Language intensive exposure in EFL curriculum:Attitudes towards the unlock textbook series at Birzeit University as a case study

Rania Qassrawi, Haya Fayyad Abuhussein, Tina Jaber Rafidi & Rula Yousef

Published online: 03 Feb 2023.

Submit your article to this journal ⍇

View related articles ⍇

View Crossmark data ⍇

: cogent
education

*Corresponding author: Rania Qassrawi, Department of Languages and Translation, Birzeit University, B?r Zayt P622, Palestine
E-mail: rqassrawi@birzeit.edu

CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Language intensive exposure in EFL curriculum: Attitudes towards the unlock textbook series at Birzeit University as a case study

Rania Qassrawi[1]*, Haya Fayyad Abuhussein[1], Tina Jaber Rafidi[1] and Rula Yousef[1]

Abstract: Language-intensive exposure and immersion can be regarded as key factors in developing proficient language learners. In the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), the current research was conducted to compare two modes of teaching English using the *Unlock Textbook Series* published by Cambridge University Press at Birzeit University, Palestine. This research effort aimed at investigating the intensive and non-intensive students' attitudes towards the Unlock Textbook Series in addition to the effectiveness of the intensive and non-intensive modes of teaching based on EFL instructors' perspectives. In a descriptive design, two quantitative instruments were utilized to obtain data; a student questionnaire was implemented with students from the two tracks; intensive and non-intensive, whereas an attitudinal scale was used to examine the effectiveness of the two modes of teaching according to EFL instructors' perspectives. The participating students were (182) non-intensive and (100) intensive students. As for the

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rania Qassrawi is an Assistant professor at Birzeit University in Palestine. She received her Ph.D. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from Yarmouk University, Jordan. She has been working at BZU since 2017 in the Languages and Translation Department as well as in the Faculty of Education. She is highly interested in conducting research regarding the latest language teaching methods with a special emphasis on the psychology of language learning

Haya Abuhussein is an assistant professor at the Department of Languages and Translation at Birzeit University, Palestine. She received her (BA) in English Language and Literature from An Najah National University in 2004, and her (MA) in the Arts of Teaching English from Al-Quds University-Bard College programme in 2015. In 2016, she was awarded a Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching at Indiana University in the United States of America. She completed her Doctorate at Yarmouk University, Jordan in Curriculum Studies and Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in 2020. Dr. Fayyad Abuhussein is also research visiting fellow at St. Antony's and the Middle East Centre, University of Oxford.

Tina Jaber Rafidi Ph.D. Curriculum and EFL Instruction from Ain Shams University, Egypt. Dr. Rafidi is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Arts, Department of languages and Translation, Birzeit University, Palestine . A former Director of the Palestine and Arabic Studies Program (PAS program), Birzeit University, 2016/2018. She is a specialized consultant in English language teaching, professional and teacher training, and curriculum development. Her academic background includes holding a B.A. in English language and literature with a minor in Translation. Her first MA is in Gender, Law, and Development, and her second MA is in Education and TEFL with a distinction. Dr. Rafidi also received her Licensed PCELT Teacher Trainer in TEFL from the School of International Training (SIT) and AMIDEAST. Previously, Dr. Rafidi worked as a training coordinator for the English Language and Professional training unit at the AMIDEAST office. She is especially interested in current education reforms and teacher training for public and private schools in the region.

Rula Yousef is a researcher and an instructor at Birzeit University. She holds a Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature, with a minor in Education and Translation from Bethlehem University and holds a Master's degree in English Language Teaching with focus on Literature, Language and Integrative Teaching Approaches from the University of Warwick in the United.

Rania Qassrawi

: cogent · oa

instructors, fifteen (15) BZU instructors of English participated on the condition of teaching the two tracks. The findings revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the intensive and non-intensive students' attitudes towards the *Unlock Textbook Series* based on students' perspectives in favor of the intensive students. Additionally, it was shown that the intensive mode was more effective than the non-intensive based on instructors' perspectives. Accordingly, some recommendations were suggested.

Subjects: Higher Education; Language & Linguistics; Language Teaching & Learning

Keywords: language exposure; Unlock Textbook Series; EFL curriculum; Palestine

1. Introduction

At different educational institutions, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) has been regarded as a significant target that needs to be achieved. Thus, universities have been providing special devotion to teaching and learning EFL to prepare undergraduate students of different majors for the workforce market (Earls, 2016; Garcia, 2020; Jufri & Mantasiah, 2019). In developing students' English language, the curriculum is a corner stone for achieving the intended learning outcomes and immersing EFL learners with sufficient amount of exposure to the language in a way that triggers both learning and acquisition (Jabarani & Muhammed, 2019; Krahen & Terrell, 1983).

Foreign language immersion and exposure is an approach that involves immersing students in the target language throughout the academic day in which students can highly participate when the number of teaching classes increases (Lenker & Rhodes, 2007). Throughout this mode, teachers only utilize the target language in teaching through demonstrating and using a wide range of instructional strategies. The fundamental goal of the exposure to the language is to prepare proficient language learners who acquaint the cultural awareness of the language parallel with a high level of academic achievement. Additionally, the intensive exposure to the language was regarded beneficial in enhancing language learning. Thus, it was asserted that students with intensive exposure to a second language registered higher accuracy in terms of words and vocabulary processing and recognition than students with lower intensity (Aqachmar, 2020; De León Rodríguez et al., 2022; Öztürk, 2018).

Curriculum standards can be in charge of promoting teachers' and learners' efforts and motivation to meet the main objectives of the English courses at hand. Suitable curricula have a vital role in raising teachers' and learners' awareness of their progress and achievement throughout the English courses. Language curriculum development was defined as "encompassing the processes of needs analysis, goal setting, syllabus design, methodology and evaluation (Richards, 1984, p. 1).

Attitude and motivation in learning a foreign language were regarded two essential factors in the learning process (Alamer & Alrabai, 2022). Learners' feelings and attitudes can have an impact their foreign or second language learning. Gardner (1985), for example, argued that there is a robust connection between positive attitudes and prosperity in foreign language learning. Thus, educational experts and stakeholders have been keen on promoting learners' attitudes and on seeking effective educational programs and curricula that could contribute to promoting learners' positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language (Abahussain & Ahmed, 2019; Jabarani & Muhammed, 2019) .

The *Unlock Textbook Series* is a curriculum published by Cambridge University Press in 2014. It is aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which divides language activities into four categories: receptive (listening and reading), productive (spoken and written), interactive (spoken and written) and mediation (translating and interpreting). These skills are also listed in two separate books: Reading/Writing and Listening/Speaking. At Birzeit University (BZU),

the *Unlock Textbook Series* has been adopted as an official English Textbook Series since 2016/2017. This Textbook Series targets teaching the four language skills, and it is divided into four main levels from A1 (Beginners) to C1 (Advanced). Freshmen students at BZU are usually divided into four levels based on the placement test offered by *Cambridge Press*; this test is usually conducted at the beginning of each academic year. Although the *Unlock Textbook Series* suggests four main levels, it has been divided into seven levels as an exclusive policy adopted at BZU. In other words, two modes of delivery for the *Unlock Textbook Series* at BZU (intensive and non-intensive modes) are implemented. Students from all majors, except for English major and Doctor of Pharmacy students, are supposed to finish each level of this textbook series over two semesters, as two-contact hours per week are allocated for each semester (non-intensive mode). However, students who are specialized in the English Language and Doctor of Pharmacy are supposed to take the whole level in one semester, as four-contact hours per week are allocated for this track (intensive mode).

It is worth noting that the difference in the number of contact hours between the intensive and non-intensive courses had an impact on BZU students' academic achievement and motivation. Instructors of the English language at BZU who have had the opportunity to teach the two tracks; the intensive and non-intensive, have reported differences in favor of the intensive courses in terms of the development of English language competence, motivation and linguistic abilities in general. This impression is corresponding with other researchers who indicated that intensive courses can provide rich exposure to the language and can affect EFL learners' attitudes positively towards learning English in addition to improving their academic achievement (Abahussain & Ahmed, 2019; Nagano, 1995).

After five years of implementing the *Unlock Textbook Series* at the Department of Languages and Translation at Birzeit University, the researchers who are also instructors of the English language at the same department observed some differences that may arise between those enrolled in the English intensive and non-intensive tracks, which can be referred to the amount of exposure to the language, in favor of the intensive track. Thus, this study aimed at investigating the importance of language exposure using *Unlock Textbook Series* by comparing BZU students' (intensive and non-intensive) attitudes towards this series based on students' perspectives, in addition to comparing its effectiveness between the two modes of teaching based on instructors' perspectives.

This study can be regarded as an innovative research effort in higher education, and it is evaluative as it aimed at providing decision and policymakers at BZU with scientific data that can affect future policies regarding the teaching modes, particularly in language teaching, as the data about the delivery system or mode of teaching can be essential to have a careful selection of the curriculum (Nordlund, 2016; Skolverket, 2006).

The main questions that guided the current study were:

RQ1: What are the attitudes of BZU intensive and non-students towards the *Unlock Textbook Series*?

RQ2: Are there any statistically significant differences (at α = 0.05) in the attitudes of BZU intensive and non-intensive students?

RQ3: What is the effectiveness of intensive and non-intensive modes of teaching using the *Unlock Textbook Series* based on EFL instructors' perspectives?

RQ4: Are there any statistically significant differences (at α = 0.05) in the effectiveness of intensive and non-intensive modes of teaching using the *Unlock Textbook Series* based on EFL instructors' perspectives?

2. Literature review

Within its larger strategy of teaching foreign languages, universities worldwide continue to reinvigorate pragmatic steps to prioritize, create and re-construct prominent academic courses. The mere purpose was to shape and improve the EFL learners' global competencies and requirements of professional practice and citizenship as a part of the internationalization in higher education. According to Nation, I.S.P. & Macalister, J (2010), curriculum, or course design is regarded as the foundation of the "how-to-do-it" practice that involves the integration of multifaceted forms of transferring knowledge to produce relevant, effective and efficient teaching programs and curricula.

Such developmental processes include the latest trends in curriculum design and teaching methodologies in EFL classrooms. This practice is also coupled with leading paradigm shifts to acquaint knowledge in and across disciplines through a comprehensive framework guided by principles, goals, and needs within institutional contexts. Indeed, new changes aligned with a student-driven philosophy of authentic communication require a clear vantage of re-visiting the curriculum as part of the change, or innovation (Nation, I.S.P. & Macalister, J, 2010).

Undeniably, both teachers and learners need to envision the need and value of change. That is discovering learners' needs (what the learner knows), lacks (what the learner does not know) and wants (what learners need) midpoint at the heart of any curriculum change (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Sitting on the edge of this change, command of foreign languages is one of the demands at all levels of educational reform. As such, research on language teaching and learning is a guide to contouring decisions regarding "what to teach" and "how to deliver". One core principle is the recurrence or exposure and thoughtful processing of material and delivery, taking account of individual differences and the learners' attitudes and motivation. The delivery system is a key determinant in the success of language classrooms that requires reciprocal understanding and pedagogical practices to enrich the four basic English Language skills.

2.1. Modes of language delivery and exposure

The appropriate principles of sequencing, organizing and delivering the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of curriculum continue to be a challenge. Specifically, the mode of delivery and intensity, planning time, and scheduling can be important factors in the success of teaching in EFL classrooms (Nasiri & Shokrpour, 2012), which is the main purpose of this study. There have been mixed views regarding the appropriateness and efficiency of implementing the intensive course mode in comparison to the traditional course mode to acquire better learning experiences in tertiary education. While some researchers (Burton & Nesbit, 2002; Grant, 2001 & Mukundan et al., 2012) have reported encouraging results associated with intensive instructional structures. Others, such as Nasiri and Shokrpour (2012) have raised concerns about the efficacy of such programs.

One main characteristic that distinguishes intensive language modes is utilizing the block form, chronological repetition and sequencing to maximize learning using compressed teaching formats while exploring massive learning moments with learners. According to Conrad et al. (1992), intensive course modes, which are also known as accelerated courses, tend to be time-shortened, flexible and compressed. The rationale for introducing the intensive course mode is that teachers can be more flexible in planning and can differentiate in teaching. In addition, teachers can generate active and hands-on activities to stimulate learners' abilities to use language concurrently than in the usual traditional schedules that require spaced-out sessions (Nasiri & Shokrpour, 2012). Moreover, some studies indicate that the implementation of intensive course programs can help in developing both social-affective skills and interpersonal communication skills as learners can construct knowledge in recurrent meaningful contexts within shortened learning cycles (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006).

2.2. Intensive and non-intensive modes and students' achievement and attitudes

The impact of EFL exposure and intensity in curriculum and the modes of teaching on students' attitudes was researched. Mukundan et al. (2012), for example, examined the effect of an intensive

English Textbook Series on a group of Malaysian Secondary School students. Results revealed that the intensive students significantly scored higher in the post-test. Likewise, Scott (2003) stated based on qualitative analysis from students' interviews and classroom observations that the success of the intensive course classes depended on certain factors. These factors were classified into different strands: (1) the instructor's traits (enthusiasm, knowledge, experience, and good communication; (2) teaching methods (active learning and classroom interaction and discussion, experiential and applied to learn; and (3) depth over breadth. Furthermore, it was concluded that learners reported the benefits of this intensive type of learning since it provided them with more in-depth discussions, and emphasis on core concepts, as well as provided an opportunity for better classroom relationships and atmosphere and better academic achievement.

Moreover, Farrokh (2018) explored the effectiveness of using the reactive/performance Textbook Series versus the intensive mode on Iranian intermediate English students' listening comprehension ability. The participants consisted of sixty (60) intermediate female English language learners at the Kish English language institute in Tehran participated in the study. They were divided into experimental and control groups. The control group received reactive instruction, while the experimental group received intensive one. The post-test showed that teaching listening and adopting the intensive performance was significantly more effective on learners' comprehension. Additionally, Öztürk (2018) carried out a study that investigated EFL vocabulary growth in an intensive language program. The Vocabulary Size Test was used to measure the learned vocabulary by EFL learners. The findings of that study revealed that a greater annual growth of the learned vocabulary has occurred through the intensive Textbook Series than in the previous non-intensive programs.

In respect of intensive exposure to the language and attitudes, Knell and Chi (2012), investigated the role of motivation, and students' attitudes towards learning English in immersion programs in China. The findings indicated that the participants in immersion mode scored significantly higher levels of willingness to communicate and perceived competencies. Furthermore, they exhibited less language anxiety as opposed to their peers in the other group. Similarly, Karaksha et al. (2013) investigated and compared overall performance between traditional and intensive course modes in an Introductory Pharmacology Course for second-year Pharmacy students at Griffith University, Australia. The results confirmed that the intensive modes of delivery increased students' motivation and preference towards the course. Additionally, students in the traditional mode revealed a lower level of satisfaction and motivation. Besides, Abahussain and Ahmed (2019), investigated the effectiveness of an intensive language textbook series at Majmaah University in Saudi Arabia on enhancing learners' linguistic repertoires. The study also surveyed the EFL teachers' attitudes towards the performance of their students at the end of the program. The findings showed higher scores and positive attitudes in the post-test in favor of the intensive students.

To conclude, it is apparent that students' attitudes and motivation concerning any scheduled academic course are pivotal in the success or failure of any teaching program. Research suggests that attitudes towards learning a foreign language are notably associated with motivation. Additionally, in light of most previous studies, foreign language immersion and exposure were demonstrated as a factor that can improve learners' language proficiency as well as their attitudes towards learning the foreign language, which is the main target of the current study that compares the attitudes of intensive and non-intensive university students based on students' and teachers' perspectives.

3. Method
In a descriptive design, the current study aimed at investigating the importance of language exposure in the *Unlock Textbook Series* by comparing the attitudes of BZU students (intensive and non-intensive) towards the Unlock courses based on students' perspectives. Additionally, it aimed at discussing the effectiveness of this series across intensive and non-intensive modes of teaching based on BZU instructors' perspectives.

3.1. Participants and context

The participants in this study were BZU intensive and non-intensive students who have been enrolled in the Unlock English courses in the fall semester of the academic year 2021/2202. The Unlock English Textbook Series applied at BZU has five levels: Remedial (A1), Intermediate I (A2), Intermediate II (BI), Advanced I (B2) and Advanced II (C). Freshmen students who join BZU tend to be divided into these levels based on a Cambridge Placement Test (CPT) used by Cambridge Press. BZU divides Unlock English courses into two tracks: intensive and non-intensive. Non-intensive students (all majors except for English major/ TEFL and Doctor of Pharmacy) are supposed to finish each level over two semesters with two-contact hours allocated for each semester. However, the intensive track student states that intensive students (English major/ TEFL and Doctor of Pharmacy students only) are supposed to finish each level over one semester with four-contact hours allocated for each semester.

3.2. Participants

From the intensive courses, the participating students were (182) male and female students, whereas non-intensive students were (100) male and female students. As for the non-intensive courses, the participant students were selected using simple random sampling based on the numbers of their sections, whereas all sections (14) of the intensive courses were selected. As for the participant instructors, (15) instructors participated by responding to a different question-naire ranging between "agree", "disagree" and "unsure" related to the effectiveness of the two modes using the *Unlock Textbook Series*. The participating instructors were selected based on the condition of teaching the two tracks (intensive and non-intensive).

3.3. Instruments of the study

To obtain data in the current study two different questionnaires were utilized: a student ques-tionnaire and an attitudinal scale for instructors. These two questionnaires were designed by the researchers based on the reviewed literature regarding the learner's attitudes and effective language teaching methods. They consisted of a list of items that elicited responses related to the Unlock textbooks.

3.4. Validity and reliability

The validity of students' and instructors' questionnaires was set by a jury of English language instructors. As such, their face and content validity was confirmed, and the students' questionnaire was translated into students' mother language (Arabic) to obtain valid results. Additionally, the test-retest reliability of the two questionnaires was confirmed by being conducted with a pilot group twice, with two weeks between the two times to guarantee its consistency. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for the questionnaires were extracted. The result of the students' questionnaire was (.81), whereas the teacher's questionnaire was (.78). There two results were above the threshold value (.70) (Cronbach, 1951), as such, the instruments were considered reliable (Creswell, 2014).

3.5. Procedures

To answer the study questions, students' and instructors' responses were analyzed by calculating the means and percentages of students' responses to each item. The percentages regarding the intensive and non-intensive modes were listed in separate tables. Besides, the statistically sig-nificant differences between the attitudes of intensive and non-intensive students in addition to the instructors' responses regarding the effectiveness of the two modes of teaching were calcu-lated using a Paired-sample T-test for dependent samples and a T-test for Independent Samples (the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23).

4. Findings and discussion

In this section, the results were displayed in light of the study questions. To answer the first question, the means, standard deviations, rank and percentages of the participants' responses to each item were extracted.

Table 1 illustrates BZU intensive students' attitudes towards the *Unlock Textbook Series*.

As displayed in Table 1, the mean scores of intensive students' attitudes towards the *Unlock Textbook Series* range from 2.31 to 2.44. Accordingly, it can be concluded that intensive students reported a moderate to high level of perspectives towards the *Unlock Textbook Series*.

Item five "I am satisfied with the quality of the learning materials included in Unlock program", for example, came in the first rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.44) and an agreement level of (49%), while item fifteen "The four-contact hours using the *Unlock Textbook Series* were sufficient to be exposed to different types of assessment (presentations, portfolios, etc.)." came in the last rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.31) with an agreement level of (37%). Moreover, the overall mean scores were (2.38) (a high level of agreement).

Table 2 illustrates BZU non-intensive students' attitudes towards the *Unlock Textbook Series*.

As shown in Table 2 based on the descriptive statistics, the mean scores of non-intensive students' attitudes towards the *Unlock Textbook Series* range from 1.76 to 2.14. Accordingly, it can be concluded that non-intensive students reported a moderate level of perspectives towards the *Unlock Textbook Series*. Item one "My experience while learning English with Unlock Textbook Series was positive" came in the first rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.14) and an agreement level of (20.3%), while item six "I have encountered some challenges while learning English using the *Unlock Textbook Series*" came in the last rank with an arithmetic mean of (1.76) and an agreement level of (19.8%). Moreover, the overall mean scores were (2.02) (moderate level of agreement).

As for the second question that aimed at examining any statistically significant differences between the attitudes of the intensive and non-intensive students towards the *Unlock Textbook Series*, t-test for Independent Samples was conducted. Table 3 illustrates the results.

Table 3 indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the attitudes of the intensive and non-intensive students towards the *Unlock Textbook Series* (at the item level and total mark level) in favor of the intensive students.

Based on the results displayed earlier regarding the differences between BZU intensive and non-intensive students' attitudes towards the *Unlock Textbook Series*, it was revealed that there were statistical differences between the attitudes of the intensive and non-intensive students in favor of the intensive. Intensive students demonstrated a moderate to high level of agreement on the attitudinal questionnaire. Item 5 "I am satisfied with the quality of the learning materials included in Unlock *Textbook Series*", for example, came in the first rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.44) and an agreement level of (49%), while item 15 "The four-contact hours using *Unlock Textbook Series* were sufficient to be exposed to different types of assessment (presentations, portfolios … etc.)." came in the last rank, yet it is still high, with an arithmetic mean of (2.31) with an agreement level of (37%). The overall mean scores were (2.38) (a high level of agreement). On the other hand, non-intensive students revealed moderate agreement on the items of the same attitudinal questionnaire, and the overall mean score was (2.02) (a moderate level of agreement).

These findings can be attributed to the fact that intensive students through having four-contact hours per week might have been exposed and immersed more in the foreign language than the non-intensive students. Consequently, they became more motivated and willing to improve their language skills. In the intensive track, students strongly believed that their level of English has improved in terms of the four language skills. However, non-intensive students demonstrated moderate agreement on the same statements as the two-contact hours per week might have been considered as a drip feed instruction as listed in Stern (1985). Thus, the intensive exposure to the language may have triggered more language acquisition and learning, which aligns with (Jabarani & Muhammed, 2019).

Table 1. BZU Intensive Students' Attitudes towards the Unlock Textbook Series		Mean	SD	Rank	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
					%	%	%
5	I am satisfied with the quality of the learning materials included in Unlock Textbook Series.	2.44	.592	1	5	46	49
3	Since using Unlock Textbook Series in learning English, I have become more motivated towards improving my English language.	2.41	.534	2	2	55	43
1	My experience while learning English with Unlock Textbook Series was positive.	2.40	.550	3	3	54	43
9	Learning English using the Unlock Textbook Series has improved my writing skill.	2.40	.636	3	8	44	48
10	Learning English using Unlock Textbook Series has improved my listening skill.	2.40	.550	3	3	54	43
4	Learning English using the Unlock curriculum made a difference in my level of English.	2.39	.567	6	4	53	43
11	Learning English using Unlock Textbook Series has improved my four language skills in general.	2.39	.567	6	4	53	43
14	The four-contact hours using Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to receive feedback on my writing assignments (from your instructors).	2.39	.567	6	4	53	43
2	Since I have started learning English using Unlock program, my English language has improved.	2.38	.582	9	5	52	43

(Continued)

		Mean	SD	Rank	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
					%	%	%
12	The four-contact hours using Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to improve my four language skills.	2.38	.582	9	5	52	43
13	Increasing the contact hours would contribute in enhancing my English language skills.	2.37	.597	11	6	51	43
6	I have encountered some challenges while learning English using Unlock Textbook Series.	2.36	.704	12	13	38	49
7	Learning English using Unlock Textbook Series has improved my reading skill.	2.34	.639	13	9	48	43
8	Learning English using Unlock Textbook Series has improved my speaking skill.	2.34	.639	13	9	48	43
16	The four-contact hours were sufficient to have various student-centered activities (group work, debates, peer-reviews, etc.) in the classroom.	2.33	.551	15	4	59	37
15	The four-contact hours using Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to be exposed to different types of assessment (presentations, portfolios, etc.).	2.31	.581	16	6	57	37
	Total	**2.38**	**.518**				

Additionally, in the intensive courses, a sufficient amount of time may have enabled teachers to vary in their instructional techniques and strategies. Accordingly, students became more involved and were granted sufficient space inside the classrooms. Thus, they were allowed to experience the foreign language frequently, which may have improved and their listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as, enhanced their motivation, attitudes and achievement. This finding corresponded with previous studies (Abahussain & Ahmed, 2019; Alamer & Alrabai, 2022; Jabarani & Muhammed, 2019; Lightbrown, 2012).

Moreover, one of the core issues related to the intensive exposure to the language is that the intensity of the foreign language instruction might have minimized the individual differences among intensive students as they may have been offered enough opportunities to participate and to have their shares due to the provision of the sufficient time. Furthermore, the intensity of instruction may have also enabled their teachers to differentiate in their teaching strategies and vary in the types of assessment with providing students with adequate feedback. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Collins et al., 1999; Collins & White, 2011; De León Rodríguez et al., 2022). Another issue that may explain the highly positive attitudes of the intensive students in comparison with the non-intensive students is that intensive students were empowered to finish the English courses as compulsory courses at college in a shorter period and at a regular pace without any distraction or interruption. This helps them to be fully engaged in the learning process. Besides, they could finish each level in one successive semester. However, it took non-intensive students to finish each level one full academic year. Thus, through this specialty, intensive students managed to focus more on their major courses.

To answer the third question regarding the effectiveness of intensive and non-intensive modes of teaching using the *Unlock Textbook Series* based on EFL instructors' perspectives, the means, standard deviations, rank and percentages of the instructors' responses to each item were extracted. Ranges of agreement with the attributions on the survey were determined by using the following rubric: the interval of 1 to less than 1.67 showed a low level, the interval of 1.67 to less than 2.34 showed a moderate level, and the interval of 2.34 to 3 showed a high level of agreement with the statement on the survey.

Table 4 illustrates instructors' perspectives related to this effectiveness.

As presented in Table 4, the results of the descriptive statistics indicated that the mean scores of the teachers' perspectives based on the attitudinal scale about the effectiveness of the intensive track using the *Unlock Textbook Series* range from 2.27 to 2.61 on a three-point scale. Thus, it can be concluded that teachers reported a moderate to high level of agreement about the effectiveness of the intensive courses. Item one "Intensive students' experiences while teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series were positive", it came in the first rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.61) and an agreement level of (73.3%), while item five "Intensive students have encountered some challenges while learning English using the Unlock Textbook Series" came in the last rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.27) and agreement level of (53.3%). Moreover, the overall mean scores were (2.43) (a high level of agreement).

Table 5 illustrates instructors' perspectives related to the effectiveness of the non-intensive mode of teaching.

As shown in Table 5, the results of the descriptive statistics indicated that the mean scores of the teachers' perspectives based on the attitudinal scale about the effectiveness of the non-intensive track using the *Unlock Textbook Series* range from 1.13 to 2.80. Accordingly, it can be concluded that teachers reported a low to high level of perspectives the effectiveness of the non-intensive track. Item eight "Increasing the contact hours would develop non-intensive students' English language skills", came in the first rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.80) and an agreement level of (86.7%), while item eleven "The contact hours while teaching non-intensive students using the Unlock Textbook

No.		Mean	SD	Rank	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Table 2. BZU Non-Intensive Students' Attitudes towards the Unlock Textbook Series							
					%	%	%
1	My experience while learning English with Unlock Textbook Series was positive.	2.14	.495	1	6.0	73.6	20.3
5	I am satisfied with the quality of the learning materials included in Unlock Textbook Series.	2.09	.569	2	12.1	67.0	20.9
11	Learning English using Unlock Textbook Series has improved my four language skills in general.	2.07	.586	3	13.7	65.4	20.9
14	The four-contact hours using Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to receive feedback on my writing assignments (from your instructors).	2.07	.622	3	15.9	61.0	23.1
7	Learning English using Unlock Textbook Series has improved my reading skill.	2.07	.576	3	12.3	55.6	20.3
2	Since I have started learning English using Unlock program, my English language has improved.	2.05	.583	6	14.3	65.9	19.8
3	Since using Unlock Textbook Series in learning English, I have become more motivated towards improving my English language.	2.05	.553	6	12.6	69.2	18.1
4	Learning English using the Unlock curriculum made a difference in my level of English.	2.03	.647	8	19.2	58.2	22.5
10	Learning English using Unlock Textbook Series has improved my listening skill.	2.03	.608	8	17.0	63.2	19.8

(Continued)

No.		Mean	SD	Rank	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
					%	%	%
12	The four-contact hours using Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to improve my four language skills.	2.03	.621	8	17.6	61.5	20.9
15	The four-contact hours using Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to be exposed to different types of assessment (presentations, portfolios … etc).	2.02	.685	11	22.5	53.3	24.2
9	Learning English using the Unlock Textbook Series has improved my writing skill.	2.01	.608	12	18.1	63.2	18.7
8	Learning English using Unlock Textbook Series has improved my speaking skill.	1.99	.639	13	20.9	59.3	19.8
13	Increasing the contact hours would contribute in enhancing my English language skills.	1.96	.680	14	25.3	53.8	20.9
16	The four- contact hours were sufficient to have various student-centered activities (group work, debates, peer-reviews, etc.) in the classroom.	1.96	.723	14	28.0	43.8	24.2
6	I have encountered some challenges while learning English using the Unlock Textbook Series.	1.76	.763	16	44.0	36.3	19.8
	Total	**2.02**	**.523**				

Table 3. Summary Results of T-Test for Independent Samples						
Item No	**Group**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
1	Intensive	2.40	.550	4.011	280	.000
	Non-intensive	2.14	.495			
2	Intensive	2.38	.582	4.483	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.05	.583			
3	Intensive	2.41	.534	5.219	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.05	.553			
4	Intensive	2.39	.567	4.627	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.03	.647			
5	Intensive	2.44	.592	4.902	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.09	.569			
6	Intensive	2.36	.704	6.510	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	1.76	.763			
7	Intensive	2.34	.639	3.601	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.07	.576			
8	Intensive	2.34	.639	4.411	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	1.99	.639			
9	Intensive	2.40	.636	5.127	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.01	.608			
10	Intensive	2.40	.550	5.088	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.03	.608			
11	Intensive	2.39	.567	4.420	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.07	.586			
12	Intensive	2.38	.582	4.589	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.03	.621			
13	Intensive	2.37	.597	5.102	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	1.96	.680			
14	Intensive	2.39	.567	4.243	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.07	.622			
15	Intensive	2.31	.581	3.627	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	2.02	.685			
16	Intensive	2.33	.551	4.433	280	.000
	Non-Intensive	1.96	.723			
Total	**Intensive**	**2.38**	**.518**	**5.484**	**280**	**.000**
	Non-Intensive	**2.02**	**.523**			

Table 4. Instructors' Perspectives related to the Effectiveness of the Intensive Mode of Teaching							
No.		Mean	SD	Rank	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
					%	%	%
1	Intensive students' experiences while teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series were positive.	2.61	.737	1	13.3	13.3	73.3
8	Increasing the contact hours would develop intensive students' English language skills.	2.59	.737	2	13.3	13.3	73.3
3	Teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series made a difference in intensive students' level of English.	2.47	.743	3	13.3	26.7	60.0
6	Teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series has improved intensive students' language skills in general.	2.47	.743	3	13.3	26.7	60.0
7	The four-contact hours using Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to improve intensive students' four language skills.	2.47	.834	3	20.0	13.3	66.7
9	The contact hours while teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to provide intensive students with feedback on their writing assignments.	2.40	.910	6	26.7	6.7	66.7
10	The contact hours while teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to expose intensive students to different types of assessment (presentations, portfolios … etc.).	2.40	.910	6	26.7	6.7	66.7

(Continued)

No.		Mean	SD	Rank	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
					%	%	%
4	Intensive students were satisfied with the quality of the learning materials included in the Unlock Textbook Series.	2.40	.828	6	20.0	20.0	60.0
2	Since using the Unlock Textbook Series in teaching English, intensive students have become more motivated towards improving their English language.	2.33	.900	9	26.7	13.3	60.0
11	The contact hours while teaching intensive students using the Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to implement student-centered activities (group work, debates, peer- reviews, etc.) in the classroom.	2.33	.900	9	26.7	13.3	60.0
5	Intensive students have encountered some challenges while learning English using the Unlock Textbook Series.	2.27	.884	11	26.7	20.0	53.3
	Total	**2.43**	**.644**				

Series were sufficient to implement student-centered activities (group work, debates, peer- reviews, etc.) in the classroom" came in the last rank with an arithmetic mean of (1.13) with an agreement level of (13.3%). Moreover, the overall mean scores were (1.71) (a moderate level of agreement).

Regarding the fourth question which aimed at examining the significant difference in the effectiveness of the two tracks according to the instructors' perspectives, a Paired-Sample T-test was utilized. Table 6 illustrates the results.

As shown in Table 6, the results indicated that the mean score of the teachers' responses regarding the effectiveness of the intensive mode of teaching (Mean = 2.43, SD = .644) was significantly higher than the mean scores of the non-intensive mode (Mean = 1.71, SD = .323). The standardized effect size was 0.704 (a considerably high effect size: (Cohen, 1988).

As displayed in the findings above regarding the effectiveness of the intensive and non-intensive modes of teaching according to EFL instructors' perspectives, it was revealed that the EFL instructors at BZU scored a high level of agreement on the attitudinal scale related to the intensive mode, whereas their agreement was moderate regarding the non-intensive. This indicates that the

Table 5. Instructors' Perspectives related to the Effectiveness of the Non-Intensive Mode of Teaching		Mean	SD	Rank	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
					%	%	%
8	Increasing the contact hours would develop non-intensive students' English language skills.	2.80	.561	1	6.7	6.7	86.7
5	Non- intensive students have encountered some challenges while learning English using the Unlock program.	2.27	.884	2	26.7	20.0	53.3
4	Non-intensive students were satisfied with the quality of the learning materials included in the Unlock program.	1.73	.799	3	46.7	33.3	20.0
2	Since using the Unlock Textbook Series in teaching English, non-intensive students have become more motivated towards improving their English language.	1.67	.900	4	60.0	13.3	26.7
3	Teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series made a difference in non-intensive students' level of English.	1.67	.617	4	40.0	53.3	6.7
6	Teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series has improved non-intensive students' language skills in general.	1.67	.724	4	46.7	40.0	13.3
1	Non-intensive students' experiences while teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series were positive.	1.60	.737	7	53.3	33.3	13.3

(*Continued*)

		Mean	SD	Rank	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
					%	%	%
10	The contact hours while teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to expose non-intensive students to different types of assessment (presentations, portfolios … etc).	1.53	.834	8	66.7	13.3	20.0
7	The two-contact hours using Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to improve non-intensive students' four language skills.	1.40	.737	9	73.3	13.3	13.3
9	The contact hours while teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to provide non-intensive students with feedback on their writing assignments.	1.33	.724	10	80.0	6.7	13.3
11	The contact hours while teaching non-intensive students using the Unlock Textbook Series were sufficient to implement student-centered activities (group work, debates, peer- reviews, etc.) in the classroom.	1.13	.352	11	86.7	13.3	0.00
	Total	**1.71**	**.330**				

Table 6. Summary Results of Paired-Samples T-Test					
Pair	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Intensive	2.43	.644	3.363	14	.005
Non-intensive	1.71	.323			

participating teachers strongly confirmed that their students' experiences were positive as item one "Intensive students' experiences while teaching English using the *Unlock Textbook Series* were positive", came in the first rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.61) and an agreement level of

(73.3%). Additionally, they emphasized that the contact hours (4 hours per week) allocated for the intensive courses were sufficient for them to vary in techniques and strategies as item 8 "Increasing the contact hours would develop intensive students' English language skills" received the second rank among the other items. According to the teachers' responses, it can also be stated that intensive students improved their level of English as item 3 "Teaching English using the *Unlock Textbook Series* made a difference in intensive students' level of English", item 6 "Teaching English using the Unlock Textbook Series has improved intensive students' language skills in general" and item 7 "The four-contact hours using *Unlock Textbook Series* were sufficient to improve intensive students' four language skills" came at the same level on the scale with an arithmetic mean of (4.47). In items 9,10 and 4, teachers who experienced teaching the intensive mode highly agreed on the sufficiency of the four-contact hours per week for students to receive feedback on their writing assignments as well as using multiple types of assessment and learner-centered activities. The allocated hours were also sufficient to motivate intensive students to improve their English. On the other hand, item 5 "Intensive students have encountered some challenges while learning English using the Unlock Program" came in the last rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.27) and an agreement level of (53.3%).

As for the effectiveness of the non-intensive mode of teaching, teachers demonstrated a moderate level of agreement in responding to the same items in comparison with their responses regarding the intensive track. It is essential to note that Item 8 "Increasing the contact hours would develop non-intensive students' English language skills", came in the first rank with an arithmetic mean of (2.80) and an agreement level of (86.7%), which indicated that the number of the allocated hours (two hours per week) for the non-intensive courses was one of the main issues that may have participated in making the differences in the effectiveness in favor of the intensive courses.

These findings can be attributed to the importance of foreign language long immersion and intensity in developing learners' proficiency, which has been revealed in the previous studies and came in line with Nagano (1995) and Jabarani and Muhammed (2019), who asserted that there is a positive impact of intensive courses on students' academic achievement and attitudes. Such results can also be referred to the fact that students in intensive courses had more opportunities for developing their social and personal skills. Thus, teachers believed that intensive students were more motivated and involved in the classrooms. This can be justified as the four-contact hours per week allowed intensive students to socialize more with their classmates and teachers than non-intensive students, who had only two-contact hours. Consequently, this may have improved their communication skills. This came in line with previous studies (Aqachmar, 2020; Collins et al., 1999; De León Rodríguez et al., 2022) who demonstrated that having more communicative interaction inside classrooms has a great influence on engaging students.

5. Conclusion
The current study investigated the language exposure and modes of delivery in the EFL curriculum by examining and comparing students' attitudes in two modes (intensive and non-intensive) based on students' and their teachers' perspectives. Accordingly, some conclusions can be extracted which can be relevant to all foreign language learners worldwide. Adopting intensive exposure and immersion in a foreign language can enhance students' motivation and engagement, which can trigger language learners' learning and acquisition. Besides, intensive language exposure can promote learners' academic achievement, linguistic skills, growth and motivation as their teachers can have sufficient time to implement effective pedagogical strategies and multiple types of assessment (formative and summative). In addition to that, foreign language teachers can also differentiate and vary in techniques and feedback provision. Moreover, this can strengthen the social and personal bonds and interaction between students and their teachers. Overall, having more communicative interaction inside foreign language classrooms can have a great influence on engaging students.

:: cogent ·· education

Author details
Rania Qassrawi[1]
E-mail: rqassrawi@birzeit.edu
Haya Fayyad Abuhussein[1]
Tina Jaber Rafidi[1]
Rula Yousef[1]
[1] Department of Languages and Translation, Birzeit University, B?r Zayt Palestine.

Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References
Abahussain, M. O., & Ahmed, S. H. A. (2019). The effect of an intensive language course on students' Linguistic performance at Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia. *Arab World English Journal, 10*(2), 115–123. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no2.10

Alamer, A., & Alrabai, F. (2022). The causal relationship between learner motivation and language achievement: New dynamic perspective. *Applied Linguistics.* https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amac035

Aqachmar, S. (2020). Improving of the target language: Does more exposure in class outweigh teaching rules and functions. *Global Scientific Journal, (GSJ).8(10),* 1335–1345.

Burton, S., & Nesbit, P. (2002). An analysis of student and faculty attitudes to intensive teaching. In *Celebrating teaching at macquarie* (pp.1-32). Macquarie University.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Collins, L., Halter, R., Lightbrown, P. M., & Spada, N. (1999). Time and the distribution of time in L2 instruction. *TESOL Quarterly, 33*(4), 655–680. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587881

Collins, L., & White, T. (2011). An intensive look at intensity and language Learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 45*(1), 106–133. https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2011.240858

Conrad, D. W., Zhang, H., Stewart, D. E., & Scott, R. A. (1992). Distance dependence of long-range electron transfer in cytochrome derivatives containing covalently attached cobalt cage complexes. *Journal of the American Chemical Society, 114*(25), 9909–9915. https://doi.org/10.1021/ja00051a024

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th) ed.). Harlow.

de León Rodríguez, D., Mouthon, M., Annoni, J.-M., & Khateb, A. (2022). Current exposure to a second language modulates bilingual visual word recognition: An EEG study. *Neuropsychologia, 164, 164,* 108109. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2021.108109

Earls, W. (2016). *Evolving agendas in European English-medium higher education: Interculturality, multilingualism and language policy.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Farrokh, P. (2018). On the impact of intensive/ reactive performance on EFL learners' listening comprehension ability (research paper). *Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 6*(1), 17–30.

Garcia, B. (2020). Formal features of Filipino ESL research papers. *The Asian ESL Journal,* 24(1),29–44.

Gardner, R. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitude and motivation.* Edward Arnold.

Grant, D. B. (2001). Using block courses for teaching logistics. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, 31*(7/8), 574–585. https://doi.org/10.1108/09600030110402987

Hong-Nam, K., & Leavell, A. G. (2006). Language learning strategies of ESL students in an intensive English learning context. *System, 34*(3), 399–415. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2006.02.002

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learner-centered approach.* Cambridge University Press.

Jabarani, N., & Muhammed, A. (2019). Intensive exposure to the English language as a requisite for language acquisition a proposal to facilitate swift learning in ESL classrooms. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR), 6*(12), 1–4. https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR1912178.pdf

Jufri, Y., & Mantasiah, R. (2019). The interference of first Foreign language (German) in the acquisition of a second foreign language (English) by Indonesian learners. *The Asian EFL Journal, 23*(6.3), 27–41.

Karaksha, A., Anoopkumar-Dukie, S., Grant, G., Davey, A. K., Nirthanan, S. N., Arora, D., & McDermott, C. (2013). *Benefits of intensive mode teaching to improve student performance.* In *2013 Conference 18th-20th November, Seville, Spain.* http://www98.griffith.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/handle/10072/59795/90003_1

Knell, E., & Chi, Y. (2012). The roles of motivation, affective attitudes, and willingness to communicate among Chinese students in early English immersion programs. *International Education, 41*(Issue), 2. https://trace.tennessee.edu/internationaleducation/vol41/iss2/5

Krahen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom.* Pergamon.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition.* Pergamon Press.

Lenker, A., & Rhodes, N. (2007). Foreign language immersion programs: Features and trends over 35 years. *The ACIE Newsletter, 10*(2), 1–8. https://carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol10/BridgeFeb07.pdf

Lightbrown, P. M. (2012). *Intensive L2 in Canada: Why not immersion?* (pp. 25–85). Intensive Exposure Experience in Second Language (SLA).

Mukundan, J., Mahvelati, E. H., & Nimehchisalem, V. (2012). The effect of an intensive English textbook series on Malaysian secondary school students' language proficiency. *English Language Teaching, 5*(11), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n11p1

Nagano, T. (1995). *Nohongo no onsei kyoiku—-Supichi komyunikeishon [Japanese oral expression education speech communication].* Tamagawa University Press.

Nasiri, E., & Shokrpour, N. (2012). Comparison of intensive and non-intensive English courses and their effects on the students' performance in an EFL university context. *European Scientific Journal, 8.*

Nation, I.S.P. & Macalister, J. (2010). *Language curriculum design.* Routledge.

Nordlund, M. (2016). EFL textbooks for young learners: A comparative analysis of vocabulary. *Education Inquiry, 7*(1), 27764–27770. https://doi.org/10.3402/edui.v7.27764

Öztürk, M. (2018). EFL vocabulary growth in intensive language study. *The Journal of Language Learning and Teaching, 8*(2), 80–88.

Richards, J. C. (1984). Language curriculum development. *RELC Journal, 15*(1), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1177/003368828401500101

Scott, P. A. (2003). Attributes of high-quality intensive courses. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, (2003*(97), 29–38. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.86

Skolverket, R. (2006). *The role of teaching aids in teaching, primary school teachers' choice, use and assessment of teaching aids in pictures, English and social studies. Assessment of language skills.* National Agency for Education.

Stern, H. H. (1985). The time factor and compact course development. *TESL.* Canada. Journal, 3, 13–27

Cogent Education (ISSN: 2331-186X) is published by Cogent OA, part of Taylor & Francis Group.

Publishing with Cogent OA ensures:

- Immediate, universal access to your article on publication
- High visibility and discoverability via the Cogent OA website as well as Taylor & Francis Online
- Download and citation statistics for your article
- Rapid online publication
- Input from, and dialog with, expert editors and editorial boards
- Retention of full copyright of your article
- Guaranteed legacy preservation of your article
- Discounts and waivers for authors in developing regions

Submit your manuscript to a Cogent OA journal at www.CogentOA.com