Language Exposure: Is it the Missing Element in the Saudi English as a Second Language Context?

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Abstract: This quantitative research explores the significance of English exposure in improving English proficiency for school students (N = 341) in a provincial area in the north of Saudi Arabia. Against the backdrop of pervasive English Language Teaching problems in this context, this research explores if restricted English exposure is associated with lower proficiency ratings. A structured questionnaire based on extensive review and expert input in the form of a review of extensive literature and expert consultations emphasized key aspects of exposure, such as classroom practices, peer, family, and home background, society and culture, independent learning, engagement in digital media, and cultural experience. An online questionnaire using stratified random sampling employed Likert-scale questions to measure quality and frequency in English exposure. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient were used for statistical analysis for identifying correlations between variables related to English exposure and self-rated English skill. The findings reflect a strong positive correlation (ρ = 0.42–0.45) for practices in class, specifically involving teacher guidance and interactive engagement, while home and culture-based exposure reflects a weak positive correlation (ρ = 0.22–0.25), indicative of general supportive practices not being in place. Also, utilization of digital media and independent learning tools, including emerging AI-based tools, is positively correlated (ρ = 0.40–0.50) and reflects untapped potential for learning improvement. The findings reflect the need for structured and interactive learning practices and better utilization of digital tools in improving English exposure. The current research contributes to the available research corpus by providing proof supporting the vital significance of thorough and enriching exposure for efficient English learning. Practical implications for instructional practices and policy-making include pushing for immersive learning practices and making use of technology in creating richer and supportive learning atmospheres for English learning.

Keywords: Language Exposure, English Proficiency, Classroom Practices, Digital Media, Interactive Learning.

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التعرض اللغوي: هل هو العنصر المفقود في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية في السعودية؟

سهل رغيان الشمري

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مستخلص البحث: يستكشف هذا البحث الكمي أهمية التعرض للغة الإنجليزية في تحسين إتقانها لدى طلاب المدارس (ن = 341) في إحدى المناطق الريفية شمال المملكة العربية السعودية. وفي ظل المشكلات المتفشية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في هذا السياق، يبحث هذا البحث فيما إذا كان محدودية التعرض للغة الإنجليزية مرتبطًا بانخفاض مستويات الإتقان. وقد ركز استبيان مُهيكَل، مبني على مراجعة شاملة وآراء الخبراء (من خلال مراجعة الأدبيات واستشارات الخبراء)، على جوانب رئيسية للتعرض للغة، مثل الممارسات الصفية، وتأثير الأقران والأسرة والخلفية المنزلية، والمجتمع والثقافة، والتعلم الذاتي، والتفاعل مع الوسائط الرقمية، والخبرة الثقافية. واستخدم استبيان إلكتروني، يعتمد على أسلوب العينة العشوائية الطبقية، أسئلة مقياس ليكرت لقياس جودة وتكرار التعرض للغة الإنجليزية. واستُخدمت الإحصاءات الوصفية ومعامل ارتباط رتبة سبيرمان في التحليل الإحصائي لتحديد الارتباطات بين المتغيرات المتعلقة بالتعرض للغة الإنجليزية ومستوى إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية المُقَيَّم ذاتيًا. وتُشير النتائج إلى وجود ارتباط إيجابي قوي (ρ = 0.42–0.45) للممارسات الصفية، وخاصة تلك التي تشمل التوجيه والمشاركة التفاعلية، في حين أن التعرض للغة الإنجليزية في المنزل وفي البيئة الثقافية يُشير إلى ارتباط إيجابي ضعيف (ρ = 0.22–0.25)، مما يدل على عدم وجود ممارسات داعمة عامة. كما يُظهر استخدام الوسائط الرقمية وأدوات التعلم الذاتي، بما في ذلك الأدوات الناشئة القائمة على الذكاء الاصطناعي، ارتباطًا إيجابيًا (ρ = 0.40–0.50)، مما يعكس إمكانات غير مستغلة لتحسين التعلم. تُبرز هذه النتائج الحاجة إلى ممارسات تعلم منظمة وتفاعلية، واستخدام أفضل للأدوات الرقمية في تحسين التعرض للغة الإنجليزية. يُساهم هذا البحث في إثراء الدراسات المتاحة من خلال تقديم أدلة تدعم الأهمية البالغة للتعرض الشامل والمُثري للغة الإنجليزية من أجل تعلمها بكفاءة. تشمل الآثار العملية على الممارسات التعليمية وصنع السياسات تشجيع ممارسات التعلم الغامرة، واستخدام التكنولوجيا في خلق بيئات تعليمية أكثر ثراءً ودعمًا لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية..

الكلمات مفتاحية: التعرض اللغوي، إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية، ممارسات الصف، الوسائط الرقمية، التعلم التفاعلي.

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1. Introduction

Language learning is a major focus for education systems around the world. Many countries invest heavily in improving language education but often see only limited progress. Teaching English in Saudi Arabia faces many challenges (Assulaimani, 2019; Alshammari, 2020; Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014). Among the factors that affect language learning success, exposure to the target language plays a critical role. Studies suggest that frequent engagement with a language helps learners develop a deeper understanding and proficiency. Regular exposure is therefore essential for successful language acquisition, as both the type and level of proficiency are heavily influenced by it (Almekhlafy & Alzubi, 2016; Kasper, 1997; Larsari, 2011; Morford, 2003; Ranta & Meckelborg, 2013). Evidence from international students studying abroad in English-speaking countries further highlights the importance of language exposure.

The increasing prominence of English Language Teaching (ELT) globally has also been reflected in Saudi Arabia, where English is viewed as the primary language for global knowledge and communication (Khan, 2011). This recognition has led to the rapid expansion of ELT programs, making English the only foreign language taught alongside Arabic in Saudi public schools (Alharby, 2005). The importance of English has driven major changes in the educational system, including the establishment of new universities and significant investments in infrastructure (Al-Badwi, 2024; Romani, 2009). English was first introduced at the primary level in 2003 and later expanded to Grade 4, creating a growing demand for ELT professionals and advanced teaching programs (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014; Ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). Colleges such as the College of Arts and the College of Education play a key role in preparing English-proficient graduates, with the former focusing on diverse professional fields and the latter specializing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching (Al-Hazmi, 2003). In addition, activities like Preparatory Year Programs (PYP) have been put into operation to fill the gap that separates secondary and tertiary education as these programs would improve English proficiency to college students in preparation for English medium instruction for their majors. This institutional thrust is similarly supplemented by the nationalize recruitment of a relatively high number of native English-speaking teachers by universities in Saudi Arabia, all of which underscored the importance accorded by the nation in English Language Teaching (ELT). In spite of this heavy expenditure and overhauls within structures, the results in proficiency in English have continually been reported as lagging behind and usually lower than expected. This spread between resources devoted and learning results points to a very much critical gap, which may very well indicate that classroom instruction alone is not enough when it comes to having ample listening-to-language exposure. It is in this background that the current study examines restricted exposure, both in and outside the classroom, as the missing link to explain limited English proficiency as found among students within the Saudi ESL context.

Despite these efforts, many challenges persist in English language teaching. Key issues include a lack of professional development opportunities for teachers, insufficient student motivation, and a shortage of modern teaching tools (Nazim & Alzubi, 2025). Teachers also require more training in using these tools and improving their teaching methods (Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014). Moreover, English teaching in Saudi classrooms remains largely teacher-centered rather than student-centered, limiting students' ability to achieve strong language competence (Ahmed, 2014; Alkubaidi, 2014; Alrabai, 2014; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). Language exposure is another significant challenge for English instruction in Arab countries, particularly in Saudi Arabia (Fareh, 2010; Al-Nasser, 2015; Ashraf, 2018; Ibrahim, 2023). Although exposure has been shown to play a critical role in language acquisition (Almekhlafy & Alzubi, 2016; Al-Zoubi, 2018; El-Dakhs, 2017; Jahrani & Listia, 2023), it remains minimal in Saudi classrooms. Ineffective teaching practices and underprepared teachers contribute to the problem. Arabic is often used in lessons, and teacher talk time dominates over student interaction. Additionally, overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to involve students in conversational activities (Fareh, 2010).

While research has explored language exposure as one of many factors in English language teaching, there is little focus on exposure as a standalone element in Saudi Arabia. The role of language exposure for public school students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the objective of this study. Earlier

research in the Saudi context identified exposure as one of many challenges like teacher-centered methods, motivation, curriculum issues, but almost each has considered exposure a peripheral or implicit factor within finding broader studies around ELT obstacles. Thus, there is a known gap in research into investigating language exposure further on an empirical and autonomous basis as a primary and multidimensional variable defined to public schools. By shifting the literature from a generalized acknowledgment of the importance of exposure to quantitative, domain-specific analysis, this study makes a contribution. This study systematically measures exposure as per different types of spheres: classroom, peers, family, social, digital, and cultural types of exposure-and correlates them with self-reported proficiency to determine which types of exposure are most important and least present. In this manner, the narrative shifts from a general "lack of exposure" to more specific and data-researched evidence on where and how exposure deficits manifest, hence providing a much more granulated foundation from which to design more targeted interventions in policy and pedagogy. The students would be first evaluated to see if they are receiving any minimal exposure to English, which here is operationalized as an exposure that is mainly restricted to limited, non-interactive use in the classroom (i.e., teacher-dominated instruction with low student engagement) and is infrequently or, oftentimes, never involved in major areas outside school (i.e., home social settings) with no quality of immersive, authentic, or meaningful interaction prevalent for robust language acquisition. Then, it will examine the correlation between language exposure and their proficiency levels. Finally, it will explore the reasons behind any observed low levels of language exposure.

Research questions:

1. What is the extent and nature of English language exposure experienced by public school students in Saudi Arabia across classroom, family, and social contexts?

2. How are different types of English language exposure (e.g., classroom activities, peer interaction, media usage) associated with the self-rated overall English proficiency of public school students in Saudi Arabia?

3. What patterns in the quantitative data suggest potential systemic, cultural, or personal barriers to English language exposure among public school students in Saudi Arabia?

2. Literature review

Theoretical foundations of language exposure are based on Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis which states that language acquisition happens when learners receive comprehensible input that consists of linguistic material that is slightly beyond their current proficiency level (i+1) but remains understandable through context or extralinguistic support (Krashen, 1985, p. 13). The hypothesis demonstrates that people need more than simple exposure because they require input that contains meaningful information which is presented in a specific context and can be easily understood to achieve successful acquisition. The theory of Krashen maintains its main principle because it establishes that understanding language through natural exposure becomes the main factor that leads to language acquisition.

2.1   The role of Language exposure in EFL Learning

Language exposure is a crucial element in language learning, significantly influencing various aspects of proficiency. Kim and Margolis (2000) highlighted the impact of different types of exposure, such as instructional settings, multimedia resources, and travel experiences, on students' motivation and mastery of English. Their study found that limited lifetime exposure to English listening and speaking hindered proficiency, while interactions with native speakers boosted motivation and learning outcomes. In the same regard, a recent study found that the more language learners exposed to language the more they better their linguistic abilities (Altaweel & Asager, 2024, Ibrahim, 2023). On the other hand, El-Dakhs (2017) demonstrated that increased exposure to English aligns Arab EFL learners' word associations more closely with those of native speakers, enhancing their mental lexicon and lexical connectivity. Shirazi and Talebinezhad (2013) further supported this by showing that exposure to idiomatic expressions improved Persian EFL learners' metaphorical competence, underscoring the importance of cultural and idiomatic awareness in language learning. Additionally, Artieda, Roquet,

and Nicolás-Conesa (2020) found that greater exposure to English correlates with better reading comprehension and writing skills, emphasizing the necessity of substantial interaction with the target language. This comprehensive exposure facilitates a deeper understanding and more effective use of the language. These studies largely confirm two themes: first, that exposure motivates and skillfully develops learners, from lexical networks to metaphorical competence; and second, that benefits accrue in regard to both quantity and quality, with interactive and meaningful engagement producing outcomes that are superior to that of passive reception (Ranta & Meckelborg, 2013). Yet, most of this research either establishes exposure in terms of general principles or demonstrates it in experimental or niche settings, such as word association tests or with particular multimedia tools. A crucial area that remains unexamined is treating exposure as a generalized, multi-domain variable in the mainstream public school EFL context, particularly in areas of Saudi Arabia, where classroom dynamics and sociocultural factors may uniquely restrict its expression.

2.2 Enhancing Language Exposure through Digital Media

Digital media and emerging technologies represent a promising, yet underexplored, avenue for augmenting language exposure outside traditional classrooms. Research indicates their potential to bypass physical and resource constraints. Many studies investigate the actual influence of digital media on language exposure. For example, though pronunciation skills are difficult for learner to master among second language learners, using podcasts significantly improves the pronunciation accuracy of Saudi school students (Al-Ahdal, 2020). Moreover, WhatsApp facilitates language exposure by connecting forty Saudi school students with native speakers, resulting in significant improvements in language exposure (Ali & Bin-Hady, 2019; Almekhlafy and Alzubi, 2016). The evolution of this landscape, especially owing to the advent of AI-powered tools (Xiao & Zhi, 2023; Divekar et al., 2021), entails a significant yet largely underexplored potential to create compensatory immersive experiences. Nevertheless, the findings from contexts such as Yemen (Bin-Hady & Al-Tamimi, 2021) indicate that having access to and being able to use these tools effectively, do not always amount to successful or high-quality instruction,

which reveals a notable gap between technological availability and systematic, constructive integration into formal learning ecologies as in the case of Saudi public schools. Limited resources represent a major obstacle to language exposure. However, Yemeni undergraduate language learners utilize technology to enhance English language skills under challenging conditions, such as ongoing conflict and limited technological infrastructure. Mobile phones, electronic resources, and internet-based applications provide significant exposure to English outside conventional classrooms, facilitating continuous language engagement that improves listening, speaking, reading skills, and vocabulary acquisition (Bin-Hady and Al-Tamimi, 2021).

The recent evolution of Artificial Intelligence provides language learners with a substantial opportunity to practice language skills. AI tools facilitate the development of learners' language abilities by exposing them to authentic resources such as videos, articles, and AI-simulated interlocutors, leading to a more immersive and meaningful learning experience (Xiao & Zhi, 2023). Moreover, AI provides language learners with opportunities to practice language using authentic materials without the need to travel abroad, particularly in developing EFL speaking skills (Divekar et al., 2022). Therefore, chatbots can be used as an educational tool because they provide greater exposure to the target language (Chen et al., 2020).

2.3 Language Exposure Challenges in Saudi ELT

A synthesis of the Saudi ELT literature reveals a persistent and central theme: a significant exposure deficit, characterized by a disconnect between policy-led aspirations for communicative competence and the enduring reality of teacher-centered, input-poor classroom practices (Assulaimani, 2019; Ashraf, 2018; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). Language exposure in Saudi public schools remains a significant challenge in English Language Teaching (ELT), especially within the context of educational reform. These reforms aim to prepare students for global communication and equip them with the skills needed for a globalized economy. Despite initiatives like the Tatweer project, which integrates technology and advanced teaching methods into education (Assulaimani, 2019), traditional ELT methods such as grammar-focused instruction and rote memorization

dominate classrooms. These outdated practices limit students' ability to use English in practical situations and hinder the development of critical thinking skills (Ashraf, 2018). Cultural attitudes toward English and the dominance of Arabic in daily life further restrict students' natural encounters with the language. Outside the classroom, students have limited opportunities for meaningful English exposure, which poses additional challenges to language learning (Al- Nofaie, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2014). Even studying abroad does not fully address this issue. Research shows that second language learners in English-speaking countries often engage in passive activities like watching television or reading academic texts. While these activities help with comprehension, they do not effectively improve speaking or conversational skills (Ranta & Meckelborg, 2013).

A shift toward communicative language teaching (CLT) is essential to address these challenges. This approach prioritizes interaction and the practical use of language, which can lead to significant improvements in language proficiency (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Additionally, integrating technology into ELT classrooms can provide students with access to authentic language materials, making learning more engaging and improving exposure to the target language (Assulaimani, 2019). Teacher development also plays a crucial role in improving ELT. Training programs should focus on modern teaching strategies and second language acquisition theories to better prepare educators for effective classroom practices (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Furthermore, encouraging early language learning and creating consistent opportunities for English exposure can enhance language acquisition, particularly for younger learners (Moskovsky & Picard, 2019). The literature clearly states that exposure is the main hurdle, but it sees this rather as the absence of normal conditions and constraints. What remains less studied is a quantitative, multi-dimensional profile of this exposure deficit- that is, an affective measurement mapping its exact severity over different life domains (classroom, home, digital, social) and correlating these directly with learner-perceived outcomes. The current study seeks to fill this precise empirical gap.

3. Methodology

This quantitative research explores how English exposure is related to English competency among students in the north of Saudi Arabia. The research is concerned with conceptualization, validation, and application of a structured tool for measuring different aspects related to English exposure, including instructional practices, peer and teacher interactions, home and social environments, self-directing strategies, use of online media, and engagement in culture.

3.1   Instrument Development

The instrument used in the questionnaire was created after a thorough review of related research on second-language learning and exposure (e.g., Elyas and Al Grigri, 2014; Kim and Margolis, 2000; Assulaimani, 2019). The questions had been created in line with different dimensions of second-language exposure recognized in previous research as being instrumental in improving English language ability (El-Dakhs, 2017; Almekhlafy and Alzubi, 2016). Particular questions, like "My English teacher uses English mainly for classwork" and "I watch English programs or films at least occasionally," had been used in measuring second-language exposure in academic and media domains. Fundamental principles guided the drafting of the tool:

a. Content Validity: A panel consisting of five experts assessed the first draft of the questionnaire for content validity. This panel consisted of three applied linguists specializing in the Saudi EFL context and two experts in quantitative research methodology in education. The criteria against which they evaluated consisted of the following: (1) relevance—whether each item adequately measured its intended domain of exposure (e.g., classroom, digital media); (2) clarity—how comprehensible the wording of the item was for the intended adolescent population; and (3) appropriateness—whether, in terms of cultural and contextual appropriateness, the items could fit the Saudi public school setting. Based on the comments received from the experts, revisions were made that simplified jargon in several items (for example, "authentic materials" was rephrased to mean "real-life materials like news articles"), eliminated two ambiguous

items related to vague cultural activities, and included two more specific items that probe into the use of AI-based tools (for example, chatbots, vocabulary apps) to capture the construct of digital exposure more comprehensively. This further established content validity for the instrument prior to pilot testing.

b. Expert Assessment: The initial draft had undergone scrutiny by English as a Second Language specialists and quantitative research methodology experts in order to ensure that the elements are appropriate and applicable in the given context in Saudi Arabia (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014; Al-Hazmi, 2003).

c. Pilot Testing: A pilot study was implemented on an independent sample of 45 students from the same target population (public school students from northern Saudi Arabia) that was excluded from the main study. The objective of the pilot study was to assess the clarity, comprehensibility, perceived completion time, and the internal consistency of various domains proposed in the instrument. Feedback given by participants who piloted the testing indicated the initial confusion in understanding the directions under the Likert scale. Thus, another more simple graphical anchor (e.g., 😊 to 😞) was added to the text labels (e.g., "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree") to create a more intuitive understanding. Also, two items were rephrased to improve their clarity according to students' remarks: one

item on peer collaboration was specified to include examples like group projects, and one item on digital media was broadened to specifically refer to YouTube or streaming services. Pilot data also provided an initial check for reliability, which went on to inform the final grouping of items into the five domains presented in Table 1.

3.2   Participants

The researchers used stratified random sampling to achieve representative samples from the three grade levels and both male and female students in public secondary schools located in the northern part of Saudi Arabia. The researcher initially chose public secondary schools in the northern region through a random selection process which involved choosing schools from an existing list of all public secondary schools in the area. The selected schools used random selection to choose participants from each grade level while maintaining the required male to female student ratio in cases where it was appropriate. The study targeted secondary-level public school students in the northern region of Saudi Arabia. The researchers selected study participants from schools which were located within the study region. All participants were students enrolled in Grades 10–12 at the time of data collection (table1). Participants selected for the research met pre-determined inclusion criteria as they were active and enrolled school students at the time. Prior to commencement of research, approval for research involving human subjects had been obtained from the review board of the respective institution and informed consent had been secured for each participant.

Table 1. Participant Profile Summary

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	220	64.5%
	Male	121	35.5%
Grade Level	Grade 10	152	44.6%
	Grade 11	116	34.0%
	Grade 12	71	20.8%
	Other	2	0.6%
Total Respondents		**341**	**100%**

3.3   Data Collection

Data were obtained via online questionnaire tool for easy dissemination of the questionnaire (Appendix A, table 2). The questionnaire was sent via mail and LMS platforms for increased response generation. The time allocated for gathering data was planned in a way to avoid interference in academic calendars and thus maximize responses. Participants were briefed about research intent, voluntary nature, and steps taken for ensuring anonymity and confidence in responses.

Table 2. English Exposure Questionnaire: Domains, Sample Items, and Scales

Domain (No. of Items)	Construct Measured	Sample Item (Full list available upon request)	Response Scale
1. Classroom Context (5 items)	Teacher's use of English and interactive practices in class.	"My English teacher primarily uses English for instructions and explanations."	1–5 (Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree)
2. Peer Interaction (4 items)	Use of English with classmates in formal and informal settings.	"I practice English with my classmates during informal activities."	1–5 (Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree)
3. Family & Social Environment (5 items)	Exposure to English at home and in immediate social circles.	"Family members fluent in English communicate with me in English."	1–5 (Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree)
4. Independent Learning & Digital Media (6 items)	Self-directed use of English media and technology/AI tools.	"I use AI chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT) to practice conversational English."	1–5 (Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree)
5. Cultural & Experiential Exposure(3 items)	Motivation and real-world experiences with English culture.	"I am motivated to learn English for cultural or professional reasons."	1–5 (Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree)
Self-Rated Proficiency(1 item)	Global self-assessment of English skills.	"How do you rate your overall proficiency in English (speaking, listening, reading, writing)?"	1–5 (Very Low – Very High)

The quantitative scoring system established for exposure domains and self-rated proficiency assessment maintained standardized procedures to achieve consistent results and clear analytical outcomes. All exposure items utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), which corresponds with standard survey methods used in research on language acquisition (Dörnyei 2007). The composite scores for the five exposure domains which include Classroom Context and Peer Interaction and Family and Social Environment and Independent Learning and Digital Media and Cultural and Experiential Exposure were determined by calculating the average of all item scores within each domain. The Classroom Context score was derived from the average of items Q1 through Q5. The researchers calculated domain mean value from remaining items when participants had one missing item in the domain while participants with multiple missing items in the domain were excluded from domain-level correlational analysis to protect data integrity which follows missing data management guidelines established for social science research (Schlomer et al 2010). The measurement of self-rated English proficiency which served as the dependent variable was conducted through a single item that requested participants to evaluate their total proficiency in the four language skills of speaking listening reading and writing using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Very Low) to 5 (Very High). Educational institutions facing logistical testing restrictions use this single-item global self-assessment method to conduct large-scale studies which focus on students' self-perception (Brutus et al 2013). The researchers established measure reliability through test-retest procedures which they conducted with 30 participants from the sample size ($n = 30$) to calculate an intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) score of 0.79 which indicates the measure maintains suitable stability over time (Koo & Li 2016). The researchers established convergent validity through

the discovery of a moderate positive correlation (r = .52 p < .001) between self-rated proficiency scores and official English course grades which participants received most recently establishing support for using this perceptual measure within the self-report framework of the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained were analysed using statistical software (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, in terms of means, frequencies, and percentages, have been computed in order to represent responses across different aspects of English exposure. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (ρ) is applied in examining relationships between variables related to English exposure and self-rated English proficiency. The correlation coefficient ρ was applied to measure both the strength and direction of the monotonic relationship existing between two variables. The research employed two analytical approaches which included (1) assessing item-level correlations between each separate item from the exposure questionnaire and the self-rated proficiency score which used a single item and (2) investigating domain-level correlations between all composite exposure domain scores which included Classroom Peer Family Digital and Cultural domains and the proficiency score. The report includes sample size (N) data along with ρ value and p-value information for all correlation results. The threshold for statistical significance was set at p-values which were less than 05. The main findings which appear in Tables 4-6 display the item-level correlations. The notion of 'proficiency' is indeed a question marked for self-assessment rather than being tested objectively for the purposes of this study. Consequently, the 'self-rated proficiency' becomes a dependent variable that describes this concept in a similar manner. The rationale behind this choice was born out of feasibility and practicality, although the probability arises for biases, such as the social desirability bias that results from the overestimation of their exposure or skills by the participants, reporting both false or inappropriately glowing self-assessed appraisals. The use of a non-parametric measure is appropriate as it can be readily applied in cases involving ordinal data derived from responses using a Likert scale. Cronbach's alpha (table 3) for each domain is computed in order to evaluate internal consistency in the questionnaire tool, thus ensuring reliability in the measurements. *Classroom Context* (α=٠،٨٤) and *Independent Learning and Digital Media Use* (α=٠،٨٨) domains show good internal consistency, which indicates that the items within these domains measure the same underlying construct reliably. *Family and Social Environment* (α=٠،٧٦) and *Cultural and Experiential Exposure* domains also showed acceptable reliability. The least order of acceptability was recorded for the *Peer Interaction* items (α=0.71), possibly due to the heterogeneous nature of informal and formal peer activities (table 2). Self-rated English proficiency was measured using a single composite item: 'How do you rate your overall proficiency in English (speaking, listening, reading, writing)?' Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High). This item was treated as an ordinal measure of perceived global proficiency (table 3).

Table 3. Reliability Statistics for Questionnaire Domains

Domain	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability
1. Teacher's Role & Classroom Context	5	0.84	Good
2. Peer Interaction	4	0.71	Acceptable
3. Family and Social Environment	5	0.76	Acceptable
4. Independent Learning & Digital Media	6	0.88	Good
5. Cultural and Experiential Exposure	3	0.79	Acceptable

The research uses a quantitative method based on a planned and proven survey tool, and is a sound basis for examining English proficiency and the impact of language exposure in north-western province secondary-level students in Saudi Arabia. Focusing on different aspects of exposure and using statistical tools to explore correlations between them and English proficiency, this research strives to produce outcomes that can be applied to policy-making and instructional strategies in the context of ESL in Saudi Arabia.

3.5 Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent

The study was approved ethically by Institutional Review Board of Northern Border University, Saudi Arabia (Approval No. ************/NBU). All participants in the study were informed and voluntary. Informed written consent was taken from parents or legal guardians of minors for their participation in the study while written assent was taken from students for their involvement in the study. Detailed information was provided to either adult participants or guardians of minors regarding the purpose and nature of the study, the procedures involved (completing an online questionnaire), the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.. In addition, the information sheet stated that the data would not be collected on any person but only in aggregate form. Minimal risks were described to be involved with the study, mostly, having given participant time involved as well as some greater understanding of language learning. Both the principal investigator and the IRB were noted for any questions or concerns. Consent and assent forms were made available electronically through the online questionnaire platform, and consent was given by the discussion of questionnaire using the information given.

4. Results

The RQ1 receives its answer through descriptive statistics which show different patterns of English language exposure that exist across five main domains: classroom context, peer interaction, family and social environment, independent learning and digital media, and cultural and experiential exposure.

The primary source of English exposure in Classroom Context mostly operated as an inconsistent exposure route. The English teacher uses English for instruction according to 75% of students who reported this (Q1, Table 5), but only 60% of students confirmed that English remains the spoken language throughout all class time (Q2) and 55% of students reported using actual life materials including news articles and videos (Q4). Students reported their participation in interactive practices which included debates and discussions at a rate of 50% following Q5. English-medium instruction occurs frequently in educational settings yet its implementation shows substantial differences in both its application and interactive elements. Peer Interaction delivered moderate exposure because students preferred informal peer conversation over systematic collaboration which includes group projects. The full dataset contains item-level data which shows that 40–60% of students use English with their peers but they participate less in structured cooperative activities. The Family and Social Environment t provided students with the lowest level of English exposure. Home English fluency was reported by only 35% of students according to their reporting in Q10 (Table 6), while 75% of students achieved rare English conversation with their family members according to Q11. Seventy percent of people watched English programs or movies at home (Q12, Table 7) but only 25% of people participated in English-speaking events (Q13) and 40% of people used English in informal social settings (Q14). The Independent Learning and Digital Media domain emerged as a crucial area that students used extensively. Students watched English media content, with 70% of them watching English movies or shows, while 60% of students searched for online English resources (Q15). AI chatbots (Q22) and vocabulary apps (Q24) functioned as emerging tools, but users adopted these tools at a rate of 40–45%. The Cultural and Experiential Exposure domain showed students who wanted to study English yet they experienced barrier because of insufficient access to English-speaking environments. The students who wanted to study English for cultural or professional reasons reached a rate of 75% (Q27), yet only 25% of students had traveled to an English-speaking country (Q25) which demonstrated a gap between their desired connection and real-life experience in English-speaking settings. Digital spaces and classroom environments provide the most exposure, while peer settings and motivation areas give moderate exposure, and family environments and social activities give the least exposure. The multi-domain profile shows which areas have the greatest exposure deficits for students in Saudi public schools.

The data show that different English exposure levels exist across different domains (table 4). The majority of English exposure happens through digital media which has a usage rate between 60 to 70 percent and through classroom settings which have a 55 to 75 percent agreement on English usage. Family environments show the least English

exposure with only 25 to 35 percent agreement while active social interactions show exposure rates of 25 to 40 percent. People engage in peer interactions and cultural experiences at a moderate frequency.

The tables that follow show the distribution of these patterns together with their relationship to self-reported proficiency levels.

Table 4. Spearman Correlations Between Exposure Domains and Self-Rated English Proficiency (Domain-Level Analysis)

Exposure Domain	N	ρ	95% CI for ρ	p-value
Classroom Context	341	0.44	[0.36, 0.52]	< .001
Peer Interaction	341	0.39	[0.30, 0.47]	< .001
Family & Social Environment	341	0.23	[0.14, 0.32]	< .01
Independent Learning & Digital Media	341	0.48	[0.40, 0.56]	< .001
Cultural & Experiential Exposure	341	0.27	[0.18, 0.36]	< .01

Note: N represents the number of student respondents included in each correlation. Domain scores were computed as mean composite scores of their respective items. Confidence intervals are bias-corrected and accelerated 95% intervals.

Classroom Context: Classroom practices significantly shape students' exposure to English. As shown in Table 5, 75% of students agree that their teachers primarily use English for instruction (Q1). However, only 60% report teachers speaking English throughout the entire class (Q2), and 55% confirm the use of real-life materials like reading news articles (Q4). Participation in interactive activities such as debates (Q5) is split evenly (50% agree vs. 50% disagree), indicating inconsistent implementation. The evidence demonstrates that teacher-led English instruction provides the highest results for both frequency of English use at 75% agreement and for correlation strength which shows a value of 0.45 at Q1 measurement.

Table 5. Classroom Context Items and Correlations with Self-Rated English Proficiency (Item-Level Analysis)

Item	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	N	ρ	95% CI for p	p
Q1	75%	25%	341	0.45	[0.36, 0.53]	< .001
Q2	60%	40%	341	0.38	[0.29, 0.47]	< .001
Q3	68%	32%	341	0.42	[0.33, 0.51]	< .001
Q4	55%	45%	341	0.40	[0.31, 0.49]	< .001
Q5	50%	50%	341	0.36	[0.26, 0.45]	< .01

Note: Correlations are Spearman's ρ. Items reflect exposure to English in classroom context

Family Environment: Family environments provide minimal English exposure. Only 35% of students report fluent English communication at home (Q10), and 75% rarely converse in English with family members (Q11). These factors show weak correlations with proficiency (ρ = 0.22–0.25), underscoring limited familial support (table 6). The family domain shows two characteristics because home English use happens infrequently at 35% agreement and this practice shows weak connection with proficiency at ρ = 0.22-0.25.

Table 6: Family Environment Responses with Self-Rated English Proficiency (Item-Level Analysis)

Item	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	N	ρ	95% CI for p	p
Q11	35%	65%	341	0.22	[0.13, 0.31]	< .01
Q12	25%	75%	341	0.25	[0.16, 0.34]	< .01

Note: Correlations are Spearman's ρ. Items reflect exposure to English within the family and immediate social environment.

Social Context: Social settings outside school rarely involve English use. While 70% watch English programs daily (Q12), only 25% attend English-speaking social gatherings (Q13), and 60% seldom use English in informal settings (Q14). Media consumption correlates moderately with **Self-perceived** proficiency ($\rho = 0.48$), but real-world practice remains limited (table 7).

Table 7: Social Context Responses with Self-Rated English Proficiency (Item-Level Analysis)

Question	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	N	p	95% CI for p	p
Q12	70%	30%	341	0.48	[0.39, 0.56]	<.001
Q13	25%	75%	341	0.25	[0.16, 0.34]	<.01
Q14	40%	60%	341	0.30	[0.21, 0.39]	<.01

Note: Passive exposure through media shows stronger associations with proficiency than active social use, which remains limited.

Independent Learning and Digital Media Use: Students actively engage with English media, with 70% regularly watching movies (Q20) and 60% searching for online resources (Q15). However, AI tools like chatbots (Q22) and vocabulary apps (Q23) are underutilized (40–45% adoption). These tools show moderate correlations with Self-perceived proficiency ($\rho = 0.40$–0.44), suggesting untapped potential (table 8).

Table 8: Independent Learning and Media Usage Responses

Question	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	N	ρ	95% CI for p	p
Q15	60%	40%	341	0.50	[0.42, 0.58]	<.001
Q20	70%	30%	341	0.47	[0.39, 0.55]	<.001
Q22	40%	60%	341	0.43	[0.34, 0.51]	<.001
Q24	45%	55%	341	0.44	[0.36, 0.52]	<.001

Note: Items reflect self-directed exposure to English through digital media and emerging AI-based tools.

Cultural and Experiential Exposure: While 75% of students are motivated to learn English for cultural or professional reasons (Q27), only 25% have travelled to English-speaking countries (Q25). Travel experiences show weak correlations with Self-perceived proficiency ($\rho = 0.18$–0.20), highlighting missed opportunities for immersive learning.

The results point to an intricate connection between student exposure factors and subjective perceptions of proficiency in English. Classroom practices showed the strongest association with proficiency. Seven in every ten indicate that English is used mostly in classes (Q1), which has been shown to have a moderately related ($\rho = 0.45$) connection to scores in proficiency. However, this is to an extent moderated by irregularity; just 60% confirm to have received regular use of English in the lesson (Q2) while authentic materials like articles in the newspaper (Q4) have been used by only 55% of responders. Favourable teaching methods in classrooms take an interactive turn (Q3 with $\rho = 0.42$) yet experience variable participation rates—with debates and interactive formats (Q5) finding equal support (50% each) and opposition ($\rho = 0.36$). These implications point to the fact that while systematic English-medium teaching is an influential determinant in effect, an irregular pattern in practice can reduce overall efficacy. Conversely, familial contexts offer minimal support in developing mastery in the English language. Only a 35% indicate that proficient English is used in families (Q10), while a sizable 75% confirm that they take part in family conversations conducted in English (Q11). Low intercorrelation scores ($\rho = 0.22$–0.25) in these results indicate insufficient support in families towards developing language proficiency in English, leading to an appreciable difference in language use in non-academic contexts.

Social contexts present an intricate situation. Whereas most (70%) interact with the English language through regular exposure to mainstream media—combined with participation in programs conducted in this language (Q12, $\rho = 0.48$)—society provides limited avenues to apply English in society-related contexts. Only 25% take part in organized programs conducted in English (Q13), while only 60% indicate minimal practice in applying English in ordinary contexts (Q14). This difference implies that passive consumption through media can lead to relatively beneficial results; yet, the inability to apply in authentic contexts can hinder overall language mastery. The engagement in independent learning, in addition to leveraging online resources, has vast potential. A notable percentage of learners are actively improving language proficiency through movies (Q20: 70% with $\rho = 0.47$) and online materials (Q15: 60% with $\rho = 0.50$). However, in opposition to these trends, electronic resources take-up rates, including chatbots (Q22: 40–45% with correlations $\rho = 0.43$–0.44) and word list apps (Q24: 40–45% with correlations $\rho = 0.43$–0.44), remain relatively low. This finding suggests vast potential in leveraging digital development to further accelerate language mastery.

Furthermore, an examination of peer interaction reveals that systematic peer cooperation (Q7, $\rho = 0.41$) is significantly more effective in improving language ability compared to non-systematic peer engagement (Q6, $\rho = 0.28$). This reveals that systematic peer cooperation is an efficient technique to achieve better English language proficiency compared to random peer conversation. In conclusion, collective impact of factors of exposure has moderately positive correlations ($\rho = 0.50$–0.55) with reported proficiency among participants. From these results, instructional methods practiced in classrooms, consumption of media, incorporation of digital tools in classrooms prove to be determining factors in determining proficiency in the English language; yet potential impacts deriving from family life and society contexts remain to be investigated. Additionally, results suggest increased consistency in interactive and conventional teaching methods, greater emphasis in integrating digital media and tools in artifices of pedagogy is necessary to support an improved language learning context in classrooms.

The patterns in the data reveal three factors which connect with each other (RQ3): (1) Systemic factors: inconsistent implementation of English-medium instruction and interactive practices in classrooms; (2) Cultural factors: limited English use in home and social environments, with Arabic dominating daily life; and (3) Personal/access factors: underutilization of available digital/AI tools despite their strong association with proficiency, potentially due to awareness, access, or training gaps. The analysis shows different patterns which exist between the different exposure domains. Self-rated proficiency showed the strongest positive relationship with classroom practices through domain-level correlation of 0.44 which encompassed individual items that ranged from 0.36 to 0.45. Family and social environment exposure showed the lowest correlation strength through domain-level measurement of 0.23 and item-level measurement between 0.22 and 0.25. Proficiency showed strong correlation with independent learning together with digital media use through domain-level measurement of 0.48 which included online resource usage (0.50) and English media watching (0.47) as activities that showed the strongest connections. Peer interaction ($\rho = 0.39$) and cultural exposure ($\rho = 0.27$) showed moderate positive correlations.

5. Discussion

The study examined three research questions that focused on English language exposure for Saudi public-school students. The study found that digital and classroom environments produced the highest exposure levels while family and social environments produced the lowest exposure levels. The study found that students who experienced classroom and digital learning environments showed the highest self-rated language proficiency results. The researchers discovered that low exposure patterns existed because of two factors, which included people using Arabic as their main language and the failure to properly implement system-wide changes and people not using digital resources that were accessible to them.

The interpretation of the findings in this study necessitates consideration of its methodology. it should be noted that self-reporting is a major limitation for language exposure and proficiency. Even though a correlation gives an indication of how students perceive their learning environment

and self-assessment of their competence, it cannot be treated as an objective measure for competence in the language. Most likely, the dialogue identified concerning classroom practices and digital media actually has moderate correlations that are biased due to method variance or even a halo effect; that is, students who have high positive feelings toward their learning environment also rate themselves higher in their skill sets. Therefore, these results are patterns relating to students' self-assessment of learning, which, while useful for understanding learner psychology and experience, will need to be corroborated with an objective measure.

The research presents an analysis of English-language exposure and related proficiency levels among Saudi students based on instructional strategies, family and society, independent learning techniques, and use of mass media. The findings in this research reflect that while a systematic English-medium instructional method is vital, irregular application and lack of enough exposure outside class severely lower its efficacy. The findings in this research not only validate but expand upon previous research on exposure and English as a Second Language status in Saudi Arabia (Assulaimani, 2019; Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014).

Classroom practices have been recognized as key indicators of improvement in English proficiency. As per information obtained, 75% of the participants identified English as being mainly used as a learning tool (Q1), and this instructional method correlates positively ($\rho = 0.45$) with the level attained in proficiency. However, just 60% affirmed English being used across the entire class period (Q2), and interactive learning strategies like debating were applied sparingly (Q5: application at 50%; $\rho = 0.36$). The observed discrepancy in instructional practices supports previous findings in research, citing extensive and prolonged use of the target language in learning setups as key for improving communicative competency (Kim & Margolis, 2000; El-Dakhs, 2017). In the Saudi context, previous research established teacher-centered instructional practices and insufficient interactive learning strategies as key hindrances to proficient learning outcomes (Ahmed, 2014; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). As such, our findings recommend exclusive use of English as the learning tool and extensive teacher training programs aimed at creating highly interactive and learner-centered

learning setups (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Conversely, the home context influence on providing opportunities for English language exposure is limited. Only 35% responded positively to the use of proficient English in the home (Q10), and there is a moderate correlation ($\rho = 0.22–0.25$) between usage at home and English competency. It is no wonder, therefore, that English at home is felt to be insufficient. The findings are in line with previous research findings indicating the limited contribution of family interactions towards English language learning in Saudi Arabia (Fareh, 2010; Al-Nasser, 2015; Ashraf, 2018). The lack of English usage in the home context limits opportunities for interactive skill practice outside schools, thus necessitating supportive interventions in the wider community to bridge this gap (Almekhlafy & Alzubi, 2016).

The investigated social context is relatively complex. Majority of the students (70%) habitually use English-language programs (Q12, $\rho = 0.48$); yet, English-speaking events are still relatively rare (25% for Q13), and use of everyday language (Q14, $\rho = 0.30$) is still restricted. The findings confirm that while passive use of mass media contributes positively towards oral skill as a whole, it is insufficient to substitute for active and live use for oral and dialogue skill improvement. Past research has emphasized as well that while multimedia tools have some privileges (Ranta & Meckelborg, 2013), real social contacts are indispensable for oral skill improvement and dialogue skill improvement (Kim & Margolis, 2000; Almekhlafy & Alzubi, 2016). The implementation of autonomous learning strategies and use of digital media offer tremendous opportunities for increased exposure to the target language. The findings in this research have identified regular online content engagement (Q15: 60%, $\rho = 0.50$) and regular English-language TV or movie watching (Q20: 70%, $\rho = 0.47$) as correlating with a self-assessed level of advanced language skill. On the other hand, lack of use of AI tools at just 40–45% (Q22 and Q24, $\rho \approx 0.43–0.44$) is indicative of underutilized in major way. The research is in line with emerging research in this area, as authors like Chen et al. (2020), Xiao and Zhi (2023), and Divekar et al. (2021) have emphasized awareness and accessibility as key drivers for uptake. By making use of AI-based tools in learning programs, teachers could offer individualized feedback and instant opportunities for dialogue engagement, thus

complementing regular class learning and providing increased target-language immersion.

Cultural exposure and experience act as internal motivators, as exemplified in that 75% of participants confirmed that they are motivated to learn English for cultural or career reasons (Q27). Yet, this is not coupled with practical immersion since there is a lower percent who have traveled to English-speaking nations (Q25: 25%, $\rho = 0.18$–0.20). Since travel and direct experience have proven highly beneficial for improving language skill (Artieda, Roquet, & Nicolás-Conesa, 2020), there is a definite need for alternative strategies for immersion in line with apparent shortfalls in experience in current population. Alternatives may include virtual cultural exchanges or online simulation (Ibrahim, 2023) as solutions to cover this experience deficit. The aggregated influence of these multiple influential variables in producing an outcome related to exposure reflects a modestly positive correlation ($\rho = 0.50$–0.55) in self-perceived proficiency. This is in line with extensive research stressing the need for a comprehensive method involving traditional in-campus training, online learning tools, and interactive participation in learning (Kasper, 1997; Morford, 2003; Larsari, 2011).

The ramifications for instructional practices are far-reaching. To start, there is a need for greater consistency in classroom practices to ensure English is used as a medium of instruction in a uniform manner. Training programs for teacher professional development in supporting student-centered and interactive instructional practices can be used to curb identified disparities (Ahmed, 2014; Alrabai, 2014). Secondly, since relatively significant is the impact of digital media on English fluency, there is a need for educational decision-makers to invest in digital infrastructure and offer subsidized access to AI enables language learning tools, thereby making advanced learning content equitably available (Chen et al., 2020; Al-Ahdal, 2020). Finally, given lack of family encouragement for English exposure, after-school clubs for learning English and family-association programs need to be implemented to expand learning beyond classroom limits (Ashraf, 2018; Al-Nasser, 2015).

Despite its significance, this research is faced with some limitations. Most importantly, a highly crucial bias was introduced by self-reported data about the independent and dependent variables. Sources of bias included social-desirability bias and inaccurate self-assessment. The construct of 'proficiency' was measured through self-rating and not objectively using standardized tests like IELTS/TOEFL or a purpose-built proficiency exam. The dependent variable was assessed through a single-item self-reporting assessment of total proficiency. The method provides practical assessment results to users but does not deliver the detailed information and testing reliability found in multi-skill proficiency assessments and authenticated self-assessment tools like the CEFR self-assessment grid. The study requires research design changes which should include objective proficiency assessment methods to confirm the perceptual data collected. Hence, the results show relations with self-perceived proficiency that ought to be corroborated with behavioral or objective performance data. Secondly, since the present research is cross-sectional, it can only demonstrate correlation and not clear-cut causation relationships. Third, the study's purely quantitative design limited its ability to fully address RQ3, which sought to identify systemic, cultural, and personal factors behind low English exposure. While patterns in the data allowed for reasonable inferences about such factors—such as inconsistent policy implementation, the dominance of Arabic in social settings, and underuse of digital tools—these interpretations remain speculative without supporting qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, or policy analysis. Future research should adopt a mixed-methods approach to explore these contextual factors directly and in greater depth.

Future research may focus on longitudinal research designs in following prolonged usage across time and adding quantitative method designs involving only quantitative information in explaining second or foreign language learning experience complexity (Moskovsky & Picard, 2019). More research is required in examining second or foreign learning experience problems related to implementing AI tools and creating plans for their use in daily language situations (Xiao & Zhi, 2023). This current research highlights the significance of exposure to English in supporting English as a second or foreign language learning in Saudi state schools. The findings confirm prior research, stressing the need for a structured and integrated second or foreign language learning

system involving regular methodologies, web-based learning tools, and structured social engagement (Assulaimani, 2019; Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014; Kim & Margolis, 2000). It is vital to resolve deficiencies in family and society assistance while tapping online and technology-based learning tools as key interventions in creating enriching and efficient learning conditions for English as a second or foreign language. By harmonizing instructional strategies and research insights like in this research, parties can contribute towards mitigating identified learning obstacles in the Saudi ESL system and improving learning outcomes in a globally connected context.

6. Conclusion

This study explores the major impact of language immersion on improving self-perceived English skill among northwestern Saudi Arabia-based school students. The findings confirm that regular and immersive instructional practices, especially interactive and teacher-guided, are vital in improving self-ratings of English-language skills. Significantly, 75% of the participants confirmed English as being the main instructional tool in class, and there are moderate correlations for instructional practices and English skill ($\rho = 0.42$–0.45) suggesting that structured learning conditions that use English exclusively linked to English as a foreign-language learning. However, lack of English use in class and limited extensive use and irregular interactive practices imply failure to achieve the total benefits linked to class exposure.

Conversely, exposure to English in home environments is relatively restricted. A modest portion of students use English on a regular basis at home, as is illustrated in the lower correlations ($\rho = 0.22$–0.25) between family encouragement and language skill. This implies that home environments in Saudi Arabia are not adequately supportive for improving language skills, and this is a key area requiring improvement. Social media reflects widespread use of media, as is observed in 70% daily English program watching, but this does not translate into meaningful opportunities for use of practical English. The passive use of media allows for improvement in listening and reading abilities but does not build oral and interactive capacities since there is no practical use in real situations. Furthermore, the findings reflect a modest correlation between self-directed learning

and use of digital media, in this case online sources and emerging AI tools, and relates to improved skill ($\rho = 0.40$–0.50). The findings reflect noteworthy opportunities for tapping unused digital tools in complementing traditional learning strategies. However, the slow uptake trend reflects usability and awareness concerns, suggesting much could be accomplished through increased systemic use in learning practices. The findings in this research are in line with a coherent and integrated instructional method for English language learning in Saudi Arabia. Policymakers and leaders in education need to collaborate in improving and streamlining interactive instructional strategies, investing in staff training and advancement programs, and pushing for utilization of digital tools and artificial intelligence to improve learning outcomes. In addition, closing loopholes in family and society engagement in learning English through after-school and in-school programs is vital. It is advisable for future research to explore extended implications of increased exposure to improved learning opportunities and evaluate programs aimed at addressing current deficits in English language learning in the country.

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Appendix A

Category	Question	Response Options
Teacher's Role in Language Exposure		
Teacher's use of English	My English teacher primarily uses English for instructions and explanations.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Speaking throughout class	My teacher speaks English throughout the entire class period.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Activities for interaction	Class activities encourage interaction in English.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Real-life materials usage	My teacher uses real-life materials (news articles, videos) in lessons.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Interactive activity frequency	I always include interactive activities (debates, discussions, games)?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Classroom Activities and Peer Interaction		
Informal speaking practice	I practice English with my classmates during informal activities.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Group activities inclusion	My English classes include group activities requiring communication in English.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Peer communication frequency	I always communicate with peers during classroom activities?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Encouragement outside class	My teacher encourages us to speak English outside class activities.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Family and Social Environment		
Family use of English	Family members fluent in English communicate with me in English.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Conversation at home	I usually converse in English at home?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Watching English media	I watch English programs or movies everyday.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Social gatherings in English	I always attend social gatherings where English is spoken?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Social English use	I always use English in social settings outside school?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Independent Learning and Digital Media Use		
Searching for English resources	I always search for English resources (videos, podcasts, tutorials)?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Gaming in English	I use English while playing online video games.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Social media interaction	I engage with social media accounts primarily in English. I follow with social media accounts primarily in English. I speak with native speaker to improve my language	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Messaging in English	I send or receive text messages in English?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Media consumption	I consume English songs, movies, or books regularly.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Browsing English websites	I always browse English websites?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

AI	I use AI chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT) to practice conversational English and improve my fluency.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
AI	I rely on AI-generated stories, essays, or flashcards to expand my English vocabulary and comprehension.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
AI	AI tools (e.g., chatbots, translation apps, or language platforms) provide me with more opportunities to be exposed to English."	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Cultural and Experiential Exposure		
Travel to English-speaking countries	I have travelled to English-speaking countries many times?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Travel impact on proficiency	My travels improved my English proficiency significantly.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Learning motivation	I am motivated to learn English for cultural or professional reasons.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Proficiency and Perception		
Self-assessment of proficiency	How do you rate your proficiency in English (speaking, listening, reading, writing)?	1 (Very Low), 2, 3, 4, 5 (Very High)
Sufficiency of exposure	Current English exposure is sufficient for improving my language skills.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Suggestions for improvement	What additional methods/resources could enhance your English learning?	Open-ended