and consequent behavioural shifts; otherwise, the aforementioned unwillingness may jeopardise the whole process of teachers to make the transitioning from teacher-centred to student-centred learning approach.

Pedagogical training courses also prescribe teachers to consider the role of learning in a context. On this subject, one participant commented about how he deals with the issue of students' diversity when it is presented and the consideration of different learning styles:

> Well, I think it contributes to the extent that it enables the teacher to create a learning space that is much more adjusted to reality, but at the same time, it allows the teacher to deliver what is foreseen in the curriculum. So, pedagogy courses come precisely to tell us how we can do this, taking reality into account. […] There are situations in the classroom in which the teacher has a student with visual impairment. Pedagogy can recommend that the teacher use the knowledge learned in the field of inclusive education, in the field of special needs, to deal with that student. (Teacher 6)

Evaluation in higher education is one component of pedagogical courses, and the integration of student feedback is important for improving teaching quality:

> (…) One of the things that (…) has helped me a lot, it's a practice a colleague taught me. In the middle of the semester, I invite the students to evaluate my work anonymously. The students write down the positive and negative aspects and how I can improve. These are aspects that I take into consideration so that if the student fails, the following year, he is supposed to not find that flaw anymore. (Teacher 2)

d) Teaching and Learning Challenges

Participants discussed some of the challenges they face in improving teaching and student learning in their field of study. Most challenges mentioned relate to the general quality of higher education in Mozambique. These aspects affect their work as teachers and students' quality of learning.

As teachers face pressure to change their teaching approach to more student centred, the challenge brought by increasing student enrolment is to balance the new approach with student preparedness. As one participant described the following:

> Because at no point in high school [is] the student prepared for university, we are trained to use this approach. The student comes from a very different study regimen in which the teacher is the holder of knowledge. So, this transition is quite challenging. (Teacher 2)

In reporting student-related problems, university teachers also shared aspects of students' lack of commitment to their studies and difficulty in improving teaching when certain facilities are not available. The following two extracts exemplify teachers who had noticed both abovementioned challenges.

> I have a big focus on students who have failed and are repeating a subject. Since they already have knowledge of the material, they end up slacking off. I have seen them miss most classes. They hardly do their work. They participate very poorly in the class. (Teacher 1)

> One challenge that I understand is the issue of materials, for example practical classes on computers. We usually don't have enough computers for each student. Since we don't have computers for each student, this ends up making the teaching and learning process more difficult in some way. And it ends up compromising in some way the quality of teaching. (Teacher 9)

Concerning teachers' perceptions of students' behaviour, the new phenomenon called *digital learners* is pervading higher education internationally. According to one participant, it is threatening the 'university culture'.

> Another issue is university culture. I feel at the time when I was a university student, there was a university culture. I think that this is being lost […]. This generation that we call digital learners and works a lot with technology; […], the role of higher education is to transform this mentality of immediacy to build a more credible mentality to preserve the identity of higher education. (Teacher 3)

Whether this is a real issue for universities in Mozambique depends on where one stands on the role of new technology in teaching and learning. One can argue that it is both revolutionary and disruptive.

Teachers also reported that, in some circumstances, managing professional commitments and ensuring the quality of teaching becomes even harder when they must deal with teaching being an underpaid profession. These two situations interfere with the time dedicated to one institution and the motivation to put in the work, as one of the participants said:

> There is not much appreciation for the work teachers do. That is why what we are looking for besides teaching is to be able to provide improvements for ourselves and for our loved ones. So, what happens is that many times this also ends up hindering the teaching career a little, because what happens is that people then must look for multiple and competing roles because of having other things to do to cover this gap. (Teacher 1)

As the interviewee mentioned below, universities are compromised by 'turbo teachers', that is 'teachers who teach in different institutions' (Teacher 3).

Finally, there is the bigger picture: The quality of teaching and learning in higher education does not happen in a vacuum. One subject candidly highlighted the following:

> […] Not to mention other factors beyond the control of the teacher and even of the institution, itself. The university depends on cultural factors, social factors, political factors

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and demographic factors, and they have a great impact on the life of educational institutions, as well as on the life of teachers. We are witnessing, for instance a drastic reduction in terms of funding for higher education in the last two years, not only in Mozambique. How are we going to guarantee quality? (Teacher 3)

V. Concluding Discussion

This study sought to understand how teachers at a university in Mozambique conceptualise the notion of 'good teaching' in HE and how they interpret the connectedness of academic development, teaching approaches and students' learning. Therefore, two research questions were asked. (1) How do university teachers perceive good teaching practices in HE? (2) How does a university teacher understand the role of academic development in teaching practice and student learning in the Mozambican HE context?

Findings from this study reveal that the understanding of 'good teaching' in HE varies widely among the participants and incorporates a wide range of aspects related to one's experience, professional growth as a teacher, teaching philosophy and knowledge of the classroom context. According to participants, factors such as meeting students' expectations, learning from interacting with students, mastering the art of transmitting knowledge and applying research to teaching make a difference in classroom teaching. The reasons for adopting good teaching practices can vary from personal reasons such as inclination and enjoyment to institutional incentives. In scholarly terms, good teaching should be understood as 'teaching that promotes student learning and other desired student outcomes' (Bernstein & Ginsberg, 2009, p. 8). It is believed that excellent instruction occurs 'naturally' and that those who are hired to teach at such institutions do it because they 'care about teaching' (Gillespie et al., 2010). It is also believed that 'one could be very effective, in terms of promoting student learning, without being able to identify any theories of learning or teaching' (Smith, 2001, p. 70).

Research has found that conceptions of teaching can influence whether a teacher adopts a more student-centred or more teacher-centred approach to teaching (Kálmán et al., 2020; Postareff et al., 2007). In our study, no interviewee revealed they used a more teacher-centred approach to teaching. This makes sense because it is not what the university is promoting (Postareff et al., 2007). All informants seemed to value the student-centred approach, although they showed no sophisticated understanding of what it entails other than saying that students are responsible for constructing their knowledge. In Mozambique, this is understandable for various reasons. First, the motivation to implement new pedagogical approaches is attributed either due to the external imposition of Western countries' agendas or as university managers' imposition following local policies and practices. This can cause hesitancy to implement and misinterpret what this new approach entails. Some teachers will merely sit in the classroom, let the students do all the teaching and call it student centred. Others are not ready to relinquish their time to talk and show off their knowledge to the whole class. The third aspect concerns students: Lecturers believe they are not ready to embrace new responsibilities as learners (Mendonça, 2014). Last is the lack of an institutional quality control mechanism, such as supervising novice teachers throughout the stages of their professional development and performance in the classroom, which can have a detrimental effect (UEM, 2012).

Research on the connectedness of academic development, the teaching approach and student learning has shown a direct connection between academic development and teaching practice, though there is no clear connection to student learning (Condon et al., 2016). However, Gibbs and Coffey (2004) demonstrated that training increased the how much teachers adopted the student-centred approach to teaching, which promotes deep learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The findings of our study indicate that all participants had taken pedagogical training courses before and after the inception of their teaching. They revealed they are still struggling to find the best way to implement a student-centred approach vis-à-vis the context of implementation. However, some were more confident than others concerning the benefits of this approach, such as how to motivate students to be interested in the class and how to promote active participation. Other positive aspects that resulted from teacher training included the incorporation of student feedback for improvement and an awareness of how student diversity can affect learning. The most important aspects of the learning context of implementation highlighted by the teachers' concern about students' preparedness and attitudes towards the new approach and learning in general. A study in the same academic context demonstrated that all parties involved in teaching and learning showed reluctance to implement the student-centred approach (Mendonça, 2014).

Positive organisational circumstances are necessary for the successful implementation of innovative teaching techniques in HE. In other words, teachers value a supportive and collaborative professional culture that values their work (Kálmán et al., 2020). Regarding this subject, findings revealed that participants tend to attribute the challenges of being effective teachers and the likelihood of changing to a student-centred approach to circumstances they cannot control. The challenges reported include the increasing enrolment of unprepared students coupled with their lack of commitment to their studies and the lack of proper facilities for learning. In addition, teaching staff have a heavy workload because they teach at many universities. These challenges are the crux of the

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problem of the quality of teaching and learning in higher education in Mozambique (Mendonça, 2014; Miguel et al., 2022). This scenario is exacerbated by reduced funding for higher education in recent years internationally; developing countries suffer the most consequences (Carr-Hill, 2020).

VI. Implications for Practice

Given the dispersed understandings of good teaching and the challenges of implementing student-centred learning, educational policy and practice regarding academic development in the context of this study should have a mechanism to follow up with trainees (mostly novice university teachers) to assess how in practice they are carrying out the task of teaching. Of course, this should be accompanied by local incentives for teaching effectiveness and continuous in-service learning to further improve academics' pedagogical and didactic skills.

Declarations

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Conflicts of Interest/Competing Interests

The author have no conflicts of interest relevant to the content of this article.

Availability of Data and Materials

Data applied for the manuscript are available by contacting the corresponding author. They were collected at Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique.

Authors' Contribution

The author contributed solely to the conception and design of this study. The material preparation and data collection and analysis were performed by Francisco De Carvalho.

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- The names of first main headings (Heading 1) must be in Roman font, capital letters, and font size of 10.
- The names of second main headings (Heading 2) must not include numbers and must be in italics with a font size of 10.

Structure and Format of Manuscript

The recommended size of an original research paper is under 15,000 words and review papers under 7,000 words. Research articles should be less than 10,000 words. Research papers are usually longer than review papers. Review papers are reports of significant research (typically less than 7,000 words, including tables, figures, and references)

A research paper must include:

a) A title which should be relevant to the theme of the paper.
b) A summary, known as an abstract (less than 150 words), containing the major results and conclusions.
c) Up to 10 keywords that precisely identify the paper's subject, purpose, and focus.
d) An introduction, giving fundamental background objectives.
e) Resources and techniques with sufficient complete experimental details (wherever possible by reference) to permit repetition, sources of information must be given, and numerical methods must be specified by reference.
f) Results which should be presented concisely by well-designed tables and figures.
g) Suitable statistical data should also be given.
h) All data must have been gathered with attention to numerical detail in the planning stage.

Design has been recognized to be essential to experiments for a considerable time, and the editor has decided that any paper that appears not to have adequate numerical treatments of the data will be returned unrefereed.

i) Discussion should cover implications and consequences and not just recapitulate the results; conclusions should also be summarized.
j) There should be brief acknowledgments.
k) There ought to be references in the conventional format. Global Journals recommends APA format.

Authors should carefully consider the preparation of papers to ensure that they communicate effectively. Papers are much more likely to be accepted if they are carefully designed and laid out, contain few or no errors, are summarizing, and follow instructions. They will also be published with much fewer delays than those that require much technical and editorial correction.

The Editorial Board reserves the right to make literary corrections and suggestions to improve brevity.

Format Structure

It is necessary that authors take care in submitting a manuscript that is written in simple language and adheres to published guidelines.

All manuscripts submitted to Global Journals should include:

Title

The title page must carry an informative title that reflects the content, a running title (less than 45 characters together with spaces), names of the authors and co-authors, and the place(s) where the work was carried out.

Author details

The full postal address of any related author(s) must be specified.

Abstract

The abstract is the foundation of the research paper. It should be clear and concise and must contain the objective of the paper and inferences drawn. It is advised to not include big mathematical equations or complicated jargon.

Many researchers searching for information online will use search engines such as Google, Yahoo or others. By optimizing your paper for search engines, you will amplify the chance of someone finding it. In turn, this will make it more likely to be viewed and cited in further works. Global Journals has compiled these guidelines to facilitate you to maximize the web-friendliness of the most public part of your paper.

Keywords

A major lynchpin of research work for the writing of research papers is the keyword search, which one will employ to find both library and internet resources. Up to eleven keywords or very brief phrases have to be given to help data retrieval, mining, and indexing.

One must be persistent and creative in using keywords. An effective keyword search requires a strategy: planning of a list of possible keywords and phrases to try.

Choice of the main keywords is the first tool of writing a research paper. Research paper writing is an art. Keyword search should be as strategic as possible.

One should start brainstorming lists of potential keywords before even beginning searching. Think about the most important concepts related to research work. Ask, “What words would a source have to include to be truly valuable in a research paper?” Then consider synonyms for the important words.

It may take the discovery of only one important paper to steer in the right keyword direction because, in most databases, the keywords under which a research paper is abstracted are listed with the paper.

Numerical Methods

Numerical methods used should be transparent and, where appropriate, supported by references.

Abbreviations

Authors must list all the abbreviations used in the paper at the end of the paper or in a separate table before using them.

Formulas and equations

Authors are advised to submit any mathematical equation using either MathJax, KaTeX, or LaTeX, or in a very high-quality image.

Tables, Figures, and Figure Legends

Tables: Tables should be cautiously designed, uncrowned, and include only essential data. Each must have an Arabic number, e.g., Table 4, a self-explanatory caption, and be on a separate sheet. Authors must submit tables in an editable format and not as images. References to these tables (if any) must be mentioned accurately.

Figures

Figures are supposed to be submitted as separate files. Always include a citation in the text for each figure using Arabic numbers, e.g., Fig. 4. Artwork must be submitted online in vector electronic form or by emailing it.

Preparation of Eletronic Figures for Publication

Although low-quality images are sufficient for review purposes, print publication requires high-quality images to prevent the final product being blurred or fuzzy. Submit (possibly by e-mail) EPS (line art) or TIFF (halftone/ photographs) files only. MS PowerPoint and Word Graphics are unsuitable for printed pictures. Avoid using pixel-oriented software. Scans (TIFF only) should have a resolution of at least 350 dpi (halftone) or 700 to 1100 dpi (line drawings). Please give the data for figures in black and white or submit a Color Work Agreement form. EPS files must be saved with fonts embedded (and with a TIFF preview, if possible).

For scanned images, the scanning resolution at final image size ought to be as follows to ensure good reproduction: line art: >650 dpi; halftones (including gel photographs): >350 dpi; figures containing both halftone and line images: >650 dpi.

Color charges: Authors are advised to pay the full cost for the reproduction of their color artwork. Hence, please note that if there is color artwork in your manuscript when it is accepted for publication, we would require you to complete and return a Color Work Agreement form before your paper can be published. Also, you can email your editor to remove the color fee after acceptance of the paper.

Tips for writing a good quality Social Science Research Paper

Techniques for writing a good quality homan social science research paper:

1. Choosing the topic: In most cases, the topic is selected by the interests of the author, but it can also be suggested by the guides. You can have several topics, and then judge which you are most comfortable with. This may be done by asking several questions of yourself, like "Will I be able to carry out a search in this area? Will I find all necessary resources to accomplish the search? Will I be able to find all information in this field area?" If the answer to this type of question is "yes," then you ought to choose that topic. In most cases, you may have to conduct surveys and visit several places. Also, you might have to do a lot of work to find all the rises and falls of the various data on that subject. Sometimes, detailed information plays a vital role, instead of short information. Evaluators are human: The first thing to remember is that evaluators are also human beings. They are not only meant for rejecting a paper. They are here to evaluate your paper. So present your best aspect.

2. Think like evaluators: If you are in confusion or getting demotivated because your paper may not be accepted by the evaluators, then think, and try to evaluate your paper like an evaluator. Try to understand what an evaluator wants in your research paper, and you will automatically have your answer. Make blueprints of paper: The outline is the plan or framework that will help you to arrange your thoughts. It will make your paper logical. But remember that all points of your outline must be related to the topic you have chosen.

3. Ask your guides: If you are having any difficulty with your research, then do not hesitate to share your difficulty with your guide (if you have one). They will surely help you out and resolve your doubts. If you can't clarify what exactly you require for your work, then ask your supervisor to help you with an alternative. He or she might also provide you with a list of essential readings.

4. Use of computer is recommended: As you are doing research in the field of homan social science then this point is quite obvious. Use right software: Always use good quality software packages. If you are not capable of judging good software, then you can lose the quality of your paper unknowingly. There are various programs available to help you which you can get through the internet.

5. Use the internet for help: An excellent start for your paper is using Google. It is a wondrous search engine, where you can have your doubts resolved. You may also read some answers for the frequent question of how to write your research paper or find a model research paper. You can download books from the internet. If you have all the required books, place importance on reading, selecting, and analyzing the specified information. Then sketch out your research paper. Use big pictures: You may use encyclopedias like Wikipedia to get pictures with the best resolution. At Global Journals, you should strictly follow here.



6. Bookmarks are useful: When you read any book or magazine, you generally use bookmarks, right? It is a good habit which helps to not lose your continuity. You should always use bookmarks while searching on the internet also, which will make your search easier.

7. Revise what you wrote: When you write anything, always read it, summarize it, and then finalize it.

8. Make every effort: Make every effort to mention what you are going to write in your paper. That means always have a good start. Try to mention everything in the introduction—what is the need for a particular research paper. Polish your work with good writing skills and always give an evaluator what he wants. Make backups: When you are going to do any important thing like making a research paper, you should always have backup copies of it either on your computer or on paper. This protects you from losing any portion of your important data.

9. Produce good diagrams of your own: Always try to include good charts or diagrams in your paper to improve quality. Using several unnecessary diagrams will degrade the quality of your paper by creating a hodgepodge. So always try to include diagrams which were made by you to improve the readability of your paper. Use of direct quotes: When you do research relevant to literature, history, or current affairs, then use of quotes becomes essential, but if the study is relevant to science, use of quotes is not preferable.

10. Use proper verb tense: Use proper verb tenses in your paper. Use past tense to present those events that have happened. Use present tense to indicate events that are going on. Use future tense to indicate events that will happen in the future. Use of wrong tenses will confuse the evaluator. Avoid sentences that are incomplete.

11. Pick a good study spot: Always try to pick a spot for your research which is quiet. Not every spot is good for studying.

12. Know what you know: Always try to know what you know by making objectives, otherwise you will be confused and unable to achieve your target.

13. Use good grammar: Always use good grammar and words that will have a positive impact on the evaluator; use of good vocabulary does not mean using tough words which the evaluator has to find in a dictionary. Do not fragment sentences. Eliminate one-word sentences. Do not ever use a big word when a smaller one would suffice.

Verbs have to be in agreement with their subjects. In a research paper, do not start sentences with conjunctions or finish them with prepositions. When writing formally, it is advisable to never split an infinitive because someone will (wrongly) complain. Avoid clichés like a disease. Always shun irritating alliteration. Use language which is simple and straightforward. Put together a neat summary.

14. Arrangement of information: Each section of the main body should start with an opening sentence, and there should be a changeover at the end of the section. Give only valid and powerful arguments for your topic. You may also maintain your arguments with records.

15. Never start at the last minute: Always allow enough time for research work. Leaving everything to the last minute will degrade your paper and spoil your work.

16. Multitasking in research is not good: Doing several things at the same time is a bad habit in the case of research activity. Research is an area where everything has a particular time slot. Divide your research work into parts, and do a particular part in a particular time slot.

17. Never copy others' work: Never copy others' work and give it your name because if the evaluator has seen it anywhere, you will be in trouble. Take proper rest and food: No matter how many hours you spend on your research activity, if you are not taking care of your health, then all your efforts will have been in vain. For quality research, take proper rest and food.

18. Go to seminars: Attend seminars if the topic is relevant to your research area. Utilize all your resources.
Refresh your mind after intervals: Try to give your mind a rest by listening to soft music or sleeping in intervals. This will also improve your memory. Acquire colleagues: Always try to acquire colleagues. No matter how sharp you are, if you acquire colleagues, they can give you ideas which will be helpful to your research.

19. Think technically: Always think technically. If anything happens, search for its reasons, benefits, and demerits. Think and then print: When you go to print your paper, check that tables are not split, headings are not detached from their descriptions, and page sequence is maintained.

20. Adding unnecessary information: Do not add unnecessary information like "I have used MS Excel to draw graphs." Irrelevant and inappropriate material is superfluous. Foreign terminology and phrases are not apropos. One should never take a broad view. Analogy is like feathers on a snake. Use words properly, regardless of how others use them. Remove quotations. Puns are for kids, not grunt readers. Never oversimplify: When adding material to your research paper, never go for oversimplification; this will definitely irritate the evaluator. Be specific. Never use rhythmic redundancies. Contractions shouldn't be used in a research paper. Comparisons are as terrible as clichés. Give up ampersands, abbreviations, and so on. Remove commas that are not necessary. Parenthetical words should be between brackets or commas. Understatement is always the best way to put forward earth-shaking thoughts. Give a detailed literary review.

21. Report concluded results: Use concluded results. From raw data, filter the results, and then conclude your studies based on measurements and observations taken. An appropriate number of decimal places should be used. Parenthetical remarks are prohibited here. Proofread carefully at the final stage. At the end, give an outline to your arguments. Spot perspectives of further study of the subject. Justify your conclusion at the bottom sufficiently, which will probably include examples.

22. Upon conclusion: Once you have concluded your research, the next most important step is to present your findings. Presentation is extremely important as it is the definite medium though which your research is going to be in print for the rest of the crowd. Care should be taken to categorize your thoughts well and present them in a logical and neat manner. A good quality research paper format is essential because it serves to highlight your research paper and bring to light all necessary aspects of your research.

.

Informal Guidelines of Research Paper Writing

Key points to remember:

- Submit all work in its final form.
- Write your paper in the form which is presented in the guidelines using the template.
- Please note the criteria peer reviewers will use for grading the final paper.

Final points:

One purpose of organizing a research paper is to let people interpret your efforts selectively. The journal requires the following sections, submitted in the order listed, with each section starting on a new page:

The introduction: This will be compiled from reference matter and reflect the design processes or outline of basis that directed you to make a study. As you carry out the process of study, the method and process section will be constructed like that. The results segment will show related statistics in nearly sequential order and direct reviewers to similar intellectual paths throughout the data that you gathered to carry out your study.

The discussion section:

This will provide understanding of the data and projections as to the implications of the results. The use of good quality references throughout the paper will give the effort trustworthiness by representing an alertness to prior workings.

Writing a research paper is not an easy job, no matter how trouble-free the actual research or concept. Practice, excellent preparation, and controlled record-keeping are the only means to make straightforward progression.

General style:

Specific editorial column necessities for compliance of a manuscript will always take over from directions in these general guidelines.

To make a paper clear: Adhere to recommended page limits.



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Mistakes to avoid:

- Insertion of a title at the foot of a page with subsequent text on the next page.
- Separating a table, chart, or figure—confine each to a single page.
- Submitting a manuscript with pages out of sequence.
- In every section of your document, use standard writing style, including articles ("a" and "the").
- Keep paying attention to the topic of the paper.
- Use paragraphs to split each significant point (excluding the abstract).
- Align the primary line of each section.
- Present your points in sound order.
- Use present tense to report well-accepted matters.
- Use past tense to describe specific results.
- Do not use familiar wording; don't address the reviewer directly. Don't use slang or superlatives.
- Avoid use of extra pictures—include only those figures essential to presenting results.

Title page:

Choose a revealing title. It should be short and include the name(s) and address(es) of all authors. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations or exceed two printed lines.

Abstract: This summary should be two hundred words or less. It should clearly and briefly explain the key findings reported in the manuscript and must have precise statistics. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations. It should be logical in itself. Do not cite references at this point.

An abstract is a brief, distinct paragraph summary of finished work or work in development. In a minute or less, a reviewer can be taught the foundation behind the study, common approaches to the problem, relevant results, and significant conclusions or new questions.

Write your summary when your paper is completed because how can you write the summary of anything which is not yet written? Wealth of terminology is very essential in abstract. Use comprehensive sentences, and do not sacrifice readability for brevity; you can maintain it succinctly by phrasing sentences so that they provide more than a lone rationale. The author can at this moment go straight to shortening the outcome. Sum up the study with the subsequent elements in any summary. Try to limit the initial two items to no more than one line each.

Reason for writing the article—theory, overall issue, purpose.

- Fundamental goal.
- To-the-point depiction of the research.
- Consequences, including definite statistics—if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account for this; results of any numerical analysis should be reported. Significant conclusions or questions that emerge from the research.

Approach:

- Single section and succinct.
- An outline of the job done is always written in past tense.
- Concentrate on shortening results—limit background information to a verdict or two.
- Exact spelling, clarity of sentences and phrases, and appropriate reporting of quantities (proper units, important statistics) are just as significant in an abstract as they are anywhere else.

Introduction:

The introduction should "introduce" the manuscript. The reviewer should be presented with sufficient background information to be capable of comprehending and calculating the purpose of your study without having to refer to other works. The basis for the study should be offered. Give the most important references, but avoid making a comprehensive appraisal of the topic. Describe the problem visibly. If the problem is not acknowledged in a logical, reasonable way, the reviewer will give no attention to your results. Speak in common terms about techniques used to explain the problem, if needed, but do not present any particulars about the protocols here.

The following approach can create a valuable beginning:

- Explain the value (significance) of the study.
- Defend the model—why did you employ this particular system or method? What is its compensation? Remark upon its appropriateness from an abstract point of view as well as pointing out sensible reasons for using it.
- Present a justification. State your particular theory(-ies) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
- Briefly explain the study's tentative purpose and how it meets the declared objectives.

Approach:

Use past tense except for when referring to recognized facts. After all, the manuscript will be submitted after the entire job is done. Sort out your thoughts; manufacture one key point for every section. If you make the four points listed above, you will need at least four paragraphs. Present surrounding information only when it is necessary to support a situation. The reviewer does not desire to read everything you know about a topic. Shape the theory specifically—do not take a broad view.

As always, give awareness to spelling, simplicity, and correctness of sentences and phrases.

Procedures (methods and materials):

This part is supposed to be the easiest to carve if you have good skills. A soundly written procedures segment allows a capable scientist to replicate your results. Present precise information about your supplies. The suppliers and clarity of reagents can be helpful bits of information. Present methods in sequential order, but linked methodologies can be grouped as a segment. Be concise when relating the protocols. Attempt to give the least amount of information that would permit another capable scientist to replicate your outcome, but be cautious that vital information is integrated. The use of subheadings is suggested and ought to be synchronized with the results section.

When a technique is used that has been well-described in another section, mention the specific item describing the way, but draw the basic principle while stating the situation. The purpose is to show all particular resources and broad procedures so that another person may use some or all of the methods in one more study or referee the scientific value of your work. It is not to be a step-by-step report of the whole thing you did, nor is a methods section a set of orders.

Materials:

Materials may be reported in part of a section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

Methods:

- Report the method and not the particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology.
- Describe the method entirely.
- To be succinct, present methods under headings dedicated to specific dealings or groups of measures.
- Simplify—detail how procedures were completed, not how they were performed on a particular day.
- If well-known procedures were used, account for the procedure by name, possibly with a reference, and that's all.

Approach:

It is embarrassing to use vigorous voice when documenting methods without using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result, when writing up the methods, most authors use third person passive voice.

Use standard style in this and every other part of the paper—avoid familiar lists, and use full sentences.

What to keep away from:

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
- Skip all descriptive information and surroundings—save it for the argument.
- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.



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Results:

The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part as entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Use statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.

You must clearly differentiate material which would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matters should not be submitted at all except if requested by the instructor.

Content:

- Sum up your conclusions in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
- In the manuscript, explain each of your consequences, and point the reader to remarks that are most appropriate.
- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation of an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and give remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or manuscript.

What to stay away from:

- Do not discuss or infer your outcome, report surrounding information, or try to explain anything.
- Do not include raw data or intermediate calculations in a research manuscript.
- Do not present similar data more than once.
- A manuscript should complement any figures or tables, not duplicate information.
- Never confuse figures with tables—there is a difference.

Approach:

As always, use past tense when you submit your results, and put the whole thing in a reasonable order.

Put figures and tables, appropriately numbered, in order at the end of the report.

If you desire, you may place your figures and tables properly within the text of your results section.

Figures and tables:

If you put figures and tables at the end of some details, make certain that they are visibly distinguished from any attached appendix materials, such as raw facts. Whatever the position, each table must be titled, numbered one after the other, and include a heading. All figures and tables must be divided from the text.

Discussion:

The discussion is expected to be the trickiest segment to write. A lot of papers submitted to the journal are discarded based on problems with the discussion. There is no rule for how long an argument should be.

Position your understanding of the outcome visibly to lead the reviewer through your conclusions, and then finish the paper with a summing up of the implications of the study. The purpose here is to offer an understanding of your results and support all of your conclusions, using facts from your research and generally accepted information, if suitable. The implication of results should be fully described.

Infer your data in the conversation in suitable depth. This means that when you clarify an observable fact, you must explain mechanisms that may account for the observation. If your results vary from your prospect, make clear why that may have happened. If your results agree, then explain the theory that the proof supported. It is never suitable to just state that the data approved the prospect, and let it drop at that. Make a decision as to whether each premise is supported or discarded or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."



Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work.

- You may propose future guidelines, such as how an experiment might be personalized to accomplish a new idea.
- Give details of all of your remarks as much as possible, focusing on mechanisms.
- Make a decision as to whether the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory and whether or not it was correctly restricted. Try to present substitute explanations if they are sensible alternatives.
- One piece of research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind. Where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from other available information. Present work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.

Describe generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

The Administration Rules

Administration Rules to Be Strictly Followed before Submitting Your Research Paper to Global Journals Inc.

Please read the following rules and regulations carefully before submitting your research paper to Global Journals Inc. to avoid rejection.

Segment draft and final research paper: You have to strictly follow the template of a research paper, failing which your paper may get rejected. You are expected to write each part of the paper wholly on your own. The peer reviewers need to identify your own perspective of the concepts in your own terms. Please do not extract straight from any other source, and do not rephrase someone else's analysis. Do not allow anyone else to proofread your manuscript.

Written material: You may discuss this with your guides and key sources. Do not copy anyone else's paper, even if this is only imitation, otherwise it will be rejected on the grounds of plagiarism, which is illegal. Various methods to avoid plagiarism are strictly applied by us to every paper, and, if found guilty, you may be blacklisted, which could affect your career adversely. To guard yourself and others from possible illegal use, please do not permit anyone to use or even read your paper and file.

Criterion for Grading a Research Paper (Compilation) by Global Journals

Please note that following table is only a Grading of "Paper Compilation" and not on "Performed/Stated Research" whose grading solely depends on Individual Assigned Peer Reviewer and Editorial Board Member. These can be available only on request and after decision of Paper. This report will be the property of Global Journals

Topics	Grades		
	A-B	**C-D**	**E-F**
Abstract	Clear and concise with appropriate content, Correct format. 200 words or below	Unclear summary and no specific data, Incorrect form Above 200 words	No specific data with ambiguous information Above 250 words
Introduction	Containing all background details with clear goal and appropriate details, flow specification, no grammar and spelling mistake, well organized sentence and paragraph, reference cited	Unclear and confusing data, appropriate format, grammar and spelling errors with unorganized matter	Out of place depth and content, hazy format
Methods and Procedures	Clear and to the point with well arranged paragraph, precision and accuracy of facts and figures, well organized subheads	Difficult to comprehend with embarrassed text, too much explanation but completed	Incorrect and unorganized structure with hazy meaning
Result	Well organized, Clear and specific, Correct units with precision, correct data, well structuring of paragraph, no grammar and spelling mistake	Complete and embarrassed text, difficult to comprehend	Irregular format with wrong facts and figures
Discussion	Well organized, meaningful specification, sound conclusion, logical and concise explanation, highly structured paragraph reference cited	Wordy, unclear conclusion, spurious	Conclusion is not cited, unorganized, difficult to comprehend
References	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring

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