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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Languages, Cultures and Linguistics

APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

**Exploring the Effectiveness of Technology-Enhanced Self-access Language Learning
(SALL) Amongst Primary Level EFL Learners in Saudi Arabia**

by

Fahad Abdullah Alghamdi

ORCID ID: 0009-0000-6490-1762

Thesis for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

September 2024

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

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EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED SELF-ACCESS LANGUAGE LEARNING (SALL) AMONGST PRIMARY LEVEL EFL LEARNERS IN SAUDI ARABIA

Fahad Abdullah Alghamdi

The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has aimed to improve English language teaching in schools at all levels. However, there is a lack of autonomous learning opportunities in Saudi schools, with limited access to resources beyond the textbook. To address this issue, the present study attempts to explore the potential of self-access language learning (SALL) in primary schools to enhance students' language learning environments, academic achievements, and performance in the English language, in line with the objectives of the Saudi Vision 2030. This study aims to explore the attitudes of young learners towards SALL, including the use of technology inside the school, and to explore their interactions and preferences for using resources and materials in SALL. Additionally, the study aims to examine the extent to which SALL is effective in promoting increased awareness of learning opportunities beyond the classroom. The sample for this study comprises three different groups: young learners, a teacher, and parents. For the young learners, the researcher selected seven students from one primary school from 6th grade (age 10-12 years). Qualitative data were collected through the use of students' diary sheets, the researcher's diary and semi-structured interviews with one teacher, two parents and the seven students. The study is grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory as the theoretical framework.

The results of the study suggest that the participants preferred digital materials and group work in SALL, and the teacher played a crucial role in promoting self-reliance over time. Participants showed a positive attitude towards SALL, with improved self-confidence and language proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and vocabulary. Moreover, the results have revealed that the use of digital resources and group work was deemed more effective than traditional teaching methods,

and participants reported improvement in academic achievements, proficiency, self-confidence, willingness to learn and personalities inside and outside the school. Overall, this study hopes to contribute to improving the education of young English learners in Saudi Arabia and provide theoretical and practical implications for foreign language acquisition and educational decision-makers in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Fahad Abdullah Alghamdi

Title of thesis: Exploring the effectiveness of technology-enhanced self-access language learning (SALL) amongst primary level EFL Learners in Saudi Arabia

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University.
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated.
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signature: Date: 25-09-2024

Acknowledgements

With the Name of Allah, the most compassionate, the most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, the guardian evolver, cherisher, and sustainer of all the worlds; I acknowledge His Grace and Guidance, who sent Mohammad (Peace and blessings be upon him).

I am sincerely grateful to everyone who helped me complete my thesis. My gratitude and appreciation go to my supervisor, **Prof. Vicky Wright**, for endless support, sincerity, patience, and encouragement and her valuable comments and feedback.

My extended appreciation goes to the members of the Linguistics Faculty at the University of Southampton whom I am particularly indebted to. Much appreciation goes to my dear friends in Southampton, especially those who helped me during my study; **Dr. Suhail Shafea, Dr. Ibrahim AL Zahrani, and Dr. Mohammed Aldawsary.**

My extreme appreciation goes to my family and friends in Saudi Arabia for their constant support, and prayers. Special thanks go to my sincere friends in Al-Baha, who encouraged me to complete my study. My enormous thanks go to the AL Falah school staff for their cooperation during my fieldwork. An exceptional thanks go to **Mr. Abdullah Aldabashi** and **Mr. Abdullah Hayan** for allowing me to conduct the study in the school.

I dedicate this thesis to those who are dearest to me, to my parents **Abdullah** and **Rifaa**, who taught me and laid the foundations for everything that I have been able to achieve in my life. I appreciate their prayers, support, and guidance in order to realize their dreams for me. To my **brothers and sisters** for their unconditioned encouragement and support.

I greatly appreciate and thank my beloved **wife "Fatimah"** and my dear **children; "Mayar, Morad and Muath"** for their patience and love. I would like to dedicate this thesis to the rest of the family as well.

Definitions and Abbreviations

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CPH	Critical Period Hypothesis
CRAPEL	Centre for Language Research and Applications
HRH	His Royal Highness
EFL	English as Foreign Language.
ESL	English as Second Language.
ELDP	English Language Development Project
ELVIICS	English Language Voluntary Intensive Independent Catch-up Study
iEN	Saudi dashboard for teachers and students
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
KS1	Key Stage 1 – Years R-2 – Ages 5-7
KS2	Key Stage 2 – Years 3-6 – Ages 7-11
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language.
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
MAXQDA	begins with a nod to the German sociologist Max Weber and ends with the abbreviation QDA – which stands for Qualitative Data Analysis.
MoE	Ministry of Education KSA
SAC	Self-Access Centre
SALL	Self Access Language learning: A class where the students and the researcher can practice learning English autonomously.
SPS	Scholarship Preparation School
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science.
UNCRC	Union Nation <i>Convention on the rights of the child</i>
YLS	Young Learners.
YLLs	Young Language Learners.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

“Learning a foreign language without good guidance is similar to sailing without a good map. When teachers are aware of the importance of learning styles, they can provide a good map to their students” (Zhou, 2011, p 77).

The quotation above questions whether we as teachers ever fully consider the different needs of language learners and provide adequate guidance in learning language. If they are to become independent and autonomous language learners, we need to consider how to provide them with the skills and strategies required for drawing their learning ‘map’.

This action research study investigates the impact of self-access language learning (henceforth SALL) as a type of autonomous language learning on a public primary school in Al-Baha City, Saudi Arabia and the use of technology with young language learners who are pupils in the upper levels of primary schools with age ranging from 10 to 12 years. Furthermore, it investigates the development of learner autonomy, including young learners' attitudes, motivation and beliefs when they are invited to participate in a ‘lunchtime English club’ during class-time activity sessions. The actual data was collected over a period of time between November 2018 and January 2019.

The self-access language learning (SALL) concept is closely related to the learner-centred approach, self-directed learning, and learner autonomy (Gardner & Miller, 2011; Papadima-Sophocleous, 2013). SALL promotes an approach whereby students work independently or in groups, choosing from among available resources, while the teacher's role is to facilitate the learning process. Many Saudi schools feature an English computer laboratory for English classes, but these labs often lack the necessary resources and are restricted to the topics from the textbook. Therefore, the application of the concept of SALL is untested throughout all levels of Saudi schools (see Section 1.4 below).

This chapter provides an introduction to the major concepts of the thesis. It begins by introducing the concepts of autonomy and self-access language learning (SALL) in subsection 1.2, then briefly introduces the young learners and their characteristics (1.3). Moreover, the research motivation and the problem statement are presented in subsections 1.4 and 1.5 respectively. The gap in the existing literature on SALL and young learners is discussed under the Rationale for the study in subsection 1.6. The research background is discussed in subsection 1.7. The chapter continues

with the study's objectives and research questions in subsection (1.8). The chapter ends with a presentation of the structure of the thesis introducing briefly the content of each chapter (1.9).

1.2 Autonomy and self-access language learning (SALL)

As explained above, the central focus of this study is the impact of self-access language learning (SALL) in a lunchtime English Club on young learners of English. The learners can choose to use authentic English language digital and non-digital resources suitable for their age. The researcher facilitates activities and supports the learners whether they want to work independently or in groups. Stories focusing on vocabulary acquisition are at the heart of the activities and the development of learner autonomy. These concepts may be unfamiliar to many teachers and foreign language learners. Even if the concept is familiar, implementing the idea of SALL is rare in many universities, schools and educational institutions, especially in Saudi Arabia.

The concept of autonomy has a complex definition. Benson (2006) defines the term 'autonomy' as the way in which people take more control over their lives - individually and collectively. However, in learning, autonomy is related to how learners take more control over their learning inside and outside classrooms. In contrast, autonomy in language learning refers to how people take more control over the purposes and ways of learning their target languages.

The concept of 'self-access language learning' (SALL) refers to the kind of learning that learners use inside a self-access centre (SAC) (Diaz, 2012). According to Dickinson (1987), SALL involves the use of a self-reliant environment in order to learn a language and such an environment offers an independent study programme with easily accessible materials with a kind of help which can be either by providing answer keys, counselling or using the latest technology (Klassen et al., 1998). In this regard, Sheerin (1989) stated that for self-access learning to take place effectively, it is necessary to provide self-access materials within an organised framework; in this way, learners may obtain what they need. SALL supports learners in promoting their academic achievement. Not only learners but also teachers find SALL useful in the sense that it stands as a solution for many of the problems they encounter because of the differences they find among their students. In this respect, Sheerin says,

[s]elf-access learning is the practical solution to many language teaching problems: mixed-ability classes, students with different backgrounds and needs, psychological and personality differences between students, etc. (1989, p. 7)

To have control over the way you do things, learning a language in this case, one has to depend on him- or herself to obtain the kind of knowledge he or she seeks. Thus, autonomy and SALL are interrelated in the sense that SALL encourages learners to move towards autonomy (Gardner &

Miller, 1997) as they will have an opportunity to use their own way, take responsibility and make decisions in learning a language. In this research, there will be an analysis of the role of technology 'digital resources' and 'non-digital resources' in enhancing language learning and how young learners are interested and motivated in SALL by using these resources.

1.3 Young language learners

This study focuses on the young learners of English who are pupils in the upper levels of primary schools (aged 10 – 12) in Saudi Arabia. Much research claims that it could be complicated to define the meaning of young learners and age. For example, Pinter (2015) assumes that definitions of young learners and children are extremely intricate to introduce. One of the reasons is the use of these terms within and outside the field of linguistics. Many arguments have been raised for the exact age of young learners and many terms have been used for young learners such as children, kids, and primary school pupils. Pinter (2015) explains that some scholars classified the stage of childhood into early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence or youth. Therefore, many researchers became aware of the fact that they need to determine the meaning of the term 'young learners' at the beginning of their research in order to describe the intended subjects in their study.

Although the term 'young learners' is broad in concept, a comparison of the characteristics of different age groups in language learning terms may enhance the way young learners are treated. Pinter (2006) listed a number of the characteristics of so-called younger learners and older learners in an attempt to make clear the differences between the two groups. In a more recent version of her book, Pinter (2017), she added further characteristics (see 3.2 below).

Many researchers focus on adult learners and self-access language learners while there has been little focus on young language learners and self-access. This study addresses this research gap. It maintains that a focus on L1 and L2 acquisition is essential as is the difference between adults and young learners in learning a foreign language. This and the main characteristics of young learners are discussed in Chapter 3.

1.4 Personal research motivation

I studied English as an obligatory subject in a Saudi school. During that period, we depended heavily on the teacher and the textbook; we had no opportunity to depend on ourselves or resort to different resources to improve our English performance. However, after joining the university, the use of English became indispensable for academic purposes as well as for communication

outside the campus with non-native speakers of Arabic. I attributed the reason for my and many other students' weakness in using English properly to several factors among which is the way we were taught English, depending heavily on the teacher and the textbook. After graduation, I got a job at a Saudi public school where I taught English at both primary and intermediate levels. During those days, I, as well as other English teachers, noticed that we were restricted to the use of specific textbooks, and learners relied only on what we presented to them; learners had no opportunity to use other resources including the use of technology.

I also noticed that students were willing to learn and practise English, but it might be the teaching method used by their teachers that hindered them from being proficient users of English as a foreign language. I discussed this issue with some colleagues; they indicated similar ideas. Having this issue in mind, I started to think about how to add something to the curriculum or the teaching and learning methods in order to assist students in their learning, so they may improve their performance. After I got the opportunity to do a PhD at the University of Southampton, I studied the course '*Autonomy in Language Teaching*' in 2014. Although I was a language teacher, I was unaware of the importance of that course and the application of its concepts in both teaching and learning. Then, I researched the advantages of implementing SALL in schools and universities in a range of contexts (Masdinah, 2002; Yau Hau Tse, 2012), and I decided to undertake this PhD project in an attempt to investigate the language learners' attitudes and teachers' views about employing SALL in schools.

1.5 Statement of the problem

English is considered to be a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. Recently, the demand for learning English has been high as it has become a requirement in the university and college curriculum. In addition, many organisations require some degree of proficiency in English as a prerequisite for getting a job. Although it is a compulsory subject for the school pupils in Saudi schools at intermediate levels, there is a huge demand for English in Saudi society. In response to the above demand, the policy makers made a persistent endeavour in an attempt to improve students' performance in English which led them to be engaged with the best international companies to design the English language curriculum, which is recognized by the ideal experiences in teaching the language.

In addition, the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) made some ambitious decisions in order to improve the teaching of English in Saudi schools at all levels, the primary level is no exception (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017). Despite that, there is a lack of autonomous English learning in Saudi schools and without exception at the primary level. Students and teachers follow the textbook

with little freedom to use different resources, and this leads to a gap in their learning and teaching processes. In an attempt to bridge this gap, the present study explores the effectiveness of SALL in an attempt to identify processes which will assist primary level learners to become more autonomous in learning English. It uses different learning resources in order to encourage English learning amongst this specific age group and to establish the role of technology in enhancing the teaching and learning processes.

1.6 Rationale for the study

There is a gap in the literature on SALL and young learners, especially in the Saudi context. Despite the numerous studies in the field of autonomy language learning and self-access for adult learners (Masdinah, 2002; Yau Hau Tse, 2012) and other autonomy language learning and self-access for adult learning in the Saudi context studies (Asiri & Shukri, 2020; Al Asmari, 2013), very little research has been carried out on SALL and young learners. For example, Werner and Kobayashi (2015) investigated the emerging field of self-access and metacognitive awareness in young learners, see 2.5 below. Another study was conducted by Jeon (2014), who explored young Korean EFL learners who reported positive learning experiences and increased confidence in using English at school after independently playing video games. Moreover, in the Saudi context, there is a lack of studies conducted in this area. The rare existence of self-access centres in many primary schools and the complexity of conducting studies on young learners caused the scarcity of studies on SALL and young learners. To sum up, research on young learners and SALL has not been paid enough attention.

Being able to communicate in English is a basic requirement not only for getting a good job but also for living in many countries of our present-day world. For this reason, the Saudi government has paid special attention to education at both levels: primary and higher education by investing a significant expenditure in order to develop the status of education in the Kingdom, but the quality of both teaching and learning continues to be unsatisfactory (Alkhazim, 2003).

I was a teacher at a public school in Saudi Arabia and despite the above efforts of the Saudi government; I found that many English teachers still use traditional teaching styles by giving little opportunity to primary English learners to practise in the classroom. This style of teaching is grounded in teacher-centred approaches with a lack of autonomy (Alzaidi, 2008). This affects the students' level of English and their ability to acquire more skills independently. There is also little awareness, among teachers and learners, of the use of technology to develop English (Saqlain et al., 2013). This was an additional reason for conducting this study.

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To support the investigation into the use of SALL in a primary classroom, it is important to focus on a number of additional theoretical pillars such as motivation (see [2.8](#) below), linguistic self-efficacy (see [2.10](#) below), self-confidence (see [2.11](#) below) and stakeholders' perceptions. The stakeholders in this study include teachers in the research site school, the young learners and parents as well. The implication of the results of the study will take into account their relevance to government perceptions of young learners (see [1.7.3](#) below).

1.7 Research background

The study was conducted in Al Baha province which is considered one of the smallest administrative districts in KSA. It has major cities such as Al-Baha city, the capital of Al-Baha province, Baljurashi, Al-Aqeeq, inter alia. Al-Baha is also considered one of the tourist areas due to its mountainous terrain and altitude. In the summer season, it is a destination for visitors and tourists from all over the world. Al Baha is also distinguished by its unique geographical location, close to major cities such as Makkah, Jeddah and Taif.

Al Baha was chosen to be the site of the study for several reasons. Firstly, it is the hometown of the researcher, so it was easy for him to spend more time collecting the required data and visiting the school, eliminating the need and cost of travelling to another city. Secondly, the number of students in Al Baha is conducive to the study, unlike large cities where classrooms are overcrowded with a high number of students per class. Consequently, Al Baha schools provided ample availability of classrooms and halls for the researcher to establish a SALL club.

Arabic is the official language of the Kingdom; it is one of the world's major languages spoken by more than 200 million people (Newham, 2015). The most important foreign language is English which has become one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and is commonly used in a number of domains such as higher education, business, industry, trade and healthcare (Crystal, 2003; British Council, 2013; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). English has thus come to be used as a lingua franca between people from different ethnicities and linguistic backgrounds around the world. Moreover, English is the means of communication in Saudi Arabia with all non-Arabic speakers (Habbash, 2011).

As a result, the demand for learning English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) in many countries has recently increased (Crystal, 2003; Schneider, 2011). New English programmes have been established to meet this growing demand, and many governments have instituted English instruction starting at the primary school level (Alkhuzay, 2016; Zein, 2017). Despite this interest in learning English in non-English-speaking countries, teaching English or other languages remains challenging as it requires advanced methods and suitable styles to

facilitate the learning process whether in schools, in dedicated programmes, or at home. Thus, English language has become a necessity for most people; this importance stems from the significant position it occupies. It is a global lingua franca that is extensively used in international education and the production of knowledge (Al-Jarf, 2008b; Findlow, 2006; Jenkins, 2012). Accordingly, both the government and the people of KSA acknowledge the importance of English as a source of professional growth having a substantial role in international trade since KSA is a major producer and exporter of oil to many countries (Alzahrani, 2017).

Consequently, the Ministry of Education has placed increased emphasis on the implementation of English language instruction at the elementary phase, so teaching of English has now started at Grade 1 instead of the preparatory phase (Grades 7 to 9). This decision was primarily driven by the recognition of a significant disparity between the skills that students have upon entering university and the level of English proficiency required to excel in courses that demand advanced language abilities. The increased efforts of the Ministry aim to bridge the gap between the school and the university levels and thus better prepare students for the linguistic challenges that they encounter upon university admission and is intended to be achieved by introducing English at the elementary stage rather than by adding an extra English course in the secondary stage (Alawfi, 2022; Albeshri, 2021).

1.7.1 Importance of English in KSA

The spread of English as an international language and an important means of communication to obtain work has caused Saudis to view EFL as a priority for the Saudi educational system. The influence of globalization has been a fundamental step for most Saudi citizens in perceiving the need for English as the chief communication tool for individuals in trade, travel, and business (Khan, 2011; Wedell & Alshumaimeri, 2014). Speakers' fluency in English in this particular setting is attained chiefly through education thus highlighting the need to look into the position of English in KSA in relation to the education sector.

Moreover, English is a job requirement in KSA as many employers demand a certain level of fluency in English for applicants in order to compete for a good job, and even after getting the job, employees need fluency in English for their career progress and promotion. Having the two Holy Mosques in Makkah and Medina, many non-Arabic-speaking Muslims from different parts of the world come to visit these two holy sites in the region; they use English for communication (Alfahadi, 2012). Another importance is that KSA invites large numbers of non-Saudis who come from different countries to work and find better job opportunities in both sectors: public and private, for example in hospitals, schools, universities, etc. For many of these non-Saudis, English

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is the only medium of communication (Mortished, 2003). This makes the idea of learning English or being fluent in English very important for Saudi people because it enables them to communicate with other nations, especially for students when they go abroad to pursue their higher studies, and for Saudi people in general when communicating with the large, imported workforce into the Kingdom.

1.7.2 Background of the school education system in KSA

This study takes place within a public school in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is essential to highlight the school education system in KSA, which might be similar or different from other educational systems in the world. Moreover, the clarification of the age of each class is important in order to show the rationale for selecting young learners.

In KSA, all Saudi people have free access to public education throughout their 12 years of schooling. In this education system, there are three stages: the elementary stage which encompasses the first six years, the intermediate stage (also called preparatory) which lasts for three years, and the secondary stage for the last three years. When passing the first year of the secondary stage, students have to choose, according to their wish, between the 'natural science' stream and the 'arts' stream for the remaining two years (Alrashidi & Phan, 2005). Based on their choice of either stream or achievement, students will be admitted to the subsequent college at the university level. In these schools, teachers, who are Saudis, must have a bachelor's degree as a minimum qualification in the specific discipline with no experience requirement.

As mentioned above, the approximate ages of the students in the elementary or primary stage, which consists of six stages, start from six or seven and go to 11, or 12 years old. The reception year is not offered by public education schools and is only offered by some private schools. The first level is Year 1 (aged 6 or 7), the second level is Year 2 with ages (7 or 8 years old) and the third level is Year 3 with ages 8 or 9 years old. Then, the students move to the upper primary level Year 4 with ages 9 or 10 years old, Year 5 with ages 10 or 11 years old and the final stage of the primary level is Year 6 with ages 11 or 12 years old. This study focuses on young learners in the final stage of the primary level Year 6 (aged 11, 12). Then, the students go up to the intermediate stages which is composed of three levels with ages 13 to 15 years old, while the secondary stages consist of three levels from 16 to 18 years old. The stages and the ages of the children will differ from one country to another. Therefore, it is important to clarify the levels of the students and the ages for each level.

As far as the education sector in KSA is concerned, schools are divided into two groups: public schools and private schools. In public schools, English as a foreign language is taught as an

obligatory subject aiming to achieve several objectives such as acquisition of the basic language skills, development of necessary linguistic skills for different vocations, improving students' knowledge in relation to the importance of English as an international language, understanding and respecting other cultures, and providing students with an opportunity to play a role in transferring scientific and technological advances from other countries into Saudi Arabia (Al-Zayid, 2012). Similar aims for teaching English are made by the private schools. However, private schools differ in that they implement English as a medium of teaching instead of Arabic and offer extracurricular lessons in English (Alamri, 2008). They employ qualified teachers from overseas or the best-qualified Saudi teachers who are thought to provide quality education (Almokhtasar, 2012). Therefore, they provide students with better access to the language. Teachers in this sector are well-trained and undergo regular evaluations; their progress is reported to the Board of Trustees. So, in order to keep their jobs secure, they have to work hard at a high standard (ibid).

1.7.3 Impact of government policy on English language teaching

The Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) has stated the general objectives of teaching English in Saudi primary schools. These objectives have been taken into account by King Abdullah Public Education Development Project "Tatweer" (meaning development) which was responsible for developing education curricula in Saudi Arabia. The English Language Development Project (ELDP) (2014) stated the main points of the objectives of teaching English in primary schools:

1. Learn the basics of the English language that would form the foundation for its mastery in the future.
2. Use the basic structures of English sentences.
3. Learn the core vocabulary assigned for this stage.
4. Listen to and understand simple English.
5. Express themselves orally using simple English.
6. Read and understand simple written English materials.
7. Write simple guided sentences in English.
8. Develop an awareness of the importance of the English language as an international means of communication in order to be able to introduce Islam, the Islamic nation's culture and the cultural achievements of Muslims to other nations.
9. Develop an awareness of the importance of the English language as an international means of communication in order to benefit from the achievements of other cultures in accordance with the precepts of Islam.

(Ministry of Education, KSA, 2019)

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The English Language Development Project (ELDP) in KSA states the curricular goals which the learners need to achieve in learning English as a foreign language:

Goal 1: explain the tenets of Islam with a vision to promote international understanding and tolerance.

Goal 2: advocate and participate in spreading Islam.

Goal 3: promote mutual cultural understanding and respect among nations.

Goal 4: enhance their cognitive and problem-solving skills. Thus, leading to academic and professional advancement.

Goal 5: develop an awareness of the significance of English as a means of international communication.

Goal 6: develop a positive attitude towards learning the English language.

(ELDP, 2014)

All the above goals may be considered universal goals amongst countries where English is a second or foreign language apart from the first and second goals. Goals 1 and 2 are primarily aimed at preserving and portraying religious culture. On the other hand, goals 3 through 6 focus on the development of the personal, cognitive and skill aspects of the English language learner as well as the promotion of positive behaviour towards the language. This, in turn, could be said to be an indication of language learning motivation (see 2.7 below).

Although the Saudi government was not reluctant to introduce teaching English and other foreign languages to Saudi society (Alharbi, 2015), there were many voices against teaching English at all levels of the education system. Based on many studies stating that learning a second language (L2) could affect the acquisition of the first language (L1), many Saudis rejected the idea of teaching English in primary school. That was why English was taught only in intermediate and secondary school for a long time. As a result, most Saudis started learning English at age 13, a late age to acquire an L2 compared with EFL instruction in other countries (Alharbi, 2015).

In spite of the above facts, English has become a popular spoken language in Saudi Arabia. Globalization, technology, and other factors have caused English to become more welcomed in schools and used in some sectors, especially with foreigners who do not speak Arabic as an L1 (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

English is widely spoken in many different fields and services, such as hospitals, higher education, and industry. As mentioned above, EFL was initially taught only in Saudi schools in intermediate and secondary schools for a total of six years (three years for each level) before university. It has since been added to the Primary 6 level to prepare pupils for the intermediate stage and more recently the government has decided that English should be taught from an early age in schools

(fourth level of primary school), an important decision since Saudi students often fail to meet the English proficiency requirements in higher education as stated above.

Public schools have been criticised for the fact that the majority of the students leave schools with poor English competencies (Alsaif, 2011). The reason for such low levels is attributed to the quality of the teachers' linguistic background and their teaching approaches, as well as the time allotted to the English language in the curriculum, according to Rabab'ah (2005) and Al-Jarf (2008a). Studies conducted by Syed (2003) and Al-Sughayer (2009) have also concluded that the English level of the students is unsatisfactory, and it needs improvement. They attributed such low levels to the poor quality of teaching and learning that teachers receive during their undergraduate programmes in which they are supposed to be trained and prepared to become EFL teachers, qualified to teach English in public schools. Similar conclusions were drawn by Elyas and Al Grigri (2014) who indicated that teachers lack proper training and suitable teaching methods. On the other hand, Khankar (2001) conducted a study in a Saudi context and found that students did not encounter problems with the methods teachers were using. EFL teachers lack the use of a variety of methods to teach English inside the classroom. Based on these studies, the problem of low levels of proficiency is circular, like a chain: students come to the university with a low level of English which, in turn, affects their progress and achievement in university so they graduate with a poor English level and again they go back to schools as teachers producing poor English students.

Disassembling and improving the links in the chain in a way can strengthen them and be the path to improving the students' poor level of English. This study, which investigates the impact of using self-access language learning on primary EFL learners in Saudi Arabia, may serve to inform the improvement of the outcomes of the public schools in the area of English proficiency since it aims to look at a new approach to improving proficiency.

Most Saudi schools provide access to online applications and new technology to assist English teachers. As such, technology gives teachers more options to change the traditional methods of teaching that were dominant in the past. Teachers can use the most appropriate materials and activities for lessons in addition to the required textbooks. Although English textbooks in Saudi Arabia are well-designed, there remain few options for learning English outside the classroom (Alharbi, 2015). Based on the researcher's personal experience as a primary school English teacher, young learners are very motivated to acquire English, but certain issues could hamper their motivation, such as the focus being solely on the textbook. Despite the availability of resources and affordable learning technology, the learning style in class depends on the teacher and the textbook (Alharbi, 2015; Sofi, 2015).

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According to Al-Shumaimeri (2003), “Teachers have pointed out that students leave the secondary stage without the ability to carry out a short conversation” (p. x). Students’ weakness can be attributed to a number of factors such as motivation which is one of the most important psycholinguistic factors in learning any second or foreign language. Moskovsky and Alrabai (2018) explain that in the L2 acquisition literature, “the big role that motivation plays in the attainment of non-primary languages is practically unanimously acknowledged” (p. 90). It is thus difficult to teach students a language when they or their parents do not believe that they need to learn that language.

Some students who study English as a required course in school only aim to pass the exams, as most jobs in Saudi Arabia do not require experience in English and most textbooks and curricula are in Arabic. As a result, a lack of motivation and determination was noticeable in the students’ performance to be good learners of English (Ahmed, 2015). In addition, a great number of learners think that English is an obstacle to their learning of Arabic and basic concepts of the religion (Al-Seghayer, 2011).

One factor that may have led to a negative perception of English in Saudi society is the anxiety associated with learning EFL. Most students’ first experience with the language is in school, but some teachers are not sufficiently trained or experienced to adequately teach English. Initial poor experiences can lead students to avoid interacting during the learning process. Learners have different kinds of anxiety such as communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation anxiety or exam anxiety; in most cases, it has a negative impact on the learning process (Al-Saidat et al., 2023; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Moreover, Burden (2004) believed that anxious students take negatively into consideration the impressions that teachers and other students will have about them. However, anxiety is not always negative; the exaggeration of anxiety and total ignorance of anxiety are dangerous states in relation to academic accomplishment that may hinder the process of learning a second language (Brown, 2000). The tension that students feel when practising the language in the early learning stages can hamper their progress later. Only properly trained teachers should be employed in the early levels, and they should avoid putting too much pressure on the students initially. Flexibility and tolerance should be present in the learning process. Students need teachers to support and be patient with their learning progress (Burden, 2004).

1.7.3.1 Learning English in light of Vision 2030

His Royal Highness (HRH) Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz is the deputy Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia initiated ‘The Saudi Vision of 2030’. The vision comprises many important aspects such as the establishment of a prominent educational system. It states,

We will continue investing in education and training so that our young men and women are equipped for the jobs of the future. We want Saudi children, wherever they live, to enjoy higher quality, multi-faceted education. We will invest particularly in developing early childhood education, refining our national curriculum and training our teachers and educational leaders. We will also redouble efforts to ensure that the outcomes of our education system are in line with market needs (Vision 2030, p. 36).

Vision 2030 aims to find common grounds in order to establish an association between Saudi Arabia and other countries in different fields including education. The vision links the improvement of the educational atmosphere in government schools to the development of English language teaching (Al-Zahrani & Rajab, 2017). According to the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE), key needs for educational development in the light of Saudi Vision 2030 are:

- Developing the Philosophy, Policy, and Goals of Curricula, Means of Development, Mechanism Activation, and connecting all these means with the programs of Teacher Preparation and their professional development.
- Developing such teaching methods, that focus on the learner not on the teacher, and concentrate on inculcating skills, personality development, improving confidence, and promoting the spirit of creativity.
- Developing an Attractive, Preferred, and Simulant school environment, connecting it with supportive and integrated services systems.
- Providing pre-primary education opportunities and expanding it, providing kindergartens, and activating its link with the education system.

(Ministry of Education, KSA, 2019)

These points focus on the transformation of the teaching methods in Saudi schools by supporting the learners to be independent in the classroom and encouraging autonomous learning by developing the school environment to be attractive for the learners. As far as English language learning is concerned, in order to be consistent with the vision of 2030 in reaching a high-quality and multi-faceted education, it is essential to have an in-depth understanding for developing the essence and the fundamentals of English language teaching. Moreover, the national curriculum will undergo certain restructuring to be in line with achieving the objectives of the Saudi Vision of 2030 (Al-Maimooni, 2016).

Al-Zahrani and Rajab (2017) investigated the attitudes and perceptions of Saudi EFL teachers at public schools in implementing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's vision of 2030. One thousand (550 females and 450 males) government school EFL teachers participated in the study. Among the

questions they investigated is “What are the successful methods that should be activated and practiced in teaching English as per the views of EFL teachers at public schools in line with achieving the Saudi vision of 2030?” (p. 86). To improve the level of English language teaching, according to the results of the analysis, teaching the English language should begin at an earlier stage, English should be made the second official language in the Kingdom, and there should be a kind of communication between English language teachers around the world.

The present study aims to investigate the role of autonomous language learning represented by self-access language learning in primary schools as a resource for learning with an attempt to improve students’ language learning environment that leads to better academic achievements and performance in the English language, thus a kind of high-quality education that goes in line with the objectives of the vision of 2030.

1.7.4 Research context

At the beginning of the study, background information on the participants and the teaching approach and materials used in the primary school in this study was collected. Preliminary data collection is a part of exploratory research in which the researcher can gather more data about the research site, the nature of the participants and the materials that are given to the subjects of the study, especially if there are few studies related to the researcher’s study. Winchester et al. (2017) clarify the importance of preliminary data collection which provides evidence for the feasibility of the research and helps to design the larger and main data. Also, it helps the researchers to know the amount of data required and helps them to plan the main project in the right way.

In this study, preliminary data collection is allocated before the main data collection. The participants of the study were teachers and parents in order to investigate how children learn English at school and their homes. After that, the results of the preliminary data shaped the design of the main data collection in which students were also included. The following section clearly explains the aims and the benefits of conducting the preliminary data collection.

The lack of autonomous learning approaches and limited potential for self-access in the Saudi school context and the few studies related to young learners and SALL made it necessary to make extra efforts to investigate the appropriate materials and instruments to be used for young learners. The researcher decided to investigate and explore the possible materials and resources in the school, the methods of teaching English, the time of speech and activities inside the classroom, the resources that young learners use at home to learn English, and the materials and the role of parents in encouraging their children to learn the language.

The main objectives of the preliminary data collection were to establish how self-access language learning might contribute to the learning of English amongst young learners; the current pedagogy and approaches to teaching language to young learners; and the beliefs that teachers and parents have about learning English.

The study started in August 2017 after ethics approval via the University's Ethics and Research Governance Online (ERGO) had been obtained. The participants were asked to fill in a short questionnaire followed by a short interview. The preliminary data collection was carried out in Southampton, UK whereas the interviewers were based in Saudi Arabia.

The participants were approached through an email to fill out the questionnaire and on Skype for an interview because these types of communications are the most popular online communication and the easiest ways to collect the data between the researcher and the participants. The participants are five male Saudi English language teachers at the primary level in Saudi schools and five parents who have children at the primary level. It was important to focus on the Saudi participants in the preliminary data study in order to investigate their opinions towards English language learning and the impact of self-access in Saudi schools.

The teachers were English-language-teacher colleagues who studied together and specialized in the English department for the bachelor's degree at Al Baha University and they were teaching English in different schools in Saudi Arabia. However, the parents were Saudis and selected by the teachers taking into consideration that they must read and sign the consent form if they agree to participate. The participants were informed that the interview would be recorded for research purposes, and it was their decision whether to take part or not and that if they agreed to participate, they would be allowed to withdraw at any time when they wanted. It was confirmed to the teacher and parents that their responses help their children at home or the students in the class in learning English in the future.

The total number of the participants in the preliminary data was 10 people; five were English language teachers who teach the primary levels in Saudi schools; and the other five were the parents who have children in Primary school. The researcher used one questionnaire for teachers and parents, but it was divided into two sections; the first section was filled out by the English teachers while the other was filled out by the parents (See appendix A).

Then, it was followed by interviews with teachers and parents to have ideas and background information about the students' levels in the classroom, the challenges that teachers may face while teaching children, their awareness of the terms 'autonomy' and 'self-access', and to what extent they may get the students to learn English autonomously. Accordingly, the researcher can

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simply prepare a suitable atmosphere for the participants in order to cope with the following phase, the implementation phase, and reduce obstacles that may cause bias in the research (See Appendix B and C).

In conclusion, the responses were encouraging for the researcher to go forward and take the idea of carrying out the study and that was because of the great compatibility between the opinions of the parents as they emphasised the importance of teaching English to their children, changing the traditional teaching methods, and taking advantages of the activity classes to do self-access language learning while providing the suitable resources and activities that encourage the students to learn and interact with English language.

The primary objectives of this preliminary data collection were twofold. Firstly, it aimed to determine the most suitable data collection tools for working with young participants. Secondly, it sought to assess the feasibility of conducting the study by estimating the willingness of teachers to participate and parents to allow their children to participate. Furthermore, this preliminary data collection yielded valuable insights from both parents and teachers on different aspects. It aimed to investigate whether children used English at home and engaged in self-directed learning. In addition, it explored the effectiveness of teachers' instructional approaches in fostering students' autonomy and examined the prevalence of traditional teaching methods. Moreover, the extent to which teachers incorporated technological devices into their teaching practices was explored. These insights played an important role in shaping the subsequent stage of the study.

1.8 Objectives and research questions

The aim of this research is to explore the young learners' attitudes towards SALL including the use of technology inside the school, and to explore the young learners' interactions and preference for using resources and materials in SALL whether these resources are digital or non-digital. Furthermore, the study investigates the degree to which SALL succeeds, or otherwise, in promoting self-access / increased awareness of learning opportunities outside the classroom. To achieve the above objectives, this study posits a number of research questions which address the problem stated in the above section (1.5).

RQ 1 How do young language learners use SALL in terms of:

- a- use of learning materials and resources (digital/non-digital),
- b- patterns of work (group work or individual work), and
- c- independent learning?

RQ 2 What is the impact of SALL on young learners in terms of:

- a- motivation and attitudes,
- b- perception of proficiency,
- c- perception of SALL compared to the formal language classroom,
- d- reported self-confidence, and
- e- self-efficacy?

RQ 3 What are the stakeholders' perceptions of the SALL approach to language learning?

The first research question yielded information about the way learners utilise the learning resources in SALL as well as the reasons for choosing or preferring some resources to other resources. Also, the way of using these resources whether by a group or preferred to use them alone and the case of being independent in the SALL or dependent. In order to gather this kind of data, the researcher relied on the researcher's diary and young learners' sheets.

The second research question seeks information about the use of SALL by young learners and their attitudes towards learning English through the involvement of technology inside the SALL. Such kind of information helped the researcher find out the degree to which technology is useful when involved in teaching English as a foreign language which was based on learners' positive and negative attitudes. These attitudes and views of learners were obtained through the interviews that were conducted with them.

The third research question is an important one as it investigates stakeholders' perceptions of SALL in learning and teaching processes. It was used to gather information about the role and usefulness of SALL in developing learners' academic achievements in English language subjects (i.e., inside the school), and promoting their linguistic abilities when using English as a foreign language outside the school. Diary sheets and interviews with the teacher, learners and parents were used to collect such data.

1.9 Structure of the thesis

This chapter has given brief explanations of the theoretical concepts of the study, followed by a statement of the problems, rationale for the study, research background, objectives, and research questions of the project. Chapter 2 sheds light on the fundamental area of the study which is the self-access and the autonomy learning of English and the role of technology in enhancing learning English as a foreign language inside self-access centres. Chapter 3 begins by discussing the characteristics of young learners and the field of language acquisition for young learners compared to adult learners. The methodology of the study is presented in Chapter 4, which is divided into a number of subsections including research paradigms, data collection, research

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instruments and procedures, and data analysis. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study, whereas the discussion of the findings is presented in Chapter 6. The final chapter (Chapter 7) is the conclusion which includes an overview of the major findings, a discussion of the study questions in the light of the findings, the contribution of the study and provides some recommendations for different parties.

Chapter 2 Language Learning Autonomy and SALL

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews one element of the research framework which underpins this study, namely, language learning autonomy and SALL. The chapter provides a general background on autonomy in education and its characteristics, then a discussion of the relationship between language learner autonomy and SALL. Selected studies conducted on self-access are presented in subsection 2.5. What may be increased while learning at SALL is discussed in subsections 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9, referring to strategies, motivation, and agency and autonomy, respectively. Moreover, self-efficacy and self-confidence are discussed in subsections 2.10 and 2.11, respectively. Then the discussion moves to the theoretical approach to autonomy and young learners who are the subject of the present study; this focuses mainly on the socio-cultural theory and is discussed in subsection 2.12.

2.2 Background on 'autonomy' in education

The term autonomy was first used in education in Europe stemming from social progress and growing regarding the quality of life in the early 1960s. It then entered the language teaching field through the Council of Europe's Modern Language Project in the early 1970s. The Centre for Language Research and Applications (CRAPEL) was the first centre to focus on research in this field (Benson, 2011).

Although the concept of autonomy has spread across Europe and other countries around the world, it is still unfamiliar or seems to be neglected in the Saudi educational system, which is primarily a teacher-centred one, especially in schools. Saudi teachers are responsible for teaching and preparing activities in the classroom, while students are often passive audience. Alzaidi (2008) described the Saudi educational system as lacking autonomy from the higher position in the school to the teachers. Therefore, teachers are required to encourage autonomy and individualism in some classes to make students more confident, breaking the routine of teachers being dominant.

2.3 The concept of autonomy in language learning and its characteristics

Autonomy in learning can be achieved through the use of a self-access centre (SAC) where modes of foreign language learning, such as self-instruction and/or self-direction are implemented (Diaz, 2012). A number of scholars have pointed out the characteristics of autonomy by defining the term 'autonomy'. First, in Longman Dictionary (2005) the term 'autonomy' is defined as "the quality of state of being self-governing; the right of self-government; self-directing freedom and especially moral independence". A general definition of the term was provided by Little (2003) who says,

capacity or behaviour; whether it is characterised by learner responsibility or learner control; whether it is a psychological phenomenon with political implications or a political right with psychological implications; and whether the development of learner autonomy depends on complementary teacher autonomy. (p. X)

Whereas, as a pedagogical matter, Candy (1988, p. 75) states that "adults demonstrably learn more, and more effectively, when they are consulted about dimensions such as the pace, sequence, mode of instruction and even the content of what they are studying". Autonomy implies taking responsibility for one's own way of doing things including learning a language. In this regard, Holec (1981) states that autonomy means,

to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e., determining the objectives; defining the contents and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition; properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc); evaluating what has been acquired. (Holec, 1981, p. 3)

Achieving autonomy, according to Sionis (1990), is a process which is, to a degree, a complex one as it requires us to identify our needs, self-determine our goals, select the most appropriate method, and self-evaluation technique. Moreover, Boud (1988) remarks that "[t]he main characteristic of autonomy as an approach to learning is that students take some significant responsibility of their own learning over and above responding to instruction" (p. 23). Whereas Cotterall (2003) maintains that in a number of learning environments, opportunities are provided for "the learners to assume control of some of the decisions surrounding their learning" (p. 1). For more on the definition of the term 'autonomy', see section 1.2 above.

Researchers have tried to spot what contributes to autonomous learning in a way to identify the factors that play significant roles in the development of learning autonomy whether positive or negative roles. For example, Lien (2022) examined teachers' and learners' perspectives on learner

autonomy in EFL classes in Vietnam. The study included 20 EFL teachers and 100 students from five institutions. The results of the study revealed that teachers have a good understanding of the importance of learner autonomy, whereas the students were not sufficiently aware of their self-controlled learning tasks. However, students have a willingness to be involved in virtual learning which was indicated by their knowledge of used technological platforms and their ability to continue and control their learning process. Similarly, Meenambal and Meenakshi (2022) investigated the teachers' perspectives on how to effectively promote and support student independent learning in their classroom. The authors collected data from 50 EFL teachers. The results of the study indicated that learner autonomy is negatively influenced by the norms of the institution and the lack of teaching strategies. They concluded that the role of the EFL teachers in autonomous learning is an important one in that they can prepare the students for independent learning to be aware of the concept of learner autonomy and the best practices required for being autonomous learners. In addition to being a source of information, the teacher should play the role of the manager, resource and counsellor.

Moreover, as far as teachers' role in promoting autonomous learning atmosphere is concerned, Oga-Baldwin (2020) investigated the role played by teachers in developing students' autonomy whether they support or impede autonomous learning, and the impact of the teacher's role on students' attendance and achievement. Analysing the responses of 250 Japanese students, the results showed a positive relationship between the autonomy-supportive teachers and the attendance and achievement of the students. However, when students perceive their teacher as intrusive, their achievement is negatively predicted. In other words, the teacher's role of being supportive or intrusive had an impact on students' attendance and achievement which revealed that teaching styles that support autonomy promote students' attendance and achievement.

The way students view autonomy in language learning is vital in evaluating what positively contributes to the issue of autonomous learning. In this regard, Qi (2022) studied the attitudes of 80 Chinese learners of EFL towards autonomy in language learning and the comments of 40 EFL teachers. The author made the survey using a questionnaire and reflective self-reports of four of the students. The results revealed that Chinese EFL learners are "ideologically ready but behaviourally not for autonomy in language learning" (p. 53) in that they do not view the teacher as an authority figure but in practice they do; they know that they should pay attention to accuracy but their performance indicates their fear of losing face or being ridiculed; finally they have the desire to be engaged in group work but they acknowledge that when speaking English they feel that their real self is threatened.

2.4 The contextualization and characteristics of SALL

A few years ago, the use of language resource centres drew the attention of many researchers and foreign language learners around the world. The first SALL centre was applied at CRAPEL (Riley & Zoppis, 1985) and the University of Cambridge (Harding-Esch, 1982, as cited in Riihimaki, 2013). The majority of universities and language learning institutions offer various resources, such as books, magazines, teachers, and CDs, to improve EFL learners' language performance and provide adequate opportunities to practice the language. The term 'self-access' refers to making available learning materials and equipment that can be accessed by the students without the need to have a teacher. It is the responsibility of the organisation to provide such a facility. According to Sturtridge (1992, p. 4), it is a "system which makes materials available to language learners so that they can choose to work as they wish, usually without a teacher or with very limited teacher support". For more discussions of what SALL is and how useful its application is, see 1.2 above.

To employ SALL, some of its characteristics should be taken into consideration, such as the access it provides to rich resources (Gardner & Miller, 1999; Little, 2003). Another important characteristic of SALL is technology, which can play an important role in supporting learners by giving access to language help in a variety of forms independent of time. SALL can also help keep interest going by providing a comfortable learning environment, such as a sufficiently large room, nice decorations, and resources allowing students to choose their preferences in SALL.

Self-access developed and became more popular because of technological innovations in the 1990s. Many self-access centres were established to provide access to learning resources and encourage communication. Nowadays, the impact of technology development is clearly noticeable in the widespread access to online resources and social activities (Benson, 2011). Zhao (2007) emphasises that "the effectiveness of a technology is in reality assessing the effectiveness of its uses rather than the technology itself" (p. X).

In the field of self-access learning, assessment is seen as one of the main issues (Gardner & Miller, 1997; Reinders & Lazarou, 2007) for its being difficult to control. Furthermore, there is an absence of practical research and standard criteria to help teachers or students assess their improvement. Reinders and Lazarou (2007) investigated the current approaches to assessment in SALL in 46 centres in five countries (Germany, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Spain, and Switzerland). The researchers visited and interviewed the centre managers by using a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) of each centre. The purpose of the extensive interview was to identify the types of assessment practices in each centre. Surprisingly, more than half of all centres conducted no form of assessment at all (24 out of 46, or 52%). Managers indicated that

there is a need for assessment; it is affected by students' conditions including shortage of time and the heavy duties of the staff. In addition to this, assessment is affected by the fact that students are not being advised through regular meetings in the centres. The findings of the study indicated that there are several assessment procedures including, self-assessment, collaborative assessment with an advisor, external examinations and tests, teacher assessment, advisor assessment, peer evaluation, and assessment through a panel.

2.5 Self-access studies

Several researchers have carried out research in an attempt to explore the degree to which self-access programmes are effective in promoting students' language competence. For instance, Cheng and Lin (2010) investigated students' perceptions of doing outside reading and self-access counselling. The participants were 350 students from a university in Taiwan. Data were collected by having students assigned to self-read several articles after class and then receive an assessment test. Four assessment tests were conducted during the year. After finishing the final assessment, they completed a survey. The findings showed that most students were not being confident with language forms, they asked for more instructions and were confused in many parts of the reading process. Participants believed that if they received help from teachers and clearer instructions and guidance for their reading, they would perform better.

Similarly, Papadima-Sophocleous (2013) investigated the effectiveness of an English Language Voluntary Intensive Independent Catch-up Study (ELVIICS), SALL programme, in assisting first-year Greek-Cypriot students in achieving the required language proficiency level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The participants were 21 students learning English at Cyprus University of Technology in the Republic of Cyprus. The results of the study showed that the participants' proficiency level was improved, and they achieved the required level of CEFR. Moreover, the results revealed that ELVIICS was significant in improving students' self-confidence as well as completing their compulsory course successfully. Another study that explored the students' perceptions and experiences within SALL was conducted by Diaz (2012). In order to do so, the author interviewed 21 students learning English at the Language Centre-Veracruz at the University of Veracruz, Mexico. Based on the findings of the study, the author concluded that the autonomous mode of learning/teaching of EFL is suitable to the educational system in general and the University of Veracruz in particular, whereas SALL and critical thinking, no-class courses, practise an obvious control and surveillance over the students rather than promoting autonomy. Based on the findings of the above studies on self-access, there is no doubt about the usefulness of such programmes in promoting students' language competence, but it is the responsibility of

the organisation to design their programmes in line with the needs of their students in order to achieve the expected outcomes.

As for young learners and self-access, the studies related to children and self-access are not sufficient to enrich this particular field, see section 1.6 above. However, the researcher came across a study on Japanese young learners of English conducted by Werner and Kobayashi (2015). It investigates the emerging field of self-access and metacognitive awareness in young learners. The authors investigate how young learners engage in self-access activities including playing online digital games with other players, watching TV/films, and reading different texts. The study also focuses on elementary English instruction in Japan, providing valuable insights into how students in a Japanese sixth-grade English class discuss their motivation to learn English outside the classroom, their approach to accessing metacognitive knowledge, and the different strategies they employ to improve their learning experience. The results of the study indicated that young learners had a clear understanding of their learning processes and were able to articulate aspects of their metacognitive and cognitive awareness. The authors concluded that successful learners are likely to develop most of their language skills through self-access, using strategies that have been found effective inside the classroom.

2.6 The relationship between autonomy and SALL

Many researchers have assumed that SALL is one type of promoting autonomous learning since the learners learn independently. This concept facilitated self-directed language learning in the past as SALL centre was a place where learners discover different things. Mynard and Shelton-Strong (2022) studied how Self-Access Language Learning (SALL) can be viewed as an autonomy-supportive learning environment. The authors provided a general review of how students' psychological needs can be supported by intervening and guiding in language learning, structured awareness raising, conversation lounges and student-led learning communities. Moreover, they provided a summary of how these activities and affordances can be encouraging for autonomous motivation and increased well-being when learners get themselves involved in such activities. The type of activities performed inside the classroom may play a role in students' feelings of being independent learners. Yarwood et al. (2019) investigated the role of targeted discussion topics in assisting students to feel that they are supported in their autonomous use of English within the context of self-access learning centres. They collected data through a survey and focus group interviews. The findings of the study showed that the discussion-based classroom intervention promoted students' feelings of competence which when joined with assistance from peers helped and motivated students to increase their use of English within the context of the centre. The

authors concluded that discussing topics in groups related to students' language learning can support their need for autonomy, relatedness and proficiency.

Benson (2011) stated that SALL centres have been proliferated to the extent that SALL is often treated as a synonym for self-directed or autonomous learning in recent years. However, in many institutions, self-access centres (SACs) have been established without any strong pedagogical rationale and it is often assumed, without any strong justification, that self-access work will automatically lead to autonomy (Benson, 2011). The idea that self-access work will automatically lead to autonomy was suggested by Reinders and Lázaro (2007). They mentioned that self-access resource centres helped learners improve their language and that most such centres aimed to improve users' learning skills and develop autonomy. They supported their point of view by the following quotation:

Self-access resource centres are the most typical means by which institutions have attempted to implement notions of autonomy and independence over the last twenty years to the extent that 'self-access language learning' is now often used as a synonym for 'autonomous language learning'. (Benson & Voller, as cited in Reinders & Lázaro, 2007)

There are some useful definitions in the literature for the concept of autonomy and the relationship between autonomy and SALL, which is part of autonomy. One definition of autonomy in Sheerin's (1989) work was that "autonomy is a state which most learners need preparation for, and which is the proper end-product of any successful course". Dickinson (1987) clarified the five characteristics of autonomous learners, including that they are able to identify what has been taught, formulate their own learning objectives, select and implement appropriate learning strategies, and monitor their own use of learning strategies. They identify strategies that are not working for them or are not appropriate and use others, resulting in a relatively rich repertoire of strategies.

According to Gardner and Miller (2011), self-access centres around the world are sometimes viewed as 'cheap alternatives to teaching'. They assumed that it is important to help learners be more autonomous. Through these explanations mentioned above, it can be clearly noticed that the purpose of self-access centres is to support language learners and push the teaching method in schools to become student-centred instead of teacher-centred.

Luu Trong (2011) investigated learners' autonomy in acquiring vocabulary, which is, according to the author, linked to the four basic skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Therefore, his research examined how the students at the University of Finance-Marketing learned vocabulary autonomously. Three questions were designed to guide his research; '1) what are the attitudes of first-year students at the University of Finance-Marketing towards autonomy in vocabulary

learning? 2) What strategies are employed by those students in enriching vocabulary autonomously? 3) What strategies are frequently used by the teachers in order to nurture learner autonomy in learning vocabulary for first-year students at the University of Finance-Marketing?' The participants were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of 140 first-year full-time students from four pre-intermediate general English classes at the University of Finance-Marketing, whereas the second group consisted of 13 teachers. The data were collected through survey questionnaires sent to students and teachers and depicted learners' attitudes towards vocabulary learning autonomy as well as the strategies they used to learn vocabulary. Luu Trong's study can be useful to my research because it mainly focused on vocabulary acquisition, self-learning vocabulary, and learner autonomy. The following subsections (2.7 to 2.11) discuss the roles of four variables: strategies, motivation, agency, self-efficacy, and self-confidence in relation to language learning autonomy and SALL, respectively.

2.7 Language learning strategies

The study of language learning strategies (LLSs, henceforth) has garnered significant attention from researchers over the last five decades. However, there has been a notable gap in the investigation of LLSs among learners (Vićević Ivanović et al., 2021).

In language acquisition, a learning strategy is defined as a conscious mental activity encompassing a goal or intention, an action to accomplish the goal, and a learning activity (Cohen, 2007). As for language learning, the term 'strategy' is related to the specific behavioural modifications that learners undertake to improve their language performance and learning process (Naiman et al., 1978, cited in Tiing et al., 2021). According to Cohen (2011), language learning strategies are those "thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalized by language learners, to assist them carrying out a multiplicity of tasks from the very outset of learning to the most advanced levels of target language performance" (p. 7). Griffiths (2015) used the term to refer to activities that learners deliberately or unconsciously adopt to facilitate language learning and management. Similarly, Chang and Liu (2013) contended that learning strategies encompass learners' steps to achieve their learning objectives. Strategic learners can choose suitable learning methods that go in line with their learning choices and task requirements. LLSs have attracted the attention of researchers. Several studies were conducted on LLS choice among learners at different levels (e.g., Chang & Liu, 2013; Rose, 2012; Rose et al., 2018; Tiing et al., 2021; Vićević Ivanović et al., 2021).

Rose (2012), for example, explored the Japanese language learning process among 12 learners of Japanese at a university in Tokyo. The author aimed to investigate the strategic learning of kanji (the Japanese written characters), particularly emphasising understanding the learners' cognitive

processes and self-regulatory mechanisms. The author used a questionnaire and interviews to collect data. The study revealed that the criticism of LLSs research has significant implications for the contemporary study of strategic learning, including that researchers must develop a context-specific framework to ensure a comprehensive examination of the learning process; the traditional questionnaires employed in strategy research showed notable limitations for which modern research should find alternative tools of data collection such as interviews and stimulated recall tasks. Finally, it is necessary for researchers not to over-generalise their findings beyond the specific boundaries of their research. The self-access and self-directed learning field provides an ideal context to explore these concepts further.

Rose et al. (2018) employed a systematic review methodology to examine 24 fundamental studies conducted between 2010 and 2016, aiming to assess the existing state of strategic learning research within a framework that acknowledges the importance of self-regulation. The results of the review indicate that strategy research mainly relies on quantitative data collection methods and uncovers a range of context-specific qualitative approaches that produce valuable insights. The results of the study also identify several innovative methodologies that have significantly enhanced LLSs research in recent years. The authors concluded that despite identifying that many LLSs studies were either dismissive or oblivious to self-regulation, several exemplary studies can serve as models for future research activities aiming at theory-building in the field of LLSs.

Vićević Ivanović et al. (2021) investigated the influence of second language intensive exposure on LLS in young children in Croatia. Data was collected using a structured interview tool at two different time points. There were 35 participants (19 girls and 16 boys) aged 5 to 7 years. The results of the study revealed that the participants indicated a preference for memory-based learning strategies, including listening to the interlocutor, model repetition and autonomous repetition. Moreover, it is revealed that learners use informal strategies using rhymes and chants, showing and naming objects, and employing language context. Additionally, only participants with lower intensity of L2 exposure preferred using social strategies such as establishing contact with native speakers. The results also showed that certain learning strategies are commonly employed by young children regardless their level of exposure to L2, while others are linked to the intensity of L2 exposure.

Tiing et al. (2021) conducted a study to identify the prevalent LLSs used in vocabulary acquisition and gender differences in choosing particular strategies among five students in an urban school in Malaysia. They administered a questionnaire to the participants to collect data. The results of the study showed that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently employed as learning strategies of vocabulary by the participants. The study also revealed that female participants

employed vocabulary learning strategies more than their male counterparts, with a preference for social strategies. The authors suggested that teachers should consider the gender-based differences in vocabulary learning preferences when teaching English as a second language in order to enhance vocabulary learning outcomes and contribute to a more effective learning environment.

Chang and Liu (2013) investigated the language learning methods used by learners of EFL in Taiwan and the role of the selected methods in the participants' motivation to learn English. The results of the study indicated that learners whose level of English proficiency is higher used a greater variety of strategies than those with lower or intermediate levels of proficiency. Students with lower English proficiency levels primarily employed compensation methods, while those with higher levels relied on metacognitive methods.

2.7.1 Learning strategies/styles and the emotional dimension of learning

Learning strategies and learning styles significantly impact the quality of learning regardless of the learner's awareness of these concepts (Leaver et al., 2005). Learning strategies involve specific actions and techniques that individuals employ to learn. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) view learning strategies as a particular action a learner uses to facilitate learning and obtain knowledge. Similarly, Oxford (1990) believes that learning strategies are intended to assist learners in learning better, faster, easier, more enjoyable and more effectively. She divided learning strategies into six categories: memory, cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, social and affective strategies.

On the other hand, learning styles encompass patterns of information perceiving, processing or responding (Leaver et al., 2005). According to Keefe (1988), learning styles are "cognitive, affective and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment" (p. 3). Learning styles are related to learners' abilities in that the former interprets how learners prefer to use the latter. Due to the interwoven relationship between strategy and style, some researchers have used them interchangeably. Despite this, distinctions can be made on the basis of the level of consciousness involved in their application. Several learners are conscious of their learning strategy preferences, which they will employ once they have the choice. Choosing a particular strategy indicates their learning style, which may be considered an unconscious activity. While there is a possibility to teach or change learning strategies, learning styles seem to be unteachable. The relationship between strategy and style seems not to be easily shown as it is not clear which one stems from the other; they appear to be intertwined (Kamińska, 2014).

Learning is not an emotion-free process. Emotion has been defined as a fundamental aspect of human functioning, typically having adaptive significance in encountering a situation (Nyklicek et al., 2011). However, others, like Martínez Agudo and Azzaro (2018) believe that it is subjective involving evaluative judgments that prompt people to adaptively respond to various situations. So, based on this, emotion can be considered a learning strategy employed in facing situations (Ifadah et al., 2023).

The learning process involves diverse emotions whether positive or negative. For instance, when learners are successful in solving a problem, they will have positive feelings showing positive emotions such as enthusiasm, joy and willingness to learn. Similarly, when they fail or are unsuccessful in achieving certain aims, they will show negative emotions such as fear, stress, or anxiety that may cause them some discomfort (Kumar, 2023; Vega-Hernández et al., 2017). Furthermore, foreign language learners' emotions encompass feelings about themselves, their instructors, their peers, the instructors' command of the language and their teaching method and materials (Richards, 2022). When language learners have positive emotions, their ability to be aware of and notice things in the language input will be enhanced (White, 2018), thus encouraging curiosity, experimentation and supporting autonomous learning which increases their motivation to learn the foreign language, especially when they feel that they have successfully achieved some goals.

As for the negative emotions, they can serve as demotivators for learners of a foreign language since they may lead to frustration and disappointment when they feel that they are unsuccessful in achieving their goals or at least not solving a particular problem. Learners may experience a decrease in their self-confidence to be successful depressing them from devoting further time and energy to foreign language learning (Richards, 2022). Richards (2022, p. 232) listed diverse negative emotions that learners may experience inside the classroom including fear of being laughed at, fear of being negatively evaluated by teachers, fear of being embarrassed, hesitance to perform in front of peers, frustration by lack of language basic skills, and boredom with the materials or the teacher's teaching style. Thus, negative emotions can demotivate learners and may hinder their learning progress in the foreign language.

In conclusion, research has confirmed that language learning strategies are associated with improved language competency among students. However, whether a particular learning strategy is effective may vary from one learner to another. As for emotions, there is an energetic and mutual kind of relationship between emotions and learning strategies in that emotions can impact the choice, application and results of learning strategies, while learning strategies can affect learners' emotional experiences and regulation. Hence, the effort lies in creating various

strategies. Teachers' role should be stressed in that they should be aware of the range of tactics available to help learners achieve comprehensive language learning. This involves teaching 'what to learn' and 'how to learn'. If LLSs are understood and effectively implemented, teachers can effectively guide their students in the language learning process (Tiing et al., 2021). Furthermore, they should be aware of the various emotions that language learning involves and look for solutions to help students overcome the negative ones.

2.8 Language learning motivation

Generally, motivation can be defined as the inner force or emotion that drives an individual to engage in a particular action. In language learning, motivation is the aspect of learning that encourages learners to learn the target language and continue or stop learning that language. When learners are motivated, their enthusiasm to engage in the L2 classroom will be increased (Beri & Safi, 2018). Therefore, it is an important factor in predicting success in language learning (Gardner, 1985). Language learning motivation is associated with second or foreign language learning rather than the first language since the acquisition of the latter is an inevitable social necessity.

Investigating the factors that affect the motivation of foreign language learners, Gardner and Lambert (1959; 1972), early researchers in the area, divided motivation into two types: instrumental and integrative. They defined instrumental motivation as the learner's desire to learn the language for pragmatic gains (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In other words, instrumental motivation is the type that learners have if their purpose of learning is to attain practical outcomes, for example, getting good grades, a good job or promotion. Integrative motivation, on the other hand, it was suggested, stems from the positive attitudes that learners have towards the target language community and the desire to identify themselves within that community.

Furthermore, motivation can be seen as intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to engage in an activity because the activity itself is enjoyable to perform. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to the actions that are performed with some instrumental aims such as getting a reward or avoiding a punishment (Dornyei, 1998). Likewise, Ryan and Deci (2000) associate intrinsic motivation with attaining activities that are inherently interesting and extrinsic motivation with performing activities that lead to a separable outcome. According to Pintrich and Schunk (2002), Intrinsic motivation refers to the desire "to engage in any activity for its own sake", whereas extrinsic motivation refers to the desire "to engage in an activity as a means to an end" (p. 245). Although intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation are not identical to Gardner and Lambert's (1972) instrumental and integrative motivation, the distinction between

them is similar to that between integrative and instrumental motivation, as stated by Schmidt et al. (1996), in that both instrumental and integrative motivation are associated with goals and outcomes and therefore are seen as sub-types of the extrinsic motivation.

Brown (2000) points out that the triggers for intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation are easily identified in any foreign language classroom even if differences exist between the cultural backgrounds and attitudes of the learners and teachers. While most classroom language learning activities are introduced and determined by extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation is more powerful than extrinsic motivation in terms of success in learning a language (Thohir, 2017). Harmer (2001, cited in Thohir, 2017) believes that even if the reason for learning a language is extrinsic, the opportunities for successful learning will be increased if the learners come to love the learning process, thus, leading to intrinsic motivation.

Al-Khasawneh et al. (2024) investigated the factors that affect EFL learners' autonomy at King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. They collected data from 232 undergraduate students. The results of the study revealed that five internal factors influence learner autonomy including psychological aspects, strategies of learning, learner's cognitive abilities, metacognitive abilities, and critical thinking. The study also identified three external factors influencing learning autonomy; they are the teacher's role, the task and the environment. Furthermore, the results of the study showed that the academic level of the learners has no connection with the identified factors whether internal or external. Moreover, Gandhimathi and Anitha (2016) reviewed the literature on motivation to explore the relationship between learners' autonomy and motivation. The review indicated that studies on motivation provide significant evidence that learning success and better motivation are necessary for learner autonomy and self-direction.

A learner's motivation is therefore important in learning an L2. Without motivation, learning the language will take more time and not go forward smoothly. Motivation causes students to be active and directs their desires to specific goals. Ortega (2009) sheds light on the concept of motivation, defining it as "the desire to initiate L2 learning and the effort employed to sustain it, and in lay terms we all understand it to be a matter of quantity, as in the everyday observation that some learners are highly motivated and others have little or no motivation".

Dörnyei's theory of motivation and L2 selves (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) brings together psychological self-concept theories and motivation. It represents an individual's thoughts about what might happen. Recently, L2 motivation research has been moving to cover these factors:

- Analysis of language identity and more qualitative work.

Chapter 2

- Exploring sociocultural diversity and fluidity in SLA.
- Emphasis on ethnicity, identity, and hybridity.
- Interest in the close relationship between identity process and motivational processes.
- Interest in how learning might be linked to membership in imagined or real communities.

(Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011)

Gardner et al. (1979) were interested in the relationship between motivation and second language acquisition. Their study was conducted on Canadian and American students in a French programme. The findings of the study showed that Canadian students with integrative motivation improved their communication skills more successfully than those who did not have this kind of motivation. Integrative motivation is similar to Schumann's (1986) acculturation model.

Schumann believes that learners' success in learning an L2 can be linked to the degree they have the desire to acculturate with the target language community. Learners' motivation can also be instrumental as the results of the studies of Alsayed (2003) and Warden and Lin (2000) showed.

Young learners' motivation to learn a foreign language has been the focus of several studies. Stegmann (2013), for example, studied the motivation and attitudes towards second language learning Early Bird English programmes at primary schools in the Netherlands. The participants were 593 pupils. The results of the study showed that there is an association between students' motivation and their English language skills, the higher their level of motivation is, the higher level of proficiency they have. The study also found that both groups were more positive about their listening and reading language skills than their speaking and writing language skills. Stegmann (2013) concluded that spending more hours learning English does not necessarily promote the level of motivation. What is more important to increase learners' motivation is their positive attitudes towards the language, teachers and the learning environment.

Asmali (2017) investigated the YLs' attitudes and motivation to learn English in three different primary schools in the west of Turkey. All the participants were seven years old and started learning English in the second grade. The results of the study revealed that most of the participants liked learning English, as their attitudes towards learning English were positive. The results also showed that their motivation is intrinsic since 85% of them found it fun to learn English; they favour the type of learning in which singing and playing games are involved.

In a study conducted by Concepcion and Ye (2018), the levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for young Thai learners of EFL in a regular programme and an English programme were investigated. They collected data using a questionnaire distributed among 253 participants. The findings of the study included that both types of motivation are of high levels in both programmes. However, there was a significant difference in the participants' extrinsic motivation

to learn EFL in the regular and English programmes. Similarly, Niazi and Zahid (2019) investigated the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning English as a second language in a college in Pakistan. They administered a questionnaire to 300 pre-university students. The results of the study reveal that the participants have both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning English. Nevertheless, they are more extrinsically motivated because they wish to get high grades and get appreciation from their instructor as well as being seen as proficient among their peers.

Turek (2013) investigated YLs' participation and engagement in L2 research. He focused on the epistemological, methodological, and practical aspects of implementing the participatory approach to research in a language-learning classroom. He examined how YLs aged 7-11 were involved in the study by being active and collaborating with the researcher to design the research instruments. The participatory approach can provide invaluable insights for those wishing to incorporate children's perspectives into their research. He states that much L2 research in young learner contexts is conducted broadly from an adult perspective. Few studies are shaped by the YLs' viewpoints. Therefore, it might affect the lives of YLs when most of such research used in educational policy and practices is conducted from an adult perspective.

Involving technology, the Internet, and computer games in teaching YLs a new language is very effective and motivating when used in the right way, as reported by many research studies. For example, Ilter (2015) examined the involvement of technology in the language learning process at an early age in a state school in Antalya, Turkey. The results of the study revealed that technology-based games, cartoon films, and blogs have a positive impact on YLs' English language and cultural awareness. Moreover, the participants of the study believed that English lessons are easier and more enjoyable when technology is used. The importance of technology for YLs' language learning was emphasised by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) since it provides YLs with authentic materials and their listening, reading and writing skills can be improved when media and Internet are used. Furthermore, the authors mentioned that the use of electronic chatting, games and podcasts while learning can be interesting for YLs. The role of multimedia technologies in English language acquisition was investigated by Parrilla (2016) who focused on the development of reading comprehension through the use of multimedia technologies including video, audio, and images. Eighty-five students in a Puerto Rican Montessori school participated in the study. She divided them into two groups: the treatment group and the control group. The results of the study showed positive relationships between the use of technology and developing reading comprehension as the treatment group developed greater reading comprehension than the control group.

Teachers need to motivate their students in doing any task or activity. With motivation, the speed of learning and achieving the target goal could be increased. In this connection, Oga-Baldwin and Fryer (2018) found that teachers' support can help students increase their motivation for learning English as a foreign language and that when students get such support, they need to render it to the harder work of thinking in the foreign language and using it in real life situations. Similarly, Rehman and Haider (2013) showed that the level of motivation, whether high or low, in education affected student success. To encourage motivation, teachers must provide a valid and healthy environment in the classroom by avoiding threats, understanding the needs of the students, accepting their errors, and reducing their fears from the beginning.

Overall, it can be concluded that students with motivation perform better than those who learn with little or no motivation, as evident in the above discussion and studies. Therefore, this study considers that implementing a more flexible or SALL approach in the research site will encourage learners to learn and to be more engaged (thus more motivated) in activities in their foreign language classrooms. Following a study looking at students' motivation to engage in self-access language learning (SALL) while taking an English for Academic Purposes course, Gardner and Yung (2015) concluded that, in a SALL context, there is potential for enhancing the motivation of learners.

2.9 Agency and autonomy

According to Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011), the term 'agency' is defined as "the capacity to initiate purposeful action that implies will, autonomy, freedom, and choice" (p. 813). They contend that since agency is an experience that is socially constructed, it cannot exist exclusively in the person. Instead, it is interactive. A human agency may be defined as a deliberate act that leads to a certain outcome or as the process by which people consciously alter themselves or their circumstances (Ray, 2009). This echoes the definition proposed by Alessandro Duranti who states, "agency is here understood as the property of those entities (i) that have some degree of control over their own behaviour, (ii) whose actions are the object of evaluation (e.g., in terms of their responsibility for a given outcome)" (Duranti, 2004, p. 453).

A brief, provisional definition of agency is offered by Ahearn (2001) in which she refers to agency as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act". It states that "all action is socioculturally mediated, both in its production and in its interpretation. Although this definition provides us with a starting point, it leaves many details unspecified" (p. 112). This is similar to the idea of autonomy proposed by Benson (2011) who states that autonomy can "take different forms for different individuals, and even for the same individual in different contexts or at different times" (p. 58).

Ahearn's self-conscious definition of agency which emphasises the concept of 'control' is like Benson's choice of a broad meaning of the concept of autonomy. Although control is considered a fundamental component of autonomy, the learners' initiative in their learning has also been recognised as a crucial aspect of autonomous learning (Jing & Benson, 2013). This emphasizes that learners' efforts are autonomous in that they initiate and manage their own learning, establish their own goals and schedules, and control the psychological elements that affect learning (Benson, 2011).

These conceptions of agency imply that agency and autonomy are closely interconnected. They also suggest that the individual (i.e., the agent) can make decisions based on their intentions and goals, essentially similar to autonomy in language acquisition in that both strongly focus on choice. In second language learning, the term 'agency' describes learners' capacity to take responsibility for their learning process; autonomous learners are proactive in that they establish objectives, choose resources, track their development, and take the initiative. Learners are allowed to explore subjects or topics that invite their interests and select learning methods that suit them. Social interaction, including contacts with peers, teachers, and real language users, also has an impact on agency. In collaborative learning contexts, learners are empowered to exercise agency and co-construct knowledge with others through dialogue meaning negotiation, and opportunities for authentic communication. In general, agency has a variety of effects on learning a second language including the promotion of autonomy and social interaction. Participating actively in the learning process can help learners become more engaged, persistent, and eventually proficient in their target language.

2.10 Self-efficacy and language learning

Self-efficacy refers to the individual's belief in his or her innate ability to do a specific task.

Bandura (1986) defines the term as "people's judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designed types of performances" (p. 391). Self-efficacy theory is a product of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory of human behaviour. It tries to account for the impact of the social environment on the individual's traits, beliefs, and thoughts as seen in that individual's behaviour. In this theory, self-efficacy beliefs govern the behaviour of an individual, the way they construe the effect of their behaviour, and how they interact with their social environment. Bandura distinguished between high and low levels of self-efficacy. The level of self-efficacy determines the individual's choice of whether to participate in a given task. Bandura (1997) distinguished between four main sources of self-efficacy, viz., mastery experience which refers to the individual's own past performance, vicarious experience which refers to experiences obtained as a result of watching, listening to, or reading about the activities of other people, rather by doing the activities by one's self, verbal persuasions in which the

individual affirms verbally, through positive self-talk, their ability to master or do the activity, and psychological and affective states such as anxiety, stress, tension, fear of reaction, tiredness, etc. An individual's self-efficacy depends on the type of context; based on this, Branscombe and Baron (2016) classified self-efficacy into three main types: self-regulatory (e.g., to resist peer pressure), social self-efficacy (e.g., to form and maintain relationships), and academic self-efficacy (e.g., to continue the course work and accomplish learning activities).

As far as language learning is concerned and since self-efficacy has a strong effect on people's behaviour and participation, there is a strong relation between learners' performance and learning context (Mills, 2014; Shi, 2016). Self-efficacy can boost learners' motivational, cognitive, and behavioural engagement in classroom activities (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). This explains the fact that learners who believe in their capabilities are likely more engaged in learning activities and when they encounter a difficult task or an adverse learning situation, they are strong and determined bearing in mind that such a situation or task is a challenging one (Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Mills et al., 2006), whereas, learners who hold low self-efficacy tend to avoid such situations and tasks as they are usually worried about failure (Al-Harthy et al., 2010), so they usually do tasks with hesitation and have a habit of becoming anxious and stressed for they always take difficult tasks as threatening (Bandura, 1997).

The theory of self-efficacy has been applied to language acquisition by a number of scholars. For example, in the Korean language context, Ooyoung Pyun (2013) investigated the learners' attitudes towards task-based language learning. The results of the study showed that self-efficacy significantly increased participants' positive attitudes. Similarly, Busse and Walter (2013) focusing on German language learners in the United Kingdom, found that learners with high self-efficacy have more participation in the classroom than those with low self-efficacy. Sardegna et al. (2018) conducted a study on Korean EFL learners and concluded that learners with high self-efficacy are more willing to participate in the foreign language context. Al-Harthy et al. (2010) conducted a study on 265 undergraduate educational psychology students at Midwestern State University to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy, task value, self-regulation, and learning strategies in order to find out the role of each variable in students' exams. The results of the study showed that self-efficacy, inter alia, positively impacted the total score. Similarly, Alrabai (2018) conducted a study on 221 Saudi EFL undergraduate students to explore the association between self-efficacy and their academic performance. The results of the study revealed that students have very low overall self-efficacy beliefs about learning the target language and their academic achievement is also low for which the author proposed that learners' beliefs about language learning impact their language performance.

Not only students' self-efficacy attracted the attention of researchers, but also teachers' self-efficacy. In the Jordanian context, Abu-Tineh et al. (2011) studied the relationships between classroom management styles and teacher's self-efficacy. The study revealed that personal teacher's efficacy has a significant influence on their classroom management styles.

As evident from the above discussion, students' self-efficacy is a vital factor in their engagement in classroom discussions and, as a result, their achievement and fluency in language. Based on this, their self-efficacy must be at a high level to enable them to improve their linguistic competence in the target language. Introducing them to self-access language learning will be one of the factors that may increase their self-efficacy. Very few studies, however, have looked at the self-efficacy beliefs of young language learners although Wyatt (2013) looks at the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers of language learners.

The term 'self-efficacy' is often confused with the term 'self-confidence'. Although they are similar in that they are used interchangeably, there is a significant difference between the two terms. The former is task-specific while the latter is a more general perception of self (Moreno & Kilpatrick, 2018). Pointing out the difference between the two terms, Dornyei (1994) states,

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's judgement of his or her ability to perform a specific action ... [whereas] Self-confidence – the belief that one has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals or perform tasks competently – is an important dimension of self-concept. It appears to be akin to self-efficacy, but used in a more general sense (p. 277).

In foreign language learning context, self-efficacy is usually impacted by the observation of others' success or failure and task completion (Bandura, 1997), whereas self-confidence is attained by performing a good number of interactions, in quality and quantity, with the native speakers of the target language (Bandura, 1989). Although the two concepts are different, they are closely related in that the findings of studies conducted on either concept may be relevant to each other.

2.11 Self-confidence and language learning

It can be said that self-confidence is a state of mind (MacIntyre et al., 1998); it is something that grows through optimistic thinking, running through events, knowledge and talking to people rather than involves learning the way rules are learnt. It increases and decreases according to the context, not a static measure. One's linguistic self-confidence is his or her proficiency which can be high or low. In the language acquisition context, low self-confidence might be caused by being unprepared, lacking knowledge or previous failures, whereas high self-confidence comes about when the individual has the required skills and knowledge to be involved in a kind of communication or doing a particular task (MacIntyre et al., 1998). It correlates with anxiety: when

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one's anxiety is high, his or her self-confidence is low and vice versa. In the foreign language context, it has been defined as the individual's overall certainty about their ability to be engaged in an effective communication (ibid). Self-confidence, as proposed by Clément (1980) and MacIntyre et al. (1998), comprises two important constituents: a cognitive constituent such as an individual's self-evaluation of L2 skills and an affective constituent such as the kind of anxiety that results in nervousness in the use of the target language. In this way, Noels et al. (1996) regarded self-confidence as "self-perceptions of communicative competence and concomitant low levels of anxiety in using the second language" (p. 248).

Therefore, self-confidence is important for learners to be willing to communicate in a foreign language. So, foreign language teachers must try to find high-risk learning contexts for their learners in order to help them improve their linguistic self-confidence which will, in turn, improve their academic achievement (Edwards & Roger, 2015).

The importance of self-confidence in foreign language learning is evident in the literature. For example, Beri and Safi (2018) conducted a meta-analysis investigating the roles of self-confidence, motivation and group cohesion in foreign language learning. The results of the study showed that motivation is a goal-directed behaviour in L2 classrooms that increases the learners' enthusiasm. It also showed that learners' self-confidence, which is needed for foreign language learning, is directly affected by teachers' self-confidence. They concluded that both teachers' and learners' self-confidence is needed in L2 classrooms as it makes learners active and motivated to be engaged in the language classroom activities. Another example is a study conducted by Edwards and Roger (2015) who investigated the language of an advanced learner of English in order to explore his self-confidence development since his arrival in Australia. The results of the study showed that learner's proficiency and desire to communicate in the target language and self-confidence are in a cyclical pattern. Moreover, listening comprehension skill is one of the factors that played a role in the development of their participant's self-confidence.

Confidence also was a decisive factor in the level of proficiency of English language learners in Hamouda's (2013) study. He focused on what plays a role in the students' desire to communicate in English as a foreign language at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. The results of the study showed that the absence of self-confidence, *inter alia*, was the source of the students' poor English proficiency. Similar results were reported by Liu and Littlewood (1997) as they confirmed that lack of self-confidence leads to speaking avoidance, especially in front of classmates to avoid losing face or negative criticism.

In a study conducted by Martínez and Villa (2017), the role played by self-confidence as a factor in learning a foreign language was investigated. The participants were 168 young learners of English

in Mexico. The authors collected data using an in-depth inquiry into the self-confidence factor questionnaire. They administered the questionnaire at the beginning of the semester and again towards its end in order to find out whether participants' confidence in speaking English was changed. The results of the analyses of the responses showed that there was an increase in the students' self-confidence level. Self-confidence played significant roles in their ability to use the language (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation), feeling comfortable when speaking English, and their willingness to communicate with native speakers of English. Being self-confident increases YLs' involvement in different language skills; Monsalve and Correal's (2006) study explored the development of children's oral communication in English. They examined such development in a group of 15 children aged 8-10 years joined Saturday English courses offered by the National University of Colombia. The authors concluded that the teacher's role is very important in developing children's activities where communication is the focus. The teacher made the teaching materials relevant to the children and created an enjoyable supporting learning environment that increased their self-confidence in oral communication.

Based on the above discussion and findings of the previous research, learners' self-confidence should be carefully handled since it increases their willingness to communicate and enhances their performance in the foreign language. Learning autonomously, as in SALL centres, students might eliminate some psychological states such as fear of making errors, negative criticism, losing face and other sources of anxiety, a fact that increases, as seen above, their self-confidence and as a result their performance and achievement. In the present research, self-confidence might be a variable through which the benefits of SALL can be measured. The language learning factors; motivation, self-efficacy, and self-confidence are useful as they can give a better understanding of the factors playing roles in the students' academic achievement. This is thus can enhance appropriate instructional designs.

2.12 Theoretical approach to autonomy and young learning

Since the present study focuses on language young learners, it is necessary to present some of the theories that underpin this issue. The focus will be on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory.

2.12.1 Socio-cultural theory

Sociocultural theory capitalises on the idea that activities of humans that happen within a cultural context are facilitated by certain cultural and social symbol systems including language. Vygotsky, who is considered to be the founder of the sociocultural theory, developed this theory during the 1920s and 1930s. Because he died at a young age, his ideas were not completely formulated into

a theory. However, in the 1970s, his work started to influence Western academic scholars when some of his writings appeared in 1978 in *Mind in Society*. Vygotsky's ideas were to some degree predisposed by the traditional schools of thought: the mentalist approach which emphasised the internal experience of learners, and the behaviourist approach focusing on the external conditions and experience (Kozulin, 1999). For Vygotsky, the concept of psychology is seen as the transformation of socially shared activities into internalised processes, thus a compromise between the two traditional approaches.

The basic assumption of Vygotsky's (1978) theory is that psychological structures result from the individual's interaction with the social environment. In this way, the idea that psychological structures already exist in the minds of individuals was discarded by Vygotsky. Consequently, the mental functions of individuals, whatever, are the result of their social interactions. In this theory, learners are seen as active constructs of their own learning atmosphere (Mitchell & Myles, 2004) as put by Zuengler and Miller (2006) "learners gain control over their own mental activity and [...] begin to function independently" (p. 39). In this perspective, young learners internalise language through performing things in social contexts; they learn through social interactions as they can construct knowledge resulting from interaction with classmates or the teacher (Putney et al., 2000). In the 1980s and 1990s, the theory became influential in research in applied linguistics and second language (Lantolf, 1994; Ohta, 1995; Watson, 1999; Wertsch, 1985, 1991, among others). The central features of the sociocultural theory are mediation, internalisation, imitation, zone of proximal development (henceforth ZPD) and scaffolding.

2.12.1.1 Mediation

For Vygotsky (1978), the term 'mediation' denotes the human ability of using physical tools to establish their relationship with the world around them. These physical tools descended from the past (culture) and are transferred to the future (the next generation). Mediation is reached when learners employ and control their mental tools (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Mediation is of different types; three types were distinguished by Lantolf (2000): mediation by others, such as teachers in the teaching process; mediation by self which is attained through private speech which refers to the way speakers tune the meanings and patterns of their speech and use it in a way to mediate their mental activity; the third type of mediation, according to Lantolf (2000), is mediation by artefacts that includes the use of tasks and technology. According to Gao (2010), resources for mediation can be artefacts, discourses, and social agents. As for the YLs of this study, this feature of the sociocultural theory is related in the sense that YLs rely on the teacher to understand certain linguistic aspects or learn how to perform certain tasks. Moreover, the involvement of

technology is a central issue in this study. Therefore, mediation can help YLs acquire language more efficiently and effectively.

2.12.1.2 Internalisation

Internalisation is the process through which artefacts, such as language, occupy a psychological function (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). It is a central concept in sociocultural theory as Kozulin (1999, p. 116) states that “the essential element in the formation of higher mental functions is the process of internalization”. Moreover, Winegar (1997) contended that internalisation tunes the connection between people and their social environment. In Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, internalisation comprises transformations; for instance, the interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal process. In this way, each psychological function is seen at two levels: at the social level between members of the society “interpsychological”, and at the individual level “intrapsychological” (1978, p. 57). In SALL, YLs internalise information by connecting the new concepts they learn with what they previously learnt. This connection can be the result of being involved in talking and discussions with more competent peers or with the teacher. With time and practice, they gradually internalise the language rules and patterns and become more autonomous in their language use. Therefore, the process of internalisation is closely linked to the role of mediation in the language development of YLs.

2.12.1.3 Imitation

Imitation, as an aspect of the sociocultural theory, was defined by Vygotsky (1987) as a process in which “there must be some possibility of moving from what I can do to what I cannot” (p. 209). Imitation, for Vygotsky, is a kind of “instruction” where learners learn something “fundamentally new” (p. 210). Vygotsky (1987) further believes that imitation of activities of other people is a key to internalisation. Showing the role of imitation, he states “development based on collaboration and imitation is the source of all the specifically human characteristics of consciousness that develop in the child” (p. 210), he adds that imitation is “the source of instruction’s influence on development” (ibid, p. 211). Especially in learning the pronunciation of new vocabulary items, imitation seems to be essential in the initial stages of language learning for the participants of this study. Furthermore, in discussing certain issues or in conversations, they may imitate other more capable peers or their teacher, such as forming questions or making a comment. Imitation allows them to learn correct pronunciation and intonation patterns. However, as they progress, it is important to balance imitation with other language learning strategies to foster their communicative competence and promote autonomy in language use.

2.12.1.4 Other-regulation vs. self-regulation

Mitchell and Myles (2004) define the term 'other-regulation' as "the child or the unskilled individual learns by carrying out tasks and activities under the guidance of other more skilled individuals, such as caregivers or teachers". On the other hand, after the YLs are properly trained, the next step is the transfer to self-regulation which shows the difference between what a person can achieve independently and what that person can achieve working in collaboration with others or with someone more expert (Vygotsky, 1978) or with the help of cultural artefacts (Lantolf, 2000). These concepts are essential to be aware of during the treatment in SALL. The majority of YLs are beginners in learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, the need for a teacher's assistant is necessary to train them to use the resources in an effective way.

2.12.1.5 Zone of proximal development and scaffolding

Zone of proximal development (ZPD) is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Vygotsky argues that the potential level gives a clearer picture of mental development than the actual level. Because of its role in achieving self-regulation, ZPD has attracted the attention of researchers interested in language acquisition. For example, Ohta (2001), in an attempt to connect Vygotsky's ZPD to second language classroom, proposed a modernised version of Vygotsky's definition "[f]or the L2 learner, the ZPD is the distance between the actual development level as determined by individual linguistic production, and the level of potential development as determined through language produced collaboratively with a peer or teacher" (p. 9). Another instance is provided by Gallimore and Tharp (1990) who made a model to account for the role of ZPD in the context of teaching and learning. This model comprises four stages: an expert (the teacher) assists learners through language, the learner does the task without any assistance, the performance of the learner is enhanced and automatized, and the learners' performance is deautomatized which results in repetition through ZPD.

Keeping in mind Vygotsky's phrase "collaboration with more capable peers" (1978, p. 86), the teacher or a more capable peer assists another person, a less able one, by providing them with a scaffold which, in turn, provides an opportunity to move to a level higher than their own. The term 'scaffolding' was not used by Vygotsky but was initiated by Wood et al. (1976). Scaffolding refers to providing "contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modelling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning" (Ovando et al., 2003, p. 345). An L2 teacher needs to facilitate the learning process in a supportive atmosphere. When ZPD is supported by scaffolding, it becomes an effective tool that teachers

may utilise to have a clear picture of the aspects of learners' developing abilities. With regard to the Vygotskian ideas on this aspect, scaffolding, learners' ZPD can be recognised by the teacher who will then try to encourage their learning independence which ultimately improves learners' mental processes and functions through collaboration with the teacher. The process of scaffolding will enable YLs to develop their cognition with the help of a more knowledgeable person, for example, the teacher. While in activities, the more competent person such as a peer or the teacher would provide a kind of support but gradually will reduce this until the learner becomes able to do the task without any help.

2.13 The use of technology in the English language classroom

Technology has dominated most of the aspects of our daily lives; we are on the brink of being unable to manage our daily life activities without such rapidly developing machines and devices. Language learning, especially learning foreign languages is no exception. The role of technology in learning a foreign language has attracted the attention of researchers. There are some studies related to affordances of mobile devices which was introduced by Gibson (1977), "action possibilities" in terms of the role of technology in learning. Many researchers investigated the degree to which technological devices may contribute to promoting students' achievement. For instance, Deng and Trainin (2015) discussed the use of mobile devices, such as the iPad, for educational purposes to enhance vocabulary acquisition and English learning. There were four research-based vocabulary-learning strategies: dictionary use, phonological analysis (i.e., learning words by analysing the sound parts), morphological analysis (i.e., learning word meanings by analysing the componential word parts), and contextual analysis (i.e., learning word meanings by referring to learning context).

Focusing also on vocabulary, Azabdaftari and Mozaheb (2012) compared vocabulary learning of EFL learners by using two different strategies: mobile learning vs. flashcards. The researchers clarified the advantages and disadvantages of mobile learning. For instance, mobile phones can be used anywhere at any time, and students are free to use them inside or outside the classroom. The participants consisted of 80 undergraduate students studying English literature and translation at a non-profit, non-governmental university in Tehran, Iran. The findings showed that the use of mobile phones for language learning and vocabulary acquisition would be a better strategy than other techniques, such as flashcards. Not only vocabulary but also writing skill was examined by researchers in the presence of technological resources. For instance, a study was conducted by Ahmed (2015) who investigated the effects of Twitter on EFL students' writing who are in the university, focusing on major parts of writing, such as ideas and content, organization, voice, and style. The author designed two tests, a pre-test and a post-test, for two classes, where

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one class was the experimental group and the other was the control group. Both classes had the same pre-test on their writing skills using the EFL writing test. Then, the author taught the students using Twitter in the experimental group. On the other hand, the students in the control group were taught using the traditional method of teaching writing. Both groups had a similar post-test to measure any improvement in their writing skills. The experimental group surpassed the control group in the post-test.

In order to find out the extent to which the use of technology is relevant in teaching younger children, a number of studies have compared such technology with more traditional methods of teaching. For example, a study by Alzannan (2015) discussed the iPad's effect on children's achievement in Saudi kindergartens. Alzannan (2015) examined a random sample of 42 boys and girls. He divided the participants into two groups. The control group (22 children) was taught using the traditional method, while the experimental group (20 children) was taught using an iPad. The researcher found significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the achievements of the experimental and control groups. The study clearly showed that using an iPad improved children's performance of English skills, and the motivation to learn English was higher in the experimental group. The younger age of the participants in this study (5-6) indicated that learning English from a younger age is now more popular and welcomed in Saudi public schools. Another attempt was performed by Ahmadian et al. (2015) as they compared EFL students' performance in acquiring vocabulary with and without the intervention of technology. According to their article, vocabulary acquisition is an essential task in language classes, and the researchers believed that computers, as a relatively new technology, would help learn English vocabulary. To investigate the impact of technology, two groups were studied; one group learned through computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and the other received paper-based contextualization of vocabulary items. To collect data, the researchers used t-tests of the pre- and post-tests. An independent samples t-test was employed as well with SPSS used to collect the data. The group that learned vocabulary through CALL performed better than the group using paper-based contextualization.

Nomass (2013) conducted a study to investigate the impact of using technology in teaching English as a second language. She examined a number of techniques including online English language learning websites, computer-assisted language learning programmes, presentation software, electronic dictionaries, chatting and email messaging programmes, listening CD players, and learning video clips. She collected the required information using a questionnaire given to arbitrary samples of students at the Department of English, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University in Libya. The results of the study showed that there are positive views towards using the computer in their learning English course as it improves their vocabulary, increases their interaction with learning inside the classroom and develops their writing skills. The results also showed that using

technology will improve students' listening and speaking skills and help them learn English language faster than in other ways.

Computers are one of the most important and effective instruments that can be used not only for educational purposes but also for many others. In this regard, Becker (2000) states that computers are instructional tools used by teachers of languages with which they have some freedom in the curriculum, enabling them to provide a high-quality education. They provide useful resources to language learners (Clements & Sarama, 2003) and rapid information and suitable materials (Tomlinson, 2009). Therefore, teachers must encourage their students to use computers in their language learning and find appropriate activities that contribute to their success in that language (Harmer, 2007; Gencler, 2015). Similarly, Saeed (2015) studied the effect of using computer technology on the performance of 70 Sudanese English language teachers in Khartoum State. The results of the study showed that although teachers are not familiar with the use of computer technology in EFL classrooms and most of the secondary schools have no computers, they have positive attitudes towards using computer technology in EFL classrooms.

Using multimedia in the classroom such as printed texts, films and the Internet will help language learners become familiar with the vocabulary and structures of the foreign language and enable them to collect information and various materials for the analysis of language and contexts (Arifah, 2014). Moreover, Alsaleem (2014) investigated the role of WhatsApp in improving learners' writing, word choice and speaking ability and concluded that the use of WhatsApp can play a positive role in learners' acquisition of speaking and writing skills and in improving their vocabulary and word choice.

Using technology in classrooms while teaching a foreign language is not always appreciated. For instance, Shyamlee (2012, pp. 153-145) listed a number of negative impacts of using technology in such a context: (1) "major means replaced by the assisting one" which means that if teaching totally relies on multimedia devices, the teachers' role will be played down and they will act as slaves to the multimedia where they will play no leading role in teaching, (2) "loss of speaking communication" as communication between teachers and students will be minimised, teachers' voice will be replaced by computer sound, and teachers' analysis will be replaced by visual images, so mutual communication between students and their teachers will be lost, and (3) "abstract thinking is replaced by imaginable thinking" that is to say, students' abstract thinking will be restricted and logical thinking will waste away in the situation when the image and imagination in students' mind were simply showed on the screen; so, their reading abilities will be lessened since written words are replaced by sounds and images, and handwriting is replaced by keyboard input.

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Furthermore, Raiskinmaki (2017) listed a number of problems that arise from using technological devices inside the classrooms including problems with the use of devices such as the loss of internet connection, teachers' preparation relies on the use of certain devices and when there is a problem in using that device they cannot easily switch to the traditional method, devices are not always reliable. Problems with students' concentration; students may fail to concentrate when their devices are included in their learning, especially smartphones, which might be used for their own entertainment rather than a learning tool. In this way, students are easily distracted and may begin to do their own things on their smartphones. Besides, problems related to the correction of essays: teacher-participants claimed that it takes more time to mark and explain students' mistakes on the computer when dealing with students' essays; they prefer doing it by hand, the traditional pen and paper method.

Leinonen (2005) listed the phases of using computer technology in education as follows:

1. Late 1970's - early 1980's: programming, drill and practice;
2. Late 1980's - early 1990's: computer-based training (CBT) with multimedia;
3. Early 1990's - Internet-based training (IBT);
4. Late 1990's - early 2000: e-Learning;
5. Late 2000's - social software + free and open content, see Figure 1.

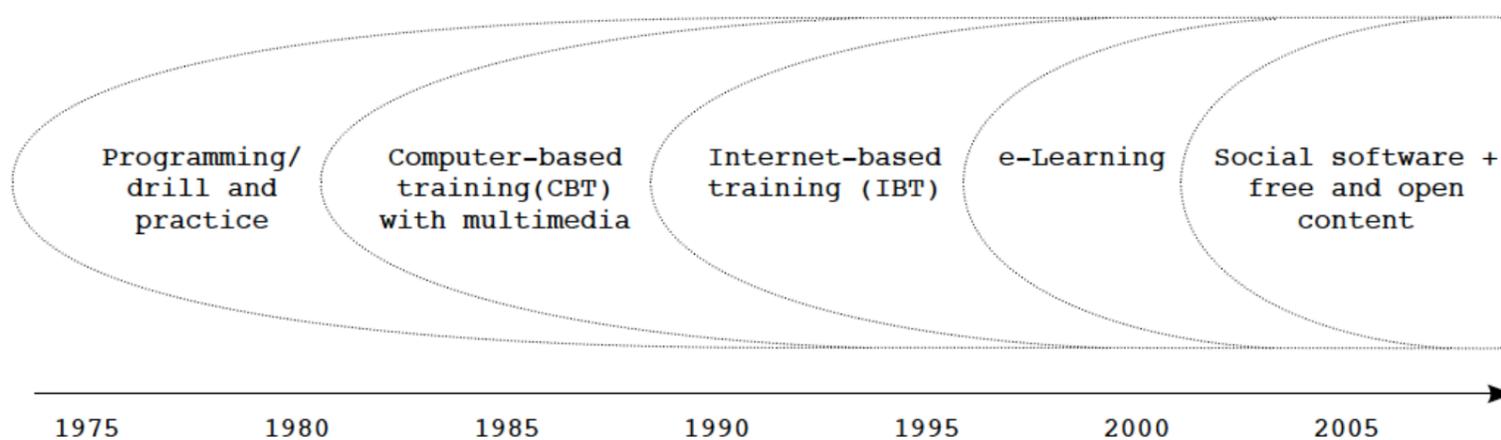


Figure 1. Phases of using computer technology in education.

It seems that technology or Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has the potential to enhance learning, self-esteem, and pleasure for students (Klases, 2006 cited in Abou Hassana, 2008). Crozier (1999) refers to the importance of selecting appropriate educational software programmes which should be matched to the grade or age level; although perhaps now

considered a rather traditional approach, Crozier (ibid) suggests that the following points should be taken into account:

1. Drill and practice, which offers repetition or practice of a particular skill.
2. Problem solving, which presents a scenario where a child needs to provide a solution to solve a problem.
3. Simulation, which presents events in a number of virtual environments; and
4. Tutorial, which presents a lock-step approach in teaching a concept.

(Crozier, 1999)

According to Leask and Pachler (1999, cited in Abou Hassana, 2008), children who use a computer at home are more enthusiastic and confident when using one in school and can bring formidable prior ICT knowledge with them to school (Klases, 2006, cited in Abou Hassana, 2008). However, the different levels of ICT ability acquired outside school may make it difficult for teachers to understand the level of ICT capability of their classes and to judge appropriate levels for the material.

Modern technology offers valuable advantages that encourage many educational institutions to incorporate it into the curriculum. One of its main advantages is the strong relationship between language and technology, as the development of language skills can be facilitated by technology, and there is a very strong link between the affordances of technology and the type of things we are trying to do as teachers (The Guardian, 2014). Technology can thus be considered a facilitator for students to improve their performance and overcome difficulties that may impede their language learning progress. In addition, using technology provides students with safe opportunities to practice authentic language in a controlled environment instead of depending on traditional textbooks that often include simplified and invented English texts. Increasing exposure to authentic language increases one's ability to interact and attain a higher proficiency in oral or written interaction, such as when communicating with native speaker groups in online chatrooms or forums about specific topics or practising written tasks for different purposes instead of memorizing given examples.

The Guardian newspaper (2014) reported the opinion of a number of experts in linguistics, education and practising English language teachers about the use of technology in language teaching or learning in the school. They quote Stannard who thinks that languages and digital technology are a natural fit. "Language development is around four skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening – and all of those are facilitated by technology. There's a very strong link between the affordances of technology and the type of things we're trying to do as teachers". They also cite Warschauer, who agrees that "Technology can provide audio-video materials that

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can be paused, repeated, played more slowly or quickly. Technology can also record and analyse a learners' own speech and can provide various types of scaffolding for students learning to read". To achieve the pedagogical goals, students should first learn how to use the suggested applications in one session and be provided with tutorial clips as resources to overcome any difficulties. Then, students should be made aware of the objectives of using technology by performing various tasks and presenting written reports on their work to achieve their proficiency goals.

With the presence of computers and tablets, listening to foreign languages became easy. Learners may imitate native speakers to improve their pronunciation or listen to stories several times to increase their comprehension. In this regard, Abdul-Ameer (2014) conducted a study in an attempt to find out the role of digital stories in developing the proficiency of Iraqi YLs at the primary level. The study focuses on vocabulary learning. She conducted a test that was designed to elicit information about whether the use of computer and internet-based technology could enhance learning of vocabulary items of English as a foreign language. The results of the study indicated that the participants could understand new vocabulary during the experiment, performed well in the test, and improved their command over the four language skills, especially listening comprehension. She attributed such results to a number of factors including motivation created by the use of digital stories, being able to play the story several times to comprehend the new vocabulary, and the positive feedback they received for their performance.

Recently, Lap et al. (2022) investigated the impact of storytelling on the reading performance of young EFL learners in Vietnam. The authors used a questionnaire, interviews and reading tests to collect data. The study's results indicated that EFL teachers positively perceived the role of storytelling in improving EFL learners' reading skills and developing their personalities. Moreover, the results showed that using storytelling as a method of teaching YLs positively affected the learners' attitudes towards their reading performance. Similar results were reported in a study conducted by Khamsuk and Whanchit (2021) who studied the role of storytelling in supporting the learning of English vocabulary by nine young learners of EFL in Thailand. For data collection, the authors used pretest, storytelling, post-test and interviews. The results of the analysis of the data obtained from the tests showed that storytelling had a positive impact on the amount of vocabulary acquired as the participants obtained 12.2 scores out of 15 in the post-test against 8 scores in the pretest. They concluded that the use of storytelling developed learning of English vocabulary which can be done at home by the parents, and they should introduce no more than three short concrete words at a time to their children.

Moreover, Le (2020) conducted a study to introduce a storytelling innovation in order to put a young learner-oriented approach into practice. The innovation offers a structure to redesign the YLs' textbook lesson in a way to involve storytelling lessons in such a textbook which, in turn, creates interactive opportunities for YLs to use the language in meaningful contexts. The author used observations, pre- and post-storytelling speaking tests and interviews to collect data from 21 teachers and 18 Grade 5 students in Vietnam. The results showed that the group of students in the storytelling intervention showed more increase in their speaking skills than those who taught without the intervention; the former group were highly engaged in storytelling activities. The involvement of storytelling created a positive change in the teaching and learning practices of YLs, as perceived by the teacher and the students.

Due to the widespread availability of electronic devices such as computers, smartphones and tablets, incorporating media into teaching YLs has become more prevalent. Although multimedia technology can greatly enhance learning, teachers and parents must be able to select appropriate methods to increase motivation.

In this chapter, the focus was on language learning autonomy and Self-Access Language Learning (SALL) as well as the use of technology to enhance learning. The results of the studies mentioned above suggest that autonomous learning can play a crucial role in enhancing the motivation of young language learners. SALL centres also have a significant impact on increasing learners' autonomy as they offer a learning environment that contains resources which YLs can access and utilize with less dependence on the teacher. To read a summary of the importance of the studies reviewed in this Chapter, see Appendix L.

Chapter 3 Young Learners' Language Acquisition

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research which underpins this study. It discusses issues related to the ways young learners acquire their L1 and L2; this has been crucial in order to understand how best to promote SALL for young learners. The chapter provides a review of the literature related to the ways learners learn a new language and what variables influence their learning. It begins by showing the definitions of young learners and the difference between young learners and older learners (3.2); after that, it discusses age-related factors and the debate around the critical period hypothesis (3.3); then the effectiveness of learning languages at an early age is discussed in the 3.4. In 3.5, the differences between young and adult learners are made clear. The chapter reviews literature related to the ways of teaching vocabulary including the use of technology (3.6). Learners' interaction with resources is discussed in 3.7. Moreover, it discusses the challenges that young learners encounter in their foreign language learning in 3.8. Finally, the chapter presents a review of a related study on young learners in the Saudi context.

'Young learners' (YLS) is one area of research in the field of L1 and L2 acquisition. However, there are fewer studies on language YLS than on adult learners, and many characteristics of YLS are neglected (Pinter, 2015). Therefore, the discussion of the YLS language acquisition field is important in order to provide a solid background on how young learners acquire /learn a foreign language and their characteristics which may be similar or different to adults. Having enough knowledge and providing arguments on YLS' acquisition of language could be useful for designing the appropriate methods and instruments in SALL by using technology or not.

3.2 Definitions of young learners

As stated in 1.3 above, it is not easy to pin an accurate terminology of young learners among different perspectives of people around the world. Turek (2013) defined 'young learners' as children up to the age of 12. In Table 1, Pinter (2006) shows the main differences between younger learners and older learners in an attempt to make the differences between the two age groups clear. Moreover, she added extra characteristics in the last two points in each column suggesting the way of treatment with technology as shown in the new version of her book, (2017).

Table 1. Some differences between characteristics of younger and older learners

Younger learners	Older learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are at pre-school or in the first couple of years of schooling. • Generally, they have a holistic approach to language, which means that they understand meaningful messages but cannot analyse language yet. • They have lower levels of awareness about themselves as language learners as well as about the process of learning. • They have limited reading and writing skills, even in their first language. • Generally, they are more concerned about themselves than others. • They have limited knowledge about the world. • They enjoy fantasy, imagination and movement. • They may be familiar with smartphones and tablets, and may have used the internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These children are well established at school and comfortable with school routines. • They show a growing interest in analytical approaches, which means that they begin to take an interest in language as an abstract system. • They show a growing level of awareness about themselves as language learners and their learning. • They have well developed skills as readers and writers. • They have a growing awareness of others and their viewpoints. • They have a growing awareness about the world around us. • They begin to show interest in real-life issues. • They are likely to have access to computers and the internet, they may own a smartphone, and they may be regular users of social media and/or regular online game players.

UNCRC (1989) set up a list of definitions of young learners to avoid possible confusion. However, the word 'child' refers to anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. Table 2 shows the 'correct' terms for each life stage and age range.

Table 2. Correct terms for each life stage and age range

Life -stage	Age range	correct terms
Pre-schooler	2-5 years	Early years
Primary school pupil	6-10 years	Primary
Secondary school pupil	11-14 years	Lower secondary

Secondary school pupil	15-17 years	Upper secondary
University/vocational student	18-25 years	Young adult

Being a young or an adult learner of a foreign language is an issue that attracted the attention of the researchers at least since the introduction of the critical period hypothesis (CPH, henceforth) in 1967.

3.3 Critical Period Hypothesis

The role of age is a key research area in SLA research. Recent research in this field has sought to answer the question: who is better at acquiring an L2, children or adults? According to Penfield and Robert (1959), children are more efficient in L2 learning for biological and neurological reasons (cited in Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003). The child's brain has a specified capacity for learning languages. Lenneberg (1967) popularised the Critical Period Hypothesis, which holds that primary language acquisition must occur during a critical period, which ends around puberty with the establishment of cerebral lateralization of functions. CPH claims that any language learning after puberty will be slower and less successful than before that period. Murphy (2014) explained Lenneberg's view that there was a biological explanation for language acquisition and that humans were predisposed to learn language more successfully in early childhood than later in life. According to Paradis (2004), the CPH "applies to implicit linguistic competence. The decline of procedural memory for language forces late second-language learners to rely on explicit learning, which results in the use of a cognitive system different from that which supports the native language" (p. 59).

In this regard, Pinter (2015) clarifies that young learners have ostensibly clear advantages over adult learners because, in ESL contexts, they end up becoming fluent and competent speakers, very similar to their native-speaking counterparts, while adults are less successful in their attempts to master L2. So, based on biological principles, the critical period refers to a declining learning ability once a specific window of opportunity has been closed. For L2 learning, the link between biology (i.e., the CPH) and language acquisition is much less clear (ibid). Emphasising the role of the critical period, Hernandez et al. (2005) point out that "the idea of a biologically determined critical period plays a pivotal role not just in linguistic theory, but in cognitive science as a whole" (p. 220).

A number of studies have been carried out in order to test the role of the age variable in language learning in the light of CPH. For example, Hakuta et al. (2003) tested the CPH on data from the 1990 US Census using self-assessments on age on arrival, length of exposure, and language

development from 2.3 million immigrants who spoke Chinese or Spanish as an L1. Instead of finding a markedly different line regressing on either side of the critical period, their results showed large linear effects for the level of education and age on arrival.

Chiswick and Miller (2007) maintain that CPH is a sharp decline in learning outcomes with age. In their view, in order to attain a native-like proficiency, language should be acquired at a time before the end of the critical period. CPH has been criticised by many researchers; for instance, Johnson and Newport (1989) believe that there is no direct relationship between learners' performance and their age throughout childhood, instead, according to their study, learners' performance started to decline increasingly from about the age of seven until adulthood. Moreover, Bongaerts et al. (1997) state that the critical period is not always significant in respect to language learning as adult learners are also capable of attaining a native-like proficiency when learning a second language.

Myles (2017) argues that there should be research evidence to support the view of CHP. She thinks that it is important to distinguish between children immersed in the new language they are learning, for example as immigrants in a new country, and children exposed to a foreign language in the classroom, a few hours a week at least, and usually less than an hour per week in the vast majority of English primary schools. In the case of immigrant children, there is much research evidence that young children are actually slower than older learners at the beginning of the learning process. However, based on their studies, Oyama (1976), Cochrane (1980), and Patkowski (1980) indicate that young children are more likely to achieve native-like proficiency in an L2 than teenagers or adults.

Despite the huge amount of research over the last few decades on the effects of age, outcomes remain indecisive. Dörnyei (2009) comments that "while everybody agrees that the learner's age does influence the SLA process, scholars have not been able to establish the exact pattern or nature of age-related change, let alone identify the specific causes and mediators of the process" (p. 233). Furthermore, Rixon (2000) believes that the critical period role in language learning is not always the case; Rixon (2000) agrees that an early start may have its own benefits, but a later one is not necessarily a barrier to success. Age appears to be an important factor in the acquisition of a foreign language. Let us consider the extent to which early age can be effective.

3.4 Effectiveness of learning foreign languages at an early age

The issue of learning a foreign language at an early age has attracted the attention of researchers as many people believe that it has a significant advantage in addition to the common belief 'the younger the better'. In this regard, Zhang (2021) conducted a study in order to explore the

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advantages of learning a foreign language at an early age. The author found that among the advantages is the development of the prefrontal cortex, which takes place at an early age. It is related to the cognitive language which means that learning a foreign language at this period is easier than later. Another advantage is that the process of learning a foreign language at an early age contributes to the cognitive development in which learners' attentional ability, memory and creativity will be increased. In addition to this, children who learn a foreign language achieve academic development to outperform those in the same phase who do not.

As for the belief 'the younger the better', Myles (2017) argues that it is one of the common beliefs about learning foreign languages in primary classrooms, which means that young children are intrinsically better language learners and will therefore become more proficient quickly. This idea has encouraged educational policymakers to lower the age at which children begin learning an L2 as part of the primary curriculum.

This trend can be seen in Saudi Arabia, where policymakers have lowered the starting age for EFL instruction to Level 4 of primary school (ages 9-10). Pinter (2015) explains two different perspectives; the first one is the 'younger is better' hypothesis which assumes that children are immersed in the language and have plenty of opportunities to interact with a variety of native speakers, while the second one is the 'older is better' hypothesis adopts that older learners can rely on more efficient learning strategies, larger memory stores, and focus on the learning task with greater intensity.

Myles (2017, p. 3) determines that all research investigating whether earlier is better in instructed contexts points in the same direction:

- Young children are very enthusiastic and love learning foreign languages. They find it fun, and they enjoy discovering new worlds and new ways of saying things.
- Young children are slower at learning languages than adolescent learners, in all aspects of language.

Kuhn and Pease (2006) discussed the process of learning among children and adults and analysed how learning underwent age-related changes. The participants were divided into two groups. The older group consisted of 20 young adults (14 female, 6 male), ranging in age from late teens to late twenties, but primarily in their early twenties, enrolled in an introductory psychology course in an urban public community college. Their ethnicity was predominantly Hispanic and African American. The other group consisted of 20 sixth graders (10 girls, 10 boys) in an urban alternative public middle school. They were all either 11 or 12 years old. Their ethnicity was predominantly Hispanic and African American as well. Participants were interviewed individually in a room

adjacent to their classroom. Their task was to identify the preferences displayed by donors for a gift they were to receive as a token of thanks for a charitable donation.

Most of the children and a few adults were unsuccessful in producing the target answer for the reason that they were unable to understand the matter presented for Case 5, for example. Before addressing the main questions of how to interpret the difference in performance between the two age groups, it should first be highlighted that the performance of the two groups overlapped substantially. Individual variation was high, with some 12-year-olds performing as well as the typical adult. The authors provided some explanations in terms of developmental factors, such as processing capacity or efficiency, which were not likely because time was not a factor and all information remained displayed at all times.

A frequent explanation of developmental differences is that one group understood the task differently than the other or kept the task goals in mind less well than the other. Older participants can interpret the task as some sort of arbitrary logic game better than younger participants. As far as the acquisition of language is concerned, it seems that whether a learner is young or an adult is decisive in terms of the amount of language acquired. Therefore, it is necessary to outline the differences between young and adult learners.

3.5 Differences between young and adult learners

According to many researchers, such as Lightbown and Spada (1993), most theories that have been developed for L2 acquisition are similar to those for L1 acquisition. However, some theories have different priorities and focus. Although theories on L1 and L2 acquisition are similar, there are remarkable differences between children and adults learning an L2 on the one hand and a child acquiring an L1 on the other, see section 3.4 above. It is important to examine the process of how children acquire their L1 because learning or teaching an L2 is influenced by the perceptions of how young learners acquire their L1 (Saville-Troike, 2012; Nemati & Taghizadeh, 2013; Castello, 2015). Research on similarities between first and second language learning and acquisition needs more attention in order to shed light on L2 acquisition theories.

Young learners are just starting their first steps in learning a foreign language. In order to encourage everyone to participate, it is important to make the lessons relaxed and fun. YL students will be learning very basic material, so, it is necessary to design creative lessons that get students moving around and speaking with one another. YLs are generally very enthusiastic about songs, especially if they can sing along, and active games. Moreover, one has to be sure to provide lots of encouragement and positive feedback. A safe, stress-free environment where everyone can enjoy learning should be created. L2 learners can notice similarities and differences between

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their L1 and L2 when starting to learn the L2. In addition, many factors may affect the process of L1/L2 acquisition, such as age (see sections 3.3 and 3.4 above), motivation, phonological memory, social factors, and culture. On the other hand, Paradis (2007) assumes that the process of L2 acquisition is similar whether in the childhood or adult stage for two main reasons: cognitive and social.

Young learners attracted the attention of researchers, for instance, Murphy (2014) focuses on “contexts of learning in children that intersect and interact with educational provision” (p. vii). She explains that learning languages is not complex for children and discusses how easily children can learn languages without apparent effort, regardless of factors surrounding children’s lives, such as their parent’s level of education or socioeconomic status. Therefore, some theories support the prevailing assumption that young developing children are like sponges, able to soak up everything around them, including language. One of these theories is CPH as established by Lenneberg (1967), see 3.3 above.

Similarly, Myles (2017) investigated the effect of teaching foreign languages in primary schools in England which was introduced formally in 2014 with two clear purposes: ‘liberation from insularity’ and ‘opening to other culture’ as stated by the Department of Education. Also, there are other factors that could enhance teaching foreign languages to children in the school such as developing the cognitive side for solving problems or ability to switch tasks.

Many of the decisions for teaching foreign languages in primary schools are influenced by the governments (Myles, 2017). As for the common belief that learning early enough, means that the children will be more receptive, Myles (2017) quotes the statements of Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1999: ‘Everyone knows that with languages, the earlier you start, the easier they are’. This quotation clarifies the interventions of politics in teaching foreign languages in primary schools to young learners.

According to Myles (2017), all these views are compatible with theoretical foundations in the so-called ‘Critical Period Hypothesis’, which claims that children are born with an innate language faculty which atrophies with age and that it is therefore important to tap into these innate mechanisms before the critical age when they disappear. She wondered whether this decision to teach foreign languages was based on research evidence or not. It can be seen from the above discussion that being young is a benefit in the process of acquisition; YLs seem to acquire the language, especially vocabulary, at a fast pace.

3.6 Acquisition of Vocabulary

Having a good inventory of vocabulary items in a foreign language facilitates communication in that language and the whole learning process. Nation (2013) recommends learning high-frequency words in English at the beginning whether they are YLs or adults. He assumes that high-frequency words form (80%) of the total of English words. Also, the list of words contains 2000 family words. Harmer (1991) prefers that a good idea to provide sets of vocabulary which students can learn at beginner and elementary levels. Cameron (2001) assumes that YLs are not only expected to know the word but also, they have to know what the meaning of that word is.

Porter (2016) mentions that despite the limitation of memorisation abilities of very YLs (children aged 5-7), the effectiveness of gestures could be sufficient to memorize and acquire the lexical terms in L1 acquisitions when occurring with speaking to simplify sentence memory by listeners. The effectiveness of gestures extends to L2 learning by increasing recall of L2 vocabulary. Teachers can use the gestures inside the SALL to show the meaning of the words because SALL is less formal than teaching in the classroom. The interaction in the SALL between the YLs and teachers could be increased and then the students may ask at any time without hesitation.

Recently, Andari (2023) investigated the factors influencing vocabulary acquisition by ten Indonesian EFL young learners. Data collection involved the use of a questionnaire and observation. The results revealed that students acquired vocabulary items faster through the learning styles that involved audio than other styles. Moreover, students who learned with English songs were motivated by their parents or had interaction with native speakers, acquired new vocabulary faster than those who did not.

Aedo and Millafilo (2022) investigated the effect of the use of multimodal texts for the acquisition and retention of vocabulary by 18 EFL young learners from 6th grade at a school in Chile. For data collection, the authors used three vocabulary tests and focus group interviews. The results of the study showed that multimodal texts had a positive effect on the acquisition and retention of English vocabulary by YLs. Learners, in the focus groups, indicated that learning English vocabulary using multimodal texts is an innovative and fun way to learn. Furthermore, it was found that using multimodal texts lowered students' levels of stress thus assisting comprehension. When the stress level is lowered, learning becomes enjoyable as reported in the study of Rahmayani (2022) who studied the English vocabulary development in young learners in a school in Indonesia. The author focused on the impact of using realia media on the acquisition of vocabulary items by fifth-grade students. The results of the study showed that the application of realia media improved the participants' mastery of English vocabulary. Moreover, learning became fun and enjoyable

process which had a positive impact on the acquisition process in general and vocabulary in particular.

Segura et al. (2022) analysed the acquisition of vocabulary by 155 EFL YLs following Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Spain. Participants were given a general vocabulary pre-test and a post-test at the end of the sessions. The results of the study revealed that vocabulary items with higher frequency are much easier to acquire than those with lower frequency which, in turn, allow for some interaction in the target language. In addition, receptive vocabulary items are developed before productive ones. The authors concluded that increasing the amount of vocabulary in the EFL classroom did not have a strong effect on the young learners. Acquisition of vocabulary is not always the responsibility of the learner; teachers also have to pay attention to this aspect in their teaching technique. Gulsen (2020) examined how effective the use of storytelling is in teaching English skills to Turkish YLs of EFL. The author used pre and post-tests and observations to collect data from 40 students at the age of 8 at a private primary school in Turkey. The results of the study revealed that using storytelling as a method of teaching English to YLs improved the acquisition of vocabulary. The author concluded that it is necessary for teachers to include storytelling techniques while teaching English to YLs.

3.7 Interaction of young language learners with resources

Young language learners have different ways of learning foreign languages. Some children may prefer non-digital resources while others prefer digital resources. Tablet technologies such as the iPad have been garnering interest and gradually are assumed as a probable learning tool and resource for engaging children in the process of learning. The use of the iPad for educational purposes has been increasing since its release in 2010. With the presence of the iPad in education, students are able to control audio and video materials; they have the opportunity to listen, stop or replay material as long as they want. The role and benefits of using the iPad in teaching and learning processes have attracted the attention of researchers. For example, Henderson and Yeow (2012) reported that the use of the iPad supports students in expanding their knowledge about the topics they learned in the classroom by researching those topics on the Web. Moreover, loading textbooks in PDF format onto the children's iPads, provided them easy access to a source of various references for individual learning and additional practice outside the classroom.

Khoo et al. (2015) investigated the opportunities that iPads provided in teaching and learning for young children at an education and care centre in Hamilton in New Zealand. The findings of the study indicated that the iPad could support children's literacy development, communication and

involvement in learning skills and understandings. Moreover, the study showed that iPads are used as a tool for communication, documentation, information, and observation that could support child-led learning.

Sandvik et al. (2012) studied the use of iPads in language learning and literacy practices in kindergarten in a suburban area in Oslo. The participants were a group of five-year-old five children. The results of the study showed that children's smooth turn-taking in controlling the tablet is supported by the device's portability and shared display. It is easy for them to cooperate, participate and share. The iPad provided them an opportunity to work in pairs and joint plenary activities. The authors concluded that the use of iPads in kindergarten classrooms can offer opportunities for children to be engaged in useful and focused first language, second language and literacy interactions.

Alsulami (2016) studied the impact of using iPads on the achievements of first-grade students in Arabic language classes at Albushra Primary School in Saudi Arabia. The results of the study revealed that involving the iPad as a tool in teaching and learning Arabic is effective as it indicated significant development in the cognitive and reading skills of the students. The study also showed that the use of the iPad has some disadvantages. For example, the iPad may have a negative impact on the students' handwriting skills, especially when they rely heavily on it instead of using the pencil-and-paper tool to write. Another disadvantage is that when each student is provided with an iPad, their communication with each other inside the classroom may decrease.

One resource that could be available as digital or non-digital is storytelling, which is a useful method in teaching a language since such a method involves the integration of the four language skills in a meaningful context; it also fosters cultural awareness and helps learners understand and acquire values and beliefs. Storytelling is important for children as it increases their vocabulary and helps them in retelling the story to someone else. Storytelling has been investigated with different focuses, for example, Soleimani and Akbari (2013) investigated the role of storytelling in learning English vocabulary by preschool students in Iran; 31 six years old preschool students participated in the study. The results of the study indicated that using storytelling as a method of teaching English vocabulary might improve their vocabulary learning and, as a result, bring positive effects on their achievement.

The impact of storytelling on speaking skills has been the focus of a study conducted by Hsu (2010) who investigated the role of storytelling in enhancing the speaking skills of twenty-five grade five and twenty-five grade six elementary school students all of whom are native speakers of Taiwanese and learning English as a foreign language. The results of the study revealed that storytelling has a positive effect on learners' speaking ability as they produce longer and more

complex oral sentences than earlier. Hsu (2010) stated that because students were introduced to new vocabulary and sentence structures in the stories they heard, they had an opportunity to retell those stories with the new vocabulary and structures they were introduced to. The role of storytelling was also investigated by Elkkilic and Akca (2008); they focused on the relationships between storytelling and the motivation of twenty-one Turkish grade four elementary learners of EFL. The results of the study showed that learners perceived storytelling as an important motivational tool in their EFL learning as they reported that they enjoyed classroom activities that incorporated storytelling and learnt something new from those stories they had been exposed to.

Using dictionaries assists learners in enriching their vocabulary since the lack of vocabulary constitutes an obstacle for learners in their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Hart and Risley (2003) have referred to such an obstacle as 'the early catastrophe' and stated that children's English reading skills and academic success are negatively affected by the lack of vocabulary. However, for younger children, it might be difficult to use dictionaries because of their inability to understand the word's textual dictionary definition and link it to the context of the passage they are reading. In this regard, Beech (2004) stated that older children are more likely than younger ones to use dictionaries to find the meaning of a word in a text. Therefore, using dictionaries seems to take place after the reading skill is acquired.

Moreover, dictionaries are either print or digital ones; print dictionaries are considered to have the disadvantage of being too time-consuming whereas digital ones are time-economical. Rahimi and Miri (2014) explored the impact of mobile dictionary use on language learning of thirty-four lower intermediate EFL learners. They divided the participants into two groups: the first group used a mobile dictionary installed on their mobile phones to do all the activities for their language course, whereas the second group used the printed version of the same dictionary. The researchers conducted a pretest and a posttest in order to see if there is any difference that can be related to the use of these types of dictionaries. The results of the study indicated that the group with the mobile dictionary outperformed the group with the printed dictionary as their language ability was improved more than that of the other group.

3.8 The challenges for young learners

Since the early 1980s, teaching English to children has been rapidly growing worldwide (Graddol, 2006). Martin (2016) believes that children in primary schools have an astonishing ability to acquire languages under suitable circumstances. In other words, children can learn aspects of a foreign language effectively when the teaching approach matches their age group. Although the use of English has spread in many countries, many challenges hamper teaching English to YLs.

English instruction has started to be implemented at primary levels in many countries. Some countries have tended to lower the age at which English is taught in schools, while others have introduced English to older ages in schools. Rixon (2013) conducted an electronic survey on the condition of teaching English in 64 countries around the world. The study aimed to discover which countries taught English to YLs at the primary level in school and which did not. The results showed that the role of teaching English in the schools in each society is different from that of schools in other societies.

Another study was conducted by Murphy (2014) who focused on foreign language learning in primary schools from different perspectives, such as policy, provision, and outcomes. Murphy showed experience with teaching English to YLs from different countries. He also discussed the challenges of teaching English in these countries. One of the studies he examined was conducted in the Arab world, which shares similar barriers to those in Saudi Arabia. Throughout the section on provision, the author discussed studies on the impact of using technology with YLs; some studies suggested that technology may improve YLs' proficiency while others found no advantages in attainment through the use of digital technology. It was found that positive motivation and attitudes towards learning a foreign language facilitated the learning process.

The presence of qualified English language teachers who teach those age groups of YLs is rarer. In fact, the lack of qualified English teachers may negatively affect the level of YLs' proficiency. This particular age requires qualified teachers to engage them in learning a foreign language. Al Malihi (2015) investigated EFL primary school teachers' perceptions of their own readiness to teach YLs in Saudi primary schools. The study examined the major needs that should be considered when developing teacher-training programmes. A questionnaire was distributed targeting primary EFL teachers, collecting 114 responses from both male and female EFL primary school teachers from different areas in Saudi Arabia, though mostly from the Eastern province. The results revealed that most EFL teachers were not fully ready to teach at this level since more than half of them had not received enough pre-service or in-service training to teach YLs.

Additionally, the teachers' responses showed high enthusiasm towards teaching primary school students and considered it a necessity. The study also surveyed the teachers' perceptions of their own needs in terms of teacher-training programmes and how these should be designed. Their priorities were mostly centred on using technology in YLs classrooms, methods and teaching strategies that suit YLs, and choosing and designing materials and activities suitable for the developmental stages of children.

This chapter has focused on studies that addressed various issues related to young language learners. It discussed the researchers' opinions on the significance of the critical period hypothesis

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and the differences between YLs and adults. The integration of technology seems essential in teaching skills such as pronunciation and vocabulary. Although learning autonomy is necessary to progress in learning, teachers and parents should not be absent as YLs require guidance and appropriate teaching methods. To read a summary of the importance of the studies reviewed in this Chapter, see Appendix M.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the methodological issues related to the present study. It consists of an introduction to the research paradigm (4.2), criteria used to assess the quality of a qualitative research design (4.3), research methodology and design (4.4), data collection including the research site and participants (4.5) and the instruments used in SALL (4.6). SALL resources, the procedures of the research and the role of the researcher are discussed in subsections 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9, respectively. Moreover, data analysis including data coding is discussed in 4.10. The chapter ends with the consideration of the university policy for the research (4.11).

This chapter provides a description of the methodological approach applied in this case study. This case study could be conceptualised as action research because the researcher's aim is to address the learning and teaching problems outlined in Chapter 1 (see 1.5 above) by implementing appropriate changes and evaluating their impact (Creswell, 2012). The study also intends to inform local practices by exploring the effectiveness of self-access language learning on young learners of English as a foreign language (ibid.). The researcher's role in this study was the facilitator in the club.

The researcher used multiple design methods to achieve the purpose of the research. Since the participants of this study are young learners who are considered as passive subjects in much research (Pinter, 2015), the researcher prepared enormous activities and materials used in SALL. These activities are several appropriate criteria, selected materials and instruments used to suit the students' ages and culture. Patton (1990) pointed out that the researchers use different methods to be suitable to different situations; Therefore, this study depends on different instruments to find out how young learners interact with self-access language learning in learning English. Because the topic of learning English independently in SALL centres for specific age groups of young learners is considered nascent, few studies have discussed these issues and therefore the selection of the appropriate instrument and materials that suit young learners is essential.

4.2 Research paradigms

Research can be viewed in different traditions. Therefore, the research of the language field could be different from the research of other disciplines and among the participants as well (Pinter,

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2015; Turek, 2013). Burns (2000) defines research as “a systematic investigation”. Therefore, starting from a specific clear vision which is called a paradigm is a useful path to extend the research capacity with knowledge, theory, philosophy, and research design that support the paradigm research which achieves the purpose of the search and success the steps of the research. (Myers, 2000). In research, the term ‘paradigm’ implies the use of a set of general philosophical assumptions that underlie the way people view the world and the nature of reality (Maxwell, 2005), whereas for Weaver and Olson (2006, p. 5), research paradigm is “the patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished”. Therefore, deciding on one’s research paradigm is necessary at the beginning of the research in order to outline the research philosophy and design. In order to choose a research paradigm, one has to decide about the ontology and the epistemology bases of the study.

Ontology is to grasp the nature of the phenomenon being studied. It deals with questions like what is the nature of reality, what is there that can be known about it, and how can we know it? (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). There are two main components in ontology: objectivism and constructivism. Constructivism encompasses people seeking to comprehend their surroundings and the world in which they live or work. They form subjective interpretations of their experiences that focus on specific objects or things (Crotty, 1998). These various interpretations encourage the researcher to explore the complexity of the individuals’ perspectives instead of narrowing them into a few categories. The goal of this research is to heavily rely on the participants’ views of the phenomenon under investigation. The questions posed in this context are broad and general in a way that the participants are allowed to construct the meaning of a situation typically through discussions or interactions with others (Creswell, 2009). On the contrary, objectivists view the social world as concrete and real as the natural world, so social phenomena and their meanings are independent of the social actors (Bryman, 2012). As far as the present study is concerned, the researcher is interested in investigating the participants’ views and experiences about the usefulness of implementing SALL for learning autonomy; his study falls under the constructivist ontology.

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge that focuses on what can be considered as acceptable knowledge in a particular field of study (Bryman, 2012). As a philosophy, epistemology comprises two main approaches: positivism and interpretivism. Interpretivism is somehow connected with the constructionist ontological approach in the sense that it views knowledge as inter-subjectively made. Thus, individuals’ actions are meaningful actions that require interpretation within the context of social practices. In this regard, Saunders et al. (2007, p. 106) state that interpretivism in epistemology is “necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our

role as social actors". In this study, the researcher adopted interpretivism as his epistemological philosophy because he is interested in interpreting and understanding participants' difficulties with and without SALL, according to their views on the way they see and experience it.

Objectivism is concerned with the social facts that exist with the phenomenon regardless of the individuals' beliefs about them. According to Staiton-Rogers (2006), there is a straightforward relationship between things in the outside world and people's knowledge of them. It is quantitative in nature since the methods it uses comprise large-scale studies with representative samples and questionnaires that require statistical analysis (Bryman, 2012).

4.3 Criteria used to assess the quality of a qualitative research design.

What criteria should be followed in doing qualitative research has been an important issue. However, Guba (1981) suggested four criteria that should be taken into consideration by researchers conducting qualitative research to achieve trustworthiness. These include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

1. Credibility is an important factor for achieving trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); it is an internal validity in which researchers ensure that their study investigates what they have planned for. This can be attained, according to Shenton (2004), by adopting well-established methods for the research, developing familiarity with the culture of the organisation, using random sampling, triangulation, iterative questioning, thick description of the phenomenon under study and examining the findings of the previous research.

2. To achieve transferability, the researchers make sure that the research findings can be applied to other situations (Merriam, 1998). They should provide sufficient information about the context of the organisation they investigate, enabling other researchers and readers to make such a transfer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3. Dependability refers to providing some procedures to indicate that the findings of the study are similar to those of the previous related studies.

4. Confirmability refers to making sure that the findings of the study are the results of the opinions and experiences of the participants and are not influenced by the researcher. This can be attained by employing a triangulation method of data collection to lessen the researcher's bias.

Furthermore, the two terms 'reliability' and 'validity' are popular in quantitative methods of research and are rooted in the positivist approach. Golafshani (2003) pointed out that reliability and validity when applied to quantitative research serve as a starting point for exploring the definitions of these terms within the qualitative research paradigm.

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Golafshani (2003) cited Joppe (2000) for the definition of reliability:

“...The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered reliable” (p. 1).

Reliability in qualitative research refers to the consistency, credibility, and trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000), rather than the replicability of measurements. It involves indicating that the findings accurately reflect participants' viewpoints and experiences and are consistent across different methods such as employing methodological triangulation to collect data (Cresswell, 2009) which can enhance reliability as it helps to ensure that findings are not dependent on a single method or individual perspective (Dornyei, 2007). In this study, this was achieved by employing three data collection instruments: semi-structured interviews, observations and diaries. As such, it can be trusted by others in the field. Moreover, in this study, reliability was enhanced by the objectivity of the findings which are grounded in the data rather than biased by the researcher's perspectives or preferences. According to (Dornyei, 2007), the chances of systematic bias in qualitative research can be minimized by the use of triangulation as the researcher comes to the same or similar conclusions about the phenomenon under study using different data collection methods.

Regarding the interpretive approach, in which the realities are multiple, it depends on the variance of perception, but the researcher took into account the aspects which may affect the reliability of the research tool when administrated within a time limit. The interview illuminated the variance in individuals such as students' motivation for participating in SALL to learn English independently. Moreover, it was important to create a quiet atmosphere inside SALL which would help the young learners to minimise the anxiety level throughout the entire period of interventions so that they were not influenced by a change in routine. The time of the day should not disturb the students' class, their break or lunchtime. Therefore, the club needed to be suitable for the students to make sure that it did not affect their normal scheduled classes. In fact, the researcher took some cases, which were associated with the participants and administrated them into consideration such as the mood of the students, noising inside SALL, and less awareness of using the material properly which usually affected the research and may negatively cause a bias in the research. Therefore, the sufficient training on how to use the material in a perfect way and asking learners before getting into SALL about their case and motivation to participate reduced the level of anxiety and supported the students to learn English. Keeping SALL in control by observing and giving a clear instruction in SALL provided an enjoyable environment for the students in SALL.

There is no expectation of 'external validity' in qualitative research. The validity in internal validity examines change through the observation of the students' attitudes. The researcher should be aware of the participants' background on how they learn English. Some students may study abroad during their parents' stay in a foreign country.

Moreover, the researcher used the opportunity of non-probability sampling in which the subjects were allowed to decide whether they wanted to participate. In fact, the Human Subject Ethical strictly stipulates that the researcher's organization give the participants the entire freedom to participate, decline or even withdraw their participation in the experiments. To address this issue, the researcher employed more participants than expected to compensate in the case of the withdrawal or absence of some participants.

4.3.1 Triangulation

The triangulation of data helps to ensure that the results are accurate by adding more instruments to investigate the phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher used two instruments in the treatment collection: one by the researcher and the other by the participants.

On the other hand, the young learner participants used the *SALL reflective diary sheet* (see section [4.6.2](#)) to express their opinions about the impact of SALL in learning and practising English. To figure out the truthfulness of the responses, the researcher compared the observation notes with the responses of the participants (RDS).

After all of that, in the interviews, they stated their perception of the effectiveness of SALL in learning English. Therefore, the researcher was able to compare the students' responses in the three different instruments and match them to find the similarities or differences.

4.4 Research methodology and overall research design

The methodology of the study mainly depended on the qualitative approach. The main purpose of the qualitative approach is to understand and clarify the possible relationships, phenomena, situations, and occurrences of research participants in the study. The participants are rarely selected randomly, instead their selection is based on the aims of the study (Mason, 2002).

As for the research method of this study, a case study approach was adopted which is a research method that provides an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon under study (the case) which can be an individual, organisation or event, as well as the related contextual settings (Ragin, 2005). Gerring (2004) defined a case study as an "in-depth study of a single unit (a relatively

bounded phenomenon) where the scholar's aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena" (p. 342). Moreover, Thomas (2011) suggested an explanatory definition identifying the areas in which case studies are applied and stressing the nature of such a method that allows researchers to gain meaningful characteristics of real-life events, he states

Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame – an object – within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates (Thomas, 2011, p. 513).

In this regard, Duff (2008) agrees that a case is a bounded entity; she adds that the focus of case studies can be groups, organisations or countries involving psychological or linguistic issues that undertake a detailed description and analysis of an individual subject such as the participants who provide the primary data through observations, interviews and life histories. Case studies have a high degree of completeness, depth of analysis and readability; they may produce new hypotheses, models or understandings about the nature of language learning processes (Duff, 2008). Thus, the case study method aims to gain an understanding of a large set of units through the analysis of a single similar unit which can be a single individual, or group, aiming to understand complex phenomena in their natural setting.

Having become aware of the strengths and advantages of case studies in research methodologies, I adopted a single case study as a qualitative approach to my study. It allowed me to have an in-depth understanding and analysis of the views of the participants regarding their learning autonomy of English as a foreign language at SALL as compared to traditional classroom instructions. This, in turn, enabled me to understand their difficulties in learning English and establish the possible reasons behind such difficulties. The 'case' in this study was the involvement of SALL at one school in Al-Baha in Saudi Arabia which included the attitudes and views of seven students, one teacher and two parents towards self-access learning.

Berg and Lune (2004) define the term 'interview' as "a conversation with a purpose". Therefore, the researcher asked the participants at the beginning about their preferences, needs, motivation, and achievement of learning to investigate their progress and interest in learning English. In addition, their English language teacher was included as a participant to discuss the performances of the students and their needs. Their English language teacher facilitated some procedures for the researcher during the experiment, such as that he presented the researcher to the students in order to break the barriers between the researcher and the students and to arrange the materials in a suitable room to conduct the study. In the meanwhile, the treatment, the reflective sheet was given to the students in order to record their opinions about the material. The researcher called

the sheet as “diary sheet”. The main study took place in different periods, the first one was in June 2018 to conduct interviews with three teachers only and the second one was between November 2018 to January 2019 which was through two phases: the preparatory phase and implementation phase to focus on 7 young learners, two parents and one teacher.

4.5 Research site and participants

The selection of the research site and participants is one of the important phases in research design. The process of selection is motivated by the research objective and questions (Sargeant, 2012). Therefore, the detailed description of the research site and information about the participants simplifies the study for the reader and helps the researcher to understand the nature of the intended research site whether hospital, university, school, or any other organisation. The following discussion presents more elaboration on the research site and the participants of the study.

The data collection was conducted in one public primary school at AL Baha province, KSA. This school is called ‘Al Falah Primary and Intermediate School’ which is considered one of the largest and most distinguished schools in the area of Al-Baha because of the modernity of the buildings established five years ago. The rationale for selecting this specific school was because it is in the hometown of the researcher. Therefore, it was easier for him to visit the school most of the days of the week for the whole period of data collection. The other reason for selecting this school was that it has the most technological equipment, spaces of the classroom, and the large number of students as participants. The large number of students was a crucial factor to select this school because most of the primary schools are only primary without the intermediate stages which means the number of the students mostly are few where enough number of voluntary participants in the research might not be found. Finally, the collaboration of the main English teacher and school head teacher to use the classes and provide background on the students’ levels and allowing the use of the equipment inside the building was a very important reason.

Collecting data from primary school students may not be easily obtained. In the most occasions, head teachers ask more clarification and official documents from different sites to allow the researcher to conduct the study because of the huge responsibility of caring about the school environment. In addition, the administration of education and head teachers are concerned about time factor in the sense that participants may miss classes while the researcher is collecting the required data. Since everything was approved, the researcher had presented the computer hall in the school as “Lunchtime English Club”.

The sample of the study consisted of three different groups of the participants: the young learners, the teacher, and the parents. Since there is gender segregation in Saudi educational policy for religious and cultural purposes, all the participants were males without including any female participant in the study. For the young students, the researcher focused on few students from one primary school in grade 6th only (age 10-12 years). The reason for selecting this grade and age group was their familiarity with the Basic English. Basic English means understanding the instructions and common English words. However, many of the students never learn English in public schools at lower grades (1st, 2nd and 3rd grades) except in private schools, international schools, abroad schools, or study in private English language institutions.

Therefore, the initial interview before the experiment was essential to investigate the background of students in learning English. The potential participants of the students are ten students who were chosen as a non-random sample. This limited number of participants was suitable for the size of SALL in the school and the prepared materials access to the students. After the treatments, students were interviewed to express their perceptions about SALL in general; advantages and disadvantages of SALL, their progress and motivations in learning English in particular. Their main teacher was also interviewed to investigate the levels of students. At the end, the researcher interviewed some participants' parents to see to what extent their children used the materials at their homes and whether they observed any difference in the attitudes of their children towards learning English.

4.6 Research instruments

The instrument of the research consisted of different tools in order to investigate the effect of SALL in learning English for young learners with or without technology. Hence, a suitable instrument was linked to the objectives and research questions of the research. Table 3 shows the research questions and the instruments that were used to collect the data:

Table 3. The research questions and the intended instruments.

Research Questions	Instruments	Data collected
RQ1: How do young language learners use SALL in terms of: a- Use of learning (digital / non-digital) materials and resources? b- Patterns of work (group work or individual work)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher's diary • Students' diary sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 Researcher diary entries • 96 learner diary entries from seven participants

c- Independent learning		
<p>RQ 2: What is the impact of SALL on young learners in terms of:</p> <p>a- Motivation and attitude</p> <p>b- Perception of proficiency</p> <p>c- Perception of SALL compared to the formal language classroom.</p> <p>d- Reported self-confidence.</p> <p>e- Self-efficacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student’s diary sheet • Club Photos • Interviews with YL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96 learner-diary entries from seven participants • 8 pre-intervention interviews with 7 learners and one teacher • 8 post-intervention interviews
<p>RQ 3 What are the stakeholders’ perceptions of the SALL approach to language learning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with YL students, main teacher, and some parents • Students’ diary sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 pre-interviews • 8 post interviews • One teacher interview • Two parents’ interviews • 96 students’ diary.

4.6.1 Interview

An interview is an important tool of data collection in qualitative research. In this connection, Maxwell (2005) states that an interview makes available “a valuable way of gaining a description of actions and events – often the only way, for events that took place in the past or ones to which you cannot gain observational access” (p. 94). In this study, interviews were conducted to help provide answers, inter alia, for the research questions.

Interviews are of three types: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. The type of interviews used in this study was the semi-structured ones. They are non-standard and flexible in the sense that they give the researcher the possibility to investigate the phenomenon under research deeply as he or she can ask a variety of open-ended questions (Gall et al., 1996). It starts with defined questions and continues in a conversation-like style. Using this type of interview, the researcher may modify, restructure, and elaborate on some parts of the questions.

4.6.2 Reflective diary document

The researcher adopted the instrument of a reflective diary sheet adopted from Dam (1990). The purpose of designing the instrument was to give the students an opportunity to assess their learning and to support the Danish students to be autonomous learners. The difference in design methods depends on the level of English proficiency of the participants and their age as well. Dam's (1990) instrument was designed for adult participants who were in their first year of English.

Since the participants in the study were young learners, certain modifications were made to the instrument to suit the age of the participants. The participants had the choice of whether to write in Arabic or English in the first section. The second section is a blank space to give the students a chance to extract the learning by drawing and writing simple words if they want. Dam (1990) claims that success encountered when young learners are being autonomous, learning through the methods instrument: the responsibility of own/other learning, cooperation, awareness of need, learning, interest, engagement, motivation, eagerness to work, fond of working, decision-making, joint participation, negotiation/discussion, and to use oneself and being creative (see appendix F).

4.7 SALL resources

As stated above in Chapter 2, one of the good characteristics of SALL is that it provides different resources to the learners in order to select their preferences and match with their needs (see 2.4 above). Throughout the initial interview, the researcher recognized the students' desire to participate in the study. Therefore, many resources were given to the students in SALL, suiting their English level and cultural practicality. Moreover, analysing students' textbooks contributed to understanding the objectives of teaching English to primary levels and the topics that were taught in the school was sufficient in order to prepare materials that matched the students' levels of proficiency, age, and cultural values.

The resources consisted of digital and non-digital resources in order to meet the students' need and discover the hidden secrets of student's rationale for selecting each resource. The digital resources were composed of computers, laptops, iPads, and CDs. Young learners had options to use their textbook online, read or listen to online stories or browse lessons from online applications using the iPads. The traditional resources such as student's textbooks and storybooks were given to the learners in order to achieve the variety of "English club" resources.

In addition to achieving the varieties of the resources in the Club, and enhancing the concept of autonomous learning, the researcher welcomed learners' ideas and activities in case of matching

the criteria of resources. Some resources that were chosen by the learners were beneficial in learning English; therefore, the researcher was flexible to discuss any resources that interest the participants in order to be added to SALL.

The researcher prepared materials that suit the children's cultural and religious principles. Some websites had advantageous options allowing the participants to choose the age and level of proficiency. Thus, the participants chose suitable topics ranging from different ages and from very basic English to advanced levels. For more details about the rationale of the selection of each resource with showing the advantages and disadvantages for each one, the researcher shows the most names of the English resources and materials in the following sections.

4.7.1 Non-digital textbooks

The English textbook used and taught in the entire Saudi schools is published by a Saudi publishing company. Nowadays, Saudi government realizes the demand for education reforms. Therefore, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project was established in 2007 with the aims to restructure education and develop curricula in order to keep pace with the labour market and bridge the gap between public education and university education. The real change for the English curriculum was in 2015. Although English language textbooks in Saudi schools are well designed, but the topics are very large. According to the results of the preliminary data, most of the teachers need to be fast enough to cover the topics and consequently, teacher and students could not have abundant time to answer the entire exercises. In SALL, the participants were able to select their textbook, which includes many attractive topics with pictures and includes the language basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

There are three foreign publishing companies for teaching English; *mm* publication which has three series for each stage; *Smart Class* for primary, *Full Blast* for intermediate and *Traveller* for the secondary schools. The second publication company is *McGraw-Hill* education, which has three series for each stage as well; *We Can* for primary, *Super Goal* for intermediate and *Mega Goal* for secondary. The third English language publication company is *Macmillan* education, which has three series: *Get Ready* for primary, *Lift Off* for intermediate and *Flying High* for secondary schools (See photo of books: Appendix J)

4.7.2 Digital textbooks

As shown above, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project has a website called *Tatweer*, which means development (<https://elt.tatweer.edu.sa/>) and another website known as *iEN* which is a national educational portal <https://ien.edu.sa/#/>. Both teachers and

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students have online access to the textbook and can download it. Throughout *Tatweer*, students can also use an Interactive White Board (IWB) which gives them a chance to learn English independently.

However, because of the frequent complaints from both students and parents during COVID-19 pandemic regarding the confusion caused by multiple educational online platforms, a decision was made to merge these two sites into a single platform '*iEN*'. This consolidation aimed to alleviate the confusion and provide a centralized location for e-learning activities. As a result, *iEN* became the official site for hosting recorded lessons uploaded by teachers. This allowed students who were unable to physically attend school due to health or other reasons to access the lessons remotely through the *iEN* site. Furthermore, *iEN* was expanded to offer official classes, both curricular and extracurricular, as well as diverse activities to support students' educational needs.

4.7.3 Non-digital storybooks

The researcher provided a variety of stories with different topics. While some stories were bilingual (Arabic-English), others were monolingual (English only). These gave the students more options in choosing the appropriate resources for their levels and their preferences as well. For example, the following are non-digital storybooks:

- *The Snowman (Oxford)*,
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle*,
- *Squeak the Lion by Katherine Sully*,
- *Under My Hood (2012) by Karla Kuskin and illustrated by Fumi Kosaka, and*
- *I Have a Hat by Karla Kuskin, Alfie's Angels Series (2003) by Henriette Barkow and Sarah Garson.*

4.7.4 Online digital storybooks

Because SALL provided digital technology as a tool that assists in language learning and teaching, computers and iPads were two of the popular technologies that were used in language teaching. Therefore, the researcher selected some websites and applications to be used in language learning such as:

- *British Council (applications and website) the school trip*,
- *<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/parents-and-children/activities-for-children/>,*
- *BBC Cbeebies Story time (application)*,

- *Lingokids (application),*
- *Starfall (applications and website),*
- *<https://www.rong-chang.com/nse/>,*
- *Agendaweb.org,*
- *The Brave Eaglet (Little Stories application), and*
- *Fun English (application).*

4.7.5 Dictionaries

Since the participants were young learners and their English was Basic, the researcher provided them with an English-Arabic dictionary as a textbook to get the meaning of the difficult vocabulary items. The researcher had a facilitator role in explaining the effective way to understand the meaning through the context or finding the root of the words if attached with affixes. Therefore, the researcher tried to encourage the participants independently to figure out the meanings. The dictionary that was used in SALL is the Children's Illustrated Dictionary by John McIlwain, 2009.

The content of the research materials in this study were suitable for the principles of the Islamic religion; it was prohibited to switch on inappropriate clips such as wearing short skirts, hugging and so on. Therefore, there were a number of caveats which were taken into consideration:

- 1- The content should be suitable for the age level.
- 2- The content should be suitable for the level of proficiency.
- 3- The content should be attractive to learn; has a lot of pictures and exercises.
- 4- The content may contain certain challenges.
- 5- The content may last for the most time of the SALL club session.
- 6- The content may cover one or more English skills.
- 7- The content is affordable and easy to access.

The researcher chose suitable resources for the young learners' participants inside SALL after careful study and practical discussion of all the positive and negative aspects. (See appendix H) for more details on each resource's negatives and positives and the rationale for selecting these resources.

4.8 Research procedures

The journey of collecting the main data started in June 2018 for a month in Saudi Arabia. Once the ethical document had been approved by the research organization, the research was conducted

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in Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia (see section 4.5). The researcher had planned to not disrupt the normal English schedules for classes or even other subjects. Therefore, the researcher used the *activity class* as an official class in the school schedules, which was approved by the Saudi MoE in 2017.

The Saudi MoE administrated *activity class* as three free classes per week to let the students practice the activities they prefer; each class lasts 45 minutes. The purpose of this class is to provide the students with an opportunity to learn and practice different skills and modules without using their textbooks. Although these classes were official in student's schedules, they had no assessments or exams for the students. Moreover, through the preliminary data collection, the teachers pointed out that the plans of these classes were not prepared by MoE, so schools have to prepare them.

The research procedure for this study consisted of two phases: the preparatory phase and then the implementation phase. The total length of the study was eight weeks. There were more details of the plan, interventions and the procedure for each week.

June 2018

The originally planned trip for May 2018 encountered some obstacles, such as that the Saudi authorities decided to end the academic year earlier than expected. Another obstacle was the delay in obtaining consent from ERGO at the University of Southampton. The researcher hoped to visit three schools and interview some English teachers there on the one hand, and on the other hand to depend on the observation tool to assess the classroom environment, equipment availability, and student numbers to be able to select the most suitable school for the study.

Despite these difficulties, the researcher managed to interview three teachers who were attending a summer course for professional development. These teachers were in schools near the researcher's residential area in Al Baha. The interviews conducted with these teachers were sufficient to gather valuable information regarding the schools, the teachers themselves, the number of students, the teaching methods employed, and the willingness of the school administration to permit the researcher to conduct the study at their school. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. To maintain anonymity, the three teachers were coded as T1-AZ, T2-MH, and T3-AD.

Relying on the collected information, the researcher decided to select T3-AD to participate in the study and his school to be the site of the study, to be conducted from November 2018 to January 2019. This decision was made due to a number of factors. Firstly, the selected school was newly built and equipped with modern facilities. Its spacious size provided the researcher with the opportunity to establish a SALL club. Moreover, this school possessed a substantial number of

students compared to the other two schools. Another thing was that T3-AD, who worked at the selected school, showed great enthusiasm and support for the study compared to other teachers, T1-AZ and T2-MH.

During the interview with T3-AD, it became evident that he used the traditional teaching method of Grammar-Translation. He admitted to allocating most of the class time to explaining the lesson with limited opportunities for student participation due to time constraints. T3-AD, based on his experience, believed that students are motivated to learn English, possessed a sense of self-confidence and are able to improve their abilities in terms of learning a foreign language (see the treatment plan in appendix G).

Week one (mid-November 2018)

The researcher examined the facilities and resources for the school in the research site depending on the teachers' interviews to establish the presence of the resources. In light of that, selecting the school and the participants was very essential, in addition to allocating a suitable room in the school equipped with the resources. Moreover, the teacher introduced the researcher to the students to find participants for the study. After selecting the participants, it was necessary to get the consent letters signed by their parents since the human ethics rights require the signature of the guardians of children under the age of 18 (See appendix D). Then, the researcher interviewed both the students and their English language teacher. Understanding students' background in learning English and their attitudes towards English motivated the researcher to prepare a suitable plan for each participant.

Interviewing the teacher expanded the knowledge about the English language taught, the textbook, the flexibility of using technology or other resources, their relationship with students in the class and students' level of participation. At the end of Week One, the participants were divided into groups and filled out the preferences sheet to choose the appropriate materials to learn and practise English in SALL (See Appendix E).

Week Two (November 2018)

The participants experienced training for the use of the resources in SALL and setting up rules inside SALL before going to the further step of the implementation phase. In fact, student's background such as level of proficiency, socio-economic status of their parents, etc. were essential to investigate in order to prepare and train each student properly before using the resources in SALL. Some students could use digital devices at their home while some of them did not have computers or iPads. Therefore, the training on using the resources was useful for the participants to interact with the experiment such as using iPads and computers properly under

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the supervision of the researcher with the presence of their teacher. In addition, it was useful to illustrate the websites, stories, applications and topics. More importantly, it was used to set up some rules and conditions in SALL to impose discipline and to be sure that participants had not gone any further steps unless getting permission from the researcher or the teacher. In fact, protecting young learners from surfing content, not suitable for learning English or their cultural and religious principles, was of more concern for the researcher. In addition, the observation of the participants minimised these issues and consequently did not restrict their freedom in learning English inside SALL.

At the end of Week Two, the researcher was confident to go to the next phase, the implementation phase, the researcher applied the research intervention where the learner-participants interacted with their preferred resources directly with a little help from their English teacher. The teacher's role at SALL eventually was that of a facilitator by giving directions on how to learn English rather than dominating the time of teaching to be ready for the interventions in Weeks Three, Four, Five, Six and Seven.

Weeks Three, Four, Five, Six and Seven (December 2018 – January 2019)

These five weeks were the second phase, the implantation phase, in which the young learners practised and learnt English in SALL. *SALL club* was equipped with a variety of devices, and equipment such as computers, iPads, storybooks, English textbooks, and Arabic-English dictionaries with the availability of the Internet. The young learner participants were advised to use the resources properly and feel comfortable without pressure if they find difficulties at any time during their presence at SALL. The participants were asked to fill out the *SALL Reflective Diary Document sheet* (see 4.6.2) to show their perceptions of using resources, their motivation and their attitude. The role of the researcher facilitated the issues that occurred to the young learner participants and monitored the use of resources to disallow using them improperly. Also, it was important to write notes about their interactions, motivations, and attitudes. More details about the resources and the way to use them in SALL are found in section [4.6](#) (See appendix F).

Week Eight (January 2019)

In Week Eight, the last week of the experiment, post-interviews were conducted with all the participants, including the seven young learners, their main teacher and two parents. The purpose of the post-interview was to investigate the impact of SALL and the experiment on the participants. Young learners were asked questions to check their preferences in the Club, such as learning in the classroom or SALL, the reasons for using the resources and the use of these resources beyond the classroom. Also, the interviews with the teacher and parents were useful to

examine the changes in the young learner's attitudes and motivation to learn English. (See photos of the English Club, Appendix K).

4.9 Researcher's role

The role that the researcher takes in their research is always important whatever the research tool is. In this respect, Ulin et al. (2005) recommend that it is necessary for the researcher to make their position clear whether insider or outsider. When insider, the researcher views the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants, whereas the outsider researcher uses their own perspective to evaluate the phenomenon. As for the current study, my role as a researcher and club facilitator is somewhere between insider and outsider. More precisely, I am an insider since I taught English in Saudi schools and am aware of the conditions of teaching and learning that students experience, so this made it easy for me to grant permissions and conduct the interviews (Coghlan, 2003). At the same time, I am an outsider since I am not going to share views and ideas with the participants or influence them in any way.

Despite issues around being both an insider and an insider, I made the decision to take a more prominent role in the study. I decided to act as the club facilitator because it was necessary to bring relevant teaching approaches and knowledge of learning styles to the research and replace the typical teacher-dominated classroom. Young learners are more likely to learn English in a more comfortable learning environment where they have the chance to discover learning. It was not possible to always record the class for ethical reasons given the age of the learners, although the class teacher was able to video record the club once or twice, so it was important for the researcher to use an alternative instrument to record what happens in the club. It was decided to use a researcher diary in which the researcher took simple notes during the class. After each session, the researcher took the time to write up detailed notes about each student's activities, interactions and levels of participation and enjoyment. These notes were an important source of data for analysing the activities within the club. Where possible, the researcher also took photos of the club which were used in data analysis of the club events. The classroom teacher also took photos when he visited the club.

4.10 Data analysis

The present study adopted the qualitative approach. To analyse the responses of the participants, the researcher used a computer software called MAXQDA (see Figure 2 below). This software facilitated the examination of the scripts, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the data. However, it is worth noting that while NVivo, a free service for students at the University of

Southampton, was available, MAXQDA has an advantage in its ability to support analysis using Arabic scripts, which NVivo does not.

As the participants of the study were young learners with low English proficiency, the researcher needed to pay for MAXQDA in order to effectively analyse the script of Arabic interviews and responses collected through RDD. This decision was taken due to the importance of considering the participants' language abilities and ensuring accurate analysis.

4.10.1 Data coding

Data coding is the process of creating and assigning codes to categorise data extracts. Qualitative researchers use data coding to derive themes and patterns for the actual analysis. Coding and analysis take place simultaneously and while coding, different themes emerge. It is a process of labelling and grouping similar types of data which, in turn, generates themes. In coding, there are two main approaches: deductive and inductive coding. The former involves a set of pre-established codes and applies them to the data set, which means that the researcher begins coding with prior knowledge and conceptual analysis of the research problem (Bihu, 2024). In inductive coding, the researcher makes detailed readings of the data to derive themes (Thomas, 2006); emerging themes are further studied for their similarities and differences (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In this coding, the researcher directly develops codes with what he or she finds in the data without having predetermined codes. So, going with the flow of the data and deriving themes helps the researcher explore the subject under investigation.

Coding comprises two main stages: initial coding and line-by-line coding. In the initial coding stage, the researcher reads through the data and understands it in order to get a general overview of the data and ultimately develops an initial set of codes that can be developed and refined later. Whereas the line-by-line stage of coding involves organizing the data into a formalized set of codes by digging deeper into the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In this stage, the researcher refines, expands and assigns additional codes or sub-codes to each line. Coding is an iterative process in which the researcher moves back and forth between, for example, interviews or documents to apply codes consistently throughout the data set (Drew, 2023). There are several methods of coding such as process coding, in vivo coding, descriptive coding, structural coding and values coding.

In this study, coding was mainly inductive in which two main steps were followed: code categorisation where the researcher created categories and made connections between the different codes and theme identification in which meanings were drawn from the data. During coding, the themes emerging from the data were compared to the themes found in the existing

literature. The researcher uses the 'in vivo' coding and the values coding. The first one involves making use of the participants' own words as codes since the researcher relied on the interviews conducted with the participants of the study, whereas the values coding was used to code the participants' insights regarding the advantages and disadvantages of SALL and the way they feel about the increase in their motivation and learning experiences inside SALL. By doing so, the researcher was able to systematically extract the participants' responses and categorise them into the appropriate themes within the Results and Discussion chapters. By organizing the data in this manner, it was easy for the researcher to present a coherent analysis and draw meaningful conclusions.

Furthermore, the researcher addressed the challenge of translating the Arabic script of the interviews and participants' diary sheets into English. To do this, he employed a computer software called GRAMMARLY EDITOR. This software served as a valuable tool for accurately translating the Arabic script into English, ensuring that the researcher had access to the complete dataset in a language that could be easily comprehended and analysed.

Overall, the combination of MAXQDA for script analysis, the careful consideration of language proficiency, the thematic organization of responses, and the use of GRAMMARLY EDITOR for translation enhanced the quality and depth of the researcher's analysis. These methodological choices contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic and strengthened the validity of the findings of the study.

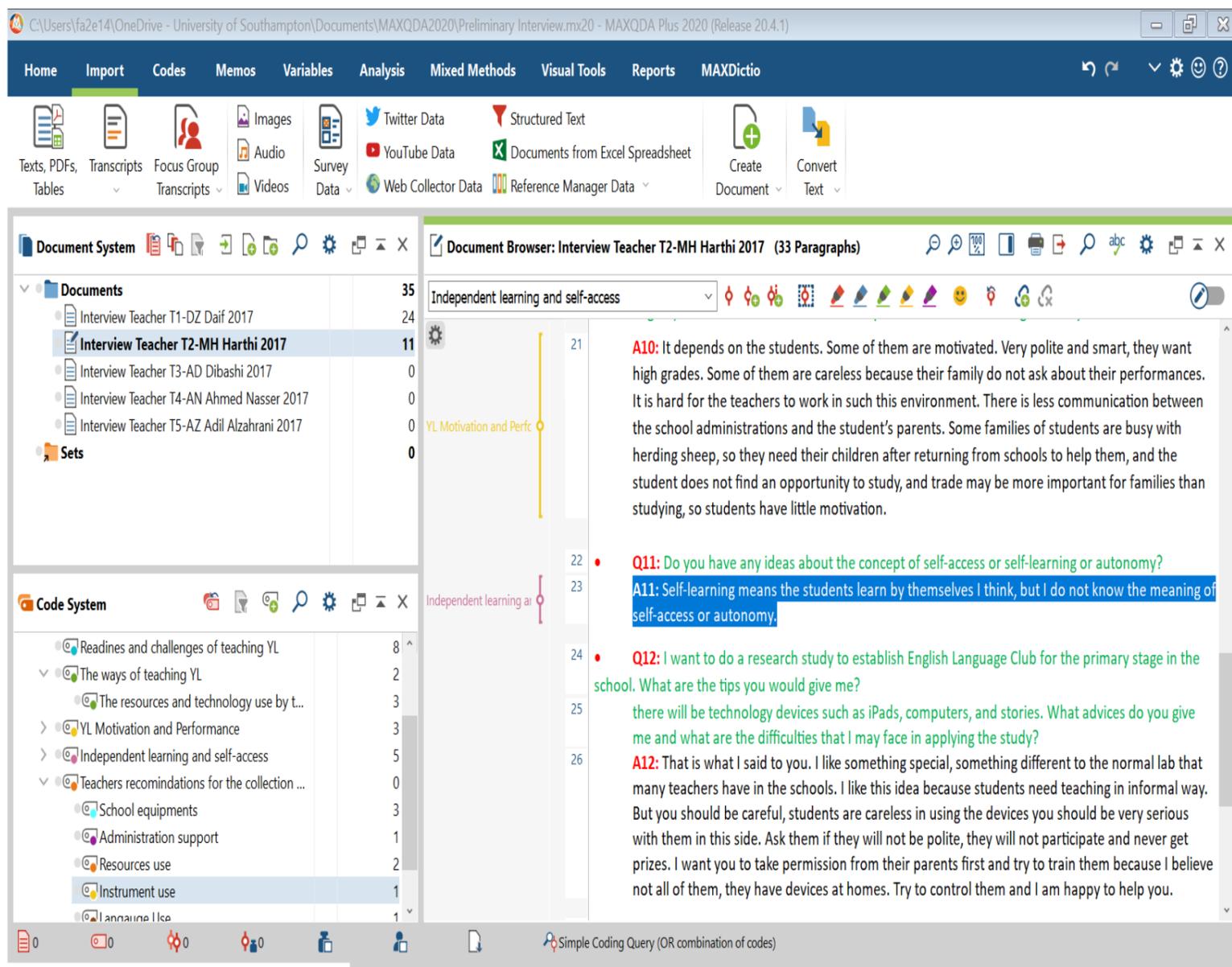


Figure 2. A screenshot of MAXQDA coding

4.11 Ethics and human participants' protection

Taking the responsibility to conduct research is a challenging process since it creates unique situations for different people such as learners and teachers as well as for organisations (Harrison & Whalley, 2008). For this reason, before starting data collection, ethical issues must be considered. There are five principles suggested by Hammersley and Traianou (2012) to be taken into consideration by researchers who plan to carry out research that involve humans. They are the following:

1. **Minimising Harm.** It refers to the need for researchers to think whether their research is harmful to any of the people, organisations or researchers in the field in any way. If true, researchers need to modify their strategies in order to decrease the probable harm to the minimum. In my study, I did not find any harm to any of the people involved in investigating the effectiveness of SALL in Saudi schools. Moreover, the findings did not cause any harm or damage to the reputation of the selected school.

2. Respecting Autonomy. It refers to the fact that the participants in the study should take their decision whether to participate freely without any pressure or influence practiced by the researcher or the organisation they belong to. For this study, I obtained a no-objection letter from the authorities of the selected school and a signed consent form from the participants indicating their free wish to participate in the study.
3. Protecting Privacy. This refers to the fact that the findings of the research should not be made public, and participants' names and other information should be confidentially dealt with. As for the present study, I did not indicate or publish any names or personal information related to the participants of the study; instead, their identities were anonymised by giving them pseudo names.
4. Offering Reciprocity. Being a participant in a study may require an additional work including attending discussions, interviews or filling out some forms for which participants may expect some rewards. To follow this principle in my research, I checked the possibility of this with the authorities of the selected school for the present study and found that rewards were not required.
5. Treating People Equitably. It means that all people involved in the research should be seen and treated as participants only and offered the same degree of respect regardless of their different official positions in the organisation. The participants of this study were dealt with equally in the sense that I paid them equal respect and attention.

In regards of human participants' protection, the researcher got a permission from the University of Southampton to conduct research on Saudi students, a permission from the administration of education, and the participants' parents/guardians. The researcher arranged the entire official documents before conducting the research. In addition, the participants were fully informed that their participation in the study is not obligatory and should feel confident that their responses used only for research purposes. The participants were informed of all the processes of data collection in the case of agreement to participate in the parts of the study, which may negatively affect the results later.

Chapter 5 Findings of the study

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the key themes around the learning preferences for one student-participant, Nadir and compares his learning preferences with the other six student-participants drawing on the appropriate data. It draws on data from the following research instruments: the researcher's diary, one interview with Nadir and one with his father (P1), one interview with another parent (P2), one interview with one of the teachers (T3-AD) and students' learner diary. In the data analysis, I gave each of the seven students a number in sequence i.e., S1 - S7. In presenting the data, I have given each of them a pseudonym so that their profiles can be more easily recognised. It begins by analysing the participants' learning preferences (5.2) where their preference for the pattern of working, the use of learning resources and their choice of materials whether digital or non-digital are dealt with. Section 5.3 deals with learning processes in which the strategies of learning adopted by learners are analysed; it includes group learning, reading strategy, vocabulary strategy, and speaking and listening strategies. Then the analysis moves to the learner autonomy (5.4) where their motivation, self-confidence and independence are analysed. The chapter ends with a comparison between classroom-based learning and self-access learning (5.5). This comparison is made under the learning atmosphere, parents' attitudes towards both types of learning, the barriers that learners encounter in both types of learning, and language learning progress.

5.2 Learning preferences

Generally, students have a preference for a particular learning style. Their preference usually depicts their competencies and learning experiences. No learning style is superior or inferior to another, but awareness of such preferences may facilitate students' learning; they may learn quickly and easily which ultimately may have a positive impact on their academic achievement. This kind of awareness can be useful for teachers as well; they may provide opportunities for their students, where possible, to use their own learning preferences which may have a positive impact on their progress. According to the available data, participants have indirectly indicated their learning preferences. These preferences are discussed below under three sub-sections: pattern of working, use of learning resources and the type of these materials whether digital or non-digital.

5.2.1 Pattern of working

Having examined the activities of the model participant, Nadir, thoroughly and focusing on whether his preference is to learn individually or with other students, it seems that group work is mostly preferred to individual one. For example, when he decided to select a story from the stories shown on the edge of the board (see Figure 3), he chose one of his classmates, Mshari, to read the story with him instead of doing it on his own.



Figure 3. Display of stories at SALL

Another example of group work preference is evident in Nadir's sheet of Day 1 (see Figure 4); he wrote, under the *Good things* he learnt in SALL "the story was interesting when I was reading it with my classmate, Mshari". Further evidence for Nadir's preference of working in groups comes from Diary 4 as he described the organisation of the groups as one of the *Good things* in SALL. Moreover, Nadir indicated his preference for group rather than individual work when he requested the teacher towards the end of the session to use a computer and the teacher could not help him, Nadir decided to join his classmates and started to move around them.

I want to learn أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم
قراءة القصة
Little bear won't sleep

Good things, why?  الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟
كانت هادئة ، كان ترتيب جميع القصص على رف المكتبة
القصص ممتعة وأنا أقرأها مع زميلي رامي ، وساعدنا
الأستاذ

Not good things, why?  الأمور الغير جيدة ، لماذا؟
أغلب القصص انجليزية
ليس هناك عربي أو انجليزي

Figure 4. Nadir's SALL dairy sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

I want to learn	Reading the story: <i>Little Bear Won't Sleep</i>
Good things, why?	Quiet. All the stories were organized at the board. I read without any haste. The story was interesting. I read it with my classmate, Rami, and the teacher helped us.
Not good things, why?	Most of the stories were in English. Only one was in English and Arabic.

Preference of group work is also found in Nadir's diary of Day 5 (see Figure 5) where he indicated his being very happy and interested in doing activities with other classmates. Under the *Good things* in SALL, he described the activity of sitting together in a circle using a bottle of water to randomly select a person to speak and ask. He said, "doing this was very interesting with my classmates, we speak and ask even if we don't know".

I want to learn أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم
لعيننا لعبة الحمار

Good things, why?  الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟
كنا نجلس مع بعض في دائرة ونسألهم
قائمة أسماء ونسألهم ونسأل حتى لو لم نعرف
صحة ذلك صمتنا مع زملائنا

Not good things, why?  الأمور الغير جيدة ، لماذا؟
كنت خائفة في البداية

Figure 5. Nadir’s SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 1

Translation

- I want to learn.** We played ‘Spin the Bottle’ game (dialogue game).
- Good things, why?** We were sitting together in a circle and using a water bottle; we speak and ask even though we do not know the meaning of some English words. It was very interesting with my classmates.

In his diary sheet of Day 9 (see Figure 6), Nadir appreciated the activity in which several classmates were involved and described it as ‘interesting’ giving an example when they asked each other about the meanings of the difficult words they encountered, thus a preference for group work.

I want to learn أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم
قراءة قصص جديدة
النوم

Good things, why?  الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟
عسى من إنجليزي
كان وصحبتنا
نسأل بعض إذا كانت الكلمات صعبة

Not good things, why?  الأمور الغير جيدة ، لماذا؟
أقل تسميلية

Figure 6. Nadir’s SALL diary sheet, Day 9, part 1

Translation

- I want to learn** Reading new stories ‘The Sleep’

Good things, why? Arabic and English story. It was fun. We asked each other if words were difficult.

Not good things, why? It was less entertaining.

In addition to the above sources of evidence for learners' preference for group work, the interviews I conducted with the parents and learners brought some indications that group work is preferred by learners. For instance, in the interview with the father of one of the students who attended SALL sessions, parent 1 (P1, henceforth), I asked him about the positive and negative things that his son mentioned about his experience in SALL, he said "[...] and he [his son] said that he worked with his classmates as a team and this is good because it increases the opportunity to search and discover" (Interview with P1). Based on this extract from the interview with P1, learning in a group is not only preferred by the students but also preferred and seen as an advantage by the parent as he appreciated such type of learning describing it as an "opportunity to search and discover". When I asked P2 the same question, he said,

[...] he [his son] talked a lot about the positive things, the good way of dealing and that he sometimes works alone and some other times with some of his classmate; this is positive which is collaborative work with others, so the child is learning with other children. (Interview with P2)

Like P1, P2 mentioned that group work is something good as he classified it under positive things or advantages, but he made no comments on his son's being working alone. Towards the end of the extract, P2 appreciated the group work way of learning describing it as "collaborative work".

In the following excerpt from the interview with one of the participants, the preference for group work is clear. It seems helpful for students to overcome some difficulties in choosing a particular story and reading it.

At first, I did not know what to choose. I found my colleague, [Faris], having the same problem, so I told him what about working together? In fact, we liked to work together in order to know how to do work in the club. It was a good experience because we read the story 'Little Bear' [...] The story became interesting. I was comfortable with my colleague. (Interview with Nadir)

In this excerpt, Nadir's statement "The story became interesting" might be a result of doing the activity of reading together since they helped each other in understanding the events of the story and in getting the meanings of the difficult words. Thus, it might be attributed to the group work activity. Moreover, the group work seems to be a good learning atmosphere since Nadir's last sentence is "I was comfortable with my colleague".

Learning in groups in SALL may have a positive effect on learners' willingness to learn in a way that could increase their motivation to communicate in the foreign language they are learning. In this way, acquisition will be facilitated once motivation is there. Instant positive results of SALL, as far as group work is concerned, were observed. For example, Nadir wrote in his SALL diary "I learnt to ask my friends in the conversation and answer. I have learnt the word 'favourite'", see Figure 7. This is evidence for the significant role of group work in improving the communication skills of the learners: speaking and listening which are necessary for the learner to be involved in any conversation. Here, Nadir learnt how to ask questions or at least he was encouraged to ask questions and to answer questions asked by other people in the conversation. In addition to that, it is a tool to obtain information from other participants who might be more competent than the speaker; for sure, their linguistic level is not the same; there will be participants whose level is higher than that of the others. In this way, there will be a benefit for participants with a low level; they might learn from other learners. Nadir approved this by saying "I have learnt the word 'favourite'". What can be said here is that group work can be linked to vocabulary learning in which the latter can be developed by the former.

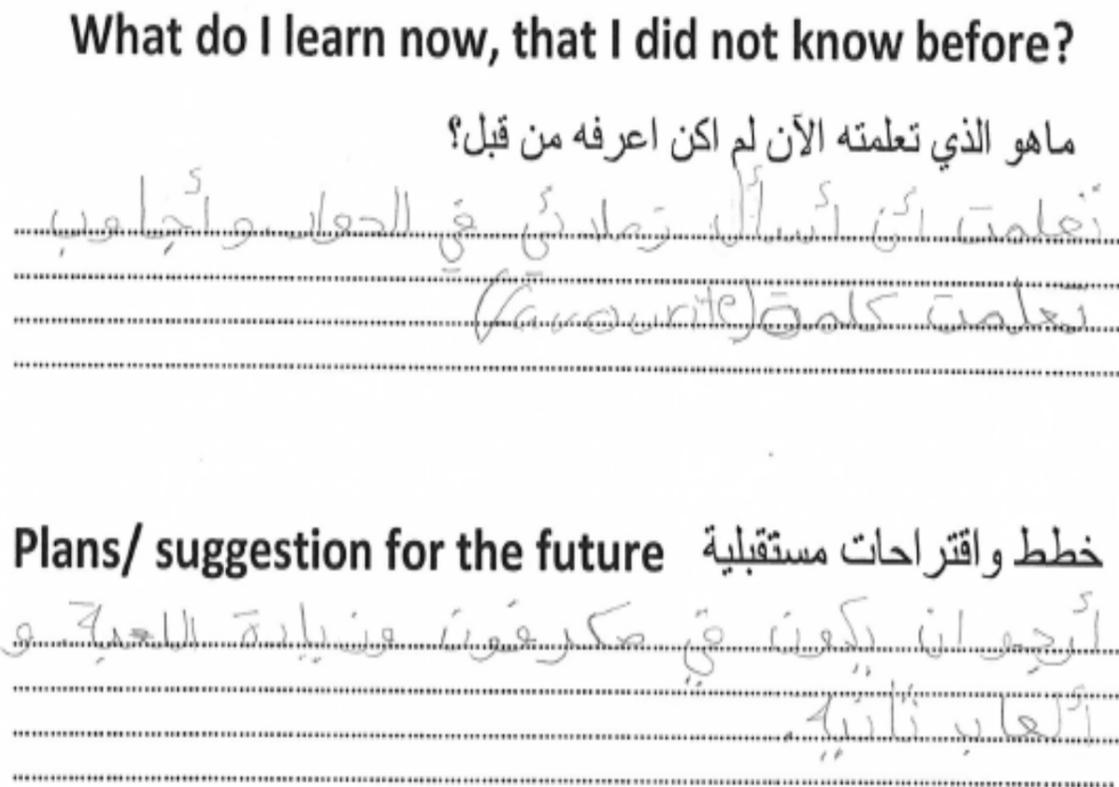


Figure 7. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? I learnt to ask my classmates in the dialogue and answer. I learnt the word 'favourite'.

Plans/suggestion for the future I wish there were a microphone and more games.

Similarly, emphasizing the idea of learning from each other, Rami mentioned in his diary sheet of Day 8 that they learn from one another when working in groups, see Figure 8.

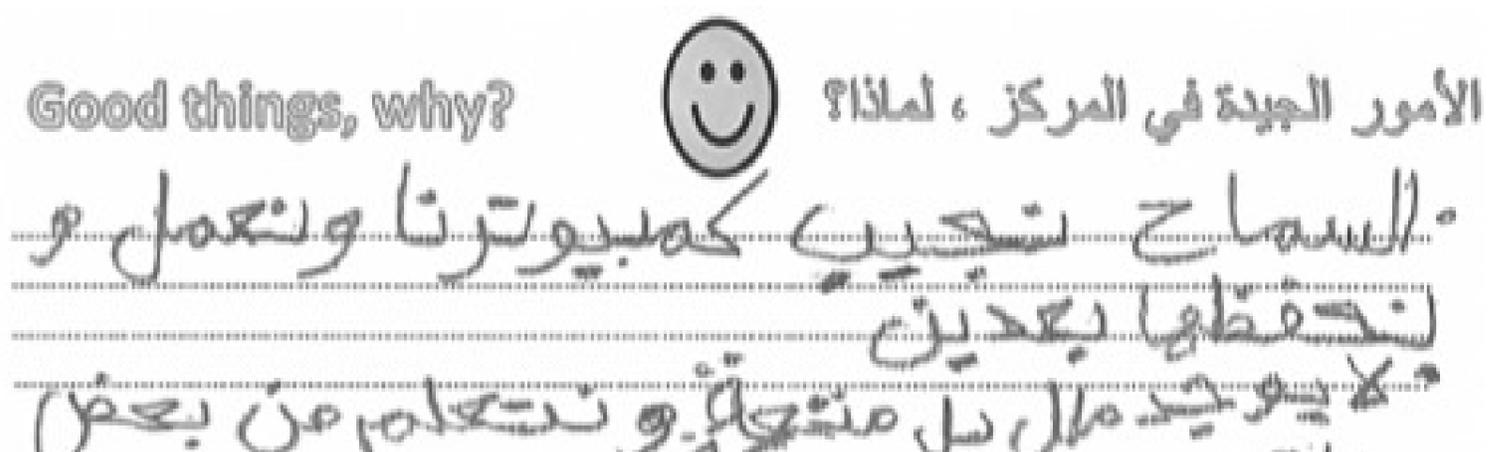


Figure 8. Rami's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The teacher allowed us to bring our computers to work inside the club and save our work.

It was exciting, there was no boredom, and we learnt from each other.

Other participants have indicated their preference for group work as well. For instance, Mshari in his diary sheet of Day 1, describing the story he read, wrote under the para *Good things, why?* that the story was not long and not difficult as his classmate helped him in reading that story (Figure 9).

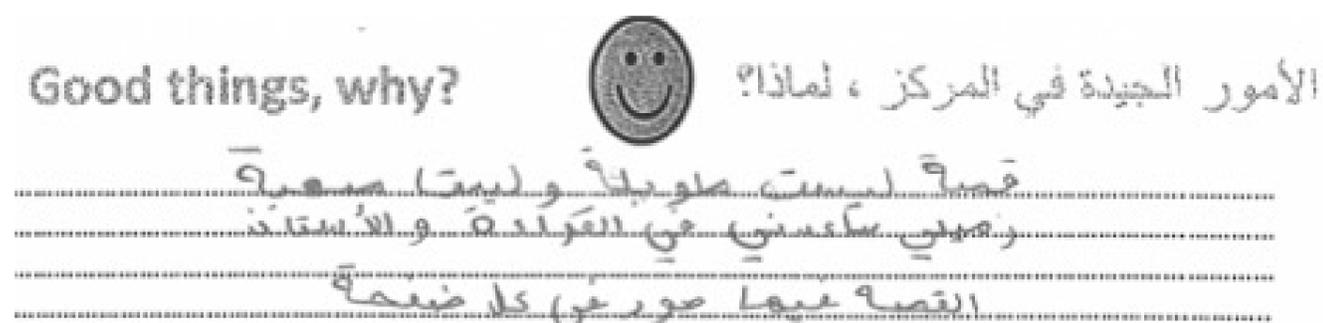


Figure 9. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The story wasn't long or complicated.

My classmate and teacher helped me with reading.

The story has pictures on every page.

Moreover, Ishaq wrote in his diary sheet of Day 1 that his classmate, Nadir, was with him in reading the story and helped him in learning and pronouncing the difficult words. Similarly, on Day 6 he indicated his preference for group work by appreciating the cooperation between his classmates while speaking, see Figure 10.

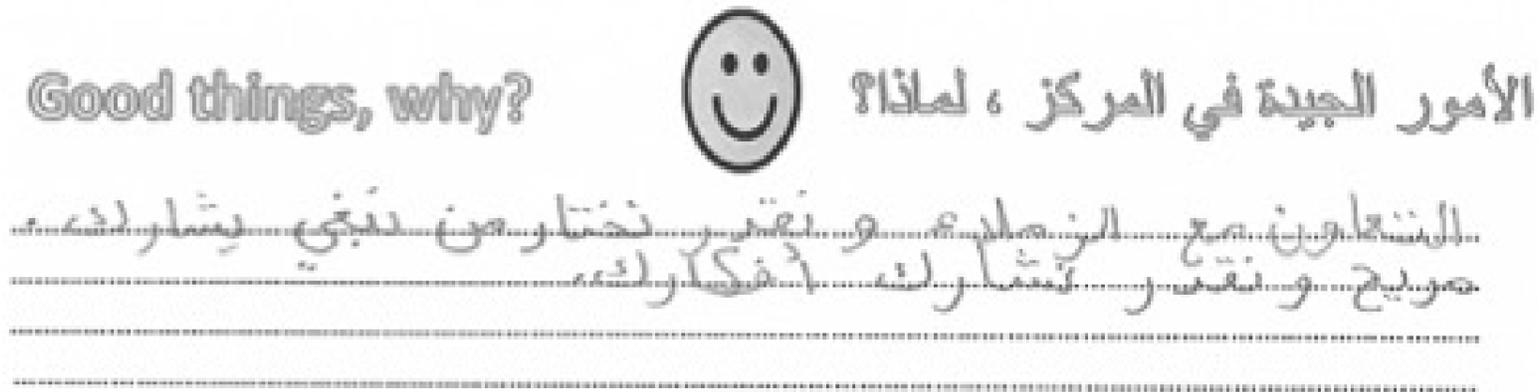


Figure 10. Ishaq’s SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? The teamwork with friends. We were able to choose who can join. Comfortable, and we could share ideas.

Furthermore, Basim described it as “entertaining’ when discussing something in a group indicating his appreciation for working in groups (Figure 11). Supporting the idea of entertainment, Rami emphasized the willingness to work in groups in his comment under *Plans/suggestions for the future* suggesting making more conversations with the different groups in SALL, see Figure 12.

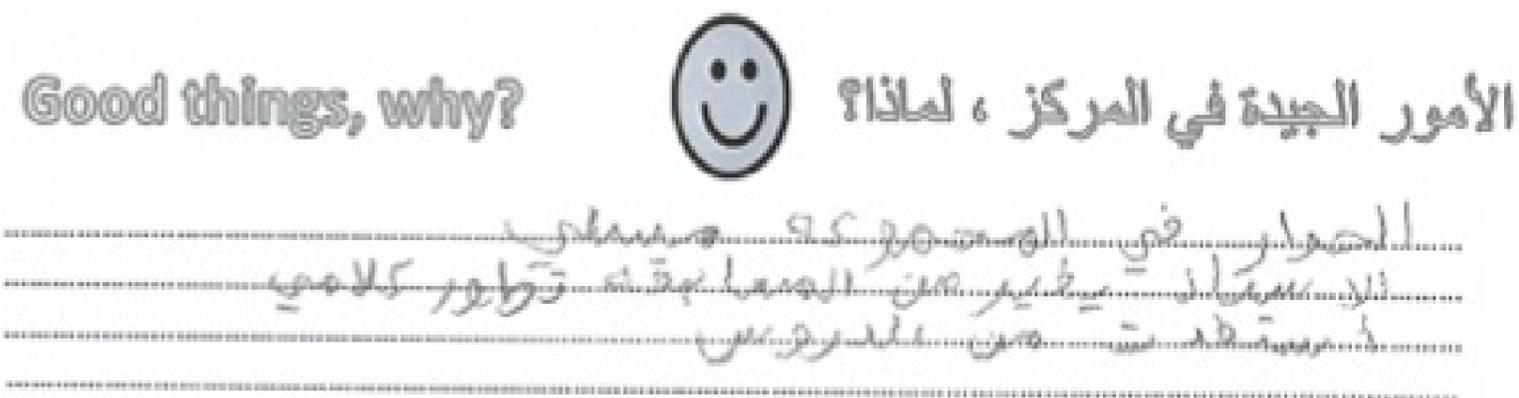


Figure 11. Basim’s SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The discussion in the group was entertaining.

The teacher changed the way of the competition, it has improved my speaking.

I learnt from the lessons.

Plans/ suggestion for the future مخطط واقتراحات مستقبلية
 أن نتكلم مع زملائنا في المجموعة
 لتأخذ من نقل
 قاعدة الآيباد

Figure 12. Rami's SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 2

Translation

Plans/suggestions for the future

We talk with the classmates from other groups.

Portable chargers.

iPad holders.

Based on the above discussion, group work seems to be preferred to individual one as it yields positive results as indicated by the participants' statements and the parents' comments on what they were told by their sons. It may improve learners' reading and communication skills including speaking and listening; it may also enrich their vocabulary items. It increases their willingness to communicate and reduces their shyness or hesitation to use the target language. Moreover, group work seems a relaxing preferred learning atmosphere, especially for YLs whose linguistic background is not very much solid.

Although many participants indicated the usefulness and their preference for working in groups, few participants indicated their annoyance implying that working in groups has some negative results or shortcomings. For example, Rami complained about the noise caused by the students while working in groups. This was on Day 5 and was repeated in his dairy sheet of Day 6 adding that he sat outside as a result of being disturbed by the noise coming from the other students, see Figure 13.



Figure 13. Rami's SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 1

Translation

Not good things, why?

There was noise, and I sat outside.

Another example of dissatisfaction with working in groups comes from Basim who, under *Plans/suggestions for the future* para of Day 6, suggested that “each group should be far from the other” as shown in Figure 14 which implies that Basim was disturbed by other groups in a way or another since he did not mention the reason for his suggestion in his diary sheet of that day.

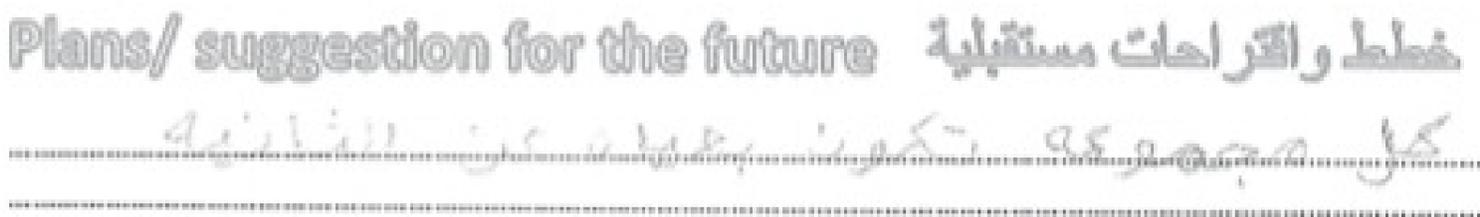


Figure 14. Basim's SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 2

Translation

Plans/suggestions for the future

Each group should be far from the other.

5.2.2 Use of learning resources

In the learning process, resources are very important because they assist the learner with the different kinds of information they need. While English teachers can use diverse types of materials in the traditional classroom, their most frequently used resource is the course book; they rely heavily on the course book when they choose what to implement to teach English as a foreign language. Therefore, investigating and focusing on the learning resources at SALL will help in understanding the teaching and learning materials implemented in a way to understand how learners at SALL used them and how they responded towards the implementation of such materials.

According to Nadir's diary sheets, the story that the participants selected was suitable for their level. Although they could not understand the story, they were happy as they started to see the

pictures and turned the pages quickly. Another thing is that Nadir asked the teacher to use the English-Arabic dictionary to look up the meaning of new words.

Nadir prefers reading or listening to stories. At first, with another classmate, Mshari, he selected a story to read, he had the desire to learn from reading a story as indicated in his diary sheet of Day 1 under the para *I want to learn*. He repeated this wish on Day 3, see Figure 15 below, and on Day 9 (Figure 6 above) as he said that he likes to read new stories. The availability of stories around Nadir and other learners seems to be essential.

I want to learn أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم
قراءة قصة جديدة من الكمبيوتر

Good things, why?  الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟
التنظيم، جانا مرتين كل واحد بطرس في مكانه المحدد
السيارة - العصاة كانوا جالسين من الكمبيوتر
أسمع أنا ونصلي السمت ونشرون الصورة
تتحرك.

Not good things, why?  الأمور الغير جيدة ، لماذا؟
الوقت قصير لأن ودي أجرب شيء ثاني
الإنترنت والكمبيوتر بطيئين

Figure 15. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

I want to learn	Reading a new story from the computer.
Good things, why?	Organization. We were tidy, everyone was sitting on his seat as specified by the teacher. The story was nice from the computer. I listened to the sound with my classmate and, we saw the picture moving.
Not good things, why?	Time was short because I wanted to try something else. The Internet and the computer were slow.

Like Nadir, Mshari preferred reading stories as a learning resource; he wrote in his diary sheet of Day 1 that he likes to read the story *Firefighter* and said that it has pictures on each page. He repeated his preference on Day 8 describing the story he read as 'nice and suitable' because it is not difficult, not long and bilingual having English and Arabic; he wrote that it has new words and useful expressions such as 'we are proud'. On the last day, Day 10, Mshari wrote that his reading ability had been developed and he had obtained new information about the UK from the stories he read. Whereas it was the first time Ishaq read a story in English as he wrote in his diary sheet of Day

1; he said that the story was interesting. Likewise, on Day 8 he appreciated the story that was given to them by their teacher; he said that it was nice having clear pictures and translated into Arabic in addition to the English text.

Moreover, describing the story he read under *Good things, why?*, Zamil said “There was no boredom. The story was very beautiful and colourful, and it looked attractive. It was Arabic and English story”, see Figure 16. In his words, Zamil supports Ishaq’s appreciation of the presence of Arabic beside English in the stories they read which seems a preference for learners to read English stories with their Arabic translation side by side.



Figure 16. Zamil’s SALL diary sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

There was no boredom.

The story was very beautiful and colourful, and it looked attractive.

It was Arabic and English story.

On Day 7, Zamil transformed his preference for stories as a learning resource in his Writing diary; he tried to write a story about two kids playing a game of FORTNITE; he wrote a short paragraph presented in Figure 17 below.

My writing/ drawing diary

Once upon a time there was two players that played Fortnite they played many levels till reaching the last level but they can't win... because they played alot And their moter forbidden the game because they didn't study.

Figure 17. Zamil's SALL diary sheet, Day 7, part 3

Finally, using stories has been approved as a learning resource from which learners can be benefited. For instance, Faris indicated his gains after reading the story mentioning that it improved his pronunciation, comprehension and learning of new animal vocabulary including words such as 'owl' and 'fox', see Figure 18.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟
 كيف اتحدث الكلمات مع زميلاتي
 كيف افهم معناتها بالهدى
 كائنات الحيوان انا ان اسد = اسد - فوس = فوس - ثعلب

Figure 18. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 1, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? How to pronounce the words with my classmate's help.
 How to understand the Arabic meaning of English words.
 The animal words: Owl and Fox.

Figure 5 above shows that Nadir was very happy in speaking and asking his classmates during the game they were playing. So, games seem to be an effective learning instrument for YLs of a foreign language. In a number of instances, Nadir indicated his happiness and willingness to learn

through games. In Figure 7, for example, he asked for more time for the game and demanded more games to be added. Moreover, he described the game ‘My Swashbuckle Adventure’ as very interesting and useful and drew something about this particular game in his drawing diary shown in Figure 19 below.



Figure 19. Nadir’s SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 3

Similarly, Mshari stated the effectiveness of games in learning; he said, “The game had words and we interacted with the sound ... I felt enthusiastic and willing to learn English”, see Figure 20. Since he was talking about the game at the beginning of his comment, the feeling of enthusiasm and willingness can be interpreted as a result of playing the game, thus, it is one of the benefits of including games as a learning resource.



Figure 20. Mshari’s SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The game had words and we interacted with the sound.

A beautiful place.

I felt enthusiastic and willing to learn English.

Funny sounds that we can interact with.

Zamil described his feelings while playing the game that he was excited and mentioned that he learnt and memorized new words as he gained from the game, see Figure 21.



Figure 21. Zamil's SALL diary sheet, Day 9, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

We memorized the words from the game.

The sounds were entertaining in the game, and I was excited while I was playing.

The iPad was easy to touch, and I was able to carry it anywhere.

As shown in Figure 22 below, Faris described the game of 'Spin the Bottle' as an entertaining game having a lot of fun indicating his gains in listening and speaking skills through asking and answering questions with his classmates. Moreover, he appreciated the general atmosphere of the game as it required them to sit on the floor instead of being seated on chairs, the traditional method.



Figure 22. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

It was very beautiful and fun game by using the bottle.

I learnt to listen and discuss with my classmates, and they helped me.

We're sitting on the floor; it was a good idea to change because we used to sit on chairs.

In the interview, when I asked Nadir about the dialogue game, he said,

A very entertaining game. At the beginning, I did not expect it this way and I felt that it was difficult for me to speak, express and ask another colleague, but your method was comfortable and not formal. I felt that there is no problem in committing mistakes... We tried to answer in English. The game was nice and interesting because we were watching the water bottle spinning and waiting for the question. (Interview with Nadir)

As clear in this excerpt, using games as a learning resource is fruitful yielding a positive feeling towards learning English language that it is not very difficult as the interviewee expected at the beginning "I felt that it was difficult for me to speak, ...". Furthermore, it shows the learners' preference for the learner-centered approach as indicated by his statement "I felt that there is no problem in committing mistakes" which tells that he used to be worried about committing mistakes in the past and more precisely outside SALL where the teacher-centred approach is used. Similarly, Mshari in his diary sheet of Day 3 described the game 'Spin the Bottle' as a game that is rich in new vocabulary and said that he feels enthusiastic and has the desire to learn English. On day 5, Mshari wrote about the new things that he learnt including how to form and answer questions in English. Whereas for Ishaq, the same game was a nice, entertaining game; he said that he learnt the dialogue through this game and how one can listen to and speak English with his classmates in a comfortable atmosphere; he described it as a nice idea since they were sitting on the ground instead of using chairs. Another evidence for the importance of games in learning a foreign language comes from P2's statement "he [his son] told me that you [the researcher] provided them stories and games in the club, and this is a useful variety" (Interview with P2).

According to the above drawing sheet (Figure 19), Nadir's comments on this particular game as shown in Figure 5 and the extract from the interview, games seem to be a useful learning resource for young learners as is clear from his statements "We tried to answer in English" and "... waiting for the question".

Another important resource is the dictionary. In learning a foreign language, dictionaries are important and an indispensable learning tool. The dictionary is one of the oldest and the most prevalent in educated societies. In addition to the definition of the word that represents its one or

more meanings, a dictionary provides information that is valuable for the learners of the foreign language including the standard pronunciation, morphological and syntactic information, and information about the origin and the usage of that word. Moreover, parts of speech – such as nouns, verb or prepositions, collocations, synonyms, antonyms and examples in which the word is used are provided by good dictionaries. The role of the dictionary in language learning is not limited to providing the above information but extends to assisting them in understanding and producing texts.

In the context of this study, the dictionary is frequently mentioned by the participants and the use and availability of the dictionary in their club is essential. They made use of it to get the meaning of the new words they came across. The importance of the dictionary is also seen in their requests to increase the number of dictionaries in the club as seen in Figure 23 below.

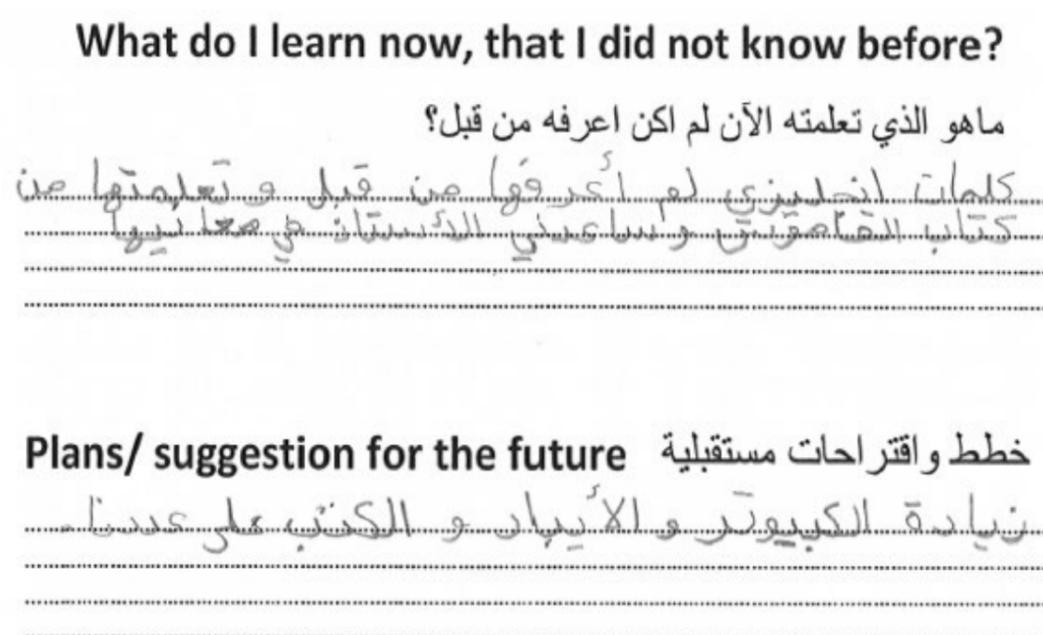


Figure 23. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 2, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? English words that I did not know before; I learnt them from the dictionary and the teacher helped me in their meanings.

Plans/suggestion for the future Increase the number of computers, iPads and the books according to number of the students.

Asking the authority to increase the number of dictionaries in SALL relatively at an earlier stage, Day 2, implies that Nadir finds the availability of dictionaries in SALL is something essential and indispensable in learning English and his statement “increase the computers, iPad and the books according to number of the students” seems to be an urgent requirement since it occurs in his

second day in the club. Moreover, supporting the effectiveness of the dictionary in the club as indicated by Nadir in Figure 23 above, Ishaq mentioned in his diary sheet of Day 8 that the dictionary is one of the good things in the club as he used it to get the meaning of the new words he came across while reading the story.

Describing the picture dictionary that he used on Day 3, Zamil said that it was easy to use since it has pictures and simple examples that can be understood by learners at his level, see Figure 24 below.



Figure 24. Zamil's SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

It was quiet and I was able to focus.

I learnt by myself, and I discovered new words and pictures.

It was suitable, not hard, there were photos and easy sentences.

I understood the difference between the countries.

(Talking about the picture dictionary 'Good Word'- Oxford Kids.)

Participants found the Painter a useful learning resource as they started to memorize the new words that they learnt in the club by drawing pictures of these words or shapes and writing them on the Painter. For instance, Nadir wrote on his Day 8 sheet (Figure 25) that he learnt to draw shapes and write their names in Arabic and English and indicated his desire to do this at home as well. Figure 26 below shows Nadir's drawing of different shapes and their Arabic and English meanings.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟

الشكالات واسماؤها بالعربي والانجليزي English

Plans/ suggestion for the future خطط واقتراحات مستقبلية

أقوم بالشكالات في البيت واكتبها بالانجليزي

Figure 25. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? The English words of Geometric shapes when translating them from Arabic to English.

Plans/suggestion for the future I do the shapes and write the words in English at home.

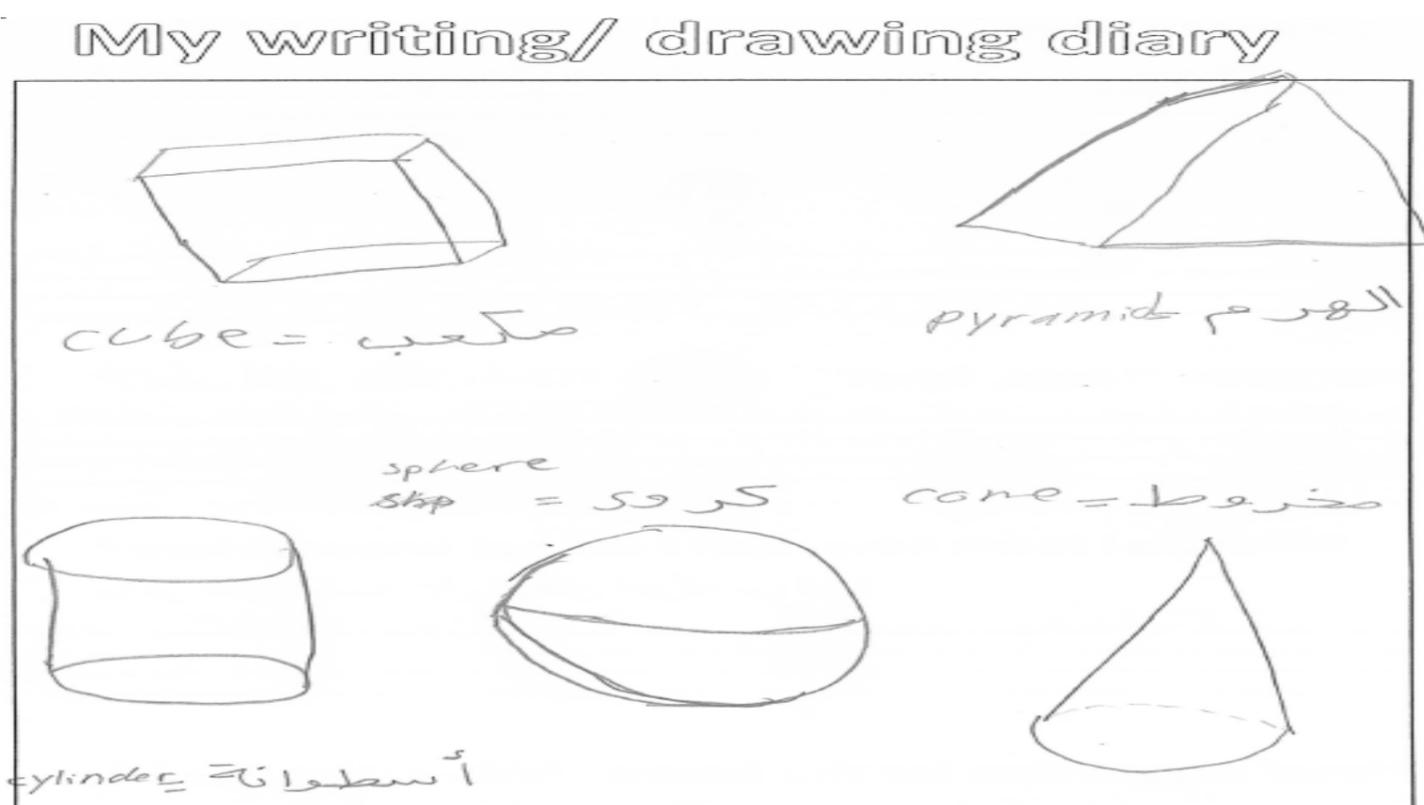


Figure 26. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 3

Figure 26 shows the presence of some English words: cube, pyramid, cylinder, sphere and cone. Each word is written with its Arabic meaning above or below the shape it refers to (Appendix K). This shows the validity of the Painter as a resource for learning English as a foreign language by YLs since Nadir was able to draw different shapes and name each of them in English. By using the

Chapter 5

Painter in this way, there will be an image for each word that will be stored in the brain of the learner. Thus, it is an effective method of learning vocabulary.

Moreover, the drawing sheet of Mshari of Day 2 indicates the effect of using the Painter in his learning of some English vocabulary. He drew a picture of a whale and a dolphin. On the top of the sheet, he wrote 'Sea animals' as a title; under the first picture, he wrote 'whale \ big' and under the second item he wrote 'dolphin fast', see Figure 27. Such practice of writing the names of the animals and a word that describes each animal informs the reader that this learner has started to acquire the language with the help of this device, the Painter. So, Painter is a valid learning instrument at least for YLs who mostly like learning through seeing or drawing pictures.

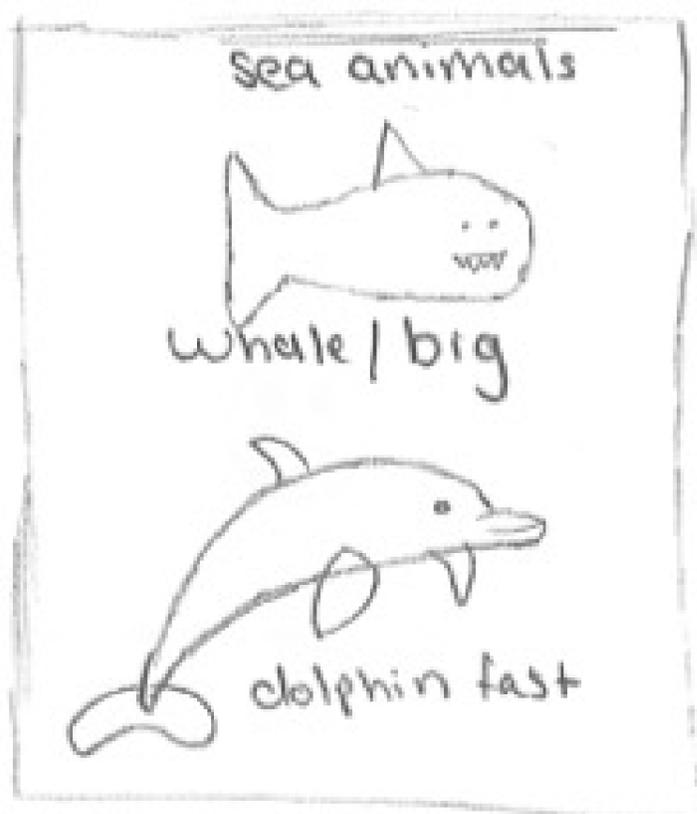


Figure 27. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 2, part 3

In the students' interviews, I asked Nadir about his opinion of the Painter, and he said

because I love drawing a lot, I prefer to draw words and write their meaning so that I never forget them. I always use my computer at home for drawing words and shapes. I felt that I did something nice and useful. (Interview with Nadir)

The above extract indicates Nadir's willingness to learn through the Painter and his preference for such a learning resource. It also indicates his satisfaction with the results of doing so as he described it as "something nice and useful".

The learning resources of the club including stories, games and other resources received a kind of satisfaction not only from the students but also from the parents as one of the parents described them as a “useful variety”. The extract below is from the interview with P2.

I hope that the school or the library will provide us with foreign stories that can be borrowed. He [his son] told me that you provided them stories and games in the club, and this is a useful variety. (Interview with P2)

As clear from the above excerpt from the interview, parent 2 implies his request for more English stories not only to be read at the school or the club but also to be borrowed by the students, so they can find more time for reading English stories. He said so because he noticed the impact of such a resource on his son’s progress and desire to learn.

The use of various learning resources was appreciated by the students in general. Evidence comes from the interview I conducted with one of the teachers. When I asked T3-AD about the impact of SALL in this regard on the students, he said that students can be classified into different groups: some of them want to read stories, some like to take the story home, some students were happy to use their laptops while others prefer to use tablet devices because they prefer learning using their hands in touching the screen. He said, “It is good to divide them into different groups some of them use laptops, some of them use tablets, learning by touching screen, some of them like to read stories or textbooks” (Interview with T3-AD).

Nothing can be always perfect. Students made some complaints about the learning resources at SALL. For instance, Faris and Zamil wrote some comments under *Not good things, why?* that can be counted as shortcomings of the resources. On his first day, Faris complained about the difficulty he faced while reading the story in addition to the failure of the computer and iPad which were not working, see Figure 28.

Faris wrote in his diary sheet “Some stories were difficult” and “The computer and iPad were not working”. Moreover, Zamil complained about the length of the story and that it was not easy for him to read because of the size of the font. He agreed with Faris in that some of the stories were difficult as he described his story as ‘long and difficult’. Zamil also had a negative experience, a complaint about the time given to students, in general, to practice the new words they learn while using learning resources at SALL, see Figure 29.

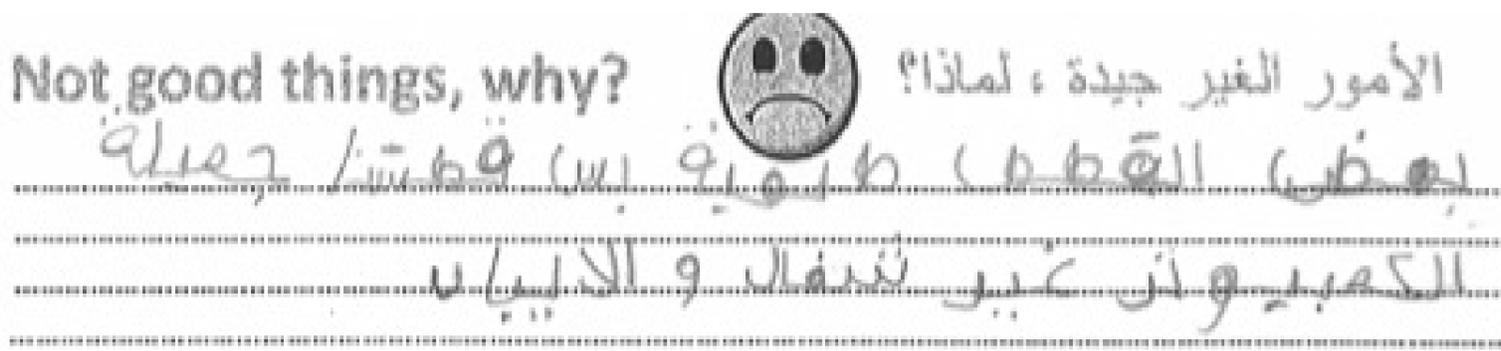


Figure 28. Faris’s SALL diary sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

Not good things, why?

Some stories were difficult, but our story was beautiful.

The computer and the iPad were not working.

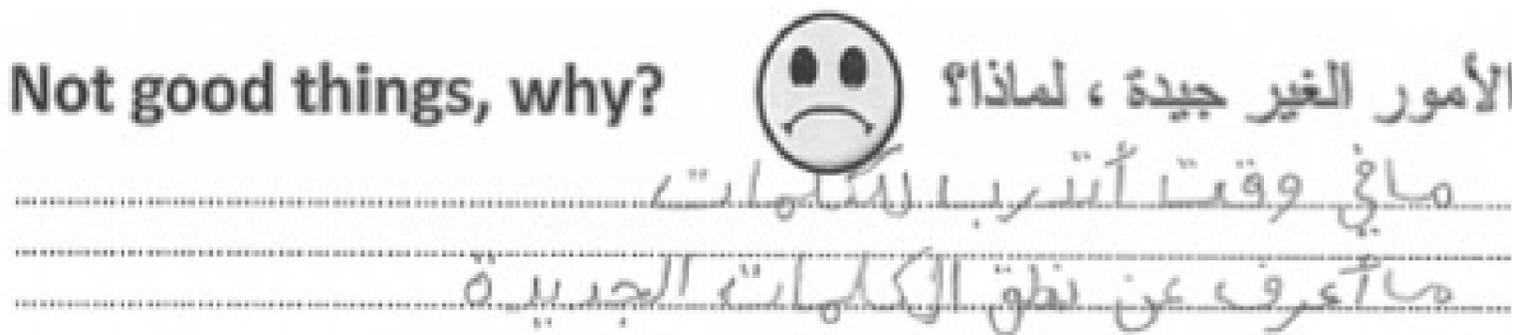


Figure 29. Zamil’s SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

Not good things, why?

Time was not enough time to practice words.

I did not know how to pronounce the new words.

(The picture dictionary ‘Good Word’- Oxford Kids.)

5.2.3 Digital vs. non-digital preferences

‘Digital learning resource’ is a term used to refer to the materials used in the context of SALL that aim to support the young learners’ achievement of the learning goals of the centre, SALL.

Nowadays, there is an enormous need for teachers of the basic skills to integrate digital resources into their lessons for learners. So, digital learning seems to be a constituent of a modern system of learning which is seen as an augmentation device for learners’ experience. It incorporates the involvement of some technological devices into lessons as a means to support this type of learning.

These devices include computers or laptops, iPods, cameras, etc. In the context of the current study, it is important to decide whether it is necessary to include digital resources in the teaching and learning processes of the YLs at SALL.

Using digital or non-digital resources is still a personal choice. In most cases, it is determined by how comfortable the user or the learner is. However, having reviewed the diary sheets of the participants, it seems that they paid some attention to the types of available resources. For example, in Figure 15 above, Nadir indicated his desire to read a new story from the computer and under the para *Good things* he said, "The story was nice from the computer, I listen to the sound with my classmate and see the picture moving". Moreover, he appreciated the use of games as a learning tool; he described the game *My Swashbuckle Adventure* as "very nice and interesting, the sound was as if I were in the forest", see Figure 19 above and Figure 30 below.

I want to learn أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم
لعينا لعبة اسمها
My Swashbuckle Adventure.

Good things, why?  الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟
صدا حلوة وممتعة
ونقدر نلعب فيها
الصوت كني حي الغابة

Not good things, why?  الأمور الغير جيدة ، لماذا؟
الوقت قليل
الإنترنت

Figure 30. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 1

Translation

I want to learn	We played a game named: My Swashbuckle Adventure
Good things, why?	It was very nice and fun. We could play it. The sound was as if I were in the forest.
Not good things, why?	The time was little. The Internet

The use of the computer as a device that contains digital materials has been mentioned by the other participants who appreciate and view this device as a valuable learning resource. For example, Rami wrote in his diary sheet of Day 8 that his teacher permitted them to bring their personal computer devices to the club to use them. He described the whole situation as an exciting and boredom-free atmosphere in which he and other students learnt from each other and enjoyed the various English learning websites, see Figure 31 below.

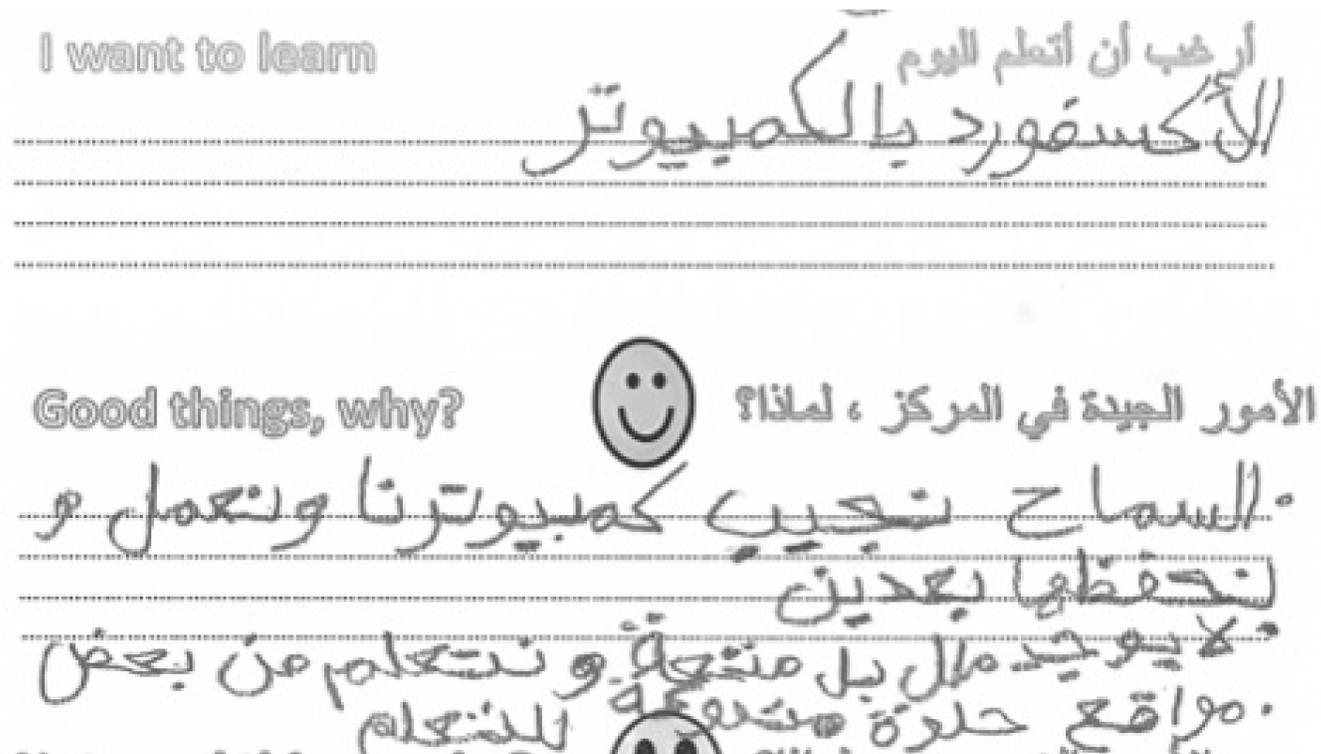


Figure 31. Rami's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1

Translation

I want to learn

Oxford by computer.

Good things, why?

The teacher allowed us to bring our computers to work inside the club and save our work.

It was exciting, there was no boredom, and we learnt from each other.

It was an excellent variety of websites for learning English.

Furthermore, as far as the preference for the use of computers and digital resources is concerned, Zamil has frequently mentioned such devices in his comments. For instance, on his second day in the club, he clearly wrote his desire to listen to and learn new words from the computer; under the para *Good things, why?*, he mentioned that he listened to some English material in the American accent. On Day 10, Zamil repeated his wish to learn things using the computer; this time he wanted to learn through some learning websites and stories, see Figure 32.

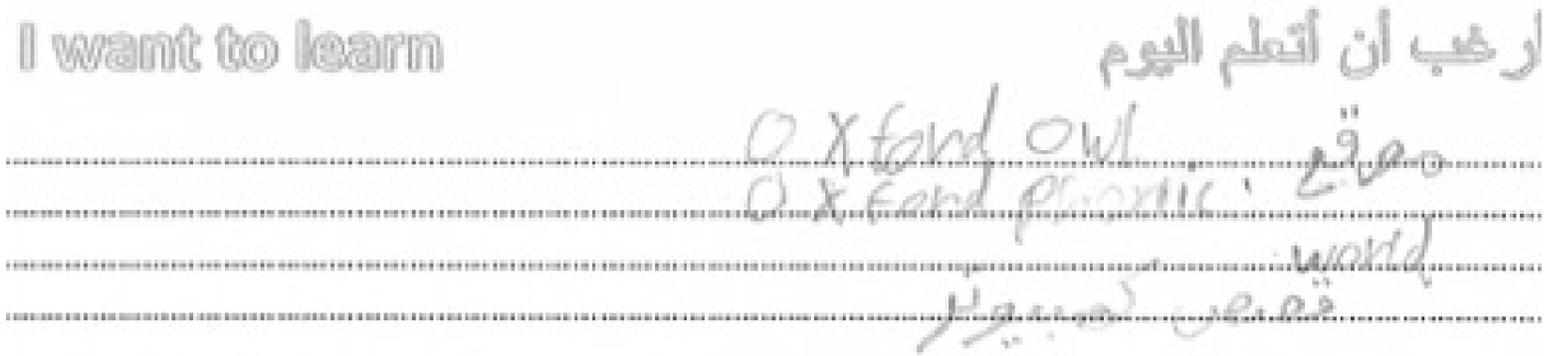


Figure 32. Zamil's SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 1

Translation

I want to learn. The Oxford Owl website
Oxford Phonics world.
Stories on the computer.

On Day 2, Mshari wrote about the new things that he learnt in SALL in which he appreciated the use of the iPad saying that his reading ability has been improved through using the iPad adding that he listened to the sound and repeated after them. Ishaq mentioned in a number of his dairy sheets that the iPad is nice and easy to use; it has many nice games. Similarly, Faris made some comments concerning the use of the iPad as a valuable digital source of learning. As shown in Figure 33 below, Faris wrote that the iPad had beautiful games for which one of his classmates wanted to join him to play the game.

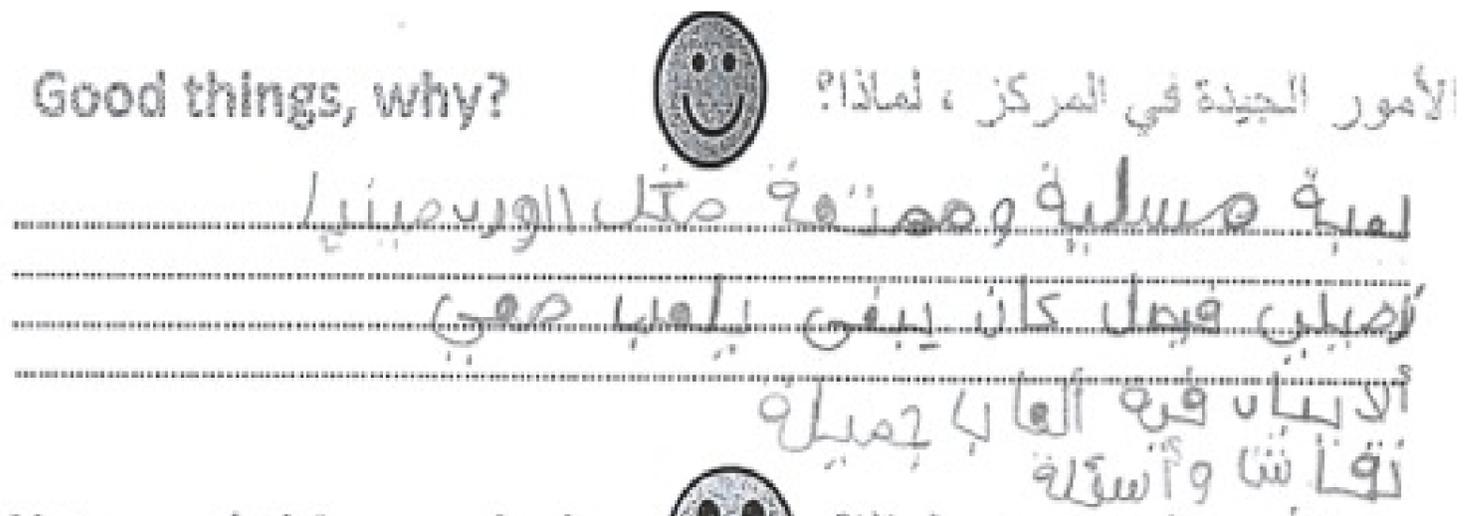


Figure 33. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 9, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? It was a fun and exciting game.
My classmate, Faisal, wanted to play with me.
The iPad had beautiful games.

Discussion and questions.

Games, learning websites and applications are associated with the use of computers and iPads. For example, Faris on Day 10 described the application 'Monkey Puzzle' which he used on the iPad as a useful one for his vocabulary development in which he had not to rely on the help of others as the game tells him if the answer was right or wrong, see Figure 34.

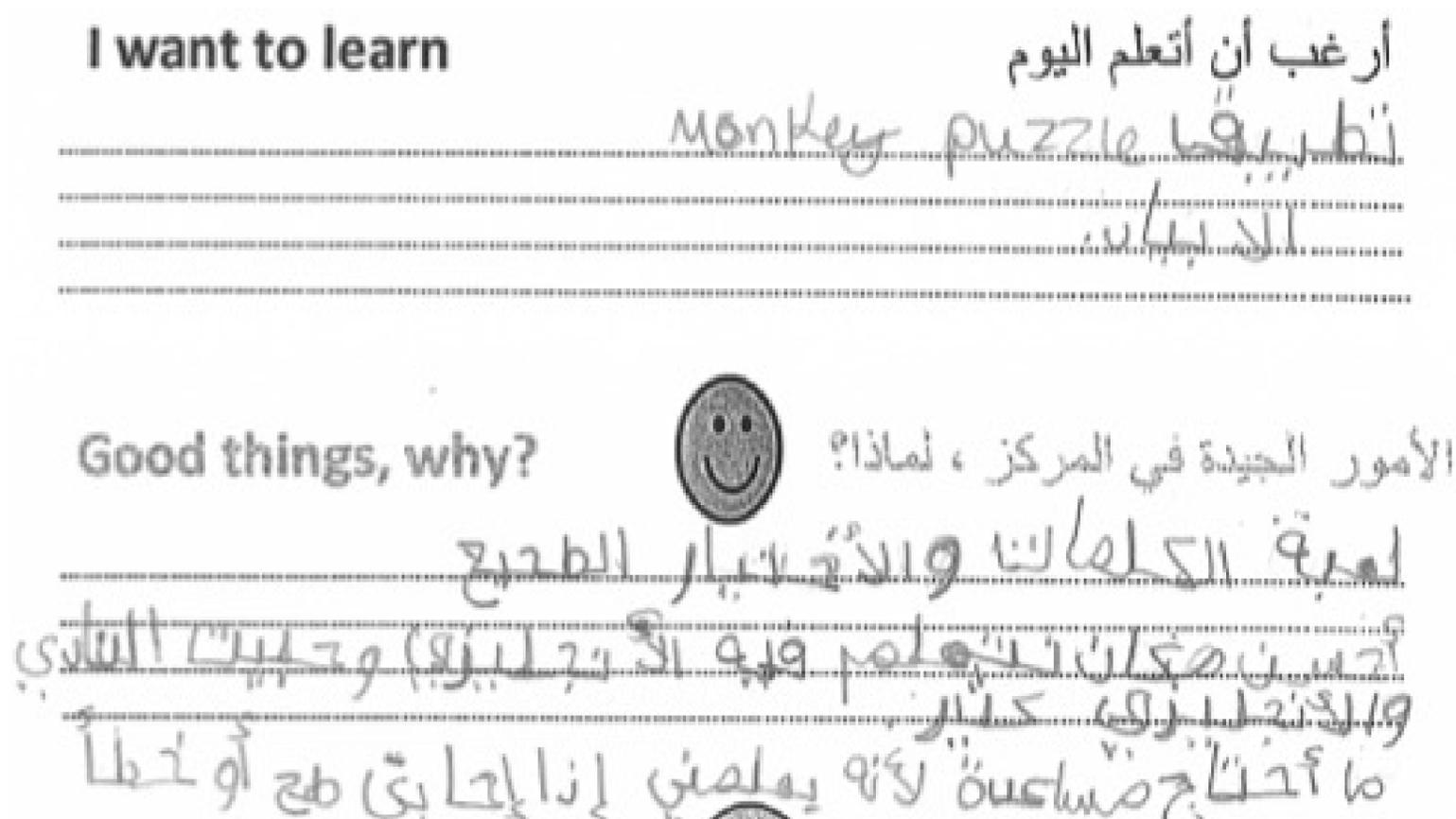


Figure 34. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 1

Translation

I want to learn

The application: 'Monkey Puzzle' on the iPad.

Good things, why?

It was a word game in which I had to choose the correct answer.

It was the best place to learn English and I liked English and the club.

I didn't need help because it tells me if my answer is right or wrong.

Similarly, as shown in Figure 35, Basim appreciated the use of the application 'Sock Puppet' and mentioned that it improves speaking skills as well as pronunciation as he can record his voice and listen to it again.

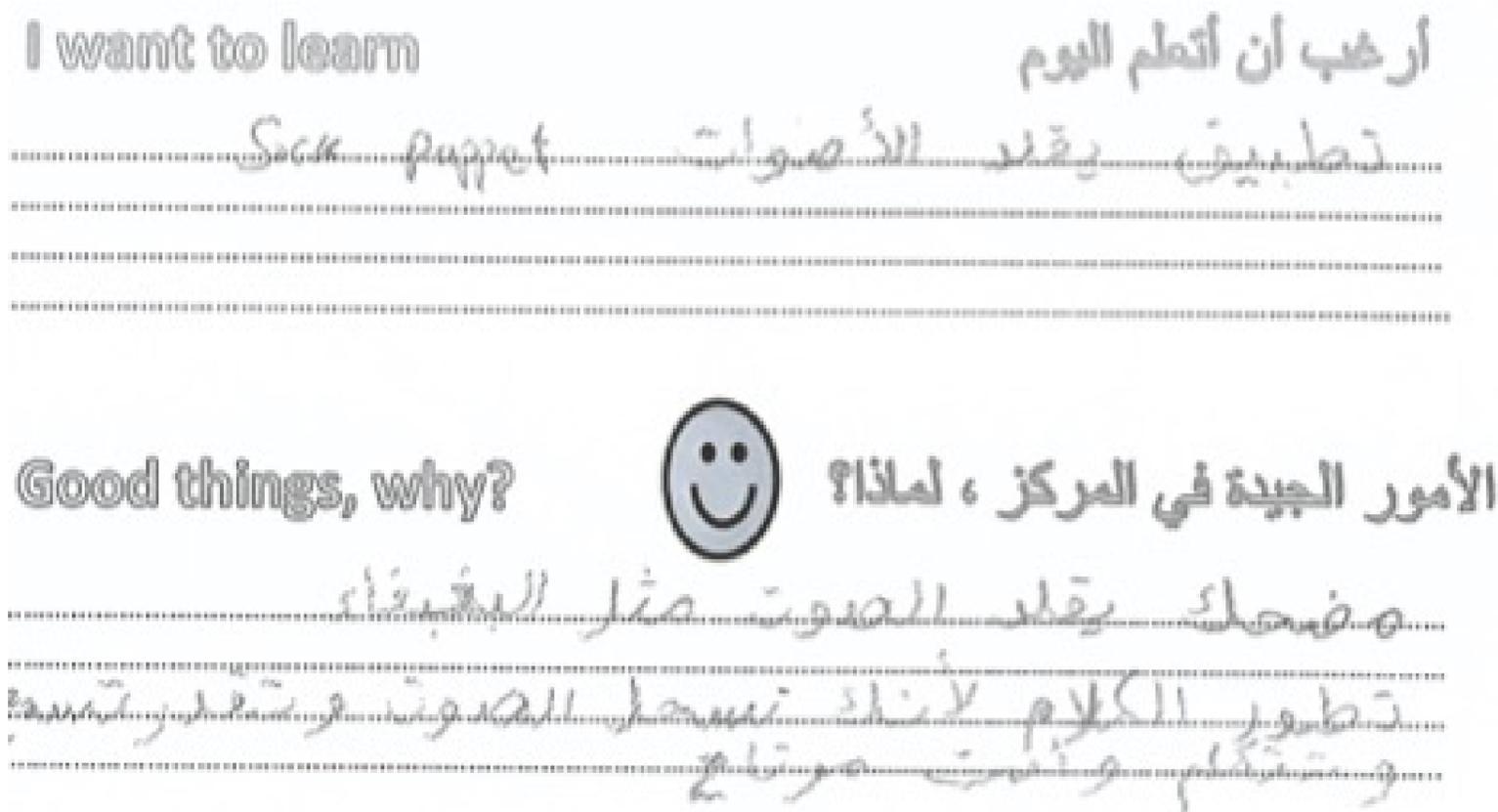


Figure 35. Basim's SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 1

Translation

I want to learn

An application that copies voices: 'Sock Puppet'

Good things, why?

It was funny, it copied my voice like a parrot.

Improves speaking because you record the voice, and you can listen and talk while you are comfortable

Other participants valued the use of digital resources in their learning of English at SALL. For example, Mshari, in his diary sheet of Day 1, demands the availability of the Internet and more devices in the club; Furthermore, on Day 6 he (Mshari) valued the use of learning applications and that it is not only the book they learn from. This shows his willingness to use the digital resources for which the Internet is necessary and his preferences in general for such resources. See Figure 36 and Figure 37 respectively.

Plans/ suggestion for the future خطط واقتراحات مستقبلية
يكون فيه انترنت وأجهزة

Figure 36. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day1, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟

كلمات كثيرة
استخدام البرامج للتعليم ما يكون الكتابي فقط

Figure 37. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

A lot of words.

I used different learning resources;
the textbook should not be the only
resource to learn English.

As for the learning websites used at SALL, the participants made it clear in a number of instances that they are academically useful for them in developing their English language skills. For instance, Basim in his diary of Day 8 mentioned that these are excellent British websites where he found everything that he needed; not only for learning English but also for other subjects as he mentioned that he can learn Maths through English. He believes that his confidence has become higher as he can learn by himself. Similarly, Rami's sheet of Day 8 indicates the positiveness of using these websites. Under the para *Good things, why?*, he wrote "It was an excellent variety of websites for learning English" (Rami's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1). Moreover, being surprised about the song 'Amazing Superhero' that Basim saw on the website 'British Council Kids', he wrote some details in his diary sheet of Day 4 mentioning that it was good; it has pictures, words, and sounds. He added that the words being pronounced appeared in a different colour, like a game, as he said, see Figure 38 below.

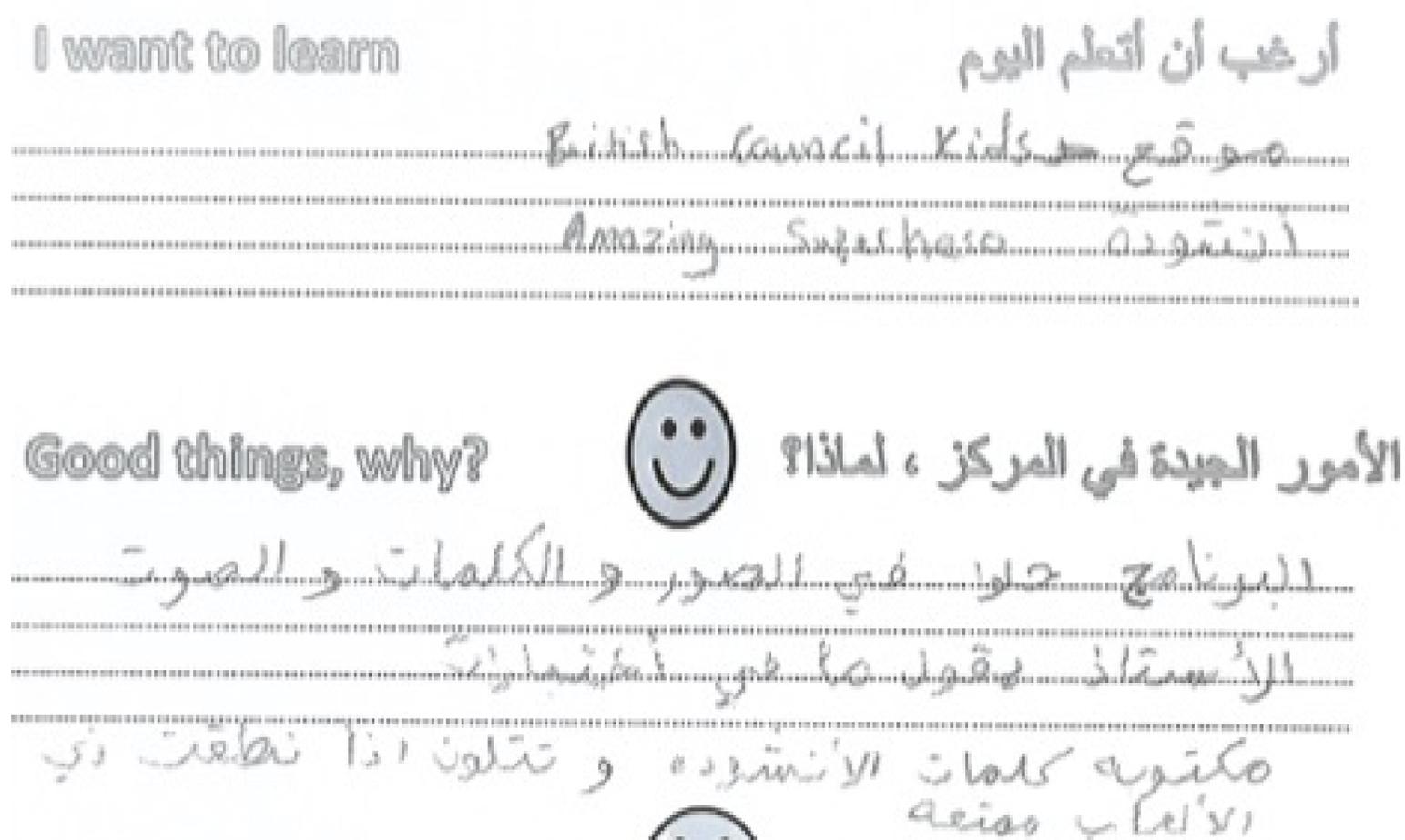


Figure 38. Basim's SALL diary sheet, Day 4, part 1

Translation

I want to learn

The website: 'British Council Kids'.

The song: 'Amazing Superhero'.

Good things, why?

The app. was good, it has pictures, words, and sounds.

The teacher said there's no exams.

The words of the song were written, and it coloured while pronouncing the words; like the fun games.

The use of the iPad was one of the instances of advantages of using digital resources at SALL. Whenever participants came across the use or presence of the iPad in their sessions, they mentioned its value and role in facilitating language learning. For example, Mshari's diary of Day 2 shows his good impression about the use of the iPad; he said that with the iPad's help, he can read faster, hear the sounds clearly, and could repeat the sounds easily. This means improvement in reading, listening and pronunciation skills, see Figure 39 below. Furthermore, on Day 9, Faris described the game he played on the iPad as 'fun and exciting' when he played with his classmate and mentioned that they learnt something about questions and discussions.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟
 احسن انرا بسرعة في الأبداء واسمع الصوت
 واضح وهو يتكلم وأردده

Figure 39. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 2, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? It was easier to read fast from the iPad and listened to the sound when it speaks, it was clear and I could repeat after it.

As for the non-digital resources, students' comments are not as much as those they made on the digital resources. They are mostly familiar with the use of non-digital resources in the school, whereas the idea of using digital resources inside the classroom is relatively new for most, if not all, of them. Stories were among the non-digital resources that were mentioned frequently by the participants. In fact, they did not mention that they prefer reading stories as a source of learning to other resources, especially digital ones. Instead, they provided some kind of description of the stories they read or some comments appreciating the use of stories at SALL. For example, Zamil in his diary sheet of Day 4 said that he wants to learn to read the story 'There is a snake in my school'. Similarly, Mshari wanted to learn to read new stories on Day 8; he described a story he read earlier as beautiful and suitable for him as it was neither difficult nor long including both languages Arabic and English. Furthermore, Faris on Day 8 mentioned his impression about the story he read and the role of the teacher. He said that the story was beautiful and translated into Arabic; it was beautiful in that it had pictures and was entertaining. The teacher encouraged him while reading that story, see Figure 40.

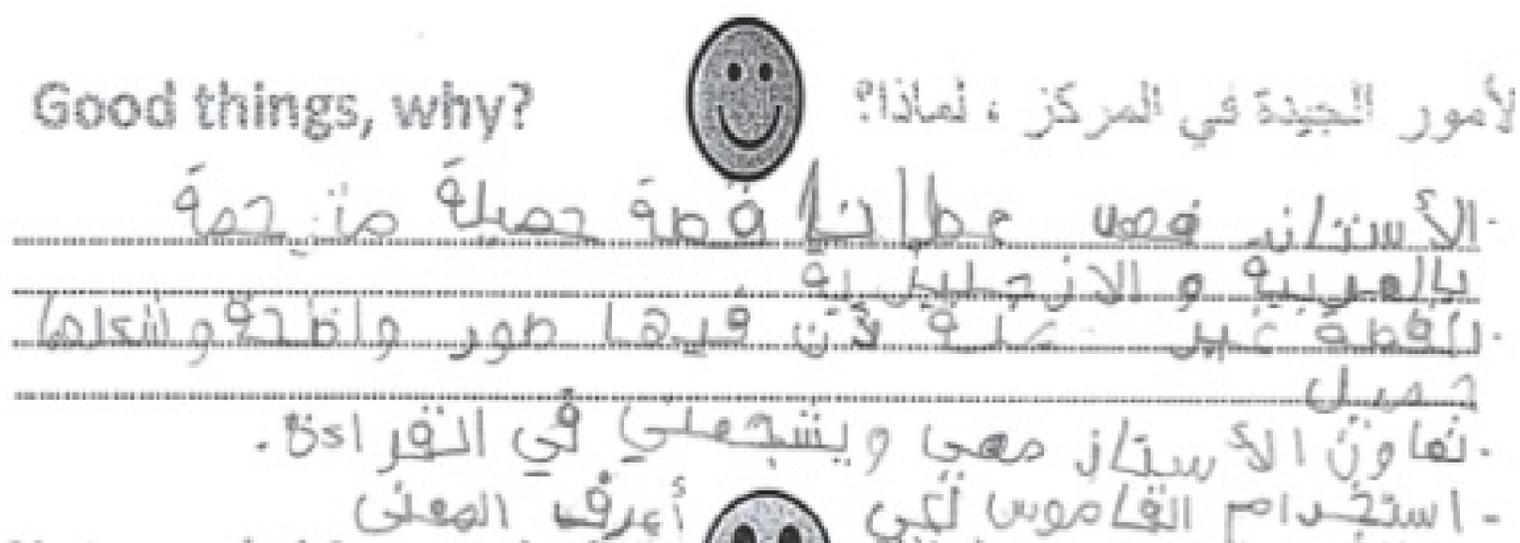


Figure 40. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The teacher gave us a beautiful English story translated into Arabic.

The story was not boring because it had clear and beautiful pictures.

The teacher helped and encouraged me when I read.

Using the dictionary to know the meanings.

According to the available data, there was no single disadvantage of using digital resources. However, the students' comments under the para 'Not good things, why?' regarding digital resources use revolved around the speed of the Internet, which was slow and requests for more time to use the computers or iPads in order to learn or play.

In the individual interviews with the students, I asked Nadir about using digital technology and whether he prefers it to non-digital ones. He said,

I honestly felt more comfortable the day I used the computer, especially when you allowed us to bring our devices to the school because we are accustomed to them; they are easier for us to use. So, they are easier, more enthusiastic, and comfortable in learning. When we listen to stories, for example, we can replay, repeat the sound more than once and try to search for words in the dictionary, Google or through pictures [...] I like the computer and the iPad more for learning, but the Internet must be fast enough so we will not get bored in the club. (Interview with Nadir)

As evident in the above extract, Nadir prefers using the available digital resources to the non-digital ones as he described how comfortable he was while using his personal computer in the club and how he gets the meaning of the difficult words using the dictionary, Google or pictures, but he

ignored the non-digital resources in his answer. In addition to this, he was amazed by the use of flash memory in the club and how useful it was. The following extract is taken from the interview with Nadir:

I felt that I wanted to review the English curriculum book because, frankly, when our teacher, Abdullah, gave us the flash and said in it is the electronic curriculum, I didn't use it. It was important that I see the content. I didn't have time to open it at home because I had to do a lot of homework. The club was an opportunity to see what was in the flash memory; I was able to read the conversations that were interesting while listening to them from the device. In the classroom, we listened to them quickly, or the teacher read them for us using in his voice. It is different when I listened to them from the computer because it gives me more time to listen and to repeat the questions and the answers. (Interview with Nadir)

In the extract above, Nadir compared the use of flash memory in traditional classrooms and in the club. After using it in the club, he became aware of the advantages of using such a tool as he said, "It is different when I listened to them from the computer because it gives me more time to listen and to repeat the questions and the answers", thus indicating his preference to use the digital resources.

To sum up, learners in the club mostly prefer group work to individual one. Moreover, they appreciated the available resources in the club, especially the digital ones showing how such resources are useful for them in learning English and indicating their preference for the digital resources.

5.3 Learning strategies

The learning strategy adopted by the learner is a very important and necessary tool for the instructor to develop their teaching style. Learners may find the learning process easy and effective once they use their own learning strategies, thus detecting their learning strategies and paying attention to such strategies may yield fruitful results in their academic progress and achievement. The following sub-sections are analyses of the types of learning strategies observed in the club.

5.3.1 Group learning strategy

The participants of the study have shown their preference for group learning strategy in a number of instances, such as Nadir's choice of one of his classmates to read a story together. Having a look at their diary sheets, group learning proved effective as Nadir says, "the story was interesting when I was reading it with my classmate, Mshari" (Figure 41).

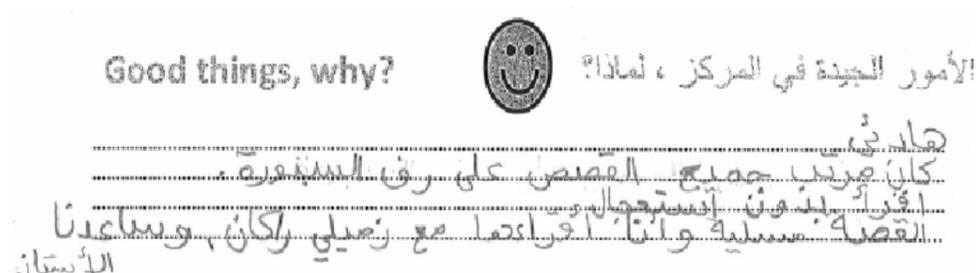


Figure 41. Nadir's SALL Dairy sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? Quiet. All the stories were organized at the board. I read without any haste. The story was interesting. I read it with my classmate, Rashid, and the teacher helped us.

Again, he indicated his impression about the group learning strategy in his diary sheet of Day 3, shown in Figure 42. He described the story as 'nice' when he listened to it and saw with his classmate how the picture was moving.



Figure 42. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? Organization. We were tidy, everyone was sitting on his seat as specified by the teacher. The story was nice from the computer. I listened to the sounds with my classmate and saw the picture moving.

Group learning strategy was achieved in the club by dividing the students into groups; such grouping yielded good learning results as Nadir mentioned in his comments under the para *Good things, why?*, he said, "Every day I learn more", see Figure 43.

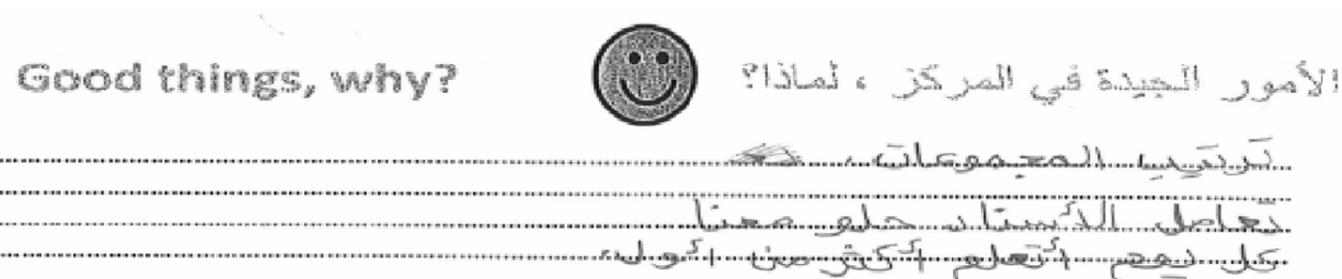


Figure 43. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 4, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? Organization of the groups. The teacher was nice with us. Every day I learn more.

Other participants indicated their appreciation for group learning as a strategy for learning English. For instance, on Day 6, Faris mentioned that this strategy was one of the good things he experienced in the club; he believed that it made the situation comfortable since he was able to move between the different groups and that it improved his speaking, see Figure 44. Furthermore, on Day 5, Zamil and Basim wrote in their diary sheets about the positive aspects of the group learning strategy and the way they increased their gains in English. Zamil said that with his classmate's support, he felt happy because he was able to speak a new language, English. Similarly, Basim said that it improved his speaking and described it as 'entertaining', especially the discussion that took place among the group members.

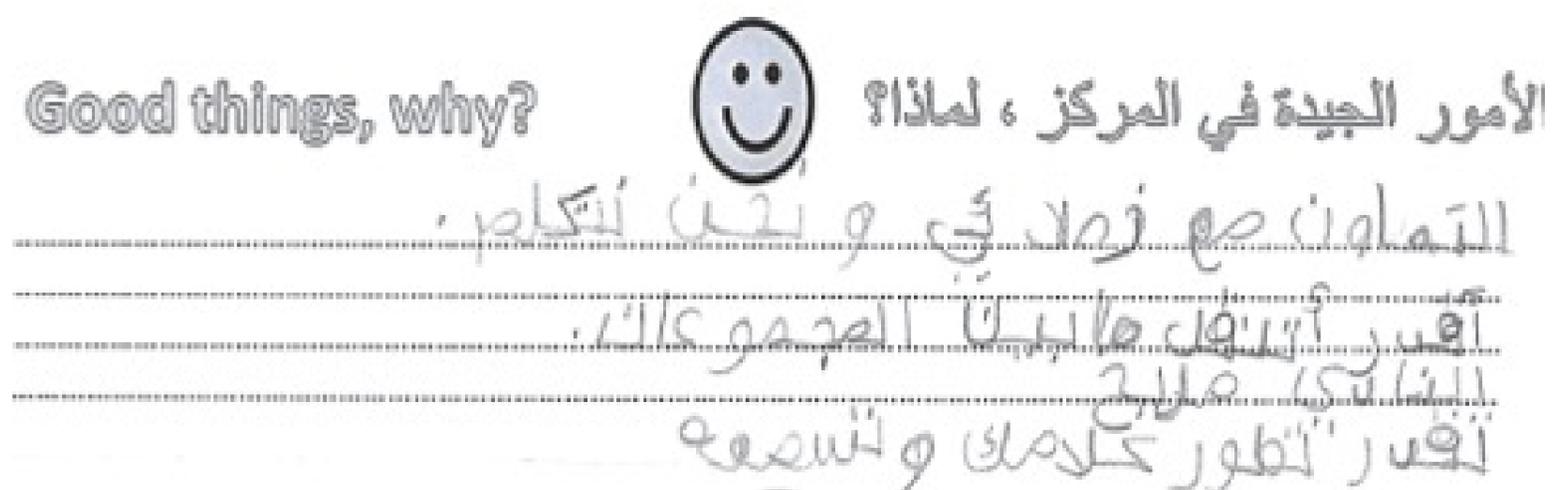


Figure 44. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The teamwork with my classmates while we speak.

I was able to move between groups.

The club was comfortable.

I improved my speaking because I listened to my voice many times.

The choice of the group learning strategy seems to be reliant on the activity itself. In other words, participants did not always prefer this strategy; in certain situations, or when doing some activity, they preferred to do things individually and not to be joined by other students or members of any group. In the interview, I asked Nadir about the choice of group learning strategy and whether he prefers it over other strategies; he said,

[...] when I was drawing and memorizing the words or using my own laptop, I preferred to sit alone and not have another colleague because I needed to concentrate in order to memorize and repeat the words. So, I didn't like anyone to interrupt me, especially when I was drawing. I also don't like anyone to use my device because they may spoil it. So, it depends on the activity; for example, I like to work with my colleagues in the dialogue game, but alone when drawing (Interview with Nadir).

Another opinion about the role of working in groups as a strategy of learning was provided by P1, one of the parents of the participants. In the interview, I asked him about his opinion of the club; he said, "he [his son] said that he worked with his classmates as a team and this is good because it increases the opportunity to search and discover" (Interview with P1)". Thus, group learning as a strategy is appreciated not only by the students but also by the parents.

However, the group learning strategy was not comfortable for all the participants; a few of them indicated their anxiety and somehow discomfort. For instance, Mshari wrote in his diary of Day 5 that he was feeling shy because of his lack of experience in such situations in addition to his fear of difficult questions as clear in Figure 45. Another annoyance was indicated by Basim who described it as an 'interruption' because the other students from other groups on Day 2 were allowed to move between groups and as a result, they may have caused some disturbance to others. This freedom of movement between groups continued to be granted for them as it was also indicated by Faris in Figure 44 above.

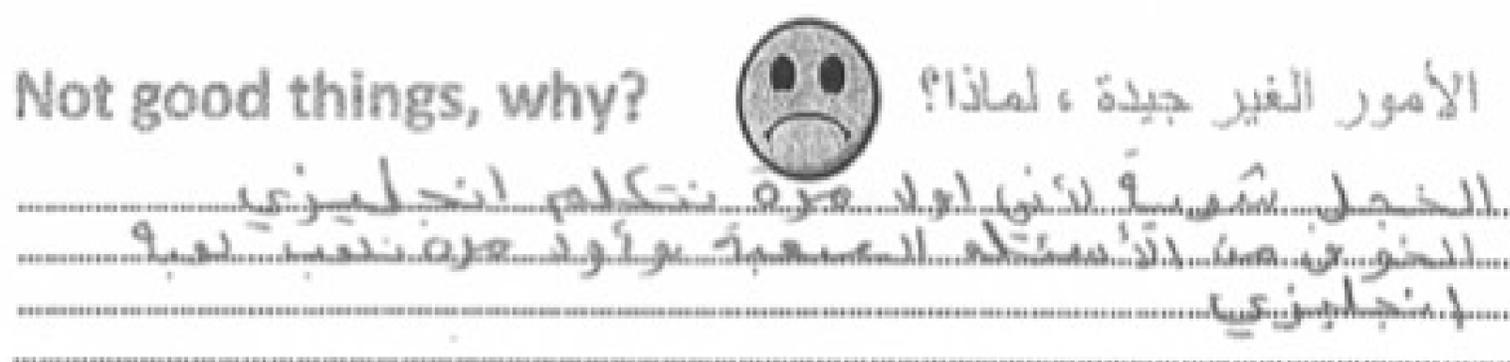


Figure 45. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 1

Translation

Not good things, why?

A little shy because it was the first time we talk in English.

The fear of hard questions and the first time we play English games.

5.3.2 Reading strategies

Using stories to improve the reading skills of the students seems to be a fruitful method in the club. Participants, being YLs, appreciated the availability of stories in the club; they indicated this in their diary sheets including that they learnt reading and pronunciation from those stories. Moreover, they showed their desire to read more stories although they preferred Arabic translation placed beside the English text. Figure 46 below shows Nadir's desire to read, he said that he likes to read a story. Similarly, Figure 47 shows his comment on his first-day activities in the club where he mentioned that he learnt how to read and pronounce unfamiliar words.

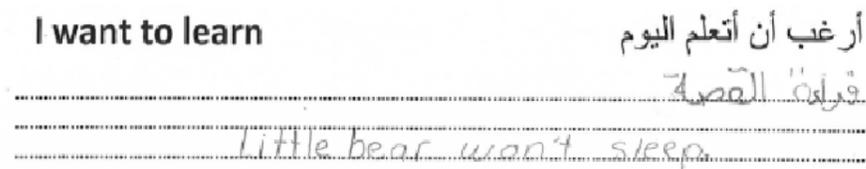


Figure 46. Nadir's SALL Dairy sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

I want to learn Reading the story: Little Bear Won't Sleep.

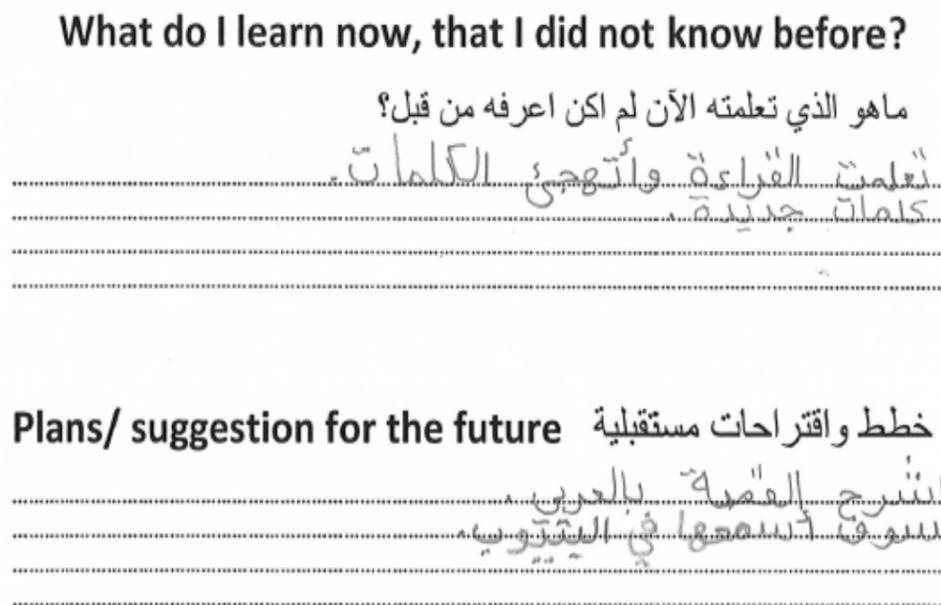


Figure 47. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 1, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, I learnt reading and how to spell words. I learnt new words.
that I did not know
before?

Plans/suggestion for Explain the story in Arabic. I will listen to it on YouTube.
the future

According to my observations on the first day of the club, Nadir selected the story 'Little Bear Won't Sleep' to read with his classmate; I saw him quickly turning the pages over; he was a little distracted. I told him to read quietly silent reading without any haste and to ask his classmate if there is a need to discuss the meaning of the new words and to link the available pictures in order to understand the text. As a result, Nadir started to be engaged in reading with more concentration as he began to underline the difficult words and asked me about the meaning of those words and how to pronounce them correctly. Thus, providing interesting materials such as stories with pictures is one of the strategies to encourage YLs to develop their reading skills in addition to providing a dictionary, translation or someone such as the teacher who can guide and explain the meaning of certain difficult words for them as highlighted by Nadir in the interview; he said,

When I read the story of 'Little Bear Won't Sleep', I was worried at first, but it was beautiful and exciting in the end; it was a challenge with my classmate that we finish it. You also helped us to know the meanings and how to pronounce certain words (Interview with Nadir).

The availability of pictures along with the text is a strategy used by these young learners to improve their reading skills as indicated above by Nadir. This is supported by the views of other participants as well. For instance, Basim in his diary of Day 9 appreciated the presence of pictures and indicated that it was an instrument of learning reading, see Figure 48.



Figure 48. Basim's SALL diary sheet, Day 9, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

It was a fun, educational and entertaining class.

I understood some of the words and I learnt reading from the pictures.

The Arabic application was perfect and easy because it was in Arabic.

Similarly, Mshari wrote in his diary sheet of Day 10 that his reading skills quickly improved because he read some stories about British culture. The students' comments and appreciation of stories showed that reading stories of different kinds contributes to the development of this skill. Furthermore, Mshari suggested that the teacher may make a 'reading challenge competition' in the future, see Figure 49.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟

تطورت قراءتي بسرعة

ثقافة جديدة عن القصص عن بريطانيا

خطط واقتراحات مستقبلية

Plans/ suggestion for the future

مسابقة تحدي القراءة

Figure 49. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

My reading has improved quickly.

Learnt new culture about England from the stories.

Plans/suggestions for the future

Reading challenge competition.

Being beginners or due to their low level, as far as English language proficiency is concerned, students relied on translating the meaning of the English words and even the whole text into Arabic, a reason for their frequent insistence on providing stories with Arabic translation whether provided by the teacher or in the story itself. For instance, on Day 1 Rami indicated the difference between Arabic and English in the direction of writing; he said, "Arabic is from the right and English is from

the left” and described the available translation as ‘easy’. Moreover, he demanded more stories in Arabic and English and more time to read those stories. Similarly, Faris on Day 8 indicated his satisfaction with the whole reading session in which he described the story given to them by the teacher as ‘beautiful and not boring’ since it has pictures with Arabic translation, see Figure 50.

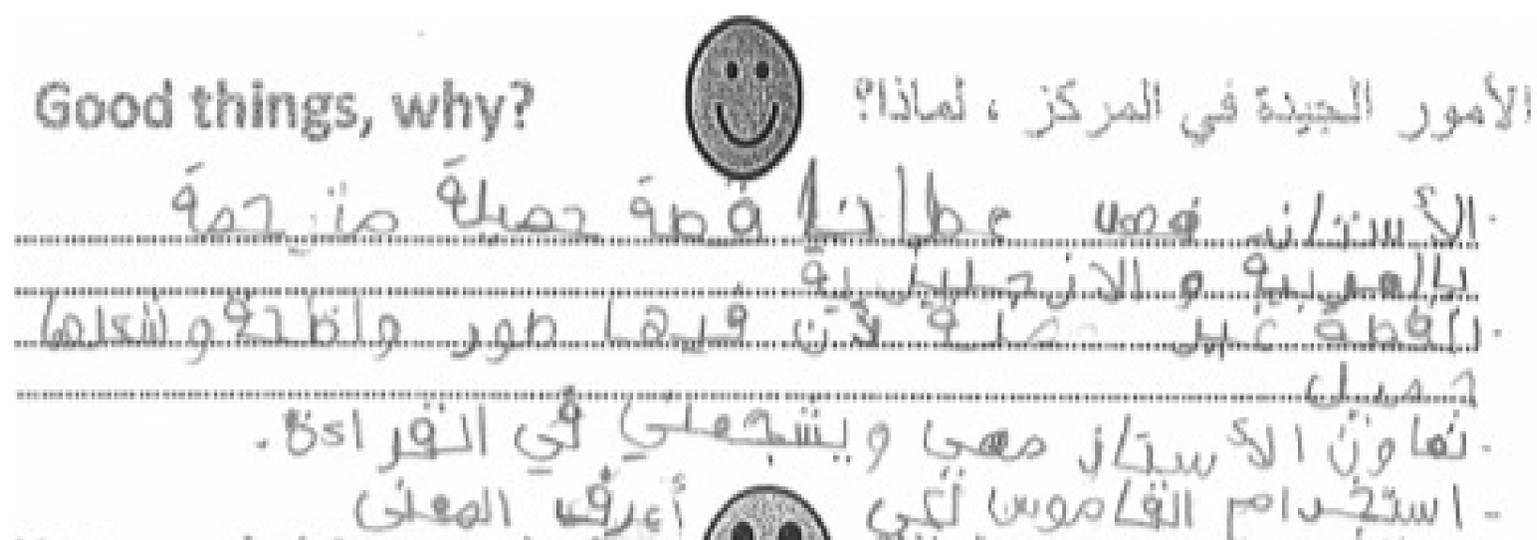


Figure 50. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The teacher gave us a beautiful English story translated into Arabic.

The story was not boring because it had clear and beautiful pictures.

The teacher helped and supported me when I read.

Using the dictionary to know the meanings.

In the interview, Nadir talked about the difficulty he and his classmate faced without the help of the teacher in reading the story and how the use of technology encouraged them to continue. He said,

We were unable to read correctly; we spelt some words with difficulty, but with your [the researcher's] help when you told us that it was on YouTube, we were encouraged to complete the story and know its events. The story became interesting. I was comfortable with my colleague (Interview with Nadir).

The use of technology in reading is a strategy associated with stories which supports the presence of devices such as the computer and the iPad in the club for their significant role in learners' reading strategies. For instance, on Day 3 Nadir indicated his desire to practice reading from the computer. As shown in Figure 51, he said under the para 'I want to learn' "reading a new story from the computer".

I want to learn

أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم

قراءة قصة جديدة من الكمبيوتر

Figure 51. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

I want to learn Reading a new story from the computer.

Moreover, in the interview, Nadir indicated the usefulness of the strategy of using the computer to read and understand the story of 'The Greatest Treasures'.

As for the story of 'The Greatest Treasures' we tried to depend on ourselves to understand the story by watching the animated clip and translating the difficult words; we could hear and repeat the sound more than once on the computer (Interview with Nadir).

What can be inferred from the above analysis of learners' reading strategies is that using stories and electronic devices such as computers seemed to be preferred strategies by learners for their reading in addition to having translated materials into Arabic.

5.3.3 Vocabulary strategies

Having a good inventory of vocabulary items facilitates the acquisition of the target language. In this way, learners will be able to identify things around them and communicate about them. As far as the context of this study is concerned, the availability of the AlKafi dictionary, an English-Arabic dictionary, in the club helped learners acquire the new words they encountered. In his diary sheet, Nadir said that the dictionary is interesting and has pictures; he also expressed his wish to learn new words from the dictionary related to travelling, see Figure 52. Moreover, in the interview with the participants, Nadir confirmed the use of the club resources including stories, dictionaries, computers and drawings as strategies for learning vocabulary; he said, "[...] it also made me eager to learn English, especially memorizing words, shapes and drawing with the computer because I need to learn many words so that I can speak" (Interview with Nadir).

I want to learn أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم
 كلمات جديدة لتضيدي في السفر
 القاموس الكافي
 الكمبيوتر

Good things, why?  الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟
 كنا منظمين لا توجد فوضى
 الكتب صديقة القلموس صمغ فيه الصور ومرتبة

Not good things, why?  الأمور الغير جيدة ، لماذا؟
 طاق أجهزة كمبيوتر كثيرة

Figure 52. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 2, part 1

Translation

I want to learn	New words to help me while travelling. AlKafi Dictionary. The computer.
Good things, why?	We were organized, no mess. Books were organized. The dictionary was interesting; it contained pictures. It was clear in order.
Not good things, why?	Computer devices were few.

Through reading stories and getting the meaning of the new words from the dictionary, Nadir confirmed the fruitful outcomes of using such strategies, he said that he learnt a lot of new words such as turtle, lion, eagle and camel, as shown in Figure 53.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?
 ماهو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟
 تعلمت كلمات كثيرة جديدة وعربية دوماً.
 Turtle / lion / Eagle / camel

Plans/ suggestion for the future خطط واقتراحات مستقبلية
 زيارة في كل سنة زيادة الوقت
 الحرف بالعربي

Figure 53. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, I learnt a lot of words that were new and unfamiliar to some extent.
that I did not know before? Turtle / lion / eagle / camel

Plans/suggestion for the future An increase in everything. Increase in time. Things to be in Arabic.

Indicating the shortcomings of the club, Nadir in Figure 52 mentioned that the number of computers available for them is insufficient, and a day later, as in Figure 53, he suggested an increase in everything which implies the number of computer devices in addition to his request for including Arabic which highlights the preference of translation or the availability of more bilingual dictionaries.

Emphasizing the importance of using the dictionary and translated materials as a strategy for learning vocabulary, Ishaq on Day 2 wrote in his diary that he learnt new words from the dictionary. Moreover, Faris in Figure 50 above, mentioned that it is a good thing in the club that they use the dictionary to know the meanings of the new words.

While reviewing the drawing sheets of the participants, I found some drawings that show the usefulness of the Painter as a kind of learning strategy for vocabulary items. Learners frequently drew pictures of certain objects and wrote their names in English. In Figure 54, for example, Nadir drew and wrote the names of words related to travelling, such as plane, dictionary, boat, train, luggage, ticket and passport.



Figure 54. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 2, part 3

Similarly, Ishaq on Day 2 drew and wrote in his drawing diary the words he learnt in that day and their pictures and Arabic equivalents; words including classroom, board, pen, ruler and sharpener. On Day 6, Mshari used the painter in a more academic style; he made a multiple-choice question based on the picture of an item he drew, see Figure 55.

My writing/ drawing diary

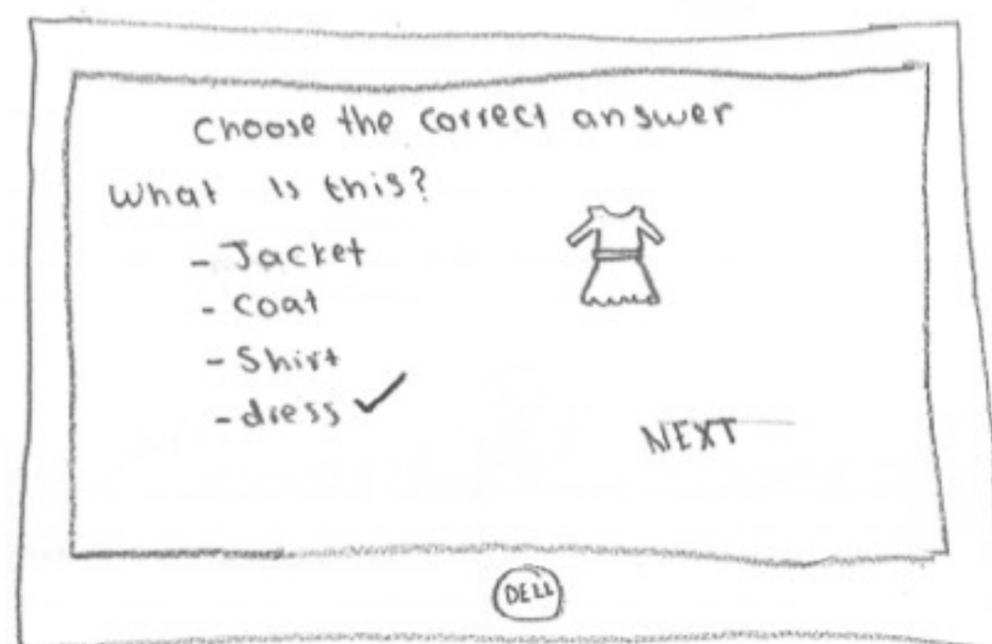


Figure 55. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 3

Furthermore, on the use of the Painter as a strategy for learning new vocabulary items, Faris developed the use of the Painter to include examples for some of the words he learnt. For instance, on Day 2 he wrote the English words with their Arabic meanings and drew pictures for two of them: shark and shrimp and wrote 'Shark is big and large' and 'Shrimp [is] small' as in Figure 56, thus learning words through using them in sentences.

My writing/ drawing diary

Shark - قرش

whale - حوت

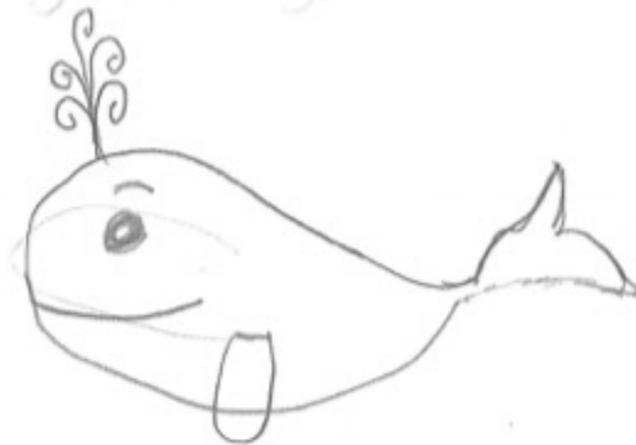
Octopus - اخطبوط

Shrimp - روبيان

Shark

Hippo - فرس النهر

Shark is big and large



Shark is big and large

Shrimp smau



Figure 56. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 2, part 3

The interview data confirmed the use of the Painter and drawing in general as a strategy for learning new words. The following excerpt from the interview with Nadir shows the importance of drawing in learning vocabulary.

I developed my abilities in listening to stories from the computer and learning the spelling of new words by writing and drawing them on the painter. It is easy to learn words in this way because I like drawing. I also started to understand the meaning of words through games. I was not very interested in the meaning of words; now, I am very interested in the meanings and how to pronounce them; I try to repeat them more than once imitating the same voice (Interview with Nadir).

In addition to this, P2, who is Nadir's father, confirmed what was said by his son; he said, "My son likes drawing; you allowed him to practice his hobby which is learning new words through drawing" (Interview with P2).

Another strategy for learning vocabulary is reading English stories. Participants indicated the benefit of reading stories for their vocabulary development; they enriched their inventory of

vocabulary as clear from their diary sheets. For instance, under the para *What do I learn now, that I did not know before?*, Basim wrote on Day 1 the words: lie, tail and prince which he learnt from the story he read that day, and Mshari on Day 8 wrote egg, no one, terrible, glad, sad, die, and life, as can be seen in Figure 57.

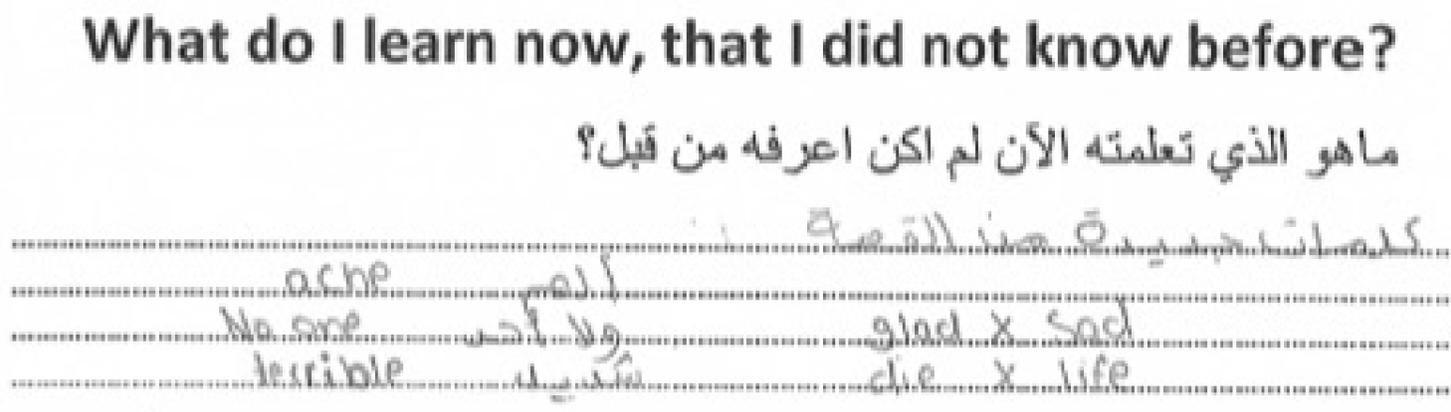


Figure 57. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? New words from the story; egg, no one, terrible, glad, sad, die, and life.

Playing games as a strategy for vocabulary learning is found frequently mentioned by the participants in their diary sheets under the paras *Good things, why?* and *What do I learn now, that I did not know before?*. This was mentioned by Mshari in Day 3 sheet and Zamil and Faris in their Day 9 sheets. Zamil said that the game encouraged him to learn and memorize new words used in the game 'Word Building', see Figure 58.

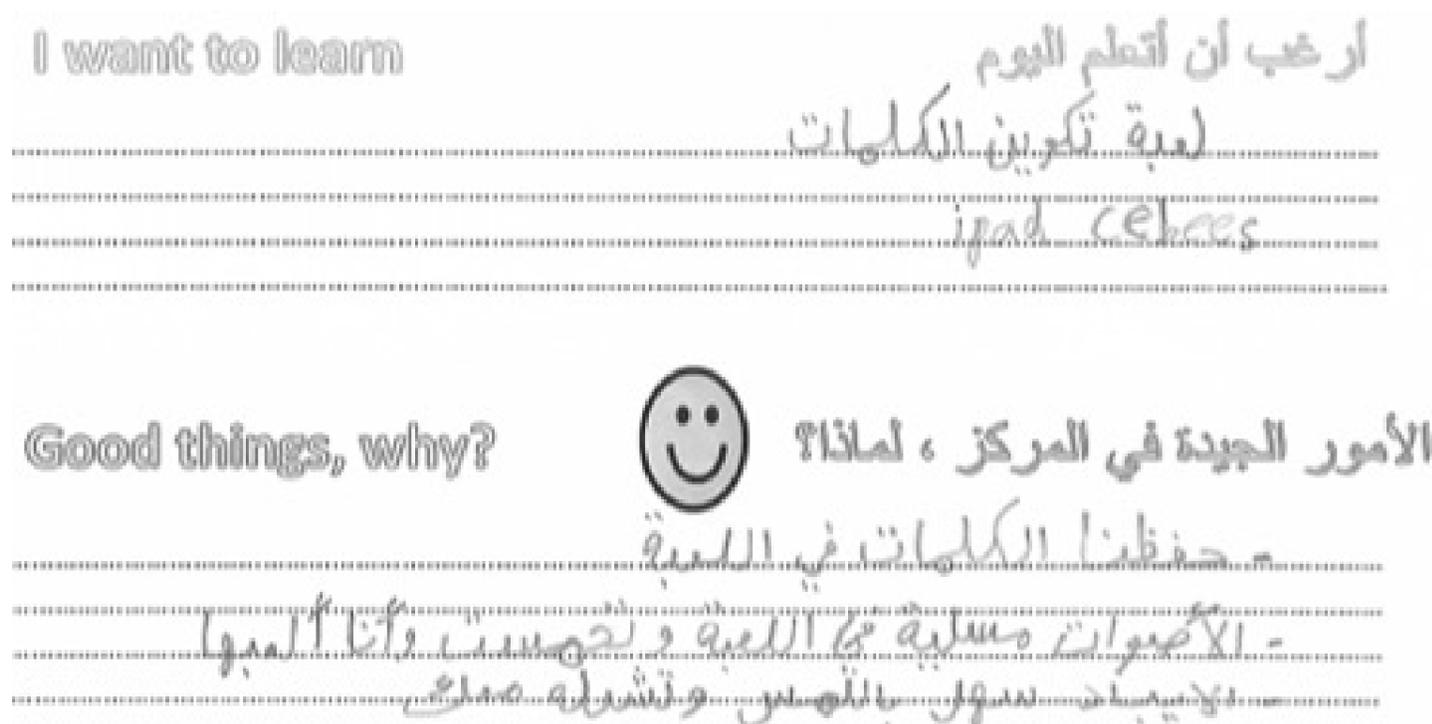


Figure 58. Zamil's SALL diary sheet, Day 9, part 1

Translation

I want to learn

Word building games

iPad CBeebies

Good things, why?

I memorized the words from the game.

The sounds were interactive, and I was excited while I was playing.

The iPad was easy to touch, and I was able to carry it anywhere.

Pictures are considered the best providers of meaning since they can be used to learn vocabulary items in any language without the need to make any kind of translation. According to the available data, the participants have mentioned the word 'pictures' frequently in describing or talking about the stories they read on a particular day. Being YLs, using materials with pictures seems to be a preferred strategy to learn not only vocabulary but also to understand the meaning of the whole story. Examples of this are found in the diary sheets of most of the students. For instance, Mshari, on his first day at the club, mentioned that he learnt some new words from the pictures, such as clothes, firefighter, and rescue. Another example is provided by Faris, as in Figure 59. While describing the things that he learnt, Faris mentioned the way he learnt vocabulary, matching the meaning with the picture.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟
 ممكن ان تعلم الكلمات مع بعض الصور
 وتوكلها وتعرف معانيها.

Figure 59. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

I was able to learn words with pictures by matching them and know the meanings.

Another strategy of vocabulary learning is guessing the meaning. The participants seem to rely on the context to guess the meaning of the new or unfamiliar words they encounter; an example of this is provided in Figure 60 below.

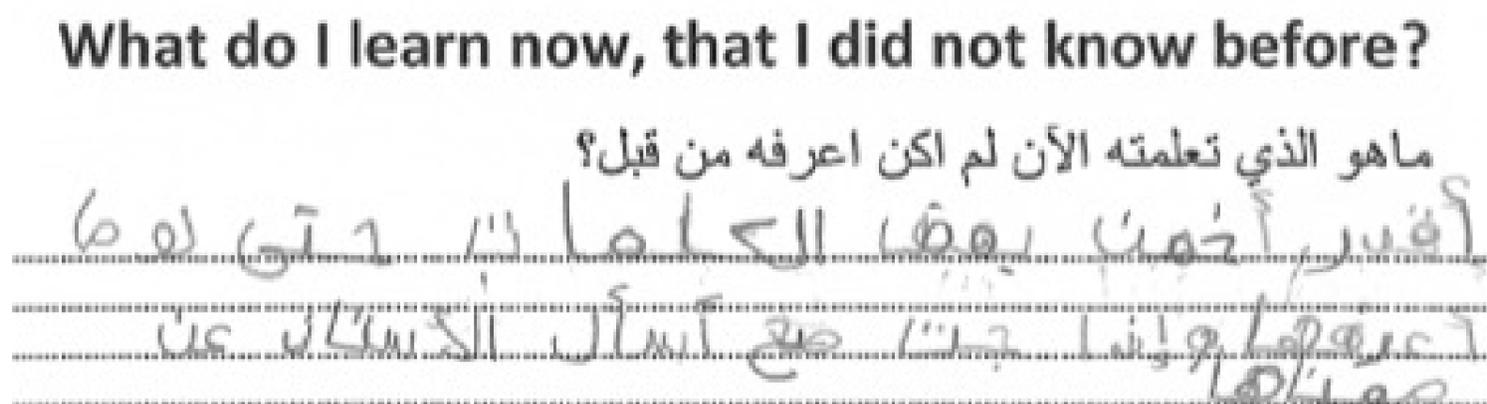


Figure 60. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 7, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? I was able to guess some of the words' meaning, even though I don't know them and if it became right, I could check with the teacher for the meaning.

Vocabulary learning strategies involved making some challenges and competitions, so participants were encouraged to enrich their vocabulary inventory through this strategy. For instance, on Day 3, Faris mentioned that he learnt and memorized new words through the word-building competition and suggested having more time in the future to practice such competitions. Similar impressions and suggestions were also found in the diary sheet of Zamil on Day 9. According to Rami's sheet of Day 7, the game that involved a kind of competition was exciting from which he learnt new words, see Figure 61.

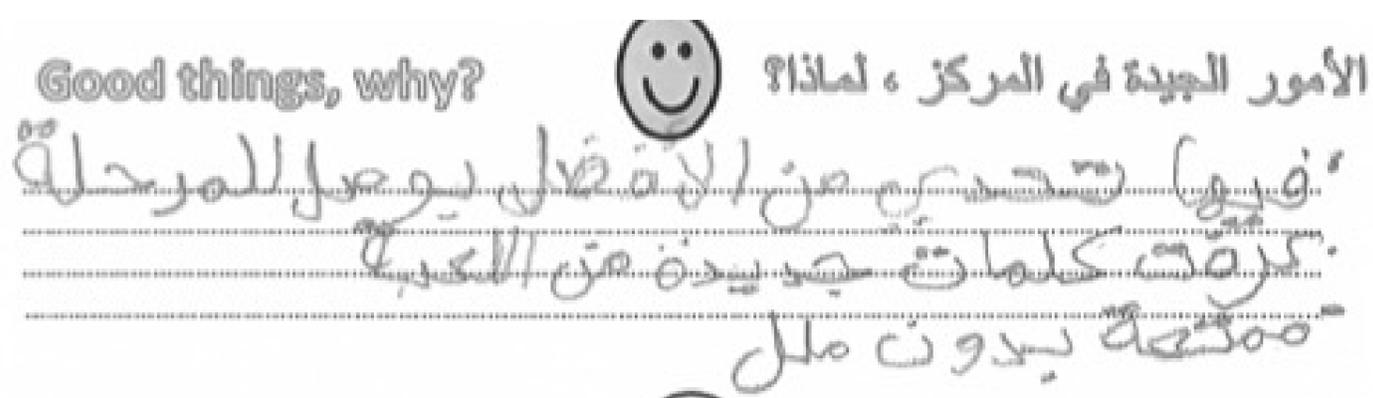


Figure 61. Rami's SALL diary sheet, Day 7, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

There was a challenge to see who is reaching the following stages first.

New words from the game.

It was exciting, there was no boredom.

In conclusion, the preferred strategies for vocabulary learning seem to include using English-Arabic dictionaries to get the meaning, increasing the number of vocabulary items through playing games and those involve challenges or competitions, reading stories through which they learn new words related to the story they read, using the Painter software on their computers or iPads where they can draw pictures of items and write examples of their usage, using pictures to identify the meaning, and using the context to guess the meaning of the word and check it with the teacher.

5.3.4 Speaking and listening strategies

In oral communication, speaking and listening are fundamental skills, so the appropriate acquisition of such skills enables learners of a foreign language to communicate with native speakers of that language. When the learner follows an effective strategy to learn these skills, his or her willingness to communicate will be increased and as a result, they will overcome barriers arising from their shyness or any other psychological factors.

As far as the context of this study is concerned, using games to encourage students to practice the skills of speaking and listening is found to be a useful strategy. For example, Nadir's diary sheet of Day 5, shown in Figure 5 above, shows his impression about the game 'The Dialogue' which was played on that day. He described it as "nice and interesting" and said that they asked and answered questions. Thus, being in a game atmosphere, Nadir was encouraged to form questions and answers since he said that he was scared at the beginning. Games' impact on learners' speaking skills is evident in Mshari's comments on his Day 5 progress as he mentioned that the game was a kind of fun, and the teacher encouraged them to speak and even they could answer by saying 'I don't know'. As can be seen in Figure 62 below, Mshari indicated under the para *Not good things, why?* that he was afraid of the experience and was feeling shy. A similar view was reported by Ishaq also on Day 5 who stated, "the focus was on speaking". The tolerability of making mistakes was indicated in the dairy sheet of Basim on Day 5. He was happy that he could answer some questions even if he did not completely understand the questions; he spoke although mistakes were there; he believed that the most important thing is to try to speak.

Good things, why?  الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟

..... الاستاذ يقول عادي
 تجاوبوا وتقولوا ما اعرف
 لعبت تصيح على زملائي

Not good things, why?  الأمور الغير جيدة ، لماذا؟

..... الخجل شوية لاننا اول مرة نتكلم انجليزي
 الخوف من الاسئلة الصعبة واننا اول مرة نتكلم لعب
 انجليزي

Figure 62. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The teacher said, it's OK if you answer and say 'I don't know'.

The game was fun and made my friends laugh.

Not good things, why?

A little shy because it was the first time we talk in English.

The fear of hard questions and the first time we play English games.

After they played the game and listened to a song on Day 4, some of the participants noticed that not all English letters are pronounced, unlike Arabic, the mother tongue of all the participants, where each letter has a corresponding sound. For example, Basim noticed that the people of England do not pronounce the letter 'r' when it occurs at the end of a word, as a simple rule. This indicates the development of the students' listening skills to the extent that they may be able to distinguish between different varieties of English, see Figure 63.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟
 أهل بريطانيا ما ينطقون R في النهاية
 التمييز حلو و اللعبه حلوه تعلمنا فيها

Figure 63. Basim's SALL diary sheet, Day 4, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? The people of England don't pronounce the 'r' at the end of the word. The song and the game were good, I learnt from them.

Another strategy is implemented by the use of the Painter. Learners illustrated their speaking abilities by sketching two people holding a dialogue in which one asks a question and the other answers as shown in Figure 64 drawn by Nadir on his Day 4.



Figure 64. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 4, part 3

Figure 65 below provides another example of using the Painter as a tool to improve speaking. In this figure, Basim drew a picture in which two students appeared and asked the same question 'How are you?'. This indicates that students imagined dialogues or part of them and what should be said by the interlocutors.

My writing/ drawing diary

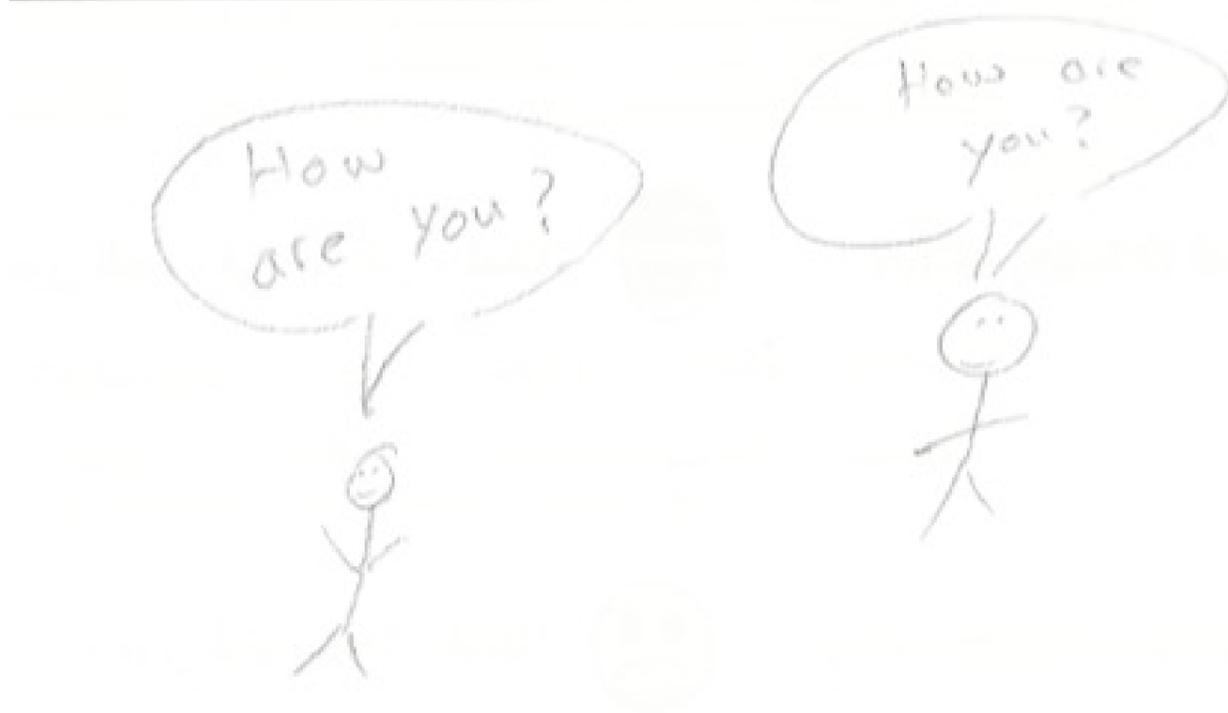


Figure 65. Basim's SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 3

When I asked Nadir about the use of digital resources in the club, he put some emphasis on the availability of computers and iPads and how involving such devices in learning a foreign language developed his listening skills. He said that he could replay the story and repeat the sound more than one time. Similarly, when he answered my question about the role of the flash memory, he emphasized the usefulness of the device as he was able to access the conversations stored on the flash memory using the computer; he listened to them several times and repeated the questions and answers. Therefore, learners found using such technologies an effective strategy for the acquisition of listening skills.

Learners developed their speaking and listening skills through the strategy of repetition. For example, on Day 6 Rami and Faris felt that their listening skill was enhanced because they replayed the sounds many times, and that their speaking was improved as they listened to their oral performance. However, on the negative side, they indicated their dissatisfaction with the general atmosphere as being noisy; both of them mentioned that in their diary sheets and said that they left the place to sit outside. More evidence comes from the diary sheet of Zamil on Day 10 who mentioned that he listened many times to the material and the sound was clear to him, see Figure 66.



Figure 66. Zamil's SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

You were able to listen many times and the sound was clear.

The teacher helped me to look for the websites.

The club has a variety of many skills.

Participants recorded their voices while speaking or pronouncing certain English words as a strategy for improving their speaking skills. Recording option is available on computers and other technological devices, thanks to modern technology. Replaying and listening to their recorded material tells them about the accuracy and whether right or wrong as mentioned, for example, by Basim, Rami and Faris on their Day 6 activities. They mentioned that it is a good method to improve speaking. In addition to benefiting from this technique, Faris demanded under the para *Plans/suggestions for the future* more similar games to practice and improve speaking, see Figure 67.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟

التعلم من الحوار في التطبيق

السمع كلامي انما طغ أو غلط من زملائي

خطط واقتراحات مستقبلية

Plans/ suggestion for the future

إنشاء لعبة تطبيق للكلام

توفير متحدثين

Figure 67. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

I learnt the conversation from the application.

Plans/suggestions for the future

I heard my voice, if it was right or wrong, from my classmates.

Make games for speaking by using the application.

Provide speakers.

During my observation session of the club's Day 4, I asked Nadir about what he likes to do; he said that he is willing to read some conversations from the curriculum, listen to them and then speak about them. I understood that he is more interested in conversations and indeed he was listening to each sentence or a question, trying to understand it by repeating it again and again or asking me about the pronunciation of certain words. Moreover, he used to stop and ask himself a question and provide the answer. Nadir was so happy that he practised speaking and pronunciation. Although he was working alone and received some comments from other students, he was focused and did not pay any attention to other students' comments. (Researcher's observations, Day 4).

The interview data support the argument that the availability of technological devices at the club provides students with opportunities to develop their listening and speaking skills. For example, the interview with Nadir revealed the degree to which using the computer helped him enhance

pronunciation through the repetition of words and listening repeatedly to the same material. He said,

I developed my abilities in listening to stories from the computer [...] I am very interested in the meanings and how to pronounce them; I try to repeat them more than once imitating the same voice ... when we listen to the stories, for example, we can replay and repeat the sound more than once (Interview with Nadir).

As for speaking, Nadir indicated that the club activities played a positive role in his and his classmates' speaking skills. In the interview, he said,

I did not expect that I would be able to speak the day we had a dialogue session and when you allowed us to play with our classmates; we began to ask each other in English; we felt that it was difficult for us at the beginning, but then we started talking and tried to arrange the speech although I made mistakes (Interview with Nadir).

When I asked each of the two parents in the interview about the characteristics they currently see in their sons, P1 replied: "I see him talking more than before and using words and expressions as if he were speaking in front of the audience" (Interview with P1), whereas P2 described his son as "confident and self-reliant, and his speaking skill has been much improved" (Interview with P2).

5.4 Learner autonomy

In this section, the researcher analysed three factors: motivation (5.4.1), self-confidence (5.4.2) and independence (5.4.3). These factors are very important to analyse in order to explore the effectiveness of the self-access English club in learning English outside the atmosphere of the formal classroom.

5.4.1 Motivation

The role of motivation in learning a second language is essential and cannot be ignored in any study in this field. Concerning the case of Nadir and his classmate, Mshari, motivation was clear in their behaviour of reading the story interestingly laughing at some parts of it and twice loudly shouting "we finish teacher". Moreover, towards the end of the session, they felt proud of completing reading the whole story by themselves which increased their confidence in reading more stories and learning English language in general.

Learners have been motivated to learn more of the aspects of the foreign language; for example, Nadir wrote in his diary sheet that he learnt more about his lessons and read the conversations, and for his future plans para he wrote that he would like to apply what he learnt and speak the way people spoke in the conversation. This is clear in his comments shown in Figure 68 below.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?
 ماهو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟
 فهمت اكثر عن مواضيع دروسنا وقرأت المحادثات

Plans/ suggestion for the future خطط واقتراحات مستقبلية
 أطبق وتكلم مثل المحادثة

Figure 68. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 4, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? I understood more about the subjects of our lessons and read the conversations.

Plans/suggestion for the future Practice and speak as in the conversation.

In his diary sheet of Day 5, Nadir showed his being motivated to speak to his classmates and ask them questions through the game of 'The Dialogue' even if he does not know how to communicate. He wrote under the para *Good things* "we were sitting together in a circle speaking and asking" and described the activity as "very interesting". See Figure 69.

I want to learn أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم
 لعبنا لعبة الجمل

Good things, why? الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟
 كنا تجلس مع بعض في دائرة ونسأل حتى لو ما نعرف
 حرة كان صمتنا مع تملادي

Figure 69. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 1

Translation

I want to learn We played 'Spin the Bottle' game (dialogue game).

Good things, why? We were sitting together in a circle and using a water bottle; we spoke and asked even though we did not know the meaning of some English words. It was very interesting and fun with my classmates.

Moreover, as can be seen in Figure 70, Mshari wrote in his diary sheet about his feelings and desire to learn English after the game he played on Day 3. Furthermore, on Day 6, after realizing the usefulness of games for his English skills, Faris suggested making more games for speaking. This indicates the role of the game in motivating the participants to learn.



Figure 70. Mshari’s SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? The game had words and we interacted with the sound.
 A beautiful place.
 I felt excited and I want to learn English.
 Funny sounds that we can interact with

Reading stories is another cause of motivation for students at the club. Students were motivated to learn new words to understand the story. For instance, on Day 1, Faris mentioned that it was his first time to read a story in English and learnt a lot of words from that story. Being bored has a negative influence on motivation. On Day 1, Zamil described the sessions at SALL with “no boredom” which was caused by the English with Arabic story he read; he described it as “beautiful and attractive”, see Figure 71.



Figure 71. Zamil's SALL diary sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

There was no boredom.

The story was very beautiful and colourful, and it looked attractive.

It was Arabic and English story.

Furthermore, as they realized the important role of reading stories in increasing their motivation to learn English, students indicated their desire to continue practising this activity to develop their skills. This was clear in their comments under the para *Plans/suggestions for the future*. For example, on Day 1, Rami requested more Arabic and English stories and more time to read such stories; Zamil, on Day 8, suggested to print the story they read and hang it on the wall at the club, and on the same day Ishaq suggested that they print their story and publish it, see Figure 72.

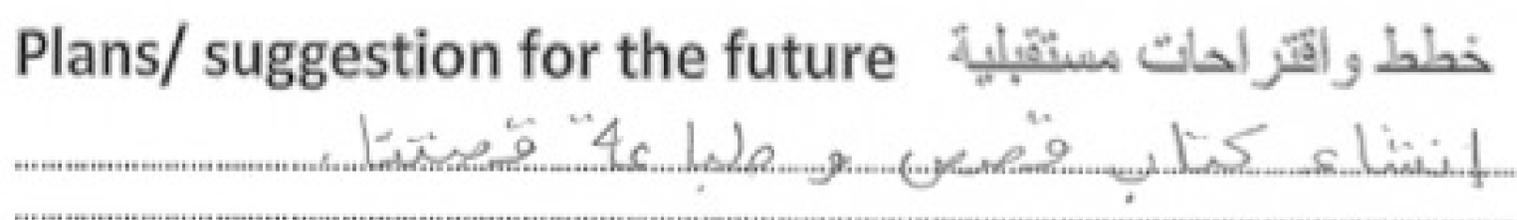


Figure 72. Ishaq's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 2

Translation

Plans/suggestions for the future

Printing and publishing our story.

The impact of using technological devices and the Internet cannot be ignored in discussing motivation at SALL; they played a significant role in increasing the students' willingness to learn. Students are being encouraged and motivated to continue learning as they found using different websites and applications helpful and facilitating in their English language learning journey. Towards the end of the experiment, Basim on Day 9 expressed his happiness by describing the session with words like 'fun', 'educational' and 'entertaining' and added that he learnt a lot of words from pictures. He also emphasized the role of using Arabic beside English. See Figure 73.

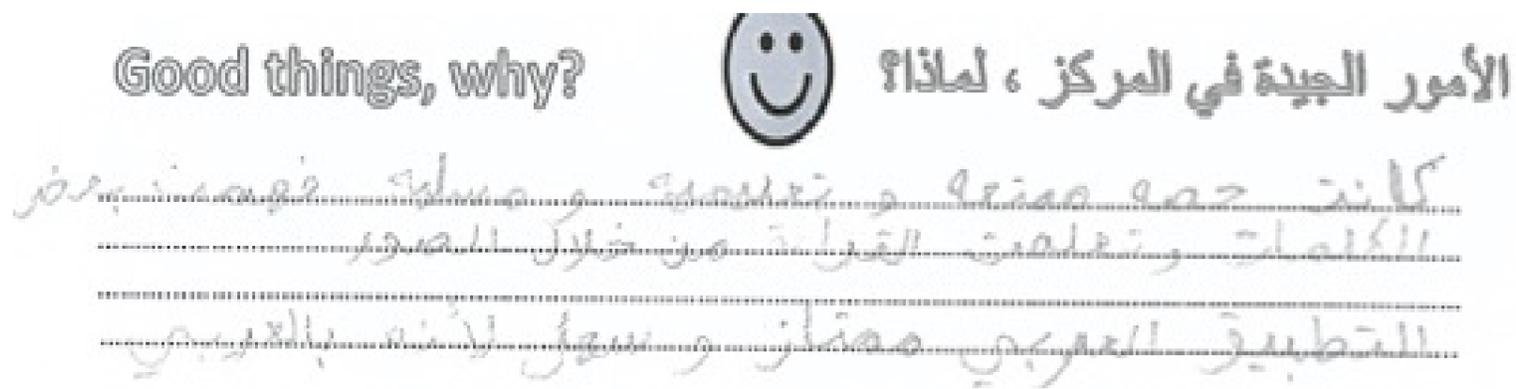


Figure 73. Basim's SALL diary sheet, Day 9, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

It was a fun, educational and entertaining class.

I understood some of the words and I learnt reading from the pictures.

The Arabic application was perfect and easy because it was in Arabic.

Moreover, the daily diary sheet's para *Plans/suggestions for the future* was rich in suggestions that imply students' desire to use more websites and applications. For example, Basim and Rami on their Day 9 sheets implied that they were motivated to learn more English through the use of YouTube, whereas Rami's sheet of Day 8 showed his intention to use the website at home and share this kind of learning with his brothers and sisters. Similarly, Faris indicated his willingness to use the website at home and wanted to ask his father to subscribe to certain educational websites.

Some students' diary sheets implied that they were motivated to learn through making competitions in reading (e.g., Mshari, Day 10) or word building (e.g., Faris, Day 3), group work (e.g., Faris, Day 1; Zamil, Day 5), and through recording their voice and listening to it again (e.g., Faris, Day 7). The whole atmosphere at SALL seems to be a source of motivation for learning English; participants were happy being at the club and enjoying the different activities provided by the programme. For instance, Mshari's diary sheet of Day 9 shows his improvement in being more able to focus and achieve, see Figure 74. In addition to this, under the para *Plans/suggestions for the future* participants indicated their wish to continue learning English at the club or to have a permanent club at their school (e.g., Basim, Day 7; Faris, Day 9; Faris, Day 10).

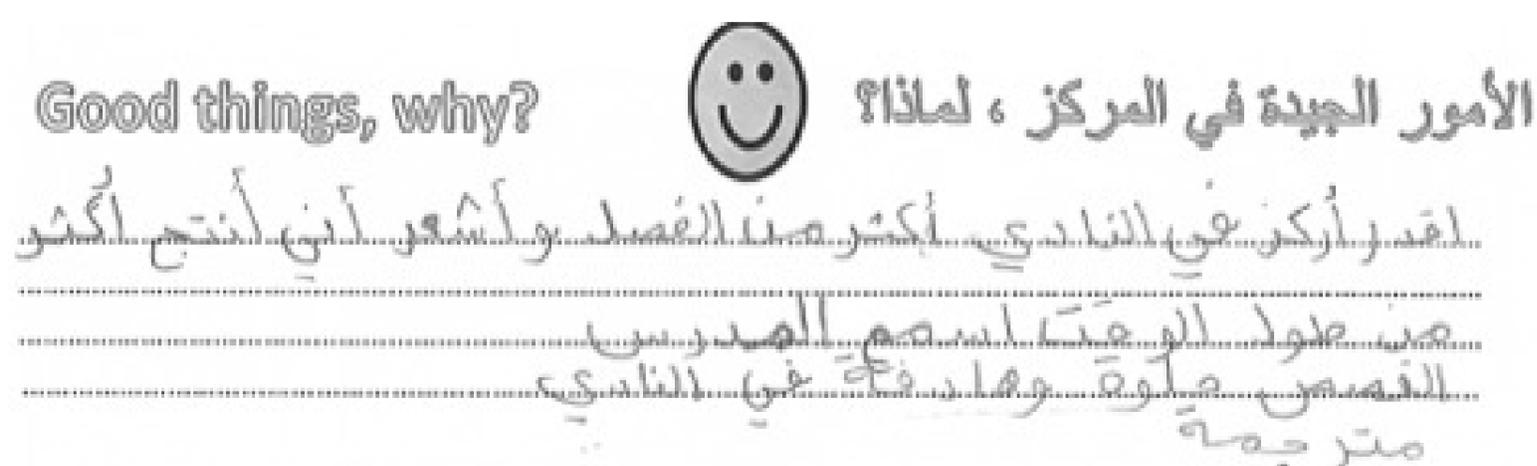


Figure 74. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 9, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

I was able to focus in the club more than in the class, and I felt achieving more.

I listened to the teacher all the time.

The stories were good, and they were translated and have morals.

Based on the researcher's observation, students' motivation was clear during the sessions; they were very happy and laughing; whenever they finished a task, they immediately called to say that they had finished and wanted to do more or asked for more stories. An example of their desire to learn more was on Day 2 when Nadir was drawing, he was trying to pronounce and spell the new words and was repeating them frequently, especially after he had written them. Moreover, on Day 3 when the session was about to finish, Nadir and one of his classmates were not willing to leave as they wanted to stay for more time in order to listen to new stories.

The data collected from the individual interviews provide support for the above analysis. In the interview with the student participants, I asked them a direct question about their motivation to learn English during and after the club. For instance, in the following extract from the interview with Nadir, the role of the club in motivating him to learn English is clear as he got a great feeling about English and how easy it became for him to learn and memorize new words.

[...] it [the club] gave us a great feeling that English language is a nice, interesting and not complicated language. I feel that I have benefited, developed my level and became able to understand and memorize new words and translate them (Interview with Nadir).

In the interview with the parents, one of them indicated the positive impact of the club on his son's motivation to learn English, he said, "I believe that their motivation to learn English has increased a lot; I hope that this method of teaching and this support for our children will continue" (Interview with P2). Also, I asked the teacher-participant about the level of motivation

of the students after they completed the sessions at the club. He appreciated the efforts made at the club and described the students as being “[...] very motivated in the new way of using technologies and stories rather than using only their books” (Interview with T3-AD).

However, students wrote in their dairies about the shortage of some equipment or that the time allowed for certain activities was not enough. Such comments may be considered as demotivating as they may have a negative impact on students’ desire to learn. Among these is the shortage of headphones or speakers in the club as indicated in the sheets of Zamil’s Day 10 and Faris’ Day 6, respectively. Another thing is the shortage of time for certain activities as indicated by Rami on Day 1 and Basim on Day 9. Moreover, under the para *Not good things, why?*, Mshari described the story he read on Day 10 as “less entertaining” and said that it suits girls more than boys, see Figure 75.



Figure 75. Mshari’s SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 1

Translation

Not good things, why?

‘The sleep’ story was less entertaining because it is for girls.

Motivation plays a positive role in increasing learners’ self-confidence. The role of self-confidence is discussed in the next section.

5.4.2 Self-confidence

Confidence is a state of mind which is developed through having positive thinking, practice, knowledge or experience. It can be increased or decreased. In the academic field, preparation, knowledge and previous results may affect and shape confidence positively or negatively. In the foreign language context, self-confidence has been defined as the general belief that the students hold about their ability to be engaged in effective communication in the foreign language (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

As far as the context of this study is concerned, the availability of the resources and the methods of teaching English inside the club increased the confidence of the learners. For example, the availability and use of stories contributed to the development of confidence in the students. After

attending the sessions on the first day, Nadir soon felt that his confidence had increased. He suggested to tell the story they read in Arabic, see Figure 76.

Plans/ suggestion for the future خطط واقتراحات مستقبلية
 انشر القصة بالعربي
 بسوق اليوتيوب في اليوتيوب

Figure 76. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 1, part 2

Translation

Plans/suggestions for the future

Explain the story in Arabic.

I will listen to it on YouTube.

Moreover, being benefited from reading the club's stories, Zamil was encouraged not only to read more English stories but also to write new ones. As it is clear from Figure 77, Zamil is willing to write a story using words and phrases they learnt from the club's stories, see Figure 77.

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟
 تقدر تسوي قصة من نفسك

Once upon a time

he said

Figure 77. Zamil's SALL diary sheet, Day 7, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? I was able to write a story by myself by using sentences with:
 'Once upon a time' and 'he said'.

Students' reliance on themselves to explore or learn something indicates an increase in their confidence. For instance, Zamil and Faris wrote in their diary sheets of Day 3 and Day 7, respectively, that they became able to do things at the club by themselves such as learning or finding the meaning of new words. Moreover, the technological devices available for the students to use inside the club seem to contribute positively to the increase of the amount of confidence. In the students' daily diary sheets, the use of devices such as computers and iPads was mentioned in association with 'being able to learn' or 'learn alone'. For example, on Day 2, Mshari wrote that he learnt by

himself using the iPad. Similarly, the diary sheet of Day 7 indicated that Nadir was able to do things by himself; he used the computer to write and translate words, see Figure 78.

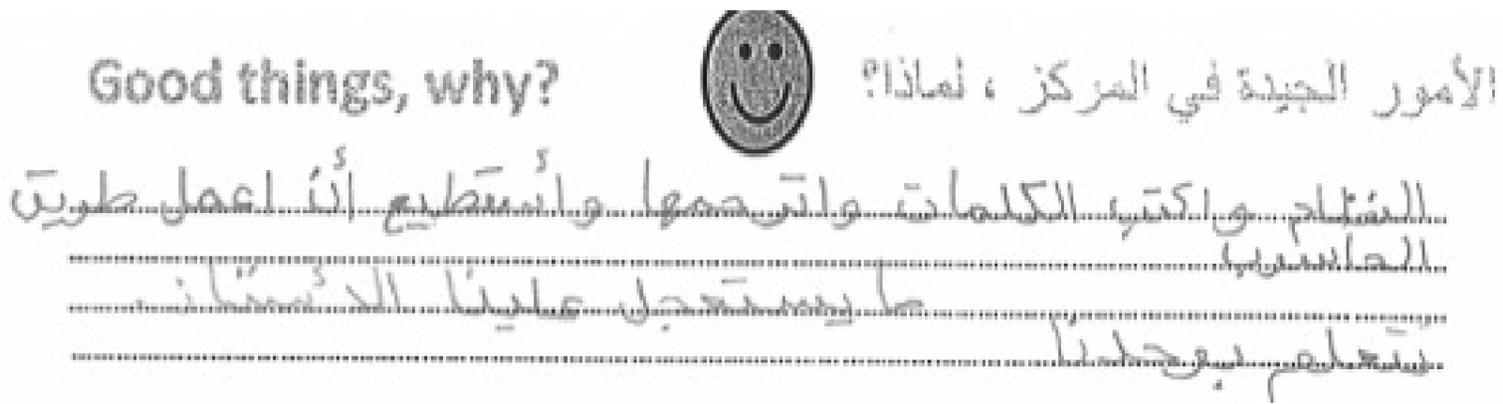


Figure 78. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 7, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The arrangement; I was able to write the words and translate them by using the computer.
The teacher didn't rush on us.
We learnt by ourselves.

Being in teamwork or receiving help from classmates is a way to encourage students to participate and as a result to increase their confidence. Reviewing their daily sheets, the analysis showed that students benefited from such teaching methods in terms of their self-confidence. The role of friends' support is indicated in the diary sheets of Rami Day 1, Faris Day 4 and Rami Day 10. Furthermore, Ishaq mentioned in his sheet of Day 3 the role of being in teamwork in developing his ability to do things by himself such as searching for the meaning of words and distinguishing different accents, American and British, see Figure 79.

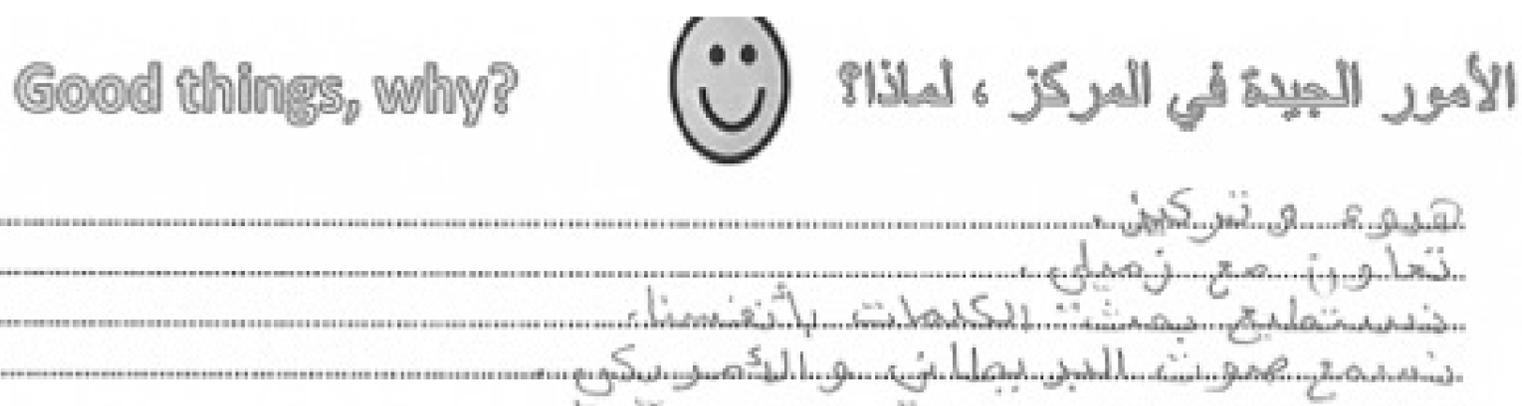


Figure 79. Ishaq's SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

Quietness and concentration.

Teamwork with my classmate.

We were able to search the words by ourselves.

We listened to the American and British accents.

The general atmosphere at the club including the variety of resources played a vital role in increasing the students' self-confidence. Towards the end of the experiment, students indicated some of the benefits they got from joining the club. On Day 10, Mshari and Basim wrote under the para *Good things, why?*, that they learnt to be independent and their confidence was increased, inter alia. In addition, Basim on Day 8, wrote that the websites they used were useful not only for English but also for learning other subjects and that the whole thing contributed to his confidence as he could learn by himself, see Figure 80.



Figure 80. Basim's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

They are excellent and relevant British websites; everything that I need.

I learnt different subjects, Maths in English language.

I have become more confident to learn by myself.

As for the general atmosphere of the club, Nadir commented on this in the interview, he said, "I liked all the things in the club and benefited from them. I feel that it developed me and made me more self-confident" (Interview with Nadir).

Self-confidence started to increase and develop from the first day at the club. Based on the researcher's observations, students seemed confident while doing activities. For example, after they had been taught about spelling and pronunciation, they immediately started learning how to spell and pronounce English words. Whether in groups or individually, this confidence was clear in their eyes and questions. For instance, when they finished reading, they twice shouted loudly "we finish teacher". Another example of self-confidence I observed was on Day 5 when I suggested a

dialogue game and all of them agreed. Some of them had a kind of hesitation, but because of confidence, they agreed which was a kind of challenge for them. Although participants' self-confidence was most clear in their dairies, interviews indicated the development of students' confidence. For instance, the interview with Nadir revealed the role of SALL in developing his self-confidence as he said,

I felt that I had confidence that I could learn [...] I felt that I was going to learn English quickly and nothing would be difficult for me. Every day I learn something new; every time I feel happier than before and more confident that I can learn and speak English while I am still young (Interview with Nadir).

I asked Nadir a direct question about whether his self-confidence increased after he completed the sessions in the club. In the following excerpt from the interview, Nadir explained his evaluation of his confidence in learning English before and after the club, he said,

Basically, I have a desire to learn English, and I told you from the first day you met me that I shared with my brothers in a WhatsApp group in order to memorize English and German words because of the teacher who was teaching both languages, so I felt that I had the confidence that I could learn only in one way, which is in the class with the teacher. But when I saw the club and the diverse methods of education, I became happy and felt that I would learn English quickly and nothing would be difficult for me. Every day I learnt something new; every time I felt more joy and more confidence that I could learn and speak English although I am young (Interview with Nadir).

Moreover, interviews with the parents provided evidence for the development of self-confidence in the students during and after the sessions provided by the club. P2 said,

As for my son, he was anxious at first and was not convinced with the idea of the club; I thought because of his personality, but later I saw that he was more happy, confident and self-reliant, and his speaking skill has been much improved (Interview with P2).

The impact of the club on the participants continued in their regular English classes at the school. English teachers noticed their new motivation and self-confidence during English classes. In the interview with the teacher-participant, the situation was described as follows: "They keep running to the English class; they bring their books and their bags; they were happy and were laughing because they had the desire to learn with confidence" (Interview with T3-AD). In the next section, the role of the teacher at the club and his support in improving the learning atmosphere will be discussed.

5.4.3 Independence

The participants' self-reliance during SALL sessions is discussed in this subsection from two different angles. First, is the way they view the role of the teacher whether positive or negative (5.4.3.1) and second the way they view or assess their progress (5.4.3.2).

5.4.3.1 Teacher support

The teacher's role is very important in any kind of learning as he or she is viewed by learners as the ultimate source of information for their education and the best model. Learners resort to their teacher whenever they encounter any difficulty in the learning process. In the foreign language learning context, the teacher is not only the source of information but also the model foreign language user, so they imitate them in order to get the appropriate usage of the language including pronunciation.

In the context of the present study, participants have indicated the role of the teacher in the club as being supportive for them in different ways. For instance, in their diary sheets, a number of expressions are found in favour of the teacher. In Figure 23 above, Nadir wrote that he learnt a number of new words and the teacher helped him in getting their meanings. Similarly, in Day 4 sheet, he mentioned that the way the teacher dealt with them was nice, see Figure 81. For me, as an observer and a teacher, I believe that Nadir was, to a large extent, cooperative with his classmates: reading, listening and making corrections when there is a mistake. I explained to him how to pause at the end of a sentence and how to use the intonation if it is a question or a statement in the story.



Figure 81. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 4, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

Organization of the groups.

The teacher was nice with us.

Every day I learn more.

The teacher's presence inside the club is viewed as a positive one since not a single student wrote any negative comment in relation to the teacher's role. Instead, all their comments were in favour of the teacher. They praised him in different ways mentioning his contribution to learning various language aspects. In a number of instances, I read their positive comments about the teacher in their diary sheets. Faris and Rami wrote the phrase 'the teacher was kind' on Day 1 and Day 4,

respectively. The participant, Rami, on Day 10, thanked the teacher for the idea of the club in general and for being nice and kind to them in particular. On Day 1, Rami wrote about the good things he saw at the club among which he praised the teacher and the support that he provided for the students, see Figure 82.

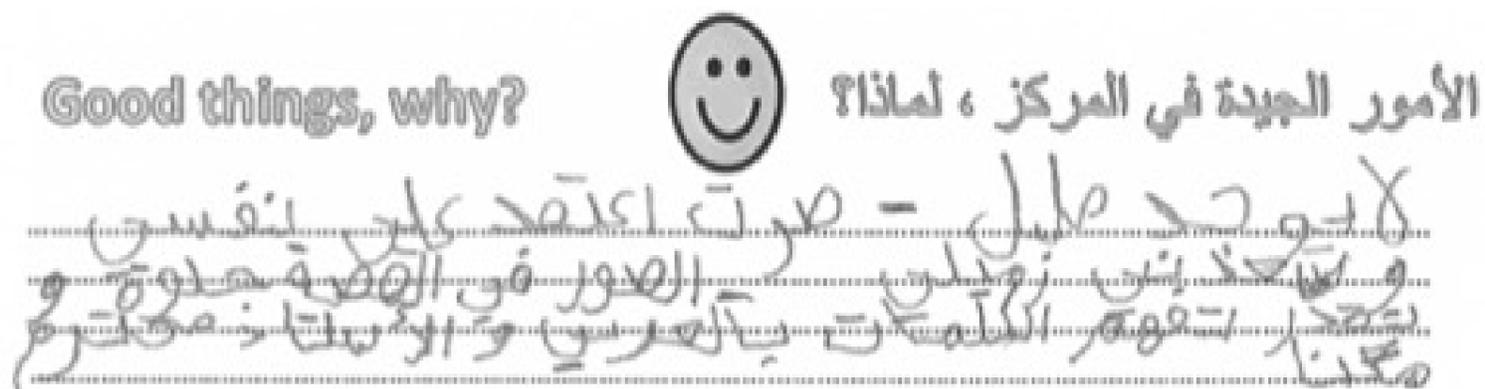


Figure 82. Rami’s SALL diary sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

- There is no boredom.
- I depended on myself, and my classmate helped me.
- The pictures were good in the story.
- I understood the words in Arabic.
- The teacher was respectful and supportive for us.

The word ‘help’ has been associated with many comments on the teacher’s role at the club. In Figure 83, Ishaq describes his activities on Day 8 and mentions the role of the teacher as being there for help. Similarly, Mshari and Faris mentioned in their diary sheets that the teacher supported and helped them in their activities on Day 2. The teacher’s help was extended to cover dealing with material on the Internet. He helped Zamil on Day 10 in listening to online material and how to repeat listening. In addition, the teacher helped him to find a suitable website for practising language skills.



Figure 83. Ishaq’s SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1

Translation**Good things, why?**

The place was comfortable and wide.

We added drawings to the story.

We could ask the teacher for help.

Other areas in which the teacher's help was indicated in the students' sheets were reading and getting the meaning of words. As for reading, the teacher helped Mshari in reading the story on Day 1 and Faris on Day 8. Both students were happy, as indicated in their sheets of those days, that they understood the stories and were able to complete them. The data obtained from the interviews supports the argument that the teacher's role in developing reading skills is vital. The following excerpt is taken from the interview with Nadir.

We were unable to read correctly; we spelt some words with difficulty, but with your help when you told us that it was on YouTube, we were encouraged to complete the story and know its events. The story became interesting (Interview with Nadir).

As for vocabulary learning, students seemed to find it difficult either to understand the meaning of English words or find the English word to express some ideas. In the interview, Nadir described his first English story, he said "... it was a challenge with my classmate that we finish it [Little Bear]. You [the researcher as a teacher] also helped us to know the meanings and how to pronounce certain words". Similarly, Rami was trying to ask some questions but faced a problem in the English meaning or vocabulary he wanted to use; he referred to the teacher to help him with this difficulty, see Figure 84. Although Faris was able to guess the meaning of certain English words on Day 7, he was not sure about the meaning, so he checked with the teacher for the correct meaning.

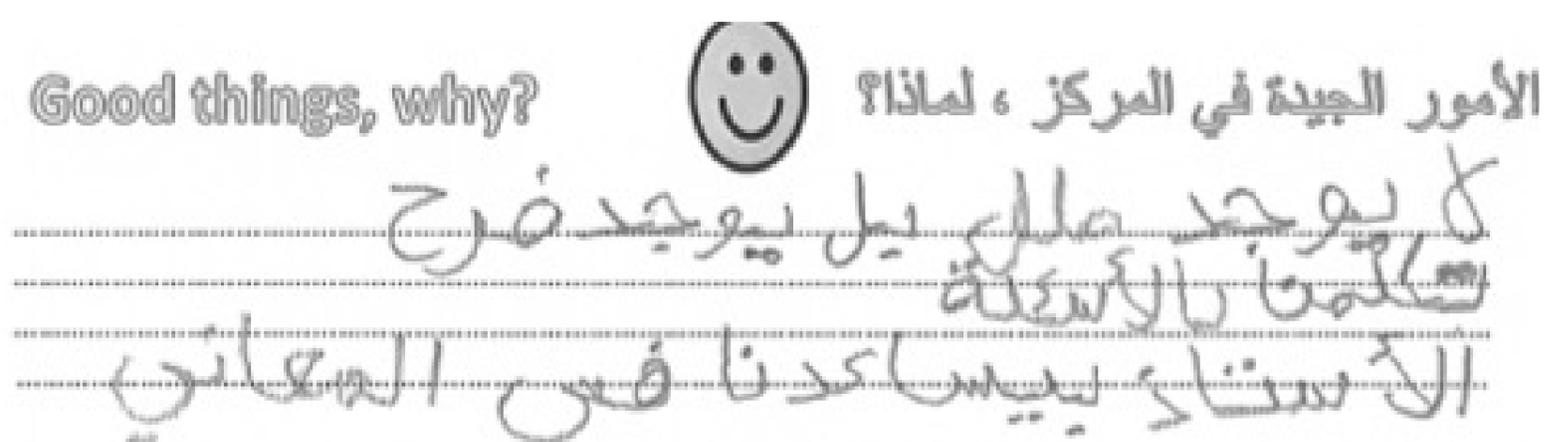


Figure 84. Rami's SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 1

Translation**Good things, why?**

There was no boredom but happiness.

We talked by asking questions.

The teacher helped us when we were struggling with the meaning.

The teacher's tolerance was appreciated by the students. It seems that students suffer from the strictness of the teachers at their schools whether in following the instructions or in their adherence to the official textbooks. At the club, students were happy to hear that they can do things they were not allowed to do at the school or to hear from the teacher that something was not paid attention to. The review of the students' sheets showed some instances of the teacher's tolerance to certain aspects of language learning. For example, Mshari explicitly stated this on Day 5 and said, "the teacher said, it is OK if you answer and say I don't know", whereas Rami included in his sheet that the teacher encouraged them to guess the meaning of the new words, but it is not necessary to do this for each word, see Figure 85. Other instances of the teacher's tolerance and flexibility were implied in the phrases used by the students in their comments on their activities of different days; Basim on Day 4, for example, wrote "the teacher said there is no exam"; Faris on Day 7 wrote "the teacher gave us freedom", and on Day 8 Zamil was happy because he was allowed to use the computer for the translation of the story they read that day and said "the teacher allowed us to complete it".

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ما هو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟
الأكاديمية يتحول نحاول نفهم الكلمة
وهو شرط نعرف كل معني لها

Figure 85. Rami's SALL diary sheet, Day 7, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? The teacher explained to us that we try to guess the meanings of words, and it is not important to know the meaning of every word.

The individual interview with Nadir provided and evidence for the teacher's tolerance. Nadir stated,

We began to ask each other in English, we felt that it was difficult for us at the beginning, but then we started talking and tried to arrange the speech although I made mistakes; you [the teacher] were not angry (Interview with Nadir).

Another example of the teacher tolerance was provided by Ishaq who indicated this in his diary sheet of Day 9. Ishaq praised the role of the teacher as he allowed them to learn the way they liked,

see Figure 86. As can be seen also in Figure 86, the teacher helped Ishaq in understanding the material that he was not able to understand at home. Moreover, the students were happy with the role played by their teacher at the club to the degree that they wished to continue consulting the teacher not only inside but also outside the club as indicated by Basim on the last day at the club, Day 10.

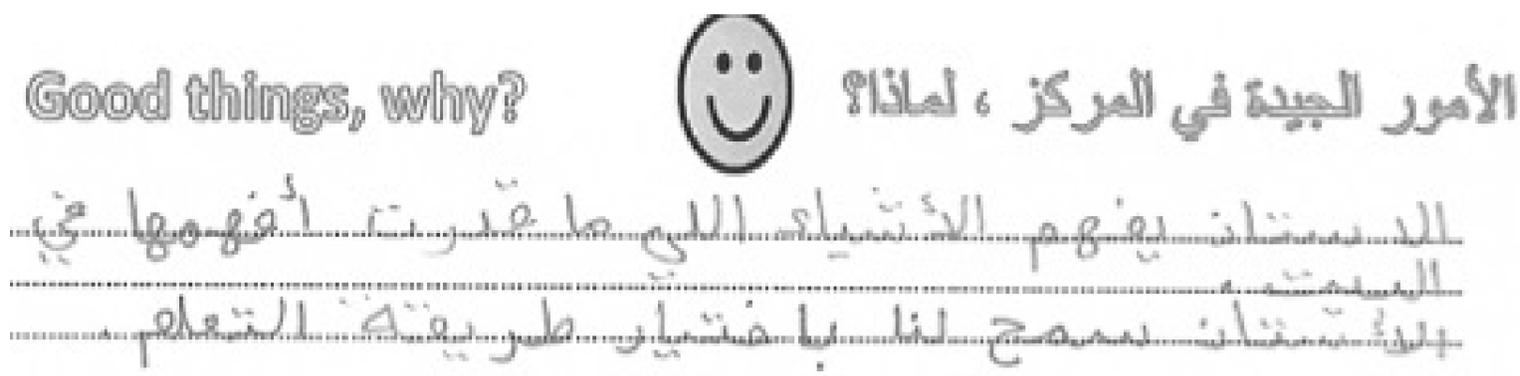


Figure 86. Ishaq's SALL diary sheet, Day 9, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The teacher made me understand topics that I didn't understand at home.

The teacher allowed us to choose the methods of learning.

The role of the teacher in the club was significant in the sense that students referred to him whenever they encountered a difficulty. In the individual interviews with the students, parents and teachers, this important role was highlighted. For instance, in the following excerpt Nadir explains the role of the teacher in encouraging him overcome the difficulties he encountered, he said,

In the beginning, I did not understand anything about the club. I used to see if the teacher was good with us, and there was no problem; I asked once so that I could understand. When you told us that we could create ideas that help us learn English language, I was encouraged by the idea of the club and started thinking that I would get things to the club that my friends and I would benefit from, such as the Sock Puppet application (Interview with Nadir).

One of the parents commented on the progress of his sons and mentioned the role of the teacher in their learning development. P2 said,

My son [first son] told me that the teacher allows them to use the computer and that they can bring it with them to the club. He also said that the teacher reads for them very beautiful and interesting stories and that they can talk freely with you, and you give them the freedom to learn what they want. Nadir likes drawing; I see that he writes and draws on the sheets what you taught him [...] he [second son] is able to search for educational sites by himself; he said that he learned this with you ... He always praises your great cooperation, kindness and containment (Interview with P2).

The schoolteacher, I interviewed, described the students after completing their sessions at the club, mentioning their attitudes towards learning at the club and towards their teacher there. He said,

Actually, they [the students] were happy, they were asking me for other classes for you to attend and bring their devices and want more books, stories. They were asking me when you would come to teach them, they want more classes with him similar to you, similar to your methods. They asked me about you if you would continue to teach them in the second semester. They want me to apply the same as yours (Interview with T3-AD).

In the above excerpt, the teacher-participant explained the status of the students from his own perspective. However, the progress they attained and the gains in different aspects of language as seen from their own perspective are equally important, the topic of the next subsection.

5.4.3.2 Self-reflection

Understanding the assessment of the progress and improvement of the students' academic levels from their own perspective is a mirror that reflects the picture of the whole situation in the organisation showing the gaps in the system. This will help the authorities improve whatever requires improvement in order to achieve the goals of the organisation. Thus, it is necessary to investigate the participants' self-reflection to have an idea about their evaluation of their achievements in particular and the organisations' outcomes in general.

As for the participants of this study, I reviewed their dairy sheets and the individual interviews I conducted with them in order to find out the points that reflect their self-assessments. In their diary sheets, students indicated that their gain is more, being at the club. Figure 87 below shows that Nadir is happy with the whole atmosphere of the club including the arrangement and the freedom given to them in terms of learning. He wrote that he was comfortable because he learnt more in the club.



Figure 87. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The arrangement.

Each student chose anything they wanted.

I relaxed a lot because I learnt more in the club.

Another example provided by Nadir on self-reflection is found in his diary sheet of Day 7. He said that he learnt how to be organised, how to write and translate words, and how to employ the computer in his learning process; he also said, among the good things, he is learning by himself, which means that his self-reliance is increased as indicated in Figure 88. Moreover, the interview with Nadir revealed the development and progress he made after joining the club as he reflected on his abilities from his own perspective, he said,

I developed my abilities in listening to stories from the computer and learning the spelling of new words by writing and drawing them on the painter. It is easy to learn words in this way because I like drawing. I also started to understand the meaning of words through games. I was not very interested in the meaning of words; now, I am very interested in the meanings and how to pronounce them; I try to repeat them more than once imitating the same voice (Interview with Nadir).

I want to learn أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم
أريد أن أكتب عن طريق الرسام
برنامج الرسام

Good things, why?  الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟
النظام و اكتب الكلمات واترجمها واستطيع ان اعمل طريق
الحاسوب
ما يستعمل علينا الدرسات
يتعلم بيوتنا

Not good things, why?  الأمور الغير جيدة ، لماذا؟
بعض زملائي يزعجون
اللايتوب ليس انجليزي

Figure 88. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 7, part 1

Translation

I want to learn	I want to write words through drawing. Al-Rassam application (The Painter app programme).
Good things, why?	The arrangement. I was able to write the words and translate them by using the computer. The teacher did not rush on us. We learnt by ourselves.
Not good things, why?	Some of my classmates made disturbance. Laptop had only English.

Moreover, Nadir became able to write English words and draw pictures for these words using the computer without the help of other people which is an example of self-evaluation as shown in Figure 89 below.

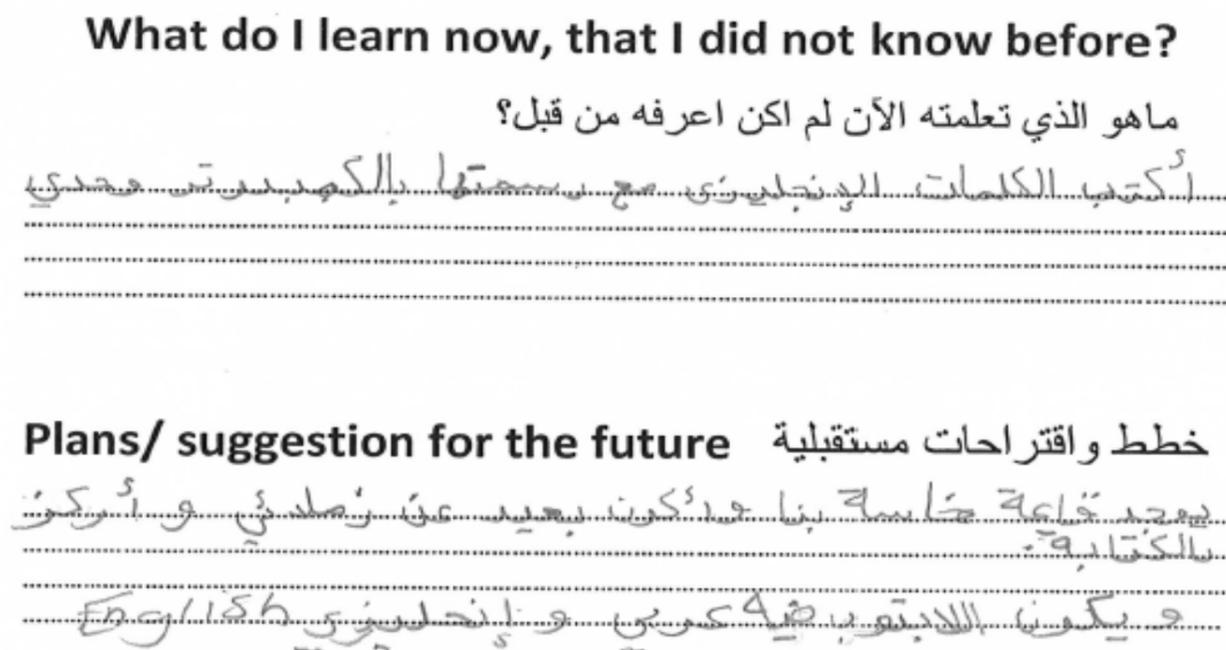


Figure 89. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 7, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? Writing words in English with their pictures alone using the computer.

Plans/suggestion for the future A special hall for us. To be far from my classmates in order to concentrate on writing. Laptop should have Arabic and English.

Students also reflected on their gains in the club by indicating that their ability to focus is increased as a result of the techniques used in the club. On Day 9, Nadir compared his abilities before and after joining the club mentioning that his ability to focus and concentrate through listening to the teacher was increased when compared with school classes. Similarly, Ishaq appreciated the learning methods used in the club and wrote in his diary sheet that he was able to focus on the material presented on Day 1, see Figure 90.



Figure 90. Ishaq's SALL diary sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

A New way, we didn't learn from the textbook, we learnt in another way.

I was able to focus.

I read with my classmate, Mohammed.

Several students felt that they became more self-reliant and more independent after they experienced learning at the club. For instance, Mshari wrote that he was able to learn by himself using the iPad on Day 2, and on Day 10 he mentioned the advantages of the place and wrote, among other things, that he developed his ability to be independent, see Figure 91. In the interview, I asked Nadir about the degree of his self-reliance in the club, he said, “[e]very time I see that the club has improved my skills, so I became able to inquire and ask” (Interview with Nadir). Moreover, as evidenced by the data collected from the individual interviews, Nadir mentioned something about self-reliance when he answered a question about the stories in the club, he said, “[...] we tried to rely on ourselves in understanding the story by watching the moving clip and translating the difficult words in the story” (Interview with Nadir).

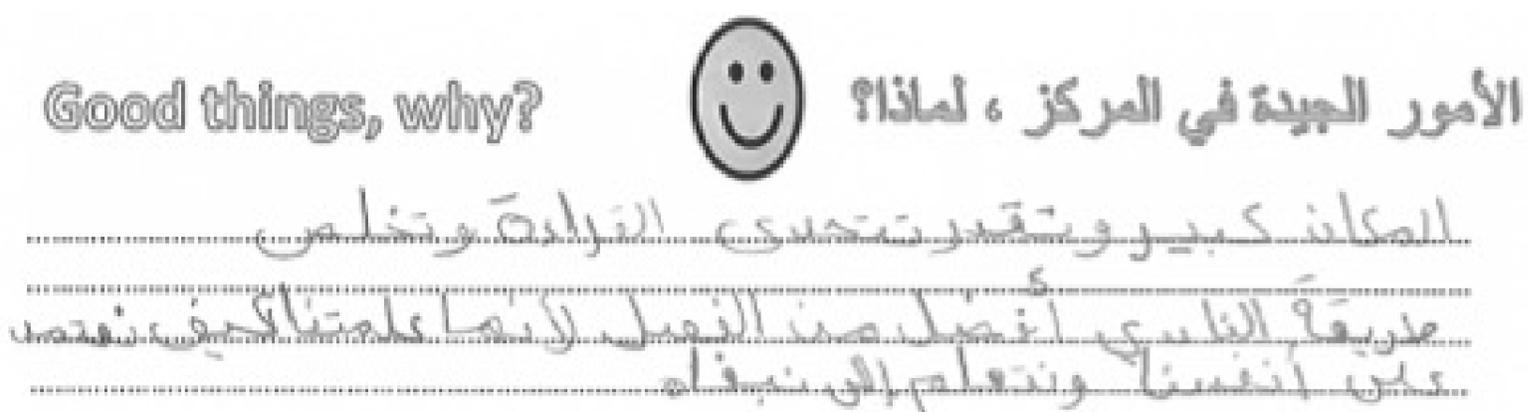


Figure 91. Mshari's SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The place is big, and you could challenge to finish reading the stories.

The club is better than the class because we learnt to be independent and learnt whatever we wanted.

Moreover, instead of asking the teacher, students relied on themselves in searching for the meaning of new words they came across while studying their materials. For example, Ishaq reflected on the atmosphere of the club on Day 3 with the words “quietness” and “concentration”. Being in this atmosphere, he wrote in his sheet of that day that he was able to recognise the American and British accents and reflected on his ability to search for the meaning of the new words. Similar self-reflection was given by Nadir during the individual interview. He said, “[m]emorizing and reviewing words, as well as searching for their meanings, if they were difficult for me. At the beginning, I did not know how to use the dictionary and look for words in it” (Interview with Nadir). Furthermore, on Day 4, Ishaq continued appreciating being in the club and mentioned that the atmosphere was relaxing in which he learnt without any stress, see Figure 92.

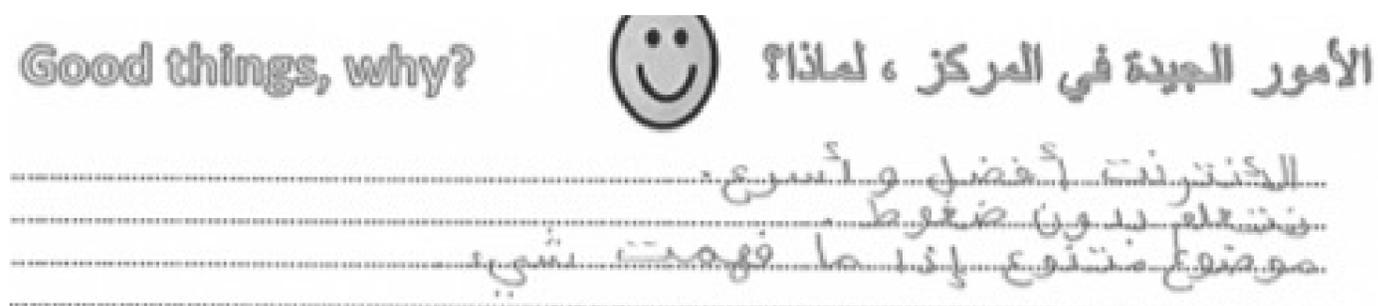


Figure 92. Ishaq’s SALL diary sheet, Day 4, part 1

Translation**Good things, why?**

The Internet was better and faster.

We learnt without stress.

Variety of subjects, if I don’t know something.

The individual interviews revealed a number of instances of self-reflection. For example, in the interview with the parent-participants, I asked P1 whether his son talked to him about his experience of learning English at the club; he said, “[i]ndeed, he spoke about the experience with admiration as a new experience and a new way of learning, and that he feels that he is fluent and free to learn” (Interview with P1). Furthermore, when I asked Nadir about how his abilities have been developed in the club, he said,

I am able to memorize the new words easily [...] I began to understand the meaning of words in games; I am also more interested in the pronunciation of words [...] I did not

expect that I would be able to speak in the dialogue session when you made me play that game with my classmates. We started to ask each other questions in English; I felt that it was difficult for me in the beginning, but later I spoke and tried to arrange the words (Interview with Nadir).

Moreover, Nadir compared his abilities before and after attending the club's sessions reflecting on the progress and development he achieved from his own perspective, he said,

I feel that I have benefited, developed my level and became able to understand and memorize the new words and translate them. Before that I was not able to do these things because we use to read from the book and do the exercises; now I really like English and will continue, God willing. (Interview with Nadir).

The above excerpt shows Nadir's self-reflection about several learning skills such as memorization of vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking and detecting the correct word order in forming questions. Moreover, towards the end of the interview with Nadir, I asked him to evaluate himself in different areas; the evaluation was out of ten. For progress and development in English language, he gave 8 out of 10, and for motivation to learn English, he gave 9 out of 10, whereas for self-confidence in learning English, he gave 10 out of 10.

The above reflections taken from the diary sheets and interviews are positive ones. However, negative ones are there as well. A few comments in their diary sheets show some of the obstacles they encountered while at the club which may be considered as negative reflections. One of the frequently mentioned barriers is time. When a participant mentions that 'time' is short or not enough, it means that he could not finish the task within the allocated time by the teacher. This means that he is unable to do so. For example, Rami wrote about a reading activity on Day 1 that he needed more time to read. Similar comments were reported by Zamil on Day 3 and Basim on Day 1, inter alia. Moreover, Zamil added his inability to pronounce words; he said, "I did not know how to pronounce the new words" (diary sheet, Day 3). Other students mentioned that they were unable to use certain applications, such as the comment provided by Rami "some applications were not suitable for me, and I couldn't understand them" (diary sheet, Day 10).

How learning at SALL is different from learning at the school is discussed in the next section.

5.5 Classroom-based learning vs. self-access learning

Having two learning experiences: one at the school and another at the club, the students indicated some differences between the two either by providing direct comparisons between the two or by mentioning the things and activities they experienced at the club. The latter can be considered as an advantage of the club over the school, especially they mentioned that it is something new they like. In their diary sheets, the students compared the learning situation they experienced at SALL

with what they had in their traditional classrooms. For example, on Day 6, Nadir wrote that he was allowed to choose the book he liked and that the teacher allowed them to go outside the club to feel more comfortable, see Figure 93. On the last day of SALL, Mshari described the place at SALL as ‘big’ and mentioned his view directly, “[t]he club was better than the class because we learnt to be independent and learnt whatever we wanted” (Mshari’s SALL diary sheet of Day 10, part 1).

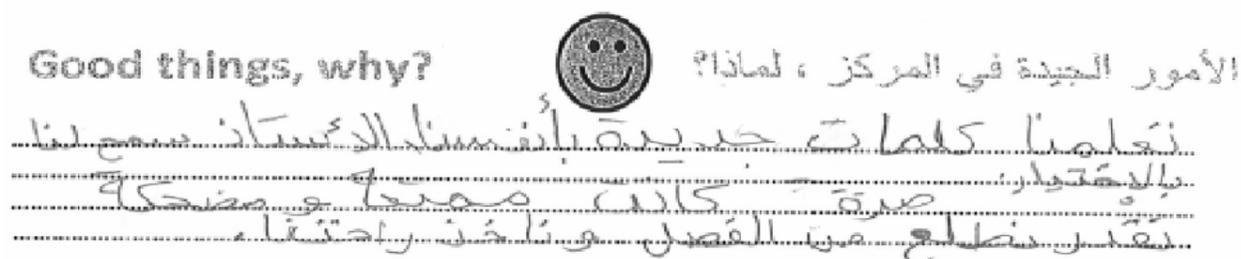


Figure 93. Nadir’s SALL diary sheet, Day 6, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? We learnt new words by ourselves, the teacher allowed us to choose.
It was very exciting and funny.
We were able to go out of the class and rest.

Another comparison was indicated by the comments of Ishaq on Day 5, although not clearly stated. He described the learning activities at SALL as “informal” which implied that learning at school is formal in addition to his being helped by his peers and that special attention was paid to the speaking skills as seen in Figure 94. Writing these comments in his sheet implies that they are at least not much done in the traditional classrooms.



Figure 94. Ishaq’s SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? Fun – funny.
It wasn’t formal because we were sitting on the floor.
Focus on speaking.

Help from friends.

In addition to diary sheets, the interview data revealed some comparisons between the two learning situations. For example, Nadir compared the use of flash memory in school with using it in the club, he said,

I felt that I wanted to review the English curriculum book because frankly, when our teacher gave us the flash and said that it had the electronic curriculum, I didn't use it. It was important that I see the content. I didn't have time to open it at home because I had to do a lot of homework. The club was an opportunity to see what was in the flash memory; I was able to read the conversations that were interesting while listening to them from the device. In the classroom, we heard them quickly, or the teacher read them to us using his voice. It is different when I listen to them from the computer because it gives me more time to listen and to repeat the questions and the answers (Interview with Nadir).

In the above excerpt, Nadir showed the advantages of using the club's technological devices and how they facilitated learning as he was able to repeat listening to questions and answers. Moreover, P2's reflection provided evidence of the good impact of the club on his two sons who attended the sessions, he said, "[t]hey all had very good impressions of the club and were very happy" (Interview with P2).

In the interviews, I asked the students to evaluate their levels in terms of self-confidence and motivation to learn English. They were required to evaluate their development by giving a score out of ten for their levels before joining the club and after the completion of the club's sessions. As for self-confidence, the most drastic change was observed in Mshari's evaluation who gained five points; he increased his self-confidence from 3 to 8. However, other students such as Zamil, Basim and Faris increased their self-confidence by adding three points as a result of attending the club's sessions. More difference was seen in the evaluation of their motivation level as Rami gained 7 points; his level of motivation shifted from 3 to 10. Similarly, Mshari moved from 3 to 9 gaining 6 points. Such differences in the scores before and after SALL indicate the differences between the outcomes of the school and the club.

Towards the end of the whole experiment - Days 9 and 10, the students indicated their positive impact and impressions about the general features of SALL which were shown through their comments and suggestions in their diary sheets of those particular days. For example, on Day 10, Zamil wrote that he liked the club for many reasons among which is the various activities on the different skills. Similarly, on Day 9, Faris suggested sitting in the club every day and on Day 10 he wanted the teacher to establish a permanent club at the school. On the same day, he clearly stated his impression about SALL and English in that the club is the best place to learn English. See Figure 95.

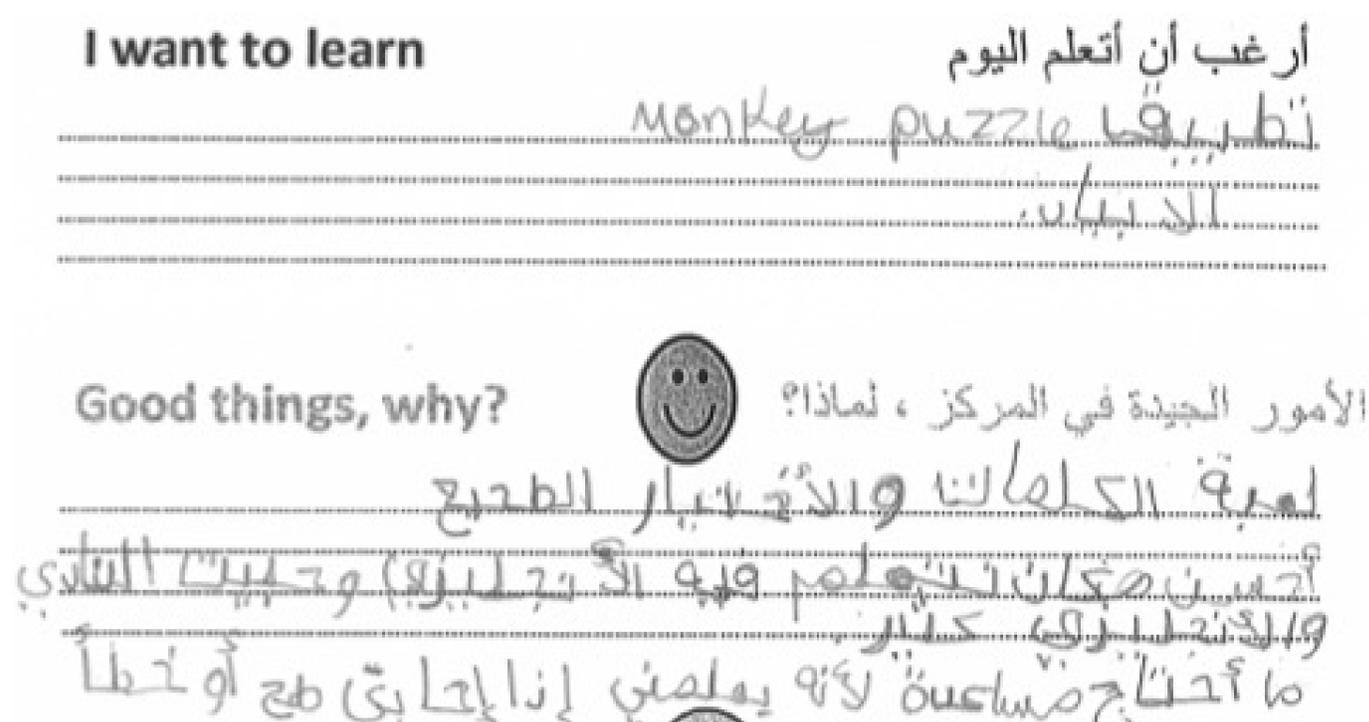


Figure 95. Faris’s SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 1

Translation

I want to learn

The application: ‘Monkey Puzzle’ on the iPad.

Good things, why?

It was a word game in which I had to choose the correct answer.

It was the best place to learn English and I liked English and the club.

I didn’t need any help because it tells me if my answer is right or wrong.

A positive impact was noticed in the interview data. Nadir, for example, talked about the way the teacher dealt with them in the club and how this method motivated him to continue to attend sessions at the club, he said,

Honestly, there wasn’t any boredom. You treated us with respect and without formality; we felt comfortable to participate and choose the method of learning. I am always eager to go to the club because its method of learning is new and different from what we study in classes and other subjects (Interview with Nadir).

Furthermore, I asked him a direct question about the differences between the club and the school, he said,

A big difference, right, the [school] teacher is good with us, but we cannot use anything in learning except the book. We cannot bring our devices and use them as in the club, where we used to do and discover many new things. There was always a time to train on the devices, unlike the classroom where we only do the curriculum exercises. I wish that the English course will always remain like this, so we can go to the club, read stories, use our devices, play and create new methods like the ones you did for us. I started trying to think

and prepare new things for the club before I go, so I see that the idea of the club is much better than the classroom (Interview with Nadir).

Nadir clearly mentioned the benefits of joining the club and how things including the method of teaching are different from those of the traditional classrooms in addition to the positive impact on his willingness to prepare for his classes and mentioned his own opinion about the club being “much better than the classroom”. This opinion is supported by the words of P1 who talked about the positive impact of the club on his son, P1 said,

In fact, what he said was mostly positive. He was talking about it being a new idea in learning and the availability of more technology in learning the language, and that was by bringing his device to school and completing learning at home... he told me that he runs quickly to the centre when he knows that it is time for the centre. This is evidence of enthusiasm and desire to learn (Interview with P1).

The benefits of the club compared to the school were also noticed by the teacher participant, T3-AD, who talked about the impact of the club on the students as he observed while they are in the school, he said,

Actually, they were happy; they were asking me for other classes for you to attend and bring their devices and want more books and stories. They were asking me when you would come to teach them; they want more classes with him similar to you, similar to your methods. They asked me about you if you would continue to teach them in the second semester. They want me to apply the same as yours (Interview with T3-AD).

5.5.1 Learning atmosphere

A good relaxing atmosphere plays an important role in language learning process. Nadir appreciated the general atmosphere of SALL. He was astonished by the tidiness, the fair distribution and the attraction of resources such as dictionaries with pictures and described the whole atmosphere as quiet and good. Such an impression about the club indicates Nadir’s lack of experiencing such a situation in the school, see Figure 96. Other students also appreciated the quietness of the club which, in turn, enabled them to focus and concentrate on their activities. For example, Zamil, Ishaq and Faris indicated this in their comments on Day 3’s sessions.

Good things, why?  الأمور الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟

هادي
 كان صديقي جميع القصص على رف البستورية
 اقرأ البنون أستعملوا وأنا اقرأها مع صديكي وكان وساعدنا
 القصص مسلية وأنا اقرأها مع صديقي وكان وساعدنا
 الأستاذ

Figure 96. Nadir's SALL Dairy sheet, Day 1, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? Quiet. All the stories were organized at the board. I read without any haste. The story was interesting. I read it with my classmate, Rashid, and the teacher helped us.

Being well organised, the club provided a good learning atmosphere for most of the students. In their diary sheets, students indicated the impact of such an atmosphere on their learning which, in turn, implies that they did not experience this atmosphere before. On Day 2, Nadir wrote that they were organised at the club and the books were organized in a clear order mentioning that the dictionary was interesting because it contained pictures, as he said, see Figure 97.



Figure 97. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 2, part 1

Translation

Good things, why? We were organized, no mess. Books were organized. The dictionary was interesting; it contained pictures. It was clear in order.

SALL's atmosphere was comfortable and entertaining when compared with that of the school. It was entertaining because students were allowed to bring and use their devices inside the club learning things about other countries. These made SALL's atmosphere a boredom-free one, as indicated by Rami in his diary sheet of Day 8, see Figure 98.

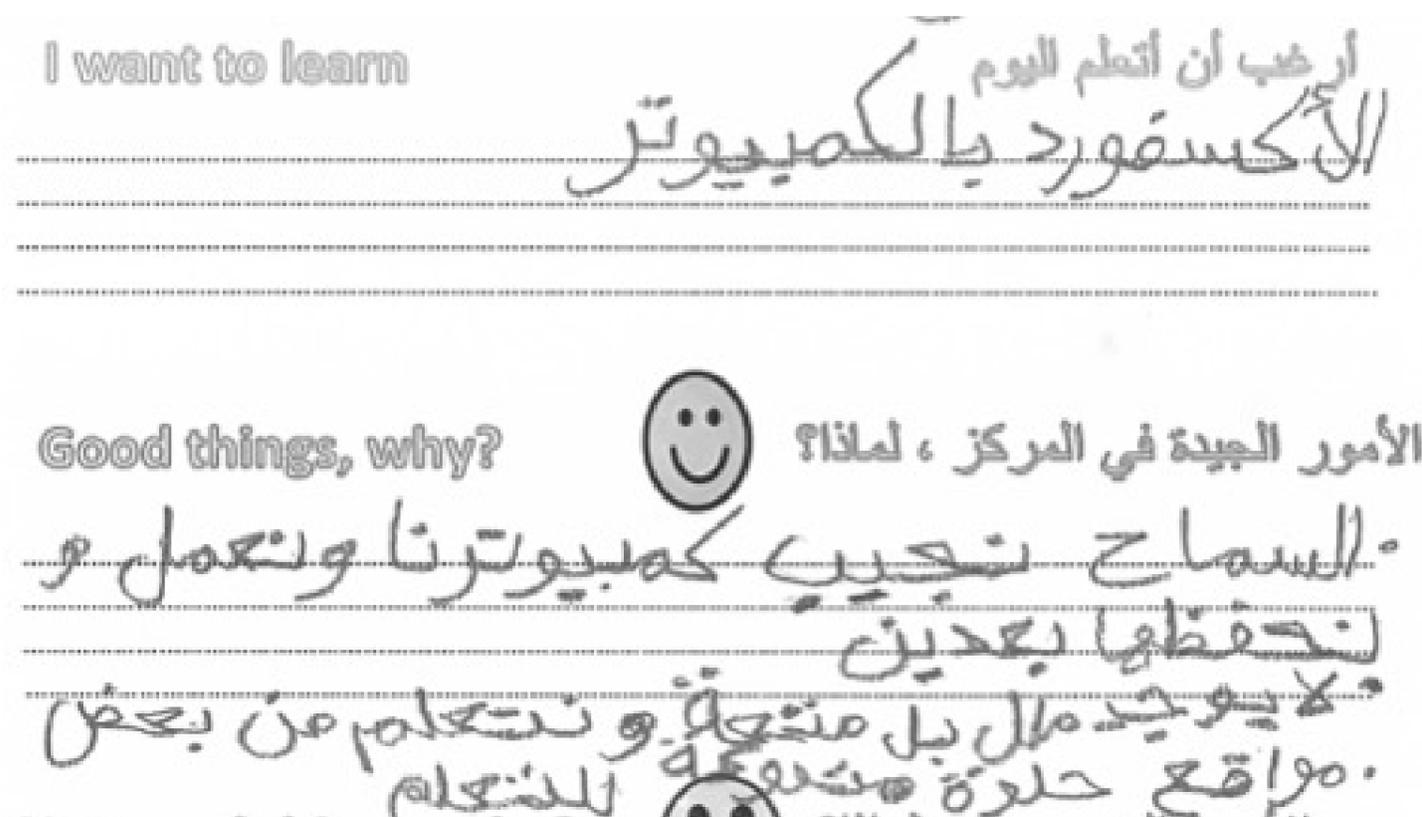


Figure 98. Rami's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1

Translation

I want to learn

Oxford by computer.

Good things, why?

The teacher allowed us to bring our computers to work inside the club and save our work.

It was exciting, there was no boredom, and we learnt from each other.

It was an excellent variety of websites for learning English.

The students wrote in their diary sheets about their learning in the club and how the whole atmosphere was comfortable. For example, on Day 2, Mshari mentioned his use of the iPad and how the teacher supported him and described the place as “comfortable”, whereas Zamil wrote about the story he read on Day 8 and how the computer helped him in translation he said, “I learnt comfortably”, see Figure 99.



Figure 99. Zamil's SALL diary sheet, Day 8, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The story was beautiful, and the teacher allowed us to complete it.

I like this place because I learnt comfortably.

We wrote the story using the computer and translated it.

5.5.2 Parents' attitudes

The attitudes of parents and teachers are important in the investigation of language learning in general and SALL in particular because both the teacher and the parent have the role of the director in this learning process; the role of the teacher is at the school and the parent is at home. In this analysis, I relied on the individual interviews I conducted with them. As for the parent participants, the data revealed that they hold a positive attitude towards the SALL club. Their attitudes were based on their observations and discussions with their children who participated in the experiment. For instance, P1 talked about the skill development, self-reliance and increased willingness to learn he noticed in his son after he joined the club, he said,

I see that there is a significant development and a great interest in my son's learning. Now, he takes a long time to review educational sites that he says are useful with a teacher who teaches them better and without boredom [...] I see in him that he speaks more than before, uses words and expresses himself as if he is speaking in front of the audience ... I see that he has the ability to independently research without much interference from me, and this is a great positive (Interview with P1).

The above excerpt shows that P1's son improved his learning skills and self-confidence. The general attitude of P1 is positive. Moreover, P1 has a positive attitude towards group learning that took place at SALL, he said: "[...] and he [his son] said that he worked with his classmates as a team, and this is good because it increases the opportunity to search and discover" (Interview with P1). A similar feeling was expressed by P2 in which he observed that his son improved his English language skills, especially speaking in addition to the development in the personality of his son as he was able to overcome his psychological barriers, he said, "I saw that he [his son] was more happy, confident and self-reliant, and his speaking skill has been much improved. I hope that this method of teaching and this support for our children will continue" and added "I see a lot of development in his personality ... I noticed that his psychological barrier is broken [...] I am happy with the development on his personal side; this is very important for me with regard to my son" (Interview with P2).

5.5.3 Barriers

Perfection is a rarely achieved goal. The data available indicated some learning obstacles encountered by the students at SALL. Most of the frequent learning barriers were time, the lack of devices such as computers and iPads, the speed of the Internet, and the disturbance caused by other students in the form of noise or interruption. As for the obstacle of time, many students clearly indicated that the time allotted to their activities or sessions' time, in general, is short; they suggested having more time to complete or to do more activities. Additionally, they complained about this obstacle to their parents as mentioned by P1 in the interview who said, "but he [his son] always asks why time is short in the club and he wants it more than that" (Interview with P1). Moreover, disturbance is another frequently mentioned learning barrier; the students wrote in their diary sheets that other students make a lot of noise and interrupt them while they are engaged in doing certain activities. Being allowed to use technological devices during their lessons for the first time in their learning journey, students required more devices such as computers and iPads in the club so each could find a device to work or play on. They indicated the shortage in the number of available devices in addition to the slow speed of the Internet. An example of the sheets that indicated such barriers is provided by Nadir on Day 3. As can be seen in Figure 100, Nadir under the para *Not good things, why?* complained about the time and the slow speed of the computer and the Internet.



Figure 100. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

Not good things, why? Time was short because I wanted to try something else. The Internet and the computer were slow.

5.5.4 Language learning progress

The language learning progress of the students is one of the themes frequently indicated in their diary sheets. Their comments on their daily activities in this new experience at the club may imply what they found different from their earlier experience at the school. Towards the end of the experiment, Nadir on Day 9 directly mentioned that his concentration and listening skills were improved and felt that achievement was increased as can be seen in Figure 101.

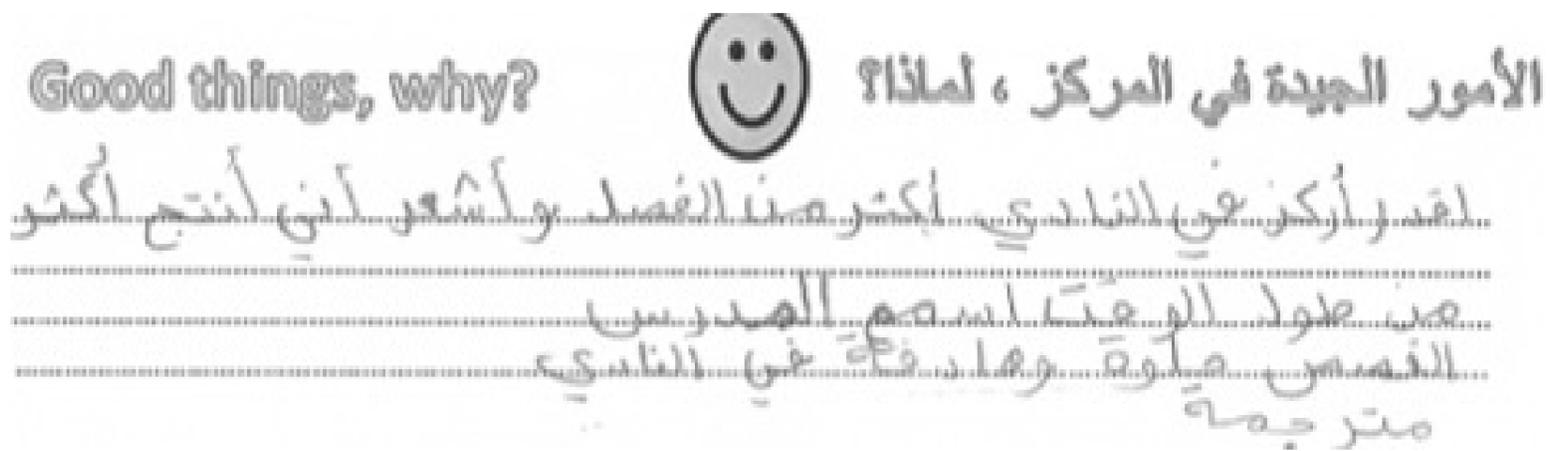


Figure 101. Nadir's SALL diary sheet, Day 9, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

I was able to focus more in the club than in the class, and I felt achieving more.

I listened to the teacher all the time.

The stories were good, and they were translated and have morals.

Another progress is noticed in their increased vocabulary items as indicated by a number of the students in their diary sheets. They indicated their progress by writing that they learnt the meaning of words in Arabic or learning new words from the dictionary. For example, Rami and Faris showed this on their first day at the club. Ishaq wrote that he learnt words from the dictionary on Day 2, whereas on Day 10, Faris wrote that he learnt new words from pictures, see Figure 102. So, besides dictionaries, pictures seem to be a good resource for getting the meaning of new words for these YLs. Furthermore, the interview with the teacher participant yielded some evidence of the students' learning progress in terms of vocabulary use; he said, "I noticed that they used some experiences from SALL; they use most of the words they have learned from the Internet, and they keep practising them inside the class and outside the class with peers in the break time" (Interview with T3-AD).

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

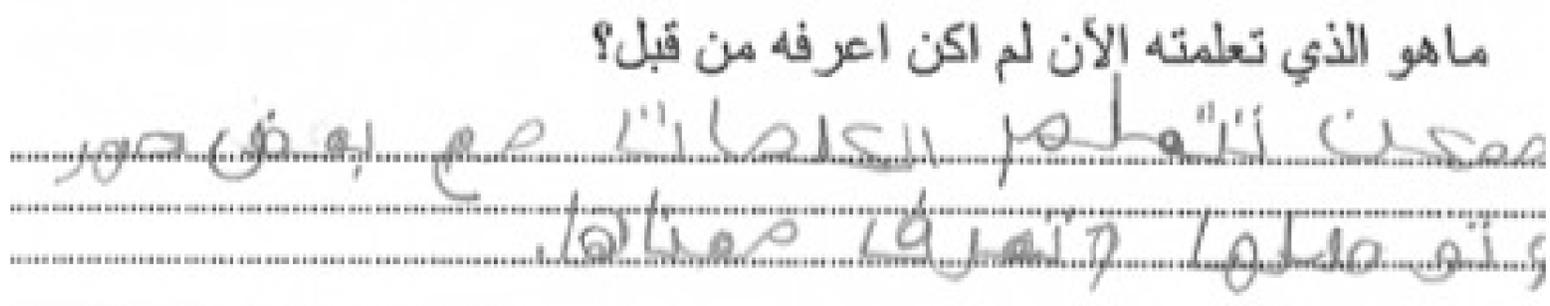


Figure 102. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 10, part 2

Translation

What do I learn now, that I did not know before? I was able to learn words with pictures by matching them and know the meanings.

As for language skills, the students indicated their progress in these skills in their diary sheets. For example, after he played the ‘Game of Bottle’, Faris was very excited and wrote that he improved his listening and speaking through discussion with his classmates (Figure 103).



Figure 103. Faris's SALL diary sheet, Day 5, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

It was very beautiful and fun game by using the bottle.

I learnt to listen and discuss with my classmates, and they helped me.

We're sitting on the floor; it was a good idea to change because we used to sit on the chairs.

Moreover, on Day 5, Zamil and Basim indicated that they made some progress in their speaking as they were able to ask questions in English and Basim recognised the importance of speaking as he said that it is necessary to try even if mistakes are there. Furthermore, students felt that their learning was increased which, in turn, resulted in an increase in their willingness to learn. In this regard, Nadir said, “every day I learn more” (diary sheet of Day 4), whereas on Day 2, Rami said that he loved the club because he learnt something new. In addition, Mshari described the club as a “beautiful place” and wrote that he learnt new words from the game he played which made him excited and feel that his willingness to learn English was increased, see Figure 104.



Figure 104. Mshari’s SALL diary sheet, Day 3, part 1

Translation

Good things, why?

The game had words and we interacted with the sound.

A beautiful place.

I felt excited and wanted to learn English.

Funny sounds that we can interact with.

Furthermore, progress in the speaking skill was observed by parent-participants; in the interview with P2, progress in speaking and being more motivated were given as examples of his son’s development; he said, “his speaking skill has been much improved. In addition to this, I believe that their motivation to learn English has increased a lot” (Interview with P2). In addition, the students’ self-evaluation of their level of learning progress indicates the gains they obtained after SALL. For example, Mshari and Rami moved from having 4 before the club to 7 and 8 after the club, respectively.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the research questions of the study in light of the findings of the analysis presented in Chapter 5, in an attempt to answer each particular question (6.2). It also revisits the objectives of the study mapping them on the findings of the study including learner autonomy and young learners (6.3), self-access and young learners where motivation, self-efficacy and self-confidence are discussed (6.4), self-access and resources for young learners (6.5), self-access and language skills acquisition (6.6), and the support for young learners in 6.7.

6.2 Discussion of research questions

In this section, the research questions are revisited based on how they relate to the analysis of the data presented in Chapter 5. The implications of the study's findings for each research question are discussed under the respective question.

Research Question 1: How do young language learners use SALL in terms of:

- a- use of learning (digital / non-digital) materials and resources'
- b- patterns of work (group work or individual work), and
- c- independent learning?

Based on the analysis in Chapter 5, the participants showed more preference for using digital material and resources than non-digital ones. This includes using the computer or the iPad for reading stories, playing some learning games, getting the meaning of some words and drawing shapes and objects related to the new words on the Painter.

As for the patterns of work whether group work or individual one, the analysis showed that group work is preferred to individual one. They indicated that group work is more effective as some psychological factors such as shyness and fear of committing errors were reduced.

Finally, they indicated that the role of the teacher is important as he helped them in whatever difficult, but as a result of being in the club, they became self-reliant as they tried to use the dictionary or the computer to get and translate the meaning of the difficult words by themselves without the help of other people.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of SALL on young learners in terms of:

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- a- motivation and attitude,
- b- perception of proficiency,
- c- perception of SALL compared to the formal language classroom,
- d- reported self-confidence, and
- e- self-efficacy?

The analysis revealed that the participants' motivation to learn English has been increased. This kind of motivation seems to be a resultative one as they became more motivated because of the immediate improvement in their abilities to speak in English with other classmates asking them questions during games and in their abilities to understand the stories as they listened to them from the devices whether computers or iPads. They also showed a positive attitude towards the whole club including the organisation of things inside the club, the available resources, and the learning atmosphere. Positive attitudes were also indicated by some parents of the learners during the individual interviews.

Based on the analysis, participants indicated their perception of proficiency in that they learnt many new things and their linguistic abilities have been improved, especially in speaking, listening, reading and vocabulary.

When SALL was compared to the traditional methods of teaching and learning, the participants appreciated the methods used in the club and stated that such methods are much more useful than those used inside the formal classrooms, especially the learning atmosphere of the club where they were allowed to move freely, work in groups and use several digital resources.

Finally, self-confidence and self-efficacy from the participants' perspectives were revealed in the analysis of the data. They indicated that they became more self-confident than earlier as they started to rely on themselves in doing many academic activities including the basic language learning skills.

Research Question 3: What are the stakeholders' perceptions of the SALL approach to language learning?

The analysis of the data proved that SALL is useful in terms of participants' language proficiency inside and outside the classroom. As for their academic achievements, the interviews with the young learners as well as the interviews with the teacher revealed that there is an improvement in their academic levels when compared with the levels before joining the club's sessions. Moreover, as for their proficiency level outside the schools, their parents indicated in the individual interviews that they have noticed that their children have improved not only linguistically but also their self-confidence, their willingness to learn English and their personalities in general.

6.3 Learner autonomy and young learners

The educational system in Saudi Arabia was described as a teacher-dominated approach in which neither learning autonomy nor students' confidence is paid any attention (Al Zaidi, 2008). Thus, having this type of role, the teacher and the teaching strategy may negatively influence the learner's autonomy (Meenambal & Meenakshi, 2022). Recognising the need for a shift in the educational system for the development of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), aligned with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030 (see 1.7.3.1), is the adoption of teaching methods that prioritise the learner. According to this vision, methods of teaching should be redesigned to place more emphasis on the learner, fostering the development of essential skills, personality traits, confidence, and creativity. The aim is to create a learning atmosphere that motivates autonomous learning and offers students attractive and engaging learning situations within the school setting. Thus, it is the shift of focus from a teacher-dominant approach to a student-centred approach which empowers students to take ownership of their learning. In other words, students are encouraged to actively participate in their education, make decisions about their learning goals, and take responsibility for their own progress. In implementing Vision 2030, the role of the teachers cannot be neglected. They can provide learners with opportunities for self-directed exploration, problem-solving and critical thinking which ultimately facilitate autonomous learning. Moreover, the learners' autonomy and their overall educational experience can be enhanced by integrating extracurricular activities, clubs and projects that promote teamwork, leadership and creativity. Focusing on these measures, Saudi Arabia aims to transform its education system into one that empowers students, enhances their autonomy and fosters the development of the necessary skills and qualities required for success in the modern world.

As for the present study, the analysis of data revealed that the participants showed a preference for independent learning as they, in several instances, appreciated the idea that they could do things inside the club alone and choose suitable resources for them, such as selecting the stories that suit their age. Suitable resources, as provided by SALL, will help learners improve their language skills and develop autonomy (Reinders & Lazarro, 2007).

Moreover, the participants valued the opportunity to choose their peers as study partners, as it supported their need for autonomy and proficiency, as highlighted by Yarwood et al. (2019). They expressed their appreciation for using games as a resource for language learning, especially when they were able to form questions and answers without the help of the teacher. They also mentioned the use of dictionaries and websites to get the meaning of the new words and do some translation. By following this self-directed approach, learners will be able to exercise autonomy in their learning

process, which can positively impact their achievement and attendance, as supported by the findings of Oga-Baldwin (2020).

Many YLs indicated their being happy with the approaches followed in the club being able to repeat the pronunciation or certain expressions after the speaker as they hear from their devices. This is to say that although they are YLs, they can choose the best for them according to their preference including games, drawings, or reading stories with the help of electronic devices. Such activities, according to Mynard and Shelton-Strong (2022), can be encouraging for autonomous motivation and can instil a sense of independence in learners. The findings of the study highlight the importance of promoting learner autonomy in language learning settings, allowing them to have a kind of control over their learning processes, choose appropriate resources, work with peers, and engage in activities that align with their preferences which can contribute to their motivation, sense of independence, and overall learning outcomes. Creating a supportive and engaging environment that caters to individual learner needs and preferences is essential in fostering autonomous language learning.

Therefore, learning English at SALL is a learner-centred approach rather than a teacher-centred approach since learners are given the choice to select suitable learning resources and the teacher role is somehow reduced. This goes in line with one of the key needs for educational development in the light of the Saudi Vision 2030 as proposed by the Saudi Ministry of Education, see section [1.7.3](#) above. Adopting a learner-centred approach, SALL acknowledges the importance of catering to the individual learner's interests, learning styles, and goals. Learners are provided with a range of resources, materials, and tools that they can select from, based on their preferences. This approach recognizes that learners have diverse learning needs and that they can take an active role in shaping their own learning experiences. Shifting the focus from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach is in line with the objectives of the Saudi Vision 2030 (see 1.7.3.1) as proposed by the Saudi Ministry of Education. It emphasized the need to transform the education system and place more emphasis on the development of learners' skills, personalities, confidence and creativity. By providing the learners the opportunity to choose their learning resources, SALL contributes to the overall goal of developing teaching methods that prioritise the learner. This learner-centred approach promotes learner autonomy, allowing learners to take ownership of their learning process and make decisions that align with their interests and abilities. It encourages self-directed learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. By reducing the teacher's role to some extent, learners are encouraged to become more independent and responsible for their own learning outcomes.

In summary, learning English at SALL in Saudi Arabia embraces a learner-centred approach that empowers learners to choose suitable learning resources and reduces the traditional teacher-centred approach. This aligns with the objectives of the Saudi Vision 2030 and the proposed educational development plans outlined by the Saudi Ministry of Education. SALL contributes to the overall goal of developing a more innovative and learner-centred education system in Saudi Arabia by emphasizing learner autonomy and individualized learning experiences.

6.4 Self-access and young language learners

This section discusses three factors: self-access and motivation (6.4.1), self-access and self-confidence (6.4.2) and finally self-access and self-efficacy (6.4.3). Through the pre-interview and post-interview, the participants show their responses on a scale out of ten (see Appendix I).

6.4.1 Self-access and motivation

The self-access programme implemented in this study has proven to be instrumental in fostering the motivation of young learners. Motivation plays a crucial role in the acquisition of language skills, and increased proficiency is often a direct outcome of enhanced motivation (Stegmann, 2013). The participants in this study confirmed this, reporting a boost in their motivation to learn English and an improvement in their overall achievement. This has been confirmed by the participants of the present study as they indicated an increase in their motivation to learn English and their achievement as well. Furthermore, what played a positive role in increasing participants' motivation in this study was the presence of games (Asmali, 2017).

Furthermore, the supportive role of the teacher has contributed positively to the participants' motivation. The teacher's tolerance of mistakes and willingness to reduce their fears (Rehman & Haider, 2013) have played a crucial part in creating a supportive learning environment. When students feel supported and encouraged by the teacher, they are more willing to take risks, actively participate, and develop their confidence in the English language (Oga-Baldwin & Fryer, 2018).

As an observer and teacher, I have witnessed the participants' joy and enthusiasm while engaging in the activities of the self-access programme. Their eagerness for more time and extended sessions in the club indicates their high level of motivation and satisfaction with the learning experience. Such positive experiences and feedback are essential for promoting Saudi students' motivation to learn English, as encouraged by Al-Shumaimeri (2003). This response aligns with the belief that students' weak performance can often be attributed to their lack of motivation, *inter alia*. By incorporating a self-access programme that integrates games, a supportive teacher and a motivating learning environment, the study has addressed the need to promote students'

motivation and proficiency in learning English. These positive outcomes reinforce the importance of implementing learner-centred approaches that consider learners' interests, provide engaging activities, and foster supportive teacher-student interactions. Overall, the self-access programme has proven effective in enhancing motivation among young learners, ultimately leading to improved English language proficiency. By addressing the motivational aspect of language learning and responding to students' needs, the programme contributes to the overall goal of empowering Saudi students to become successful language learners.

6.4.2 Self-access and self-confidence

In line with a number of the previous studies, the participants in the present study reported an increase in their self-confidence resulting from the different activities they engaged in, including the teaching methods employed at SALL, which aligns with the requirements set by the MoE in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education, KSA, 2019). The analysis of data showed that self-confidence plays a significant role in promoting learners' abilities to use the language (Martínez & Villa, 2017). These findings of the present study, as far as self-confidence is concerned, agree with research conducted by Papadima-Sophocleous (2013) and Monsalve and Correal (2006). The findings of the present study highlight the importance of self-confidence in language learning. So, without self-confidence, learners may avoid speaking and their English will be poor as indicated by the findings of Hamouda's (2013); Liu & Littlewood (1997). Therefore, having a SALL centre at the school seems to be a necessity since the participants showed their desire to do more activities inside the club, especially with other students, increased their confidence, and improved their skills and motivation. Providing a SALL centre at the school emerges as a necessity, given the students' expressed desire to engage in more activities within the club, especially with other students. This willingness for increased involvement demonstrates the positive role of the SALL approach in boosting learners' confidence, improving their skills, and enhancing their motivation to learn English. Moreover, having a dedicated space like the SALL centre, students are provided with opportunities to practice English in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. This fosters their self-confidence as they engage in activities that enable them to advance their language skills and interact with their peers. The SALL centre serves as a platform for students to overcome inhibitions, take risks, and gain the required confidence to become proficient English speakers.

The findings of the present study strengthen the need to establish SALL centres in schools as part of the educational system in Saudi Arabia. These centres contribute to the growth of learners' confidence, skills, and motivation, aligning with the goals set by the Ministry of Education. By creating an educational atmosphere that promotes self-confidence, students will be able to

overcome language barriers, keenly participate in language learning activities, and ultimately improve their overall English language competence.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study highlight the importance of self-confidence in language learning. The presence of a SALL centre at the school proves essential in cultivating learners' self-confidence, as evidenced by their increased willingness to participate in activities within the club, improved skills, and increased motivation. By prioritizing the development of self-confidence, schools can effectively support students in their English language acquisition journey, ultimately leading to improved language proficiency and communicative abilities.

6.4.3 Self-access and self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to people's belief in their innate ability to do a specific task. In the context of academic self-efficacy, it refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to be engaged in coursework and successfully complete learning activities. The findings of the present study show that the participants exhibited high levels of self-efficacy, which contributed to their boosted engagement in activities that involved using English, ultimately resulting in improved achievement. The high level of self-efficacy observed among the participants in this study was a significant factor in motivating their active participation in English language learning activities. This finding is in line with the research conducted by Sardegna et al. (2018) on Korean EFL learners, who reported an increased desire to participate in foreign language activities. When learners possess a strong belief in their own abilities, they are more likely to actively engage in tasks and persist in their efforts to achieve success.

Moreover, the participants' high self-efficacy levels align with the findings of Al-Harthy et al. (2010) and Alrabai (2018). Al-Harthy et al. (2010) discovered a positive relationship between learners' self-efficacy and their overall scores, indicating that learners with higher self-efficacy tend to perform better academically. Similarly, Alrabai (2018) conducted a study on Saudi EFL learners and found that high self-efficacy was associated with improved English language proficiency. The findings of the present study underline the importance of advancing learners' self-efficacy in language learning. When students have confidence in their own abilities, they are more likely to engage actively in learning activities, take on challenges, and endure in their efforts to succeed. This, in turn, leads to improved achievement and language proficiency. Promoting self-efficacy in language learning can be attained through numerous means, such as offering learners opportunities for success, providing constructive feedback, and creating a supportive learning atmosphere. By instilling a sense of self-belief in learners and nurturing their confidence, teachers can improve students' motivation and engagement, resulting in improved academic performance.

In short, the present study reveals the importance of self-efficacy in language learning. The participants' high levels of self-efficacy contributed to their increased engagement in English language activities and ensuing improvement in their achievement. These findings agree with previous research on EFL learners and emphasize the need for teachers to focus on fostering learners' self-efficacy as a means to enhance their motivation, participation, and overall language learning outcomes.

6.5 Self-access and resources for young language learners

Self-access language learning in the present study provided a relaxed and informal learning atmosphere that greatly appealed to the participants. In comparison to the traditional classroom setting, self-access learning was perceived as less formal and more flexible (Porter, 2016). The participants showed a high level of interest and enthusiasm towards attending the club's sessions, expressing a desire for the club to be available in their school throughout the entire academic year. This positive response can be ascribed to the unique benefits and advantages of self-access language learning. The participants indicated that the availability of various resources and teaching methods offered by the SALL programme proved to be highly useful. They recognised the positive impact of these resources and teaching methods on their learning skills, motivation, and self-confidence. They noticed a tangible improvement in their language learning abilities, experiencing an enhanced level of motivation and a boost in self-confidence as a result of their participation in the SALL programme.

The relaxed and informal learning environment provided by SALL allows participants to take ownership of their learning process. They have the freedom to choose resources and learning activities that align with their individual needs and preferences. This autonomy and flexibility foster a sense of independence and responsibility, leading to increased motivation and engagement. Furthermore, the availability of a wide range of resources, including books, multimedia materials, and online platforms within SALL provides learners with different learning opportunities. They can explore topics of interest, engage with authentic materials, and select resources that suit their learning style and level. This personalized approach to learning improves the participants' language acquisition process and creates a sense of empowerment and ownership over their own learning journey. Overall, the relaxed learning environment provided by SALL, combined with the availability of diverse resources and effective teaching methods, proved to be highly beneficial for the participants in the present study. Their positive experiences highlighted improvements in learning skills, motivation, and self-confidence. The participants' enthusiasm for attending the sessions of the club and their desire for its continuation throughout the entire academic year emphasises the effectiveness of SALL as a valuable approach to promoting successful language acquisition.

It is evident in the analysis of data in Chapter 5 that having such a supplementary resource of learning is very useful for learners in general and YLs in particular. Having a variety of resources and implementing a new method of teaching and learning English including the use of technology helped the participants improve their learning skills and be motivated to learn English. Participants' learning skills were improved through the adoption of new strategies for vocabulary learning such as the use of stories (Hsu, 2010) and dictionaries (Deng & Trainin, 2015). Thus, the type of materials that the learners are exposed to using the latest technology in SALL with the ability to have self-access to such materials will motivate learners to engage in group work and support them in promoting their academic achievement since they may obtain what they need as emphasized by Qi (2022) and Sheerin (1989).

To sum up, the analysis of data presented in Chapter 5 reveals the significant impact of the SALL programme and the availability of various resources on learners' language learning skills and motivation. The implementation of innovative teaching and learning methods, supported by the latest technology, enhanced learners' vocabulary acquisition strategies and provided opportunities for self-directed learning. The self-access nature of the SALL programme empowered learners to engage in group work and facilitated their academic achievement. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of providing learners with diverse and accessible resources, utilizing technology, and promoting learner autonomy to enhance their language learning outcomes.

The analysis of data revealed that the available resources in the club proved to be helpful for YLs as participants valued the inclusion of such learning resources in the club. Despite their comments on the slow speed of the Internet, in line with the findings of Raiskinmaki (2017), and the shortage in the number of available devices and dictionaries, they appreciated the use of such resources for language learning as they played an essential role in their language acquisition development, especially in listening skills and vocabulary learning using electronic devices. Using resources such as digital stories improved their motivation to learn English. In this regard, one of the student participants said, "[...] it [the resources] also made me eager to learn English, especially memorizing words, shapes and drawing with the computer because I need to learn many words so that I can speak" (Interview with Nadir). This agrees with the findings of some previous studies such as Murphy (2014), Abdul-Ameer (2014) and Alzannan (2015). As suggested by the findings of the previous studies conducted in this area, the availability of computers and iPads positively contributed to the participants' acquisition of language skills (e.g., Clements & Sarama, 2003; Tomlinson, 2009; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Henderson & Yeow, 2012; Khoo et al., 2015; Parrilla, 2016). As for vocabulary learning, the findings of the present study revealed that SALL's resources played an effective role in enriching participants' inventory which confirmed the results of the studies conducted by Nomass (2013), Arifah (2014) and Ahmadian et al. (2015). Involving

technology-based games as a learning method was appreciated and described as 'enjoyable' by the participants as they indicated their interest and an increase in their motivation and self-confidence to speak in the target language confirming the findings of Ilter's (2015) study.

In conclusion, the analysis of data conducted in this study demonstrated that the resources available in the SALL club were highly valued and appreciated by the participants, despite some challenges related to internet speed and device availability. The use of electronic devices, digital stories, and technology-based games positively impacted the participants' motivation, self-confidence, and language skills development. These findings are in line with previous studies, which emphasized the positive impact of technology integration on learners' language acquisition and vocabulary learning. In total, the availability of resources in the SALL programme played a vital role in improving the participants' language learning experiences and furthering their motivation to learn English.

6.6 Self-access and language skills

The analysis of data presented in Chapter 5 above showed that the participants have developed their language basic skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in addition to other skills such as the acquisition of vocabulary. This became clear when they compared their present level in these skills with what they learnt at the school where the traditional methods of teaching and learning are dominant. The increase in their different skills is attributed to the resources available and the overall atmosphere of SALL in general.

As for reading, the availability of stories where pictures are used alongside the text was one of the strategies that developed their skill as indicated by some of the participants (Figure 48). Providing evidence for being improved in reading, one of the participants suggested having a reading competition in the future (5.3.2). Moreover, the use of technology associated with stories and devices such as the iPad and computers at SALL was significant as many participants attributed the development of their different skills including reading to such technologies, as reported in the findings of Parrilla's (2016) study, in addition to having English-Arabic stories and dictionaries.

As for speaking and listening skills, SALL resources contributed to the development of these two skills; this was clear in the comments and reflections made by the participants. For example, some games included making questions and answers had encouraged them to speak and improved their speaking when they tried to understand the questions. Another important role of SALL's resources is that of the computer and iPad where recording is available which allowed participants to check their pronunciation and repeat listening to the materials. In addition, they used the Painter as a tool to improve speaking as they created dialogues between two speakers and drew the whole

thing on the Painter screen; this, in turn, positively contributed to their writing skills. A sort of support for the development in speaking and listening is provided in the interviews with P1 and P2; they indicated that their children have improved in speaking; P1 said “I see him talking more than before and using words and expressions as if he were speaking in front of the audience” (Interview with P1); P2 said, describing his son, “confident and self-reliant, and his speaking skill has been much improved” (Interview with P2). The participants, being young learners, viewed the use of resources in SALL as a kind of fun and entertainment through which they improved their different skills, as indicated by Myles (2017). Furthermore, students’ writing skills have been, to an extent, improved as they used the Painter to write the meaning and illustrative examples of certain words, in addition to the availability of different textbooks from which they can select (Anderson, 2011). These have many attractive topics with pictures that include activities related to writing and other language skills, see 4.7.1.

Having a good inventory of vocabulary items leads to improving language basic skills (Nomass, 2013) as learners require vocabulary to express their ideas and opinions when speaking and writing and understand the other interlocutor’s ideas through reading and listening. SALL’s resources contributed to the acquisition of vocabulary as participants frequently indicated an increase in their vocabulary items through reading stories, using pictures to identify the meaning, writing the new words on the Painter with examples of their meanings and usage, using dictionaries (Figure 52), and using the context to guess the meaning.

SALL resources had a significant impact on the language skills of the participants. The participants made significant progress in their reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities, in addition to the great role of the resources in the acquisition of vocabulary. The positive impacts of SALL were evident not only in the participants’ diary sheets and self-assessments but also in the observation of their parents who noted increased confidence and proficiency in their children’s speaking skills. In conclusion, the overall atmosphere of SALL, combined with the diverse and effective resources available, appeared as pivotal factors in nurturing language skills and proficiency in general and laying a strong foundation for continued language learning and growth.

6.7 Support for young language learners outside the classroom

Foreign language acquisition cannot be achieved inside the classroom only; it requires additional support outside of formal instruction. One crucial form of outside support is the opportunity to mix with native speakers in order to practice the language in authentic, real-life situations. Another significant outside source of support comes from the family of the learner in which he or she receives a kind of encouragement to persist in the language acquisition process.

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As far as the present study is concerned, the individual interviews with the parents of the participants indicated that participants have received quite good support from their families to join and continue in the programme of self-access language learning (SALL). It has been appreciated by the parents of the participants because of the immediate positive results they have observed in their children's willingness to learn English in addition to the improvement in their proficiency level. Moreover, at the individual level, parents have observed that their children increased their motivation and self-confidence; they overcame some psychological barriers in using the language such as shyness and fear of speaking in front of other people.

The parents themselves liked and viewed the programme of SALL as a tool that develops their children's abilities in several ways as one of the parents said that it is an "opportunity to search and discover". Moreover, parents have shown their ability to provide their children with the required devices and time to use these devices at home in a systematic way that does not occupy their whole time and reduces their attention to their other school subjects.

Therefore, based on the results of this study, for YLs to learn a foreign language, it is necessary to provide outside support from family members and friends for YLs to be encouraged to learn and develop their linguistic abilities at this particular age as suggested by the findings of the study of Al-Zahrani and Rajab (2017).

In summary, learning English at SALL in Saudi Arabia takes a learner-centred approach, aligning with the goals of the Saudi Vision 2030 and the Ministry of Education's educational development plans. SALL emphasizes learner autonomy and individualized learning experiences, contributing to the overall goal of a more innovative and learner-centred education system in Saudi Arabia. The study findings demonstrate the importance of self-confidence in language learning, with the SALL centre playing a vital role in cultivating learners' self-confidence through increased participation, improved skills, and motivation. The study also stresses the importance of self-efficacy, as learners' high levels of self-efficacy resulted in increased engagement and achievement. Furthermore, the availability of diverse resources, supported by technology, enhanced learners' language skills and motivation. The study acknowledges the challenges related to internet speed and device availability but emphasizes the positive impact of technology integration. Lastly, the study accentuates the importance of family support in young learners' language acquisition journey, as it positively impacts motivation, self-confidence, and language development.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides concluding remarks about the whole project undertaken in the present study. It begins with an overview of the major findings of the study presented in 7.2. In section 7.3, the researcher's journey is presented including the obstacles he encountered while carrying out the study. The chapter also provides, in section 7.4, the contribution of the study to the field of language acquisition and the authorities in Saudi Arabia including decision-makers, course designers, teachers and students. Section 7.5 presents the limitations of the present study. In addition, it offers recommendations for implementing SALL for young learners in general and Saudi young learners in particular (7.6). Final section 7.7 suggests related areas of future research in order to have a panoramic view of the phenomenon discussed in this study.

7.2 Overview of the findings

Based on the analysis of the data presented in Chapter 5 above, the major findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. Group work is preferred to individual one as it has positive effects on learners' communication skills, willingness to communicate and motivation for learning English.
2. Participants have indicated the benefits of using stories, games, dictionaries, computers and iPads in their language learning at SALL. However, they preferred digital resources to non-digital ones.
3. Group learning, as a strategy, is preferred by the participants as it reduces their reluctance to participate in the different activities of SALL including speaking.
4. Participants preferred stories, especially those with coloured pictures, and technological devices such as computers as strategies for learning reading in addition to materials translated into Arabic.
5. As for the strategies of vocabulary learning, participants preferred using English-Arabic dictionaries, games with competitions, stories, the Painter, pictures and using the context to guess the meaning. These strategies were used and preferred by the participants to enrich their vocabulary items.
6. The learning strategies of listening and speaking included using games which encouraged the participants to discuss issues and form questions and answers, the availability of technological devices including computers and iPads helped in listening to the correct

English pronunciation with the possibility of recording and repeating the utterances several times, and the use of the Painter where participants indicated a progress in their speaking abilities by drawing sketches for two or more people holding a dialogue.

7. The participants were highly motivated by the tolerability of making mistakes provided by the teacher. Moreover, the use of technology including devices, the Internet, and the diversity of websites and applications increased the participants' motivation. They were also motivated by playing games and reading interesting stories.
8. An increase in participants' self-confidence was caused by the availability of resources and methods of teaching inside the club. Self-confidence was indicated by the participants' reliance on themselves to explore or learn something.
9. The teacher is viewed as being supportive of the students in different ways. The word 'teacher' was associated in most instances with the word 'help'; they referred to him whenever they encountered a difficulty. His tolerance of linguistic mistakes led the students to praise and appreciate his role in their different comments.
10. Participants' self-reflection is positive; they indicated an improvement in their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in addition to being able to translate and employ the computer in their learning process. This showed their success in being engaged in autonomous learning.
11. Self-access learning outweighed the traditional classroom-based learning in several aspects including the relaxing, entertaining learning atmosphere in which participants developed their self-confidence and learning skills in addition to the positive attitudes held by parents and the teacher towards SALL.
12. There are some shortcomings of self-access learning such as insufficient time given for certain activities, disturbance caused by the noise and interruption of other students, slow internet speed, and shortage of devices and books including stories and dictionaries. However, these are very small when compared with the advantages of learning at SALL as provided by participants.

The research reported here took place just before the global pandemic and the following section looks at the impact of Covid 19 on teaching and learning practices around the world and in particular in Saudi Arabia. No doubt, these changes will eventually speed up the acceptance of SALL-type approaches and the use of technology.

7.2.1 Spread of Covid 19 and its impact on the educational system

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected organizations worldwide, including healthcare, the economy, and educational systems. Educational institutions worldwide have been significantly affected by the pandemic, necessitating extensive adaptations and changes to ensure the continuity of learning. In March 2020, as countries implemented total lockdown measures, universities and schools faced complete closures at the onset of the 2020-2021 academic year. The implementation of strict measures, including lockdowns and social distancing protocols, led to the closure of schools and universities, disrupting traditional modes of education.

In response to these challenges, educational institutions quickly shifted towards remote learning and online platforms to facilitate distance education. Virtual classrooms, video conferencing tools, and online learning management systems became essential components of the educational landscape. This transition, although necessary, presented its own set of challenges, such as the need for technological infrastructure, access to devices and internet connectivity, and ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all students.

As the lockdown persisted until the end of August 2020, the Saudi Ministry of Education responded by launching an online educational platform called Madrasati, meaning 'my school.' It served as a platform where students could access their school lessons through Microsoft Teams. This online system enabled teachers to conduct live sessions with students, providing direct explanations for each subject within a 45-minute timeframe. These lessons took place during regular school hours until noon. Consequently, relying on e-learning became an essential requirement during this period.

The educational portal, Madrasati, offered more than just direct explanations of lessons; it was designed to align with several objectives of this study, particularly aimed at transforming the students' learning style, which typically heavily relies on the teacher. As part of this initiative, teachers were required to incorporate various activities, lessons, and links to educational websites such as 'iEn'. This website provided lessons explained by different teachers, allowing students the flexibility to log in at any time and take control of their learning using the provided materials. The present study sought to implement these changes as a means of transforming the teaching and learning policy specifically in English language education.

The employment of the Madrasati platform persisted throughout the duration of the total lockdown in universities and schools until March 2022 when the formal face-to-face education system was reinstated. However, even with the return to physical classrooms, the use of the

Chapter 7

Madrasati platform was integrated into the educational framework. Teachers continued to prepare lessons, activities, and assignments through the platform, ensuring synchronization between the online platform and the face-to-face teaching system.

Following their return from school, students had the opportunity to log in to the platform, take advantage of the various educational links and engage in both curricular and extracurricular activities.

Due to the conditions imposed by Covid-19, certain previously prohibited activities were permitted. For instance, students were allowed to bring their smartphones or iPads to school, despite the previous prohibition. However, the use of these devices within the school premises was limited to logging in to Madrasati platform and participating in standardized exams across various subjects, including English language assessments. The purpose of these exams was to evaluate the students' progress in accordance with the learning objectives set for each stage of education.

7.3 The researcher's journey

As previously mentioned, the global impact of Covid-19 significantly affected educational institutions worldwide. In this study, the researcher successfully collected data in Saudi Arabia but faced the challenge of conducting data analysis while located in Southampton, UK.

Both the researcher and the study were significantly impacted by the effects of Covid-19. The researcher faced unique challenges as a result of the pandemic, including the need to adapt research practices and work remotely. The restrictions imposed by COVID-19 limited the access to essential resources and facilities, which had a negative impact on the progress and achievement of the study. However, with the support of the supervisor, alternative solutions were implemented to overcome these difficulties. Online academic meetings provided a platform for collaboration and guidance, mitigating some of the challenges posed by the pandemic. Additionally, the researcher utilized various analysis applications, such as 'MAXODIA' and 'GRAMMARLY,' to enhance the quality of data analysis and address syntactic and writing errors. Despite the obstacles presented by COVID-19, the researcher remained committed to the study's objectives and strived to navigate the evolving circumstances to ensure the successful completion of the research.

The results of this study have surprised the researcher in many ways. The concept of learner autonomy in YLs is not necessarily a key part of English classes given the traditional approaches to learning in KSA. However, the study shows that if you change the approach to learning and individualise the opportunities, learners develop their self-confidence quickly, and they make

connections between their own interests and learning English. This study has helped learners, teachers and parents to see that there are alternative ways of learning. Learners appreciated the comfortable atmosphere and the attitudes of all the participants to learning English totally changed. Post-COVID-19, the learners in this school are now allowed to use iPads in their learning – before COVID-19, these devices were prohibited. This study seems to have shown that with small changes you can alter attitudes, increase the desire and motivation to learn English and provide opportunities to develop appropriate learning strategies. The learners developed an interest in finding out about other cultures and felt that they could see some sense in having English in their lives. The school which was at the heart of the study has now taken many of these ideas forward using the same textbook but making the classes more interactive with access to more digital resources.

In contrast, approval to get permission to carry out the study from the authorities was lengthy since it was unusual to run a longitudinal study such as this and the head of the school had to be convinced that this study would also benefit the participants. The provision and maintenance of the technology was not always easy to access which was a particular issue. The parents were for the most part very interested in the project and wanted their children to participate but they were also worried that their children would miss out on formal teaching. However, the parents were convinced that this would benefit their children. After the study, there was more of a feeling that their children were more confident and autonomous learners. Mshari for example, initially had no confidence to learn English and he thought that English was too difficult. He thought that English was something ‘weird’ in his life, and he was unable to ask the teacher any questions in the formal classroom. From the first conversations with Mshari, he asked the researcher questions and in a more relaxed atmosphere was able to ask questions, engage with his peers and study alone. He appreciated that there were different styles of teaching and the relaxed atmosphere of the English Club.

7.4 Contribution of the study

This study contributes to various parties. Firstly, worldwide, learners of a foreign language need support through the resources including games and drawings in order to engage in language activities, especially when the classroom is the only place where they can practice the foreign language. Therefore, the study offers various solutions to overcome foreign language learners’ difficulties, especially the young ones. This is true not only in Saudi Arabia but also in other Arab and non-Arab countries, so course designers, teachers, students, parents and other authorities may benefit from the findings of the present study. Secondly, as seen in section 1.6 above, there is a gap in the literature on SALL and YLs and no study in the Saudi context has been identified; this study

contributes to bridging such a gap. As a result, researchers will compare their findings with the findings of the present study showing similarities and differences in a way to have a panoramic view of the whole effectiveness of implementing SALL in the education of the English learners in general and young ones in particular. Thirdly, the present study contributes to the field of foreign language acquisition in general and English as a foreign language in particular in that it showed the role of autonomy and the application of technology in foreign language acquisition which leads to a better understanding of how these factors impact the foreign language acquisition. Finally, this study is important for the authorities at the Saudi MoE as the results of the present study showed the usefulness of having self-access centres in schools. Based on the results of this study and other similar studies conducted on SALL, the MoE authorities and decision-makers may ensure the availability of such centres in Saudi schools.

The attraction of SALL was further indicated by the participants as following the study they asked their class teacher to change the way that classes were conducted to a SALL style where the Internet and technological devices could be used at school, for instance, allowing them to bring and use their iPads inside the classroom. Therefore, this study can provide further evidence of how these changes can be implemented and be effective. This necessitates finding spaces within the existing curriculum to encompass such teaching and learning tools which, in turn, will impact the young learners' motivation to learn English as a foreign language and enhance their learning autonomy, as shown by the results of this study. Further evidence was provided by the participants who are now in their secondary stage of education. The experiment had a positive impact on their academic achievement as they told the researcher that they still remember their learning in SALL as a successful experience which increased their motivation, self-reliance and learning autonomy. They reflected on what they had experienced at SALL and how they utilised the Internet and electronic devices such as the iPad.

Furthermore, the study provides strong evidence of the important role of learning at home after school and how this can be effective, especially when supported by the learners' families. Moreover, the findings of this study achieved the study objectives presented in 1.8 above and the goals set by ELDP in section 1.7.3. In addition, it is hoped that the results of the study will contribute to achieving some of the goals set by the Saudi Vision 2023, see 1.7.3.1.

This study shows that the development of language learning confidence in younger learners using more learner-centred methods which allow the learners more freedom to develop their own ideas and interests will provide a good base for future language learning. For me, as a researcher, I did not expect the findings of this study to be implemented in terms of learning autonomy before at least ten years. However, COVID-19 seems to have some positive impacts as the MoE adopted some

ideas related to the use of technology, distance learning, and providing internet and devices in schools to employ all of these whenever required besides the blended courses which have already started in many academic institutions.

7.5 Limitations of the study

There is nothing perfect in this world; any kind of work done by humans will have a gap somewhere, and it would have been improved if done in a different way that fills the gap(s) it has. As far as the present study is concerned, despite its fruitful results, there are a few limitations. First, the whole period of time of making the experiment was only ten days; it would have been more fruitful if such a period was longer, one month or one academic semester, so more comparisons could be made between SALL and the traditional approaches. Second, as for the methodology followed in the present study, diary sheets and individual interviews were used as tools for collecting the required data. However, the inclusion of video recording would have added more information about the facial expressions of the participants showing their interest in learning or being happy, surprised or disappointed. Moreover, the study, being qualitative in design, cannot show any external validity or transferability, however, the researcher has attempted to provide rich and thick information about the context in which the study took place and the research design. Finally, this study was conducted on male participants; female participants were not included, so the results cannot be generalized to all young learners of English in Saudi Arabia.

7.6 Recommendations for SALL in KSA

Having completed this project and based on the results of the study, it is recommended that MoE implement self-access centres in Saudi schools. As evident in this study, the availability of SALL in the school improved the learners' level of proficiency, their motivation to learn English, self-confidence and academic skills. Learning a foreign language in a place where it is not used for communication such as the case of English in Saudi Arabia requires doubling the efforts inside the institutions as learners have few or no chances to practice the foreign language outside the institution or more precisely outside the classroom, thus missing an important necessity for foreign language acquisition which is the exposure to the target language which will negatively affect their speaking and listening skills in particular. Therefore, making such centres available in schools will hopefully recompense what Saudi learners of English are missing.

7.7 Recommendations for future studies

Although the present study has provided evidence to answer the research questions it set out to investigate, several related areas worth investigating could be researched further.

First, in order to generalize the results of this study, it is necessary to investigate the implementation of SALL in different schools and different geographical locations in Saudi Arabia.

Second, this study was carried out on male participants only; further studies are required on female participants as well in order to generalize the results.

Third, the participants of this study are young learners; it is recommended that further research be carried out on adult learners to find out whether such centres are useful for different age categories or only for young learners.

Finally, this study investigated the usefulness of SALL at Saudi schools; further research is required on Saudi universities to find out the applicability of such centres in the higher education context.

Appendix A The teacher's and parents' questionnaires

Title – Exploring the impact of Self-access language learning.

Please fill in the questionnaire below:

Background information:

Please tick (check) the appropriate box

1- Gender	Male	Female	
2- Status	Teacher	Parent	
3- Age group	Year 4 (age: 9,10)	Year 5 (age:10,11)	Year 6 (age:11,12)

If you are a teacher, please go to Section 1 first

If you are a parent, please go to Section 2

Section 1: (Filled by English language primary teacher)

Q1: Which of the following ways do you use in the class for teaching English? (Tick all those that apply)

- I use a lot of translation in English and Arabic
- I use Arabic to give the instructions
- I use English for most of the class
- I use group work
- I use a textbook
- I use technology
- I use games.
- Other.....

Q2: Which resources do your students use in the class? Why?

- I use textbooks only
- I use computers
- I use IPad
- I use story book
- I use TV
- I use games
- Others:

The reasons:

Continued

Q3: Which of the following is true of your classes?

- Students talk a lot (individual or in groups) than teacher
- I talk most of the time
- I give the students time to learn English from the available resources in the class

Q4: What is your belief toward independent learning for young learners?

- I think I should teach and prepare everything in the class
 - I wish I give them time to learn independently.
 - I give the students time to learn English independently.
-

Section 2: (Filled by parents):

Q1: How does your child learn English at home?

- Learning alone at home
- Learning with our help
- Going to a private institution/ classes

Q2: How long do your children learn English per week?

- Everyday most the days one /two day(s) a week Never

Q3: Which resources do your children use to learn English at home?

- Nothing
- School textbook
- Computer
- I pad
- Smart mobile
- CDs
- Story book
- TV cartoon
- Other:

[END]

Sample of Interview Questions?

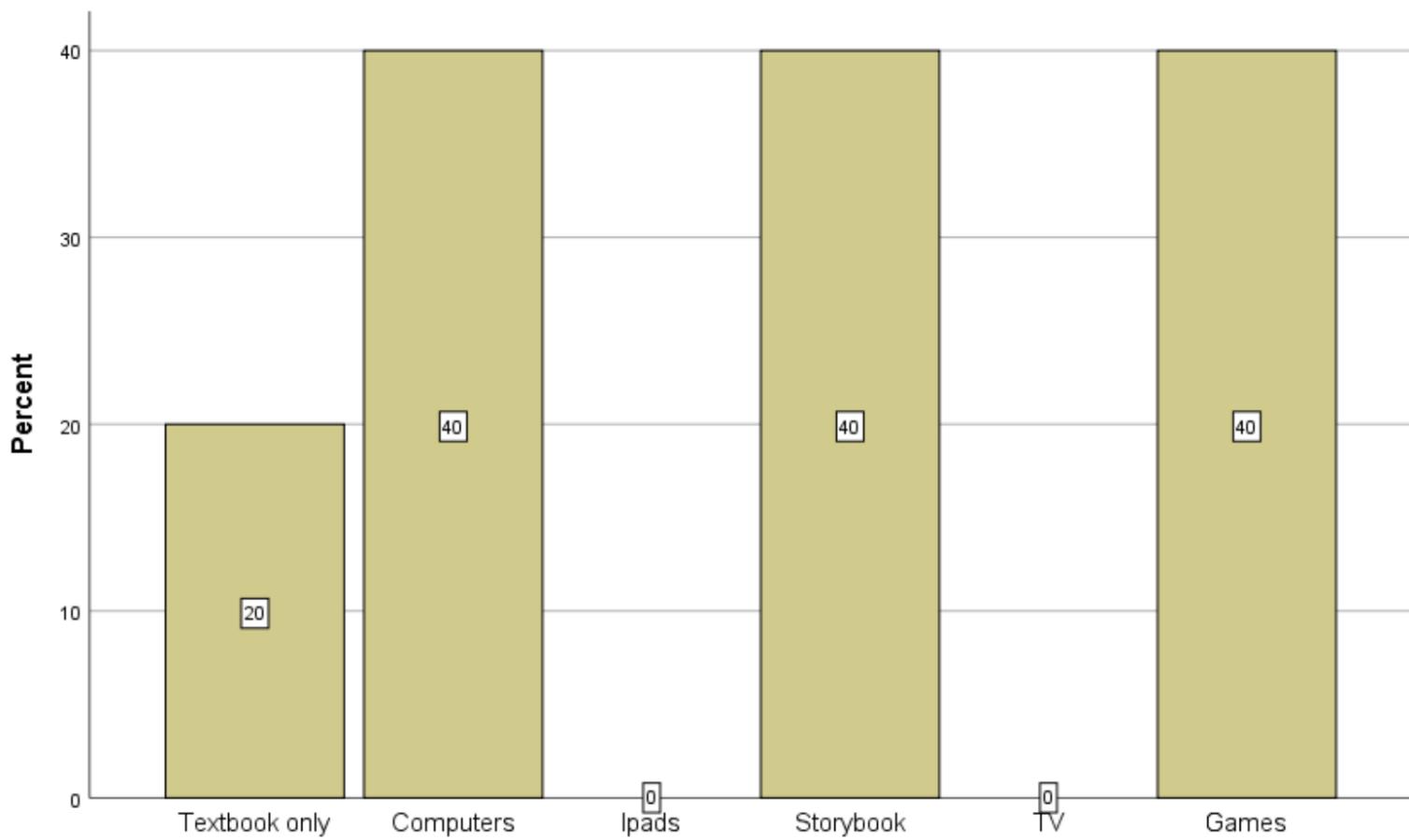
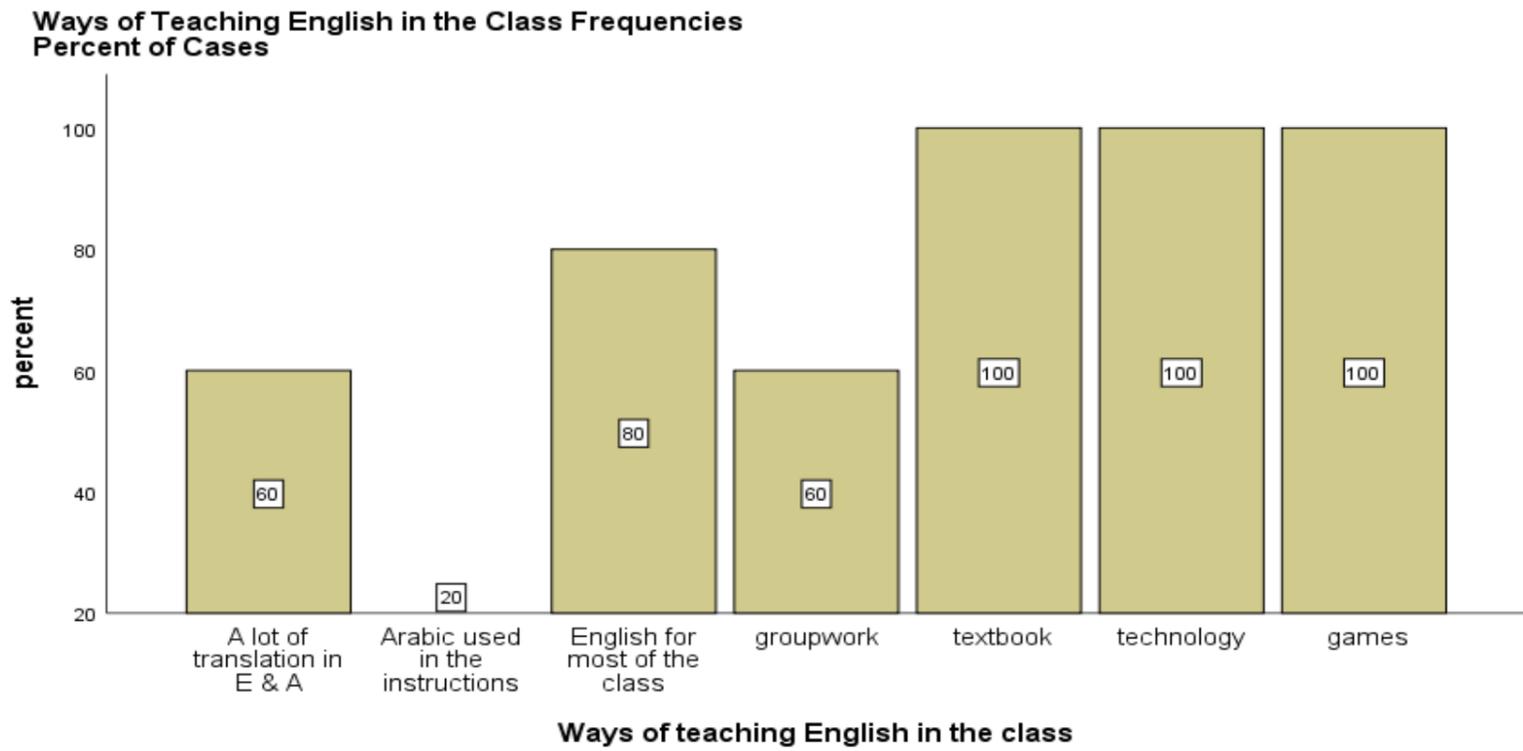
A: For Teachers:

- What year are you teaching in primary school?
- Describe the ways that you use in the class for teaching English?
- What resources do your students use in the class? Why?
- What is your belief toward independent learning for young learners?
- What is your belief toward the idea of English center in the schools?

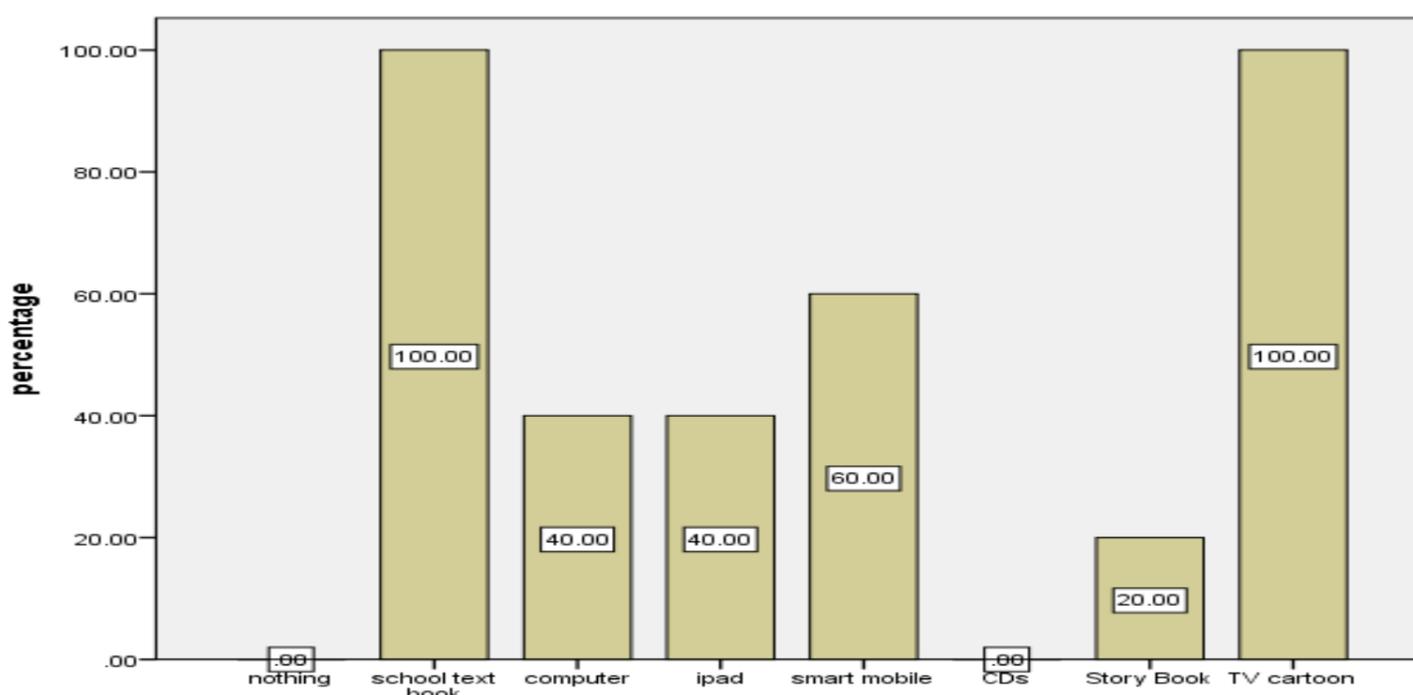
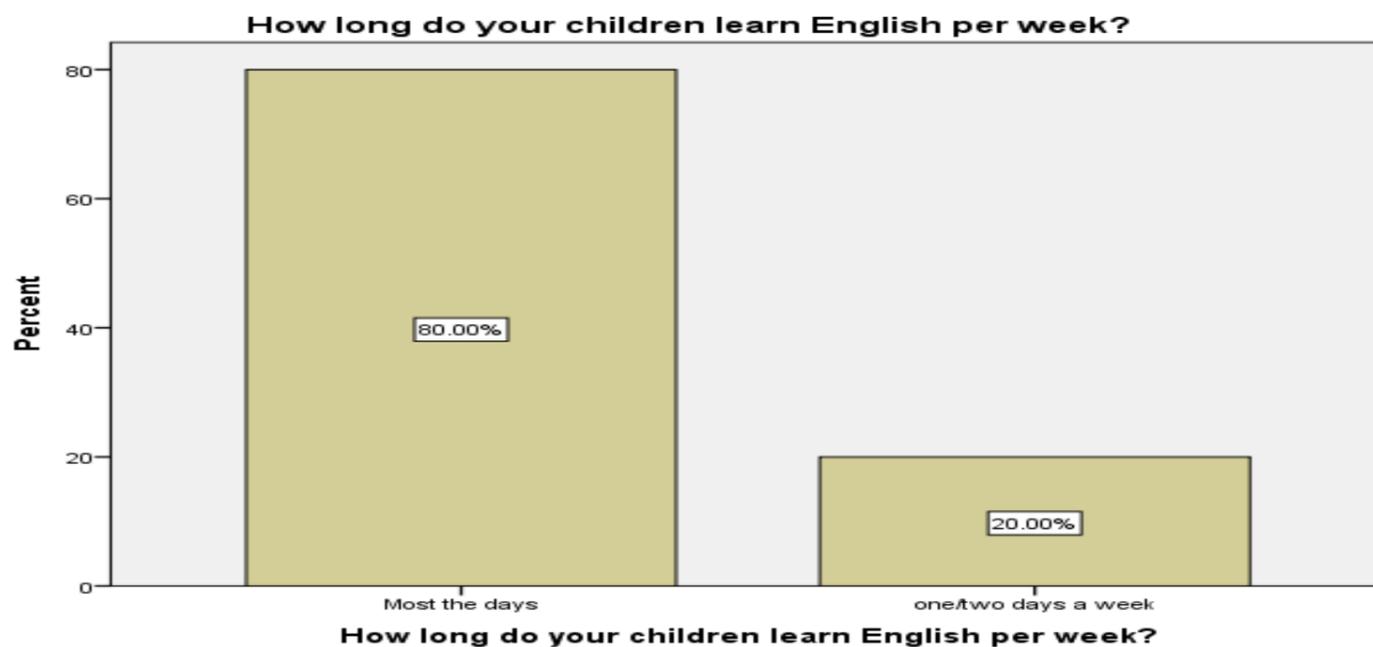
B: For Parents:

- Describe the way that your children learn English at home?
- What resources that support your children to learn English?
- Do your child use technology in learning English at home?

Appendix B Teachers' responses



Appendix C Parents' responses



Appendix D CONSENT FORM

Study title: Exploring the effectiveness of technology-enhanced self-access language learning amongst primary level EFL learners in Saudi Arabia

Researcher name: Fahad Alghamdi

ERGO number: 40555

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time for any reason without my rights being affected.	
I agree that my responses will be audio/video recorded and anonymised in reports of the research.	

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Name of researcher (print name)

Signature of researcher

Date.....

.....

Appendix E Participants' diary Preference sheet

Name:

Class:

We have the following options in our SALL Center...

What do you like to use for learning English in SALL?

1-

2-

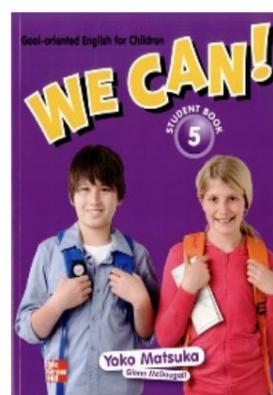
3-

4-

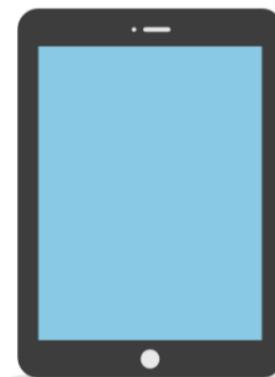
5-

6- Other:

.....



textbook



Ipad



CD



Computer



Story

Appendix F Self-access language learning diary

My name:

I want to learn

أرغب أن أتعلم اليوم

.....
.....
.....
.....

Good things, why?



الأمر الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟

.....
.....
.....
.....

Bad things, why?



الأمر الجيدة في المركز ، لماذا؟

.....
.....
.....
.....

What do I learn now, that I did not know before?

ماهو الذي تعلمته الآن لم اكن اعرفه من قبل؟

.....
.....

Plans/ suggestion for the future خطط واقتراحات مستقبلية

.....
.....
.....
.....

My writing/ drawing diary

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write or draw in. It occupies the central portion of the page.

Appendix G The treatment plan

Week	Plan
One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Selecting the school equipped with internet, computers, large number of students as participant. ➤ Selecting the volunteer participants and giving the consent paper to sign by their parents with explaining the aims of the study. ➤ Initial interview for students: (samples) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you think about learning English in the school? 2. What do you think about learning English through the textbook? 3. Does the student benefit from sources other than the curriculum in learning English? 4. To what extent are the student's using technology in learning English, such as iPads and smart devices? ➤ Dividing the students into groups to choose the appropriate materials to learn and practice English.
Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Training the participants to use some devices such as iPads and computers to use it ideally and under the supervision of the researcher. • Implementation phase: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intervention (story –using iPad – using computer –using textbook)
Three	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Intervention (story –using iPad – using computer –using textbook)
Four	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Intervention (story –using iPad – using computer –using textbook)
Five	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Intervention (story –using iPad – using computer –using textbook)
Six	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Intervention (story –using iPad – using computer –using textbook)
Seven	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Intervention (story –using iPad – using computer –using textbook)
Eight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Second interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ For students: (sample) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you think about learning English in SALL? Is it better to learn English in SALL or in the classroom? Why? 2. Why do you use or not use (the SALL resources)? 3. How do you learn English through these resources? How do you feel about it? 4. Have you used these resources at you home? Will you use them to learn English in future? ❖ For teacher: (sample) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Do you notice any development in the students' learning or personal attitude in the class during or after SALL experiment? ❖ For parents: (sample) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- How do your children learn English at home?

Appendix H Rationale of selecting resources

Resources	Types of resources	The rationale
Textbook	Non-digital resources	Pros: Suitable for Islamic religion Suitable for foreign and local culture. Suitable for age Suitable for level of proficiency Variety of English skills Attractive with pictures and photos Cons: No enough time to practise and answer whole exercises.
Story book The snowman The very hungry caterpillar Squeak the lion Under my hood I have a hat	Non-digital resources	Pros: Suitable for Islamic religion Suitable for foreign and local culture. Suitable for age Suitable for level of proficiency Some stories are bilinguals (Arabic-English) Improve reading skills and speaking if sharing ideas about the story Attractive with pictures and photos Cons: It might not be challengeable for the students during the session
Dictionary books Oxford young learner's dictionary.	Non- digital resources	Pros: Suitable for Islamic religion Suitable for foreign and local culture. Suitable for age Suitable for level of proficiency Vocabulary enhancement bilinguals (Arabic-English) words meanings and structures Attractive with pictures and photos Cons: Less interaction and practicality
Digital textbook (https://elt.tatweer.edu.sa/) (Ein) as national educational portal (https://ien.edu.sa/#/)	digital resources (computers- laptops- I pad)	Pros: Suitable for Islamic religion Suitable for foreign and local culture. Suitable for age Suitable for level of proficiency Variety of English skills Attractive with pictures and photos Cons: No enough time to practise and answer whole exercises. Little awareness of using the computers and iPad technological tools.
The online digital storybook	Digital resources	Pros: Suitable for Islamic religion

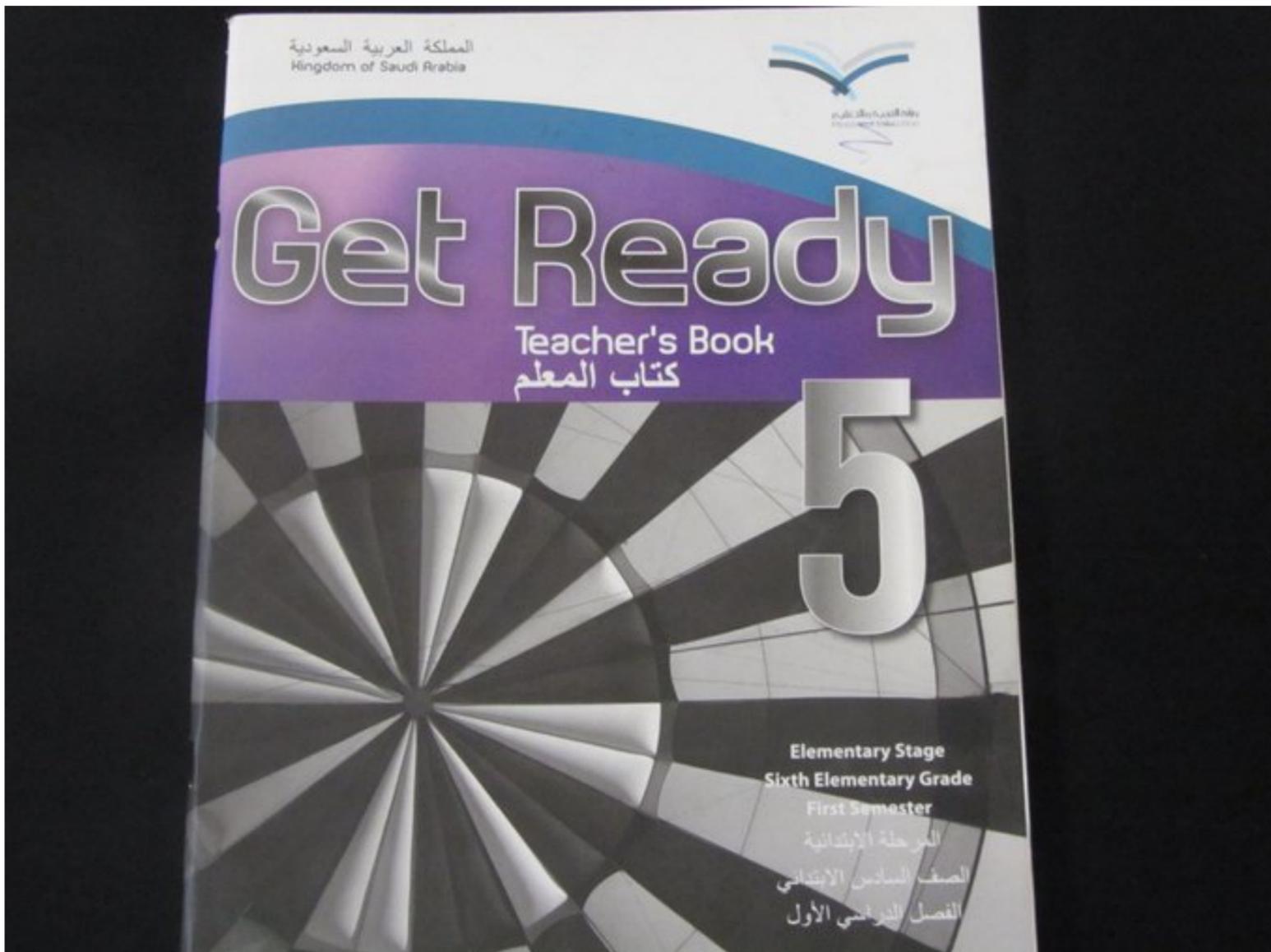
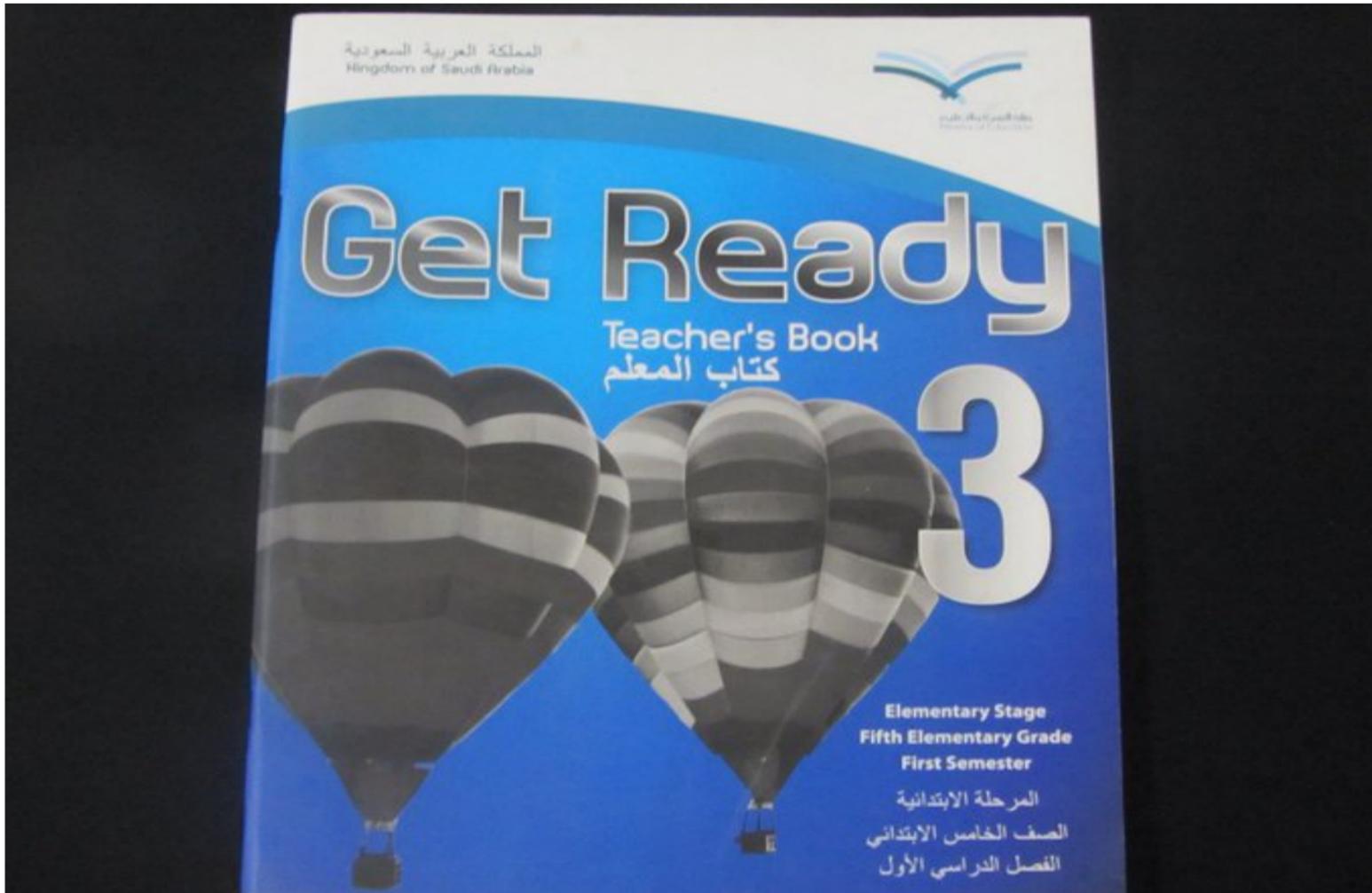
Appendix H

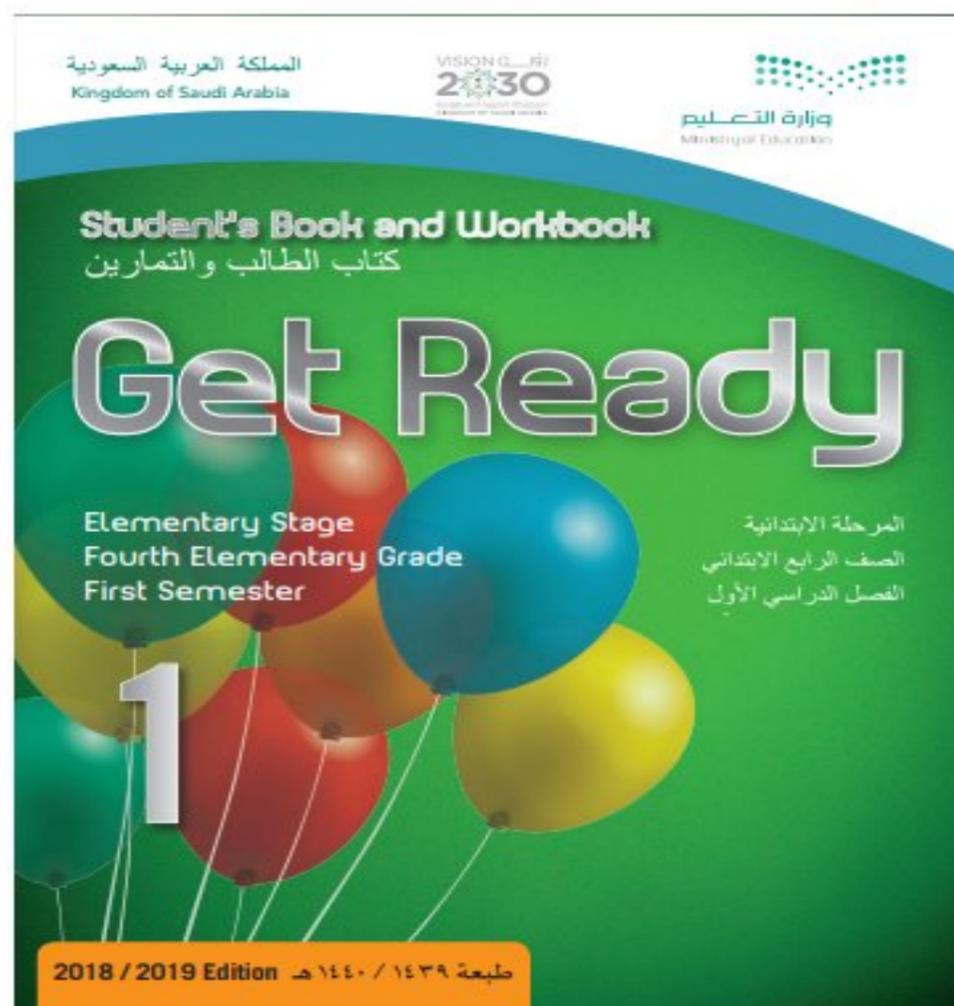
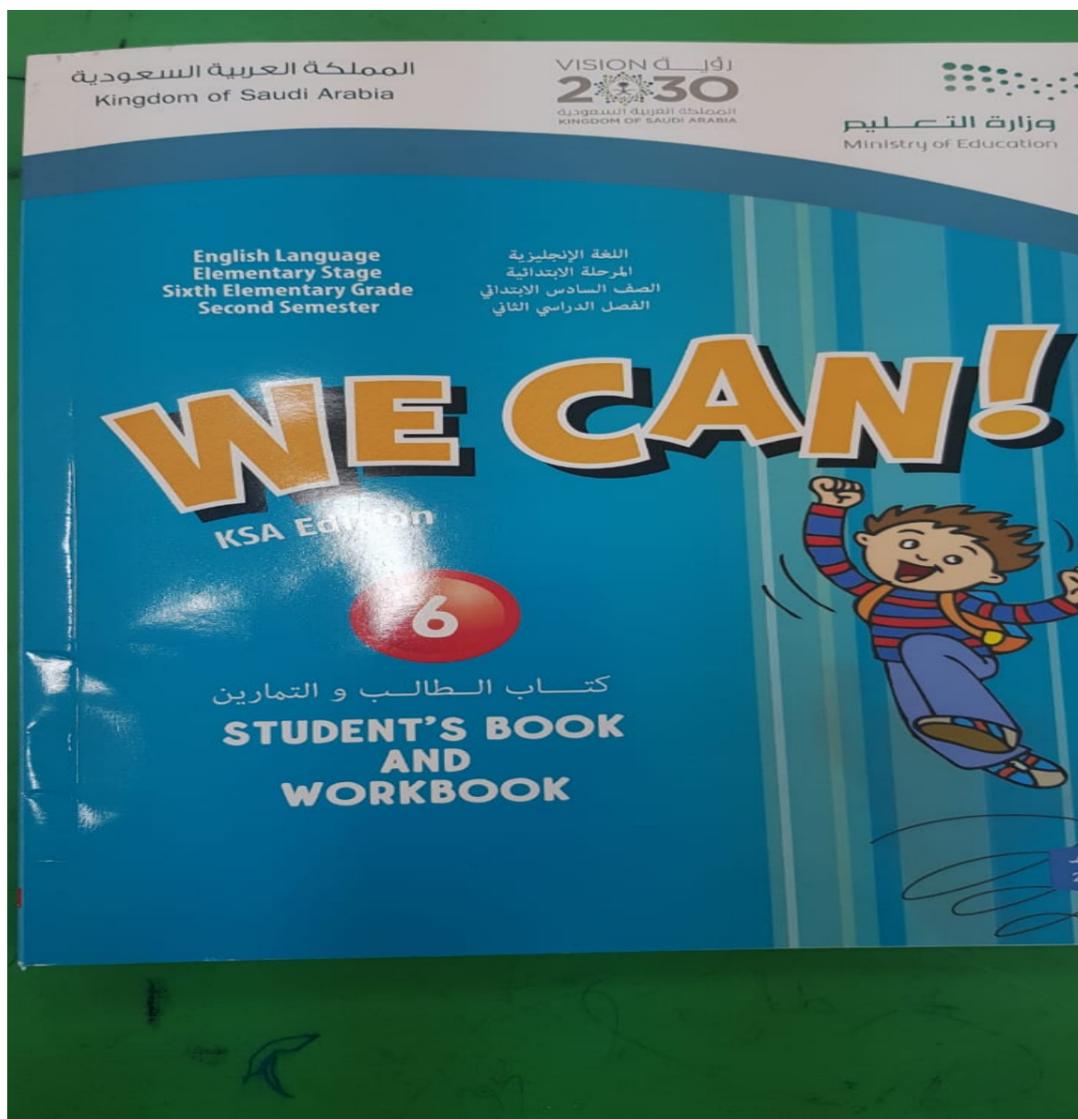
<p>- British Council (applications and website) such as: the school trip - BBC Cbeebies Story time (application) - The Brave Eaglet (Little Stories application)</p>	<p>(application on iPad – computer – laptop)</p>	<p>Contain a foreign culture but Suitable for local culture. Suitable for age Suitable for level of proficiency (graded from very basic to more advanced Variety of English skills Attractive with pictures and photos Cons: Little awareness of using the computers and iPad technological tools.</p>
<p>https://www.rongchang.com/nse/</p>	<p>Digital resources (iPad – computer – laptop)</p>	<p>Pros: Suitable for Islamic religion Contain a foreign culture but Suitable for local culture. Suitable for age Suitable for level of proficiency (graded Focus on reading and listening (student can listen and repeat the stories Exercises after readings Cons: Less attractive (no pictures or photos).</p>

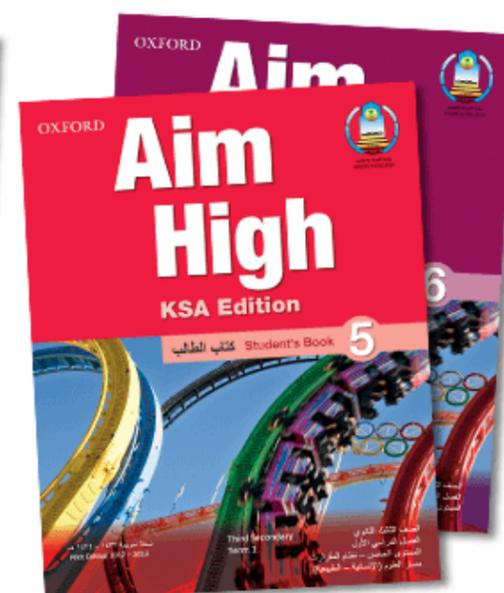
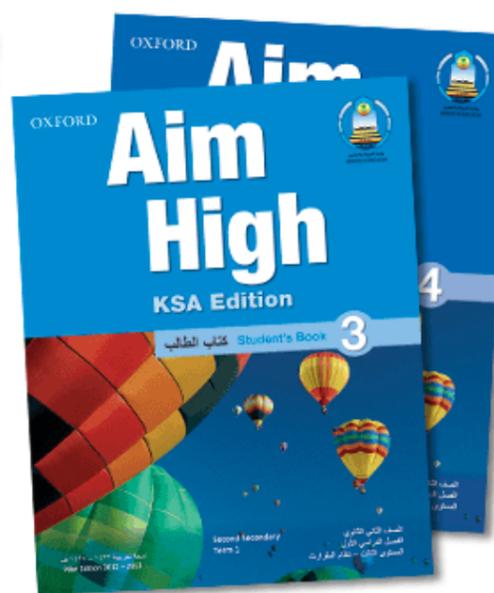
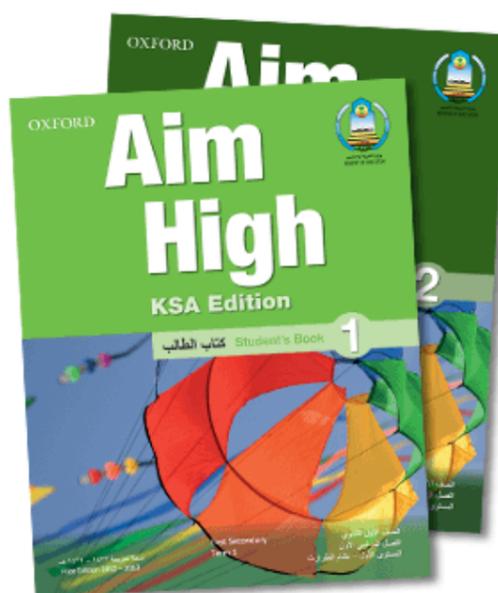
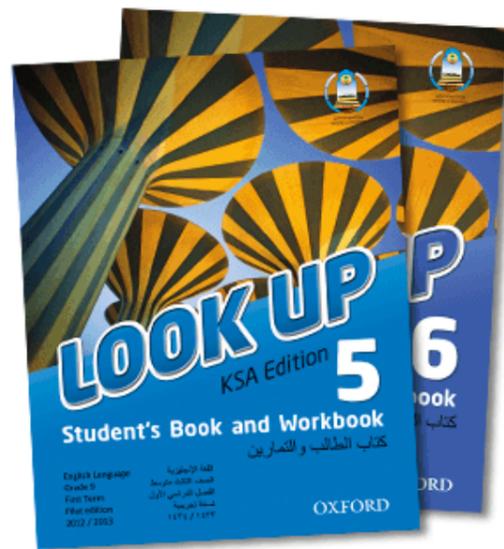
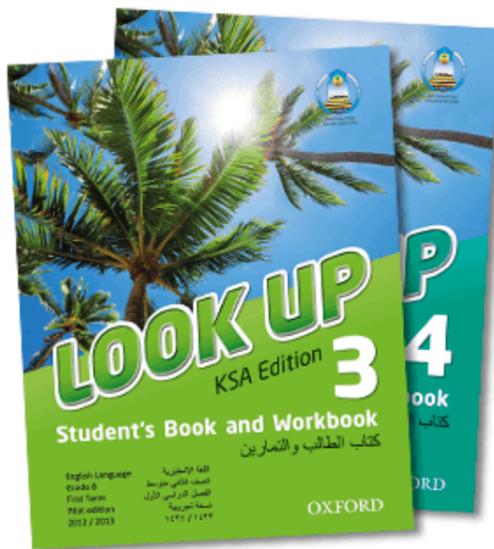
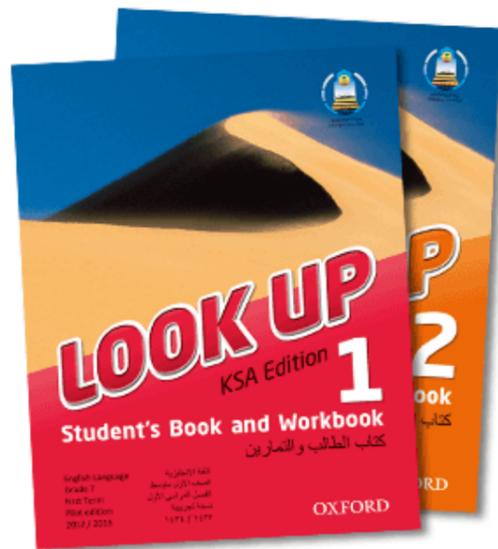
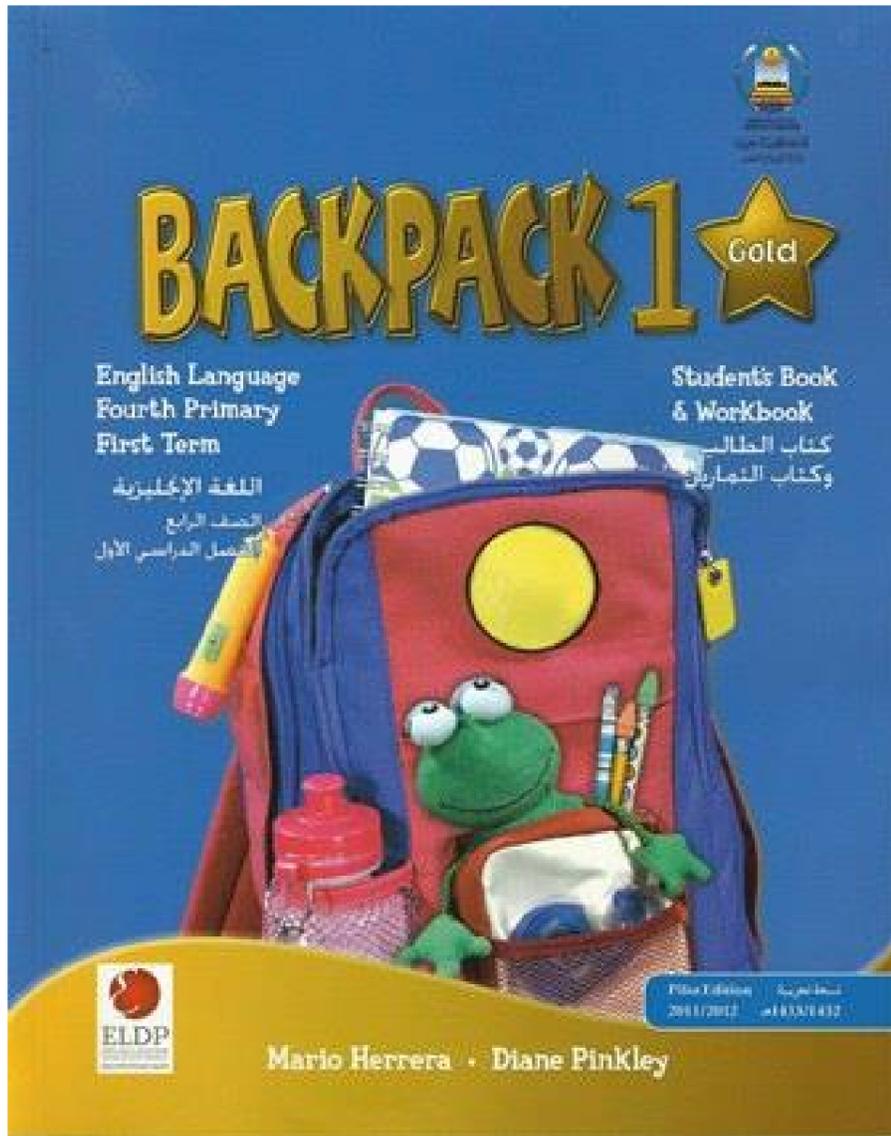
Appendix I Students' self-evaluation table

Students	Learning Proficiency improvement		Motivation		Self- confidence	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Nadir S1	6	8	7	9	8	10
Mshari S2	4	7	3	9	3	8
Ishaq S3	7	9	7	10	8	10
Zamil S4	7	9	8	10	7	10
Basim S5	6	8	6	9	6	9
Rami S6	4	8	3	10	7	9
Faris S7	8	10	7	10	5	8

Appendix J Photos of book cover

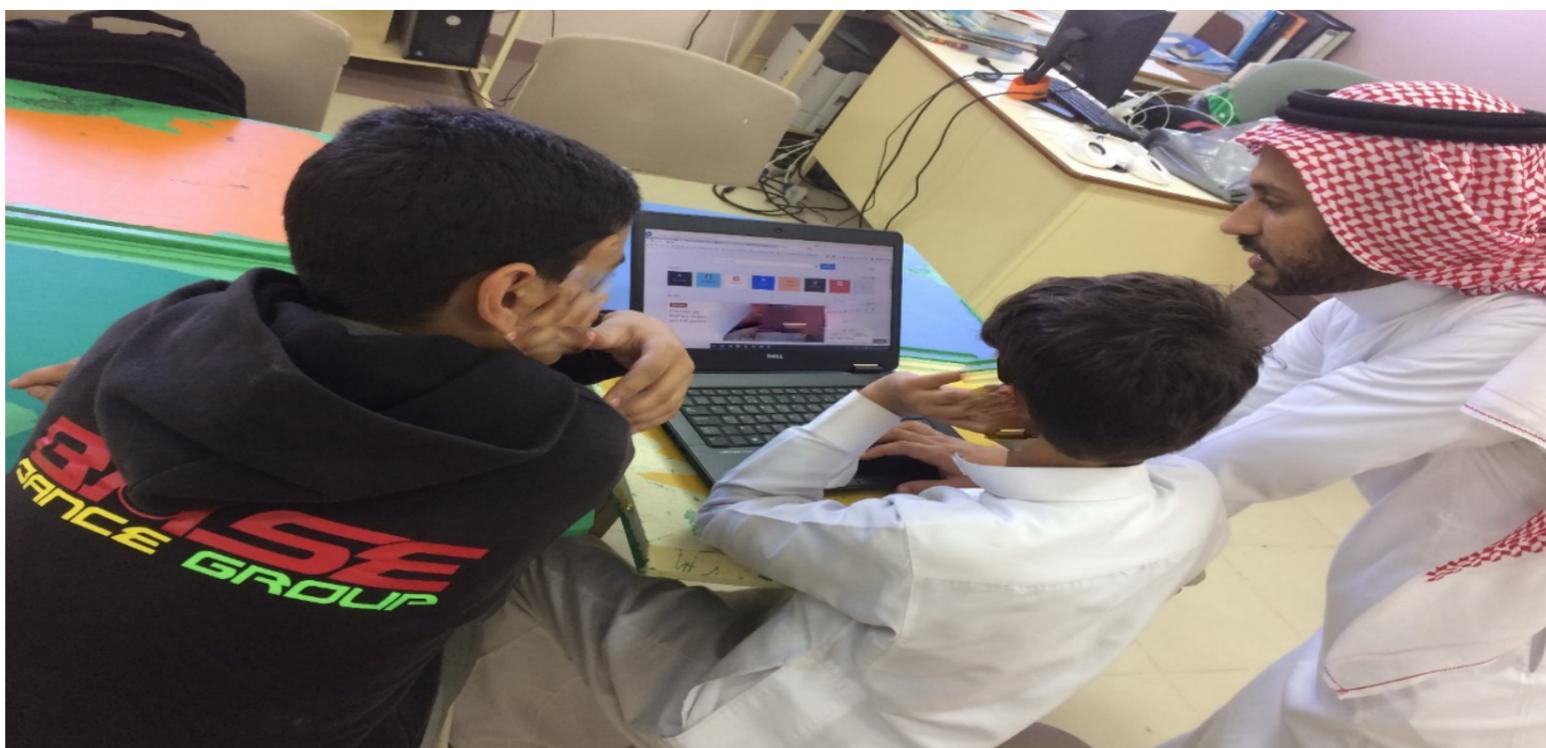






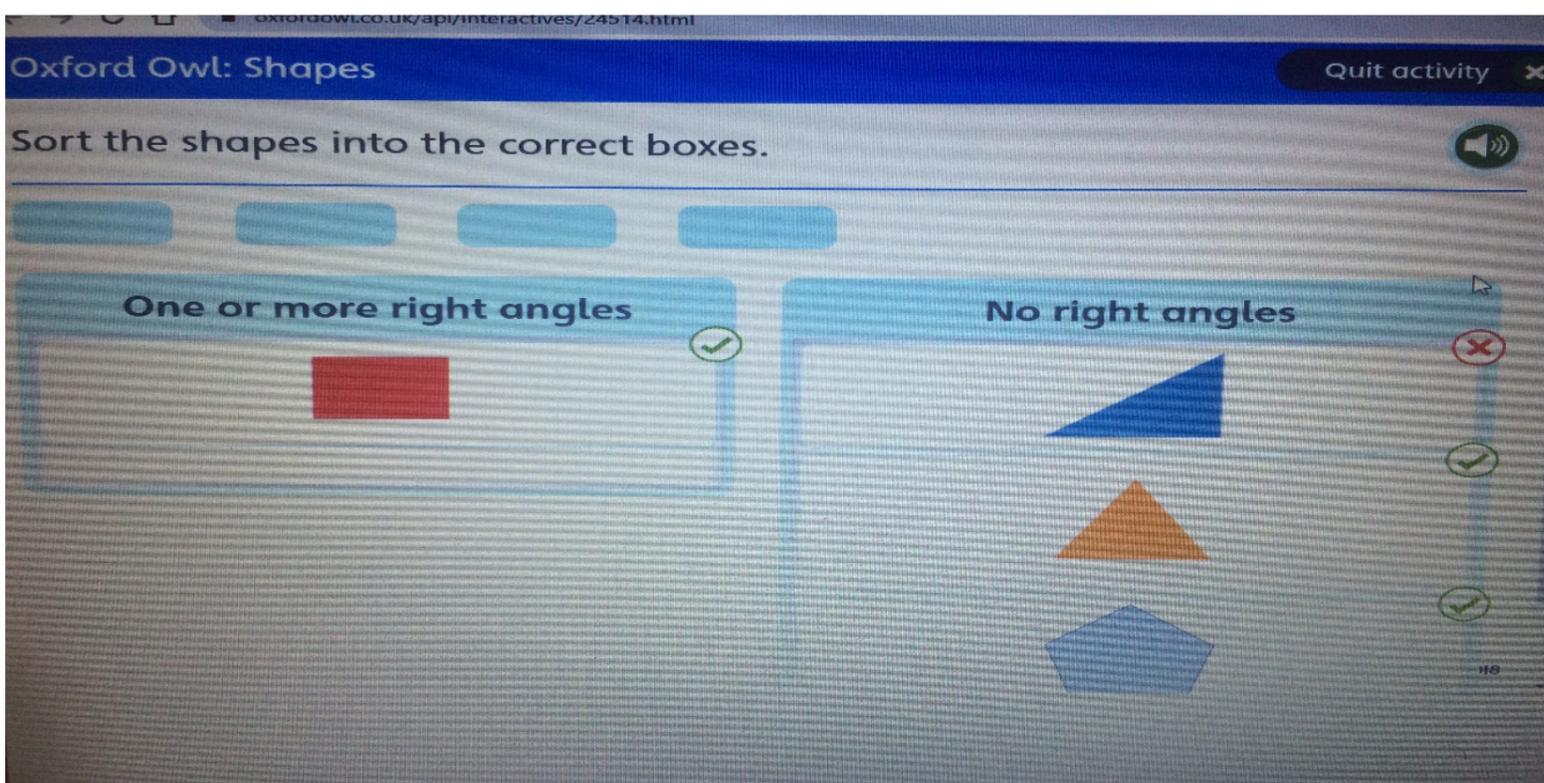
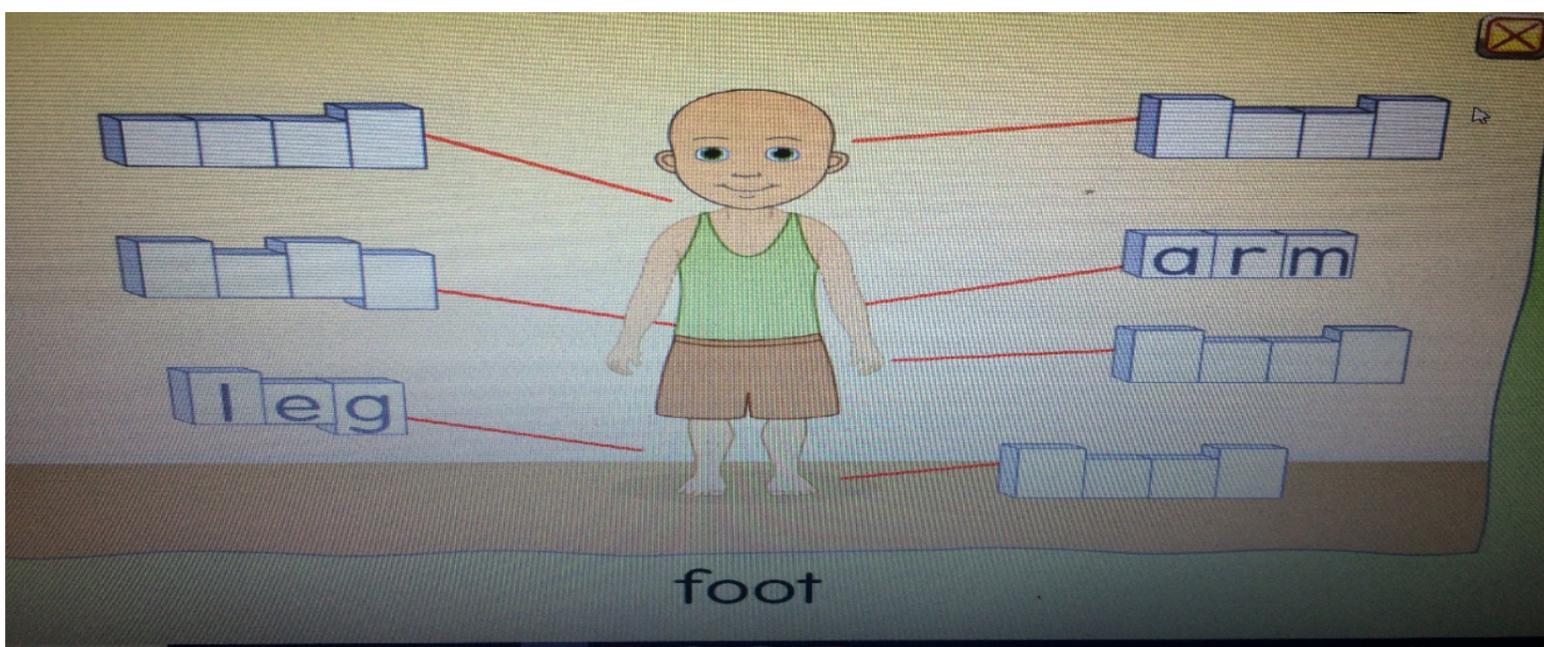
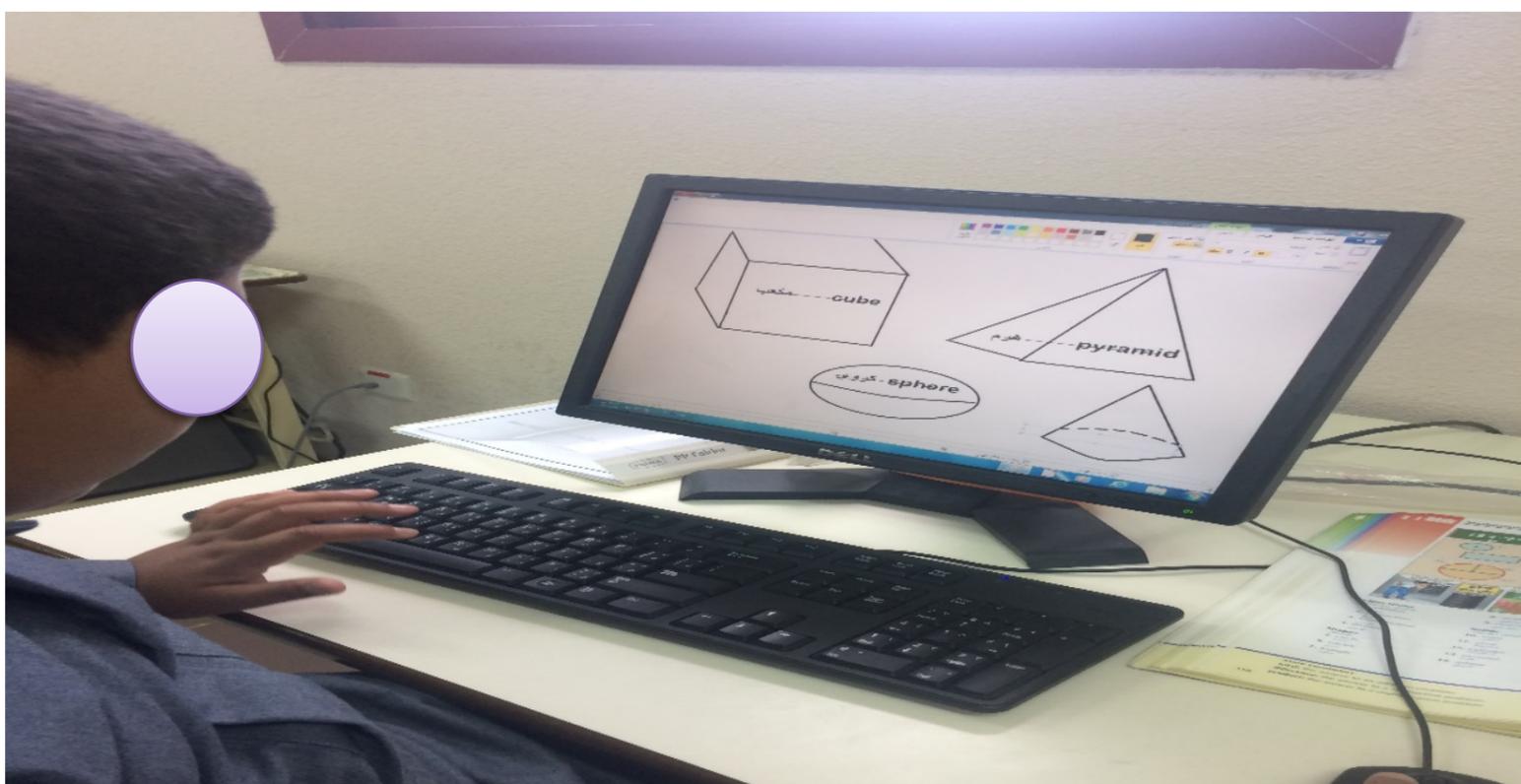
Appendix K Photos of SALL 'English club'





Appendix K



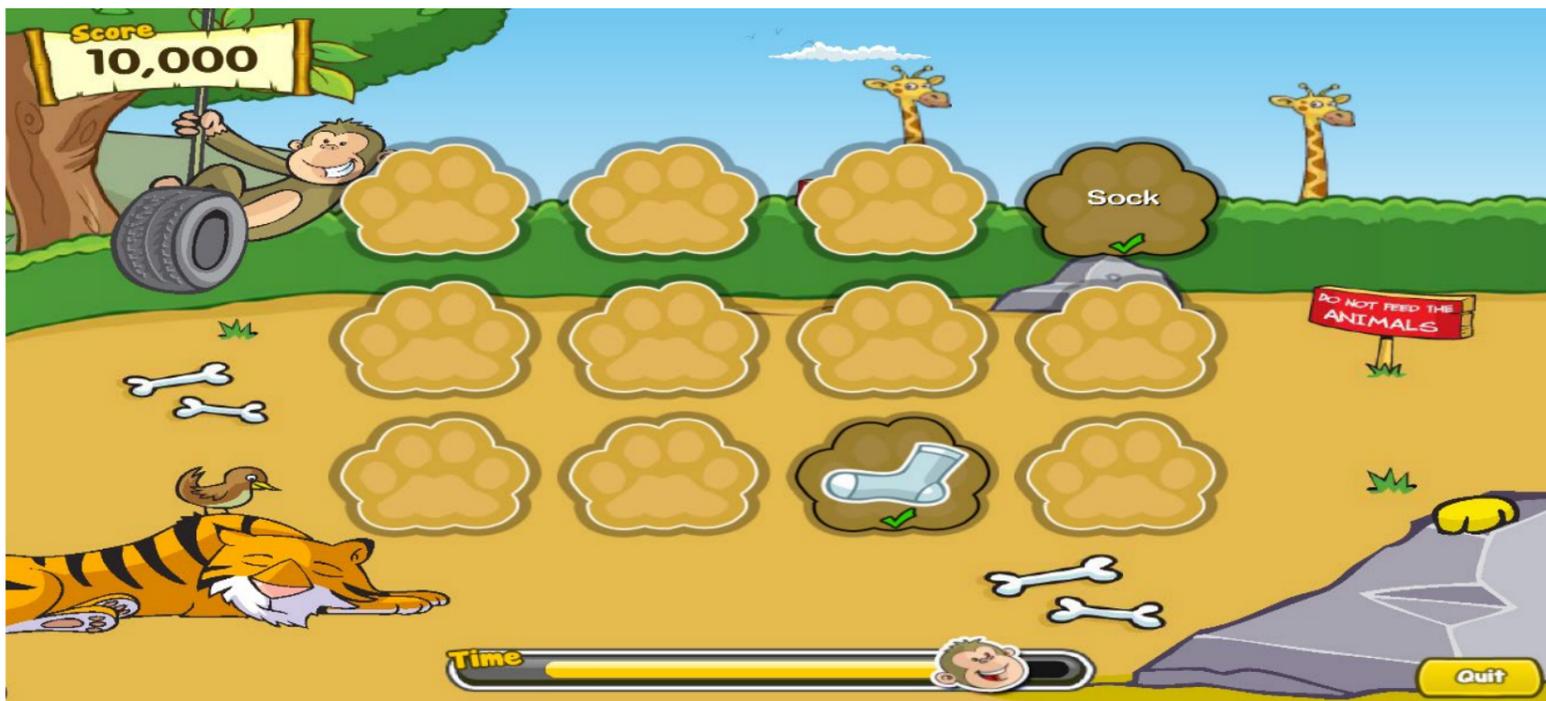




كلمة جديدة 
أي هذه "رجل"؟



تحقق 



Appendix L Summary table of the importance of the studies reviewed in Chapter 2

section	Reference name	The purpose of the references
2.2	Benson 2011	Review background of autonomy in education and the first Center has been established
2.2	Al Zaidy 2008	Review the gap of study, the lack of the notion of autonomy in Saudi educational system.
2.3	Diaz 2012	Show how autonomy achieved through (SAC)
2.3	Little 2003	Show general definition of the term autonomy
2.3	Candy 1988	Show the attainment of subject-matter autonomy
2.3	Holec 1981	Show the autonomy is responsible for all decisions concerning all aspects of learning with providing examples
2.3	Sonic 1990	Show a process to achieve autonomy
2.3	Boud 1998	Remark that the main characteristic of autonomy.
2.3	Cotterall 2003	Show the definition of learner autonomy by controlling of some of the decisions surrounding their learning
2.3	Lien 2022	Examine teachers' and learners' perspectives on learner autonomy in EFL classes in Vietnam
2.3	Meenambal and Meenakshi 2022	Investigate the teachers' perspectives on how to effectively promote and support student independent learning.
2.3	Oga-Baldwin 2020	Investigate the role played by teachers in developing students' autonomy
2.3	Qi 2022	Show the attitudes of 80 Chinese learners of EFL towards autonomy in language learning and the comments of 40 EFL teachers. The author made the survey using a questionnaire and reflective self-reports of four of the students.

section	Reference name	The purpose of the references
2.4	Sturtridge 1992	The notion of SALL
	Gardner & Miller, 1999; Little, 2001	Show the characteristics should be taken into consideration to employ SALL
2.4	Benson 2011 Zhao 2007	Show the impact of technology development on language teaching and the extent of the possibility of using technology in SALL
2.4	Gardner & Miller, 1997; Rienders & Lazaro, 2007	Difficulties and issue that may be encountered within the self-access center.
2.4	Rienders and Lazaro 2007	Investigate the current approaches to assessment in SALL in 46 centres in five countries
2.5	Cheng and Lin 2010	Investigate students' perceptions of doing outside reading and self-access counselling.
2.5	Papadima-Sophocleous (2013)	investigate the effectiveness of an English Language Voluntary Intensive Independent Catch-up Study (ELVIICS), SALL programme, in assisting first-year Greek-Cypriot students

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2.5	Diaz (2012)	explore the students' perception and experiences within SALL by interviewing 21 students learning English at the Language Centre-Veracruz at the University of Veracruz, Mexico
2.5	Werner and Kobayashi (2015)	investigate the emerging field of self-access and metacognitive awareness in young learners and how young learners engage in self-access activities.
2.6	Mynard and Shelton-Strong (2022)	Show the study of how the Self-Access Language Learning (SALL) can be viewed as an autonomy-supportive learning environment.
2.6	Yarwood et al. (2019)	investigate the role of targeted discussion topics in assisting students to feel that they are supported in their autonomous use of English within the context of self-access learning centers.
2.6	Benson (2011)	state that SALL centres have been proliferated to the extent that SALL is often treated as a synonym for self-directed or autonomous learning in recent years
2.6	.Dickinson 1987	clarified the five characteristics of autonomous learners
2.6	Gardner 2011	Describe self-access centres around the world as 'cheap alternatives to teaching'. assume that it is important to help learners be more autonomous.
2.6	Luu Trong (2011)	Investigate learners' autonomy in acquiring vocabulary, which is, according to the author, linked to the four basic skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

section	Reference name	The purpose of the references
2.7	Vićević Ivanović et al., 2021	Show a notable gap in the investigation of LLS among learners and investigated the influence of second language intensive exposure on LLS in young children in Croatia.
2.7	Cohen 2007	Show the definition of learning strategy in language acquisition.
2.7	Griffiths 2015	Show the way of using the term LLS.
2.7	Rose (2012)	explored the Japanese language learning process among 12 learners of Japanese at a university in Tokyo.
2.7	Rose et al. 2018	employed a systematic review methodology to examine 24 fundamental studies conducted between 2010 and 2016 aiming to assess the existing state of strategic learning research within a framework that acknowledges the importance of self-regulation
2.7	Tiing et al. 2021	conducted a study to identify the prevalent LLS used in vocabulary acquisition and gender differences in choosing particular strategies among five students in an urban school in Malaysia.
2.7	Chang and Liu (2013)	investigated the language learning methods used by learners of EFL in Taiwan and the role of the selected methods in the participants' motivation to learn English
2.7.1	Kamińska, 2014	Discuss the relationship between strategy and style.
2.7.1	Nycklicek et al., 2011	Define emotion as a fundamental aspect of human functioning, typically having adaptive significance in encountering a situation.
2.7.1	Ifadah et al., 2023	Discuss the belief that emotion can be considered a learning strategy employed in facing situations

section	Reference name	The purpose of the references
2.8	Gardner and Lambert (1959; 1972)	divided motivation into two types: instrumental and integrative.
2.8	Dornyei, 1998	Show the types of motivations; intrinsic or extrinsic and the differences between them.
2.8	Brown (2000)	points out that the triggers for intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation.
2.8	Al-Khasawneh et al. (2024)	investigated the factors that affect EFL learners' autonomy at King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. They collected data from 232 undergraduate students.
2.8	Gandhimathi and Anitha (2016)	reviewed the literature on motivation to explore the relationship between learners' autonomy and motivation.
2.8	Gardner et al. (1979)	Discuss the relationship between motivation and second language acquisition.
2.8	Stegmann (2013)	studied the motivation and attitudes towards second language learning Early Bird English programmes at primary schools in the Netherlands.
2.8	Asmali (2017)	investigated the YLs' attitudes and motivation to learn English in three different primary schools in the west of Turkey.
2.8	Niazi and Zahid (2019)	investigated the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning English as a second language in a college in Pakistan.
2.9	Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011) Ahearn (2001)	Show the definition of agency and its relation to autonomy.
2.10	Bandura (1986) Bandura (1997)	Define the term Self-efficacy and distinguished between four main sources of self-efficacy.
2.10	Branscombe and Baron (2016)	classified self-efficacy into three main types.
2.10	Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003	explain that Self-efficacy can boost learners' motivational, cognitive, and behavioural engagement in classroom activities
2.11	MacIntyre et al., 1998	Define the term Self-confidence and explain two constituents.
2.11	Edwards & Roger, 2015	Explain how self-confidence is important for learners to be willing to communicate in the foreign language.
2.11	Beri and Safi (2018)	conducted a meta-analysis investigating the roles of self-confidence, motivation and group cohesion in foreign language learning
2.11	Hamouda's (2013)	Focus on what plays a role in the students' desire to communicate in English as a foreign language at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. The results of the study showed that absence of self-confidence.

Appendix M Summary table of the importance of the studies reviewed in Chapter 3

section	Reference name	The purpose of the references
3.2	Turek (2013)	defined 'young learners' as children up to the age of 12
3.2	Pinter (2006)	shows the main differences between younger learners and older learners in an attempt to make the differences between the two groups clear.
3.3	Penfield and Robert (1959)	Believe that children are more efficient in L2 learning for biological and neurological reasons.
3.3	Lenneberg (1967)	popularised the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)
3.3	Murphy (2014)	explained Lenneberg's view that there was a biological explanation for language acquisition.
3.3	Pinter (2015)	clarifies that young learners have ostensibly clear advantages over adult learners because in ESL contexts.
3.3	Hakuta et al. (2003)	tested the CPH on data from the 1990 US Census using self-assessments on age on arrival, length of exposure, and language development from 2.3 million immigrants who spoke Chinese or Spanish as an L1.
3.3	Chiswick and Miller (2007)	maintain that CPH is a sharp decline in learning outcomes with age.
3.3	Bongaerts et al. (1997)	state that critical period is not always significant in respect to language learning as adult learners are also capable of attaining a native-like proficiency when learning a second language.
3.3	Myles (2017)	distinguish between children immersed in the new language they are learning.
3.3	Oyama (1976), Cochrane (1980), Patkowski (1980)	indicate that young children are more likely to achieve native-like proficiency in an L2 than teenagers or adults.
3.3	Rixon (2000)	believes that critical period role in language learning is not always the case.

section	Reference name	The purpose of the references
3.4	Zhang (2021)	conducted a study in order to explore the advantages of learning a foreign language at an early age.
3.4	Pinter (2015)	explains two different perspectives; the first one is the 'younger is better' hypothesis and the 'older is better' hypothesis
3.4	Myles (2017)	determines that all research investigating whether earlier is better in instructed contexts points in the same direction
3.4	Kuhn and Pease (2006)	discuss the process of learning among children and adults and analysed how learning underwent age-related changes.

3.5	Lightbown and Spada (1993)	show most theories that have been developed for L2 acquisition are similar to those for L1 acquisition.
3.5	Paradis (2007)	assumes that the process of L2 acquisition is similar whether in the childhood or adult stage in two main reasons of cognitive and social.
3.5	Murphy (2014)	focuses on contexts of learning in children that intersect and interact with educational provision.
3.5	Myles (2017)	investigated the effect of teaching foreign languages in primary schools in England which was introduced formally in 2014 with two clear purposes.
3.6	Nation (2013)	emphasise the importance of learning high frequency words in English at the beginning whether they are YLs or adults.
3.6	Porter (2016)	Show the effectiveness of gestures could be sufficient to memorize and acquire the lexical terms in L1 acquisitions when occur with speaking to simplify sentence memory by listeners.
3.6	Andari (2023)	investigated the factors influencing vocabulary acquisition by ten Indonesian EFL young learners.
3.6	Aedo and Millafilo (2022)	investigated the effect of the use of multimodal texts for the acquisition and retention of vocabulary by 18 EFL young learners from 6th grade at a school in Chile.
3.6	Rahmayani (2022)	studied the English vocabulary development in young learners in a school in Indonesia and focused on the impact of using realia media on the acquisition of vocabulary items by fifth-grade students.
3.6	Segura et al. (2022)	analysed the acquisition of vocabulary by 155 EFL YLs following a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Spain.
3.6	Gulsen (2020)	examined how effective the use of storytelling in teaching English skills to Turkish YLs of EFL.

section	Reference name	The purpose of the references
3.7	Henderson and Yeow (2012)	reported that the use of the iPad supports students in expanding their knowledge about the topics they learned in the classroom by researching those topics on the Web.
3.7	Khoo et al. (2015)	investigated the opportunities provided by iPads for teaching and learning for young children at an education and care centre in Hamilton in New Zealand.
3.7	Sandvik et al. (2012)	studied the use of iPads in language learning and literacy practices in kindergarten in a suburban area in Oslo.
3.7	Alsulami (2016)	studied the impact of using iPad on the achievements of first grade students in Arabic language classes in Albushra primary school in Saudi Arabia.
3.7	Soleimani and Akbari (2013)	investigated the role of storytelling in learning English vocabulary by preschool students in Iran. Thirty-one six years old preschool students participated in the study.
3.7	Hsu (2010)	Showed the impact of storytelling on speaking skills of twenty-five grade five and twenty-five grade six elementary school students all of whom are native speakers of Taiwanese and learning English as a foreign language.
3.7	Elkkilic and Akca (2008)	focused on the relationships between storytelling and the motivation of twenty-one Turkish grade four elementary learners of EFL.

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3.7	Risley (2003)	stated that children's English reading skills and academic success are negatively affected by the lack of vocabulary.
3.7	Beech (2004)	stated that older children are more likely than younger ones to use dictionaries to find the meaning of a word in a text.
3.7	Rahimi and Miri (2014)	explored the impact of mobile dictionary use on language learning of thirty-four lower intermediate EFL learners.
3.8	Martin (2016)	believes that children in primary school have an astonishing ability to acquire languages under suitable circumstances.
3.8	. Rixon (2013)	conducted an electronic survey on the condition of teaching English in 64 countries around the world.
3.8	Murphy (2014)	focused on foreign language learning in primary schools from different perspectives, such as policy, provision, and outcomes.
3.8	Al Malihi (2015)	investigated EFL primary school teachers' perceptions of their own readiness to teach YLs in Saudi primary schools.

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