| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Effectiveness of Collaborative Zoom Breakout Rooms Discussion on Eliminating Subject-Verb Agreement Difficulties Encountered by Palestinian English majors

Dr. Zulfa Sh. Badereddeen
Faculty of Education, University of Palestine, Gaza City, Palestine
Corresponding Author: Dr Zulfa Sh. Badereddeen, **E-mail**: zulfasadi@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT

The current study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussion in eliminating subject-verb agreement difficulties encountered by Palestinian English majors. The quasi-experimental approach was adopted. To explain, an intact class consisting of 30 freshmen English majors were exposed to a pre-posttest focusing on subject-verb agreement. For intervention, the participants were put into Zoom breakout rooms in small heterogenous groups to discuss the subject-verb agreement rules and to practice related exercises collaboratively. Google documents were used to provide exercises and instructions. The result showed that the participants' scores in the posttest outperformed the results of the pretest. The statistically recorded positive result confirmed the effectiveness of the collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussion on eliminating subject-verb agreement difficulties encountered by Palestinian English majors.

| KEYWORDS

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

1. Introduction

Technology has recently become an effective means of facilitating educational processes and upgrading learning outcomes. That is, it provides educators and students with effective teaching/learning aids which help deliver teaching messages, achieve learning objectives and boost learning outcomes. E.g., educational videos provide information accompanied by sounds, images, colors, movements, emotional expressions, and animate aspects. All the above-mentioned advantages of technology act as stimuli for deeper thinking, creating mind images and realizing relations among introduced information. Further, applications of educational technology such as Zoom screen and Zoom breakout rooms introduce appropriate learning environments in time, place, interaction and communication, which help accomplish educational activities and promote learning outcomes.

Zoom conferencing and Zoom breakout rooms are applications of distance digital learning technology. Noteworthy that breakout rooms are small Zoom rooms split from the main Zoom screen. They are based on a collaborative learning approach as students communicate in online groups to discuss issues or solve problems. Collaborative Zoom breakout rooms were described by (Tonsmann 2014) as invaluable learning facilities because they allow students to develop and apply their understanding of concepts which had been explained. Further, (Bastos, 2022). Explained that one of the benefits of using zoom breakout rooms is that they facilitate collaborative learning and interaction between the participants in the same breakout room and between students and teachers.

Discussion through breakout rooms is based on online collaboration among small groups of participants. It is used to help students build discussion skills, such as learning to listen to others, learning to state and communicate their opinions, and learning to evaluate arguments. When discussion skills are focused towards a certain topic, they develop a deeper understanding

of it. Using breakout rooms discussion aims at improving learners' performance because they are influential tools in providing opportunities for direct communication among small groups of participants. For the purpose of learning language skills, students are involved in online oral discussions, which develop listening and speaking skills. They are also involved in online writing activities as they take notes, write questions and answers or exchange written material while running discussions through zoom breakout rooms. Practicing these language activities communicatively promotes all language skills and helps produce grammatically correct sentences in all grammar topics, including subject -verb agreement. Noteworthy that (Celce-Murcia, 1999) considered grammar as a fifth language skill. (Elbashir, 2022) highlighted the effectiveness of breakout rooms discussion on improving grammar performance and eliminating grammar difficulties. In addition, (Nisa et al. 2021) inserted that discussion through breakout rooms improved students' speaking skills which means that they produce oral correct sentences in form(grammar) and meaning. So, the combination of collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussion is the strategy adopted in the current study to eliminate the difficulties that encounter the target students at establishing a subject-verb agreement in English sentences.

The specific topic of Subject-verb agreement difficulties is the dependent variable addressed in the current study. Mainly, subject-verb agreement refers to compatibility between subject and verb in number in person. According to (Eastwood 2002), in English grammar, subject-verb agreement is the correspondence of a verb with its subject in person (first, second, or third) and number (singular or plural). However, it is a problematic area for EFL learners because it is affected by the position of the subject in a sentence, the type of the subject, and many irregularities of related rules in English.

1.2. Background of the problem
Palestinian students in Gaza City encounter problems in achieving subject-verb agreement in English sentences appropriately. The author detected this problem while following up on their written material or oral speech. Anyway, the problem is not limited to Palestinian students; It was identified by researchers across the world. E.g. (Iwan & Seprizanna, 2016) from Indonesia found that the EFL students of eighth graders were unable to achieve subject-verb agreement; (Yustisia, 2017). Yamen found that in dealing with subject-verb agreement, students were on negative interlanguage transfer and over generalization. Further. (Al Murshidi, 2014) from   United Arab Emirates University inserted that subject-verb agreement was one of the grammatical difficulties students encountered. In Palestine, (Qaddumi, & Walweel,. 2018). (Suleiman, 2006) and (Murtaja 2006) investigated Palestinian students' syntactic errors in English sentences and found that subject-verb- agreement topic was a main error area. This background incited the current author to identify the problem of the study as follows.

1.3. Problem of the study
The problem addressed in the current study is represented in the inability of Palestinian English majors to achieve subject-verb agreement in English sentences
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1.4. Question of the study
1-To what extent can collaborative Zoom breakout room discussions improve Palestinian English majors' performance in the subject-verb agreement area.?

1.5. Objectives of the study
The objective of the current study is to investigate the effectiveness of collaborative Zoom breakout room discussions in eliminating difficulties of Subject-Verb agreement that Palestinian English majors encounter.

1.6. Significance of the study
The current study may provide insight for curriculum designers, supervisors, and EFL teachers to reconsider the traditional policies and techniques of grammar teaching that prevail in TEFL methods in Palestine. They may realize the effectiveness of utilizing cooperative technology/ collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussions as a means of increasing time and providing facilities needed for high-quality learning. Such a strategy may improve the cognitive, psychological and social aspect of the learning process and upgrades learning outcomes.

1.7. Rational of the study
The current study can make up for the shortage of experimental studies that investigate the statistical progress participants make resulting from utilizing the learning strategy of collaborative Zoom breakout room discussions. It also sheds a clear light on the themes pertaining to beneficial aspects of cooperative Zoom breakout room discussions that may benefit concerned parties in the field.

2. Literature Review
This section provides a detailed background of the main terms of the study, including the concept of effectiveness in education, the collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussion and the concept of subject-verb agreement. In addition, operational

definitions are identified.

Educational effectiveness was defined by (Lockheed & Hanushek 1994). As "whether or not a specific set of resources has a positive effect on achievement and, if so, how large this effect is.". The current research refers to the effectiveness of collaborative Zoom breakout room discussions as a tool teaching learning aid that may enable participants to achieve progress in producing correct grammatical sentences free from errors in subject verb agreement(S/V).

2.1. Zoom breakout rooms

According to.(Almendingen, Skotheim, & Magnus, 2022)., (Woo, 2022), (Sekhri, & Kaur,. 2021). (Lorenz, 2020), (Taylor2020) (Griffith, 2020), (Erin, 2020), (Isaac, 2020) and (Mike, 2020) Zoom is a videotelephony service provided through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform and is used for teleconferencing, telecommuting, distance education, and social relations. Zoom breakout rooms are apps split from a larger Zoom screen. They are used to perform specific tasks by people who have the same concern, such as discussing a topic, solving problems, doing exercises, etc.

(Chandler, 2016) described breakout rooms as the following, "Zoom and many other videoconferencing programs include a breakout room feature, where participants can be divided into smaller groups for activities, discussions, or sub-meetings. Through breakout rooms, students can engage in practical communicative activities and assignments with a smaller group of peers." In the current study, thirty English majors are put into six breakout rooms consisting of heterogenous members. The participants in each breakout room are absolutely separated from other rooms and from the main zoom screen. Each Breakout room participants have full audio, video and screen share capabilities and a cloud google document through which written exercises are delivered and discussions are run. These breakout rooms are used to foster effective discussion, asking and answering questions, doing exercises pertinent to the grammatical topic, and subject-verb agreement. They are also used to boost social communication benefits.

A bunch of authors like Chandler (2016), Haleem et al. (2022), Vurdien (2019). Park & Bonk (2007) highlighted the role of the electronic strategy represented in Zoom breakout rooms in facilitating synchronies virtual classes. Further, Johnson & Johnson (2002.) explained that synchronous online language learning breakout rooms centralize the student-to-student principle of learning and create opportunities for students to interact, discuss, engage, share, and cooperate. Moreover, breakout rooms lessen teachers' talking time and give him/her the ability to monitor, encourage, give feedback and reinforce students. Tonsmann (2014) reported that participation in group problem-solving activities in breakout rooms was valuable in giving students the opportunity to learn from each other and that this could be more straightforward logistically than doing so in class.

The researcher of the current study found that heterogenous breakout rooms discussion are suitable for shy and struggling students. That is, members of students in each room are limited to four or five. Such a learning environment provides intimacy and engagement. Thus, it enables high achievers to give struggling students to take the information they need without suffering shyness or hesitation happening in big classes.

The lines below introduce a summary of the advantages of breakout rooms as they were highlighted by authors such as (Afdal, Evanita, & Febliza, 2022). (Wang& Tokiwa, 2021). Park and Bonk (2007) , (Lin 2014) (Lederman 2020).

Zoom breakout room discussions provide an opportunity for students and instructors to meet in academic virtual classes in small groups. They can exchange oral discussions or written ones on the whiteboard and collaborate in solving problems.

An instructor can draw, annotate, and display images, video clips, documents and other materials needed for class. Further, She /he saves work with the digital whiteboard.

An instructor can automatically or manually break a class into small groups that can work together, and in the meantime, he/she can watch their smaller groups progress. Breakout rooms also provide instructors with an opportunity to check-in with students.

Zoom sessions can take place on participants' computers, mobile telephones, or tablets to manage their meetings. Young generations are interested in using modern technology on the internet and find it more flexible and enjoyable. Indeed. "Participants using video conferencing enjoy the flexibility and convenience of participating online" (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). Zoom is easy to use as participants do not need to have an account or download a program. The electronic meeting invitation is generated and distributed to participants by Zoom. Zoom links want only a click to join an intended meeting. While engaging in breakout room activities, students are incited to speak. So, speaking confidence is stimulated. Discussion can be recorded to be watched later.

In conclusion, all the above-mentioned characteristics of breakout room discussions confirm that learning takes place in a convenient, flexible, engaging, anxiety reduced learning environment. The experience of the current researcher in the field made her realize the value of such a strategy as it provides an adequate quantity of time needed to master one of the topics, particularly when the time allocated in regular classes is not enough to master it.

2.2. Collaborative learning (CL)

Collaborative learning (CL) is an educational strategy based on cooperation among learners (Csavina et al. 2014) defined (CL) as an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. The current study refers to assigned groups of participants, each consisting of five students. Each group's members have to communicate with each other through Zoom breakout rooms to discuss and practice subject-verb agreement exercises. Johnson and Johnson (2002) asserted that cooperative learning is an instructional method which has some characteristics, such as the responsibility of each learner for his understanding as well as the understanding of the whole team. He also added that reward should be a part of the cooperative learning process so that each learner should maximize his efforts to understand and motivate the other team members to increase their understanding for the success of the team.

The collaborative learning approach is derived from the social learning theory by Bandura (1977), Which suggests that social behavior is learned by observing and imitating the behavior of others.

As to the advantages of collaborative learning (Johnson et al. 2014) explained that students who learn collaboratively have some special characteristics as they acquire knowledge well, remember material fast, solve problems better than their counterparts in individual work, and enjoy reasoning abilities. Collaborative group work or pair work has a lot of educational and social benefits, such as centralizing students' role in the learning process and, reducing the teacher's work, building student to student and student to teacher communication. In collaborative learning discussions, high achievers can support struggling ones which strengthens cognitive and social intimate relations. Moreover, shy students find collaborative group work the best chance to participate in group discussions confidently. To sum up, collaborative learning is a student-centered educational approach that stimulates the best educational outcomes, promotes academic and social progress, and boosts self-confidence.

2.3. Discussion

The last section of the strategy used in the current study is "Discussion". A discussion is a pedagogical approach used to promote knowledge in the form of dialectical conversations and through drawing on the multiple perspectives of the participants and their unique experiences and knowledge contributions. (Brown, & Eaton, 2020. Newman, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). This definition of discussion matches the learning technique taking place in the current study represented in the discussion through the collaborative Zoom breakout rooms. To explain, the participants led small group discussions via collaborative breakout rooms related to subject-verb agreement rules and their applications in context.

Discussion is a reciprocal technique of questions and answers, stating opinions, mutual feedback, and accepting or refuting ideas. Such discussion activities incite critical thinking, great attention and decision-making. Furthermore, a small group discussion centralizes the role of a student as one who is responsible for his and his partners' learning. A discussion learning environment helps scaffolding and accelerate learning. It also promotes deeper understanding, refines knowledge gained and increases long-term retention.

(Wisecarver, 2017, Brookfield 1990, King & Rosenshein, 1993). asserted that group discussion stimulates interest and engages participants in discovering new perspectives, raises students' ability to active listening, increases students' involvement with a topic, teaches participants to respect and take benefit from others' experiences, and develops democratic behaviors and tolerance of diversity.

2.4. Difficulties in subject-verb agreement

Difficulties in subject-verb agreement refer to the lack of ability of language users to construct subject-verb agreement in English sentences. The current research refers to Palestinian English majors' weakness in constructing subject-verb agreement with a focus on irregularities and exceptions. Noteworthy that subject-verb agreement is the conformity of a verb with its subject in person (first, second, or third). For example, in the present simple tense, when a subject refers to a singular third person, she, he, it, the verb is added with "S" . he/she/ it /plays. When other subjects are used (I, we, they and you), only the stem of a verb is used. E.g., I, we. they, you /play. Further, Subject-verb agreement in number is embedded in each English sentence. E.g., with a verb to be, when first person subjects are used ("I", am, and we are), represent the subject-verb agreement forms. She/he/it takes the (is) form of the verb to be, while. we/they/you take (are) form of verb to be. Concerning the verb to have, the singular form is "has" with third person singular (she, he, it) and "have" with other subjects (I, We, they, you)

Grammatical difficulties in relation to the subject-verb agreement that encounter EFL learners in Arab countries, including Palestine, are ascribed to linguistic obstacles and the inappropriateness of teaching methods. Linguistically, the Arabic language is not cognate with the English language. That is, it is different in vocabulary, grammar rules and sentence structures. Consequently, learning English in Arab countries is obstructed by linguistic interference. To explain, errors committed by Arab learners can be traced back to the mother tongue. Learners transfer the language habits of their mother tongue to EFL. Such interference includes sentence structure, word formation, subject-verb agreement, use of tenses meaningfully, use of articles, and use of prepositions. Thus, learners produce incorrect linguistic output. Another reason for difficulties in the subject-verb agreement is that students' use of the English language is limited to classroom practices based on curriculums designed to prepare them for exams, not for the use of language in real in life situations. The Grammar Translation Method is the most prevailing, and grammar is taught explicitly. Learners are not provided with authentic material activities that develop communicative skills, but they have to memorize rules, keywords and lists of irregular verbs to fill in gaps, select correct items, or correct errors in exam papers. They neither receive authentic material nor do they practice the English language in everyday life. EFL researchers like (Souisa & Yanuarius, 2020), (Listia& Febriyanti, 2020) ,and Dehghani (Bagheri, Sadighi, 2018). (Alhanjoury,2017)   investigated grammar difficulties that encounter EFL learners announced that the areas of subject-verb agreement, sentence word order, a form of the verb phrase, tense choice and consistency, use of adjectives and adverbs, and use of articles and prepositions are the most prominent grammar difficulties.

The current researcher has observed that subject-verb agreement is the main difficulty encountered by Palestinian English majors. Learners encounter difficulties in setting subject-verb agreement in terms of compound subjects, subjects separated from verbs, indefinite pronouns, a subject that comes after the verb, numbers and amounts, collective and uncountable nouns, abbreviations and acronyms. An explanation of subject-verb agreement rules is summarized below in Appendix B. The summary is based on (Azer 2019, Butterfield, 2015. Hamilton, 2011).

2.5. Previous studies
Section 1: The following research papers were conducted to investigate the impact of synchronous zoom conferences and zoom breakout rooms discussion on improving EFL learning in general and EFL grammar in particular

Amelia and Yosintha (2022) performed qualitative descriptive research to determine whether the use of breakout rooms discussion in jigsaw online learning classes could develop creativity and increase a group of college EFL students' engagement in studying English. The Likert scale questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data. The result showed that breakout rooms discussion improved students' talent in the English language and increased their creativity.

Nisa et al. (2021) conducted qualitative research to investigate the effect of using small group discussions through zoom breakout room to increase the English-speaking fluency of participants in English courses in the English education department at Islamic University in Negeri. A qualitative method with applied video analysis and questioners' perceptions of students were the instruments used. The findings showed that the participants preferred small group discussions via the zoom breakout room because they helped them to be more active and confident in individual speaking.

Lee, (2021). Conducted a study entitled "Breaking through digital barriers: Exploring EFL students' views of Zoom breakout room experiences." The study sought to gain insight into 25 undergraduate South Korean students' satisfaction with Zoom breakout rooms in English communication classes. Data collection comprised an open-ended survey, a focus group, and individual interviews. The participants expressed satisfaction towards using Zoom breakout rooms for EFL classes.

Using three instruments in this study supports its result, which indicated that most students were satisfied with using Zoom breakout rooms for EFL classes.

Bawanti, & Arifani, (2021). Performed a study which aimed to find out the impact of utilizing the mobile phone Zoom screen on students' improvement of speaking skills and their attitude towards online learning. The participants were elementary school students in Thailand. The instrument used to collect data was a twelve-item questionnaire. The result showed that the participants expressed positive attitudes towards zoom applications in learning, and they improved their speaking skills. Using the zoom application on students' mobile phones is an advantage of zoom applications that provides a wide space for improvement in speaking, particularly for young participants.

Hastomo & Marcela (2021) examined 35 Indonesian higher education students' perception of Zoom video conferences and their impact on improving writing skills in English. The data collection instruments used were a questionnaire as a qualitative tool and a pre-post-test as a quantitative tool. The pre-post-test investigated the participant's writing ability. The participants announced that Zoom conferencing facilitated learning because of the accessibility, simplicity, real-time interaction, and engagement. The

posttest also showed improved statistical results in writing skills.

Hastomo & Marcela's research raises the value of Zoom video conferences as a tool for improving perceptions and learning outcomes. That is, it treated the topic both quantitively and qualitatively.

Li, Watson, & Majo (2021). used Zoom breakout rooms for students with learning disabilities. Through observation, the researchers stated that they had gained invaluable experience in promoting and engaging disabled learners via using Zoom breakout rooms. The study reflects the high effectiveness of Zoom breakout rooms in improving the learning process, even with students who need special educational experiences.

Vu & Bui, (2021). investigated the students' attitude and learning efficiency in learning IELTS reading skills via Zoom's online learning platforms. Fifty students at the pre-intermediate level were the participants. An experimental, qualitative design was applied. A pre-posttest and a questionnaire were implemented to collect data. Findings from the post-test showed improved statistical scores, and the questionnaire's result showed positive attitudes towards the interactive teaching via zoom break out rooms. Fifty participants, which is a considerable number of participants in experimental research and two data collection instruments, confirm the validity of using Zoom breakout rooms in learning a foreign language.

Section 2: This section of previous studies addresses studies concerned with grammatical difficulties of subject-verb agreement. Wakabayashi. Kimura, Matthews, et al. (2021) explained the taxonomy of the grammatical errors in English written texts made by twenty freshmen Taiwanese EFL learners. They ranged from low-intermediate to advanced level. Twenty English texts written by the participants were the instrument of data collection. The findings of the study revealed that errors in the subject-verb agreement were prominent among other errors. These findings should stimulate the teacher of English to raise students' awareness of such errors and to provide sufficient remedial exercises or improving strategies that may support making progress.

Alahmadi (2019). investigated grammatical errors with subject-verb agreement in texts written by freshman Saudi students at Taibah University. The participants belonged to intermediate and -upper intermediate levels. The instrument used was a writing test focusing on grammatical errors with subject-verb agreement. The result showed that errors were in singular subjects, errors in plural subjects, and errors were with the main verb or auxiliary verb when separated from the subject.

Hidayatullah, & Hati,. (2017) conducted a. descriptive quantitative research to detect subject-verb agreement errors and the possible causes of the errors that were made by sixth-semester English major students at Bengkulu university. The instrument of data collection was essays written by the participants. The result revealed that participants made three types of subject-verb agreement errors. The errors were omission, addition, and misinformation of subject-verb agreement. The result analysis of possible causes of subject-verb agreement errors was attributed to either interlingual errors or intralingual & developmental errors.

New types of errors were identified in subject-verb agreement, which means that it is a problematic area that needs treatment with improved strategies.

Najlaa, binti, and Fong (2012) investigated errors in subject-verb agreement in the written texts of students in the Diploma in Culinary Arts. The participants were 45 students whose selected essays were the instrument of data collection. The data collected were analyzed. The results indicated that four types of the subject-verb agreement were apparent; they were person, number, indefinite subject, notional agreement and proximity subject-verb agreement.

The result implies that students have problems with different types of subject-verb agreement and that teachers should consider the teaching paradigm to improve student's performance on the topic.

2.6 Commentary on the previous in total
Section 1: The previous studies above mentioned, whether quantitative or qualitative, highlighted the effectiveness of Zoom video conferences and collaborative Zoom break out rooms discussion, particularly in improving language skills. The studies targeted various categories of participants, including elementary, secondary, university EFL and disabled students of different nationalities. Further, a variety of instruments, including tests, questionnaires and interviews, were used. Such diversity confirms the effectiveness of the suggested strategy in the current research.

Commentary on Section 2: All the studies in section 2 confirmed a high frequency of subject-verb agreement errors in EFL writing and speaking. Recommendations for remedial work to eliminate errors were made.

3. Methodology
The methodology section describes the research design, the participants (the sample), the instruments and the procedures.

3.1. Research design
The current quantitative research adopted a quasi-experimental approach to investigate whether collaborative zoom breakout rooms discussion could improve freshman English majors' performance at constructing S/V verb agreement in English sentences.

3.2. Participants/ Sample
The participants who were the target for the current quasi experimental research were not selected randomly. They were an intact class consisting of thirty freshman English majors at Issara University in Gaza /Palestine. They were selected purposefully. They all received EFL in public governmental or UNRWA schools. They were all 19-21 years old with similar social and financial backgrounds.

3.3. Instruments
Since it is quantitative research, a pre-posttest was conducted with a focus on constructing subject-verb agreement in English sentences appropriately. The test consisted of forty items that included MCQ questions, error recognition and editing, and fill in the gaps exercises. The exercises addressed various aspects of S/V, including subject-verb agreement in terms of compound subjects, subjects separated from verbs, indefinite pronouns, a subject that comes after a verb, numbers and amounts, collective and uncountable nouns, abbreviations and acronyms. Students had to explain the reasons for their answers in order not to give random answers. (Appendix A)

The validity of the test was confirmed by two PhD holders who were highly experienced in teaching grammar in universities. They found that the items of the test cover all the areas intended to be tested, the seven areas above mentioned. The reliability of the test was calculated by Split Half Reliability by the standard Pearson correlation.

3.4. Procedures
This section describes the procedures that took place in the current study to achieve its objectives. To lead the experiment, the instructor discussed subject-verb agreement rules with some exercises in public face-to-face sessions. However, she found that students could not master the rules and their applications appropriately and that they needed a lot of discussion and practice to master them. So, she decided to utilize collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussions. Noteworthy, students had experienced how to use Zoom platforms to receive virtual classes during the period of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

3.5 Designing the groups of breakout rooms discussion
To design the groups which should run discussions in the breakout rooms, the instructor put the target participants into heterogenous groups in advance. Each group consisted of five students. The groups were given serial numbers from 1-6. The instructor nominated six couples of distinguished students; each couple should be the main member of one of the six groups. Then, three average and struggling students selected the group that they wanted to join. Members of each group had to interact together in one of the collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussion. The purpose of having heterogenous groups was to boost struggling and average students' performance through engagement with high quality peer discussions.

The instructor assigned roles for the students participating in each discussion group. The purpose of assigning roles was to help students begin the discussion and to guarantee equal participation. The roles assigned were the first-to-speak, note-taker, equity monitor and reporter.

3.6 Type of exercises to be discussed (Appendix B)
The exercises were designed to address all aspects of subject-verb agreement in various contexts. The objectives of the exercises are the following:

To provide an opportunity for systematic use of rules so as to build command over the language and to produce the target structure of subject-verb agreement accurately.
To enable students to use subject-verb agreement forms in their real-life; spoken or written communications.
To enable students to build awareness of the progress they have made, which helps adjust and improve their learning.

3.7 Content of the exercises
1-Error correction exercises designed to raise the concentration needed to edit errors and to help produce correct sentences. Students also have to explain the reasons for the error and for the corrections made.

2- Multiple choice questions (MCQ) designed to enhance decision-making based on reasoning. Students have to justify the reason for the choice made

3-Filling in gaps exercise. It is based on realizing relations among components of a sentence that students are asked to justify their answers in order to deepen their understanding and to make them avoid random answers.
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3.8 The discussion sessions

Three discussion sessions, each of 90 minutes, were assigned.

The instructor provided each breakout room with a cloud google document. Each google document file included the instruction to be followed and exercises to be discussed by peer members of each breakout room. So, all the members in each group could access the same google document file at the same time.

The first step in the discussion phase was that each participant, alone, should read the items of the exercises and find the answer and reasons for them.

Then, he/she posed answers on the group screen for discussion. Through discussion, the group either agree, modify or disagree. They should justify each point they suggest. After the discussion, the group members should have a consensus on an answer which was supposed to be correct,

The instructor allowed one of the leaders to record the breakout rooms' discussions using the record button on the screen. The recorded material would be saved on their local machines or on the cloud google document.

In the discussion sessions in the current study, the instructor turned off his microphone and simply observed the work in the breakout room discussion.

After the three discussion sessions had been completed, the instructor stated the correct answers on the main zoom screen to be seen by all participants in all rooms and sent the link to the chat room, which enabled students to compare their answers to the perfect ones. Finally, A post-test was conducted, and data were collected to compare the results of the pretest with the result posttest ones.

4. Results

T. test was used to depict the difference between the participants' scores in the pre and posttest. The results are shown below. The difference between the participants' achievements in the pre and posttest.

scope	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. value	sig. level
total	Pre test	30	11.933	3.947	7.316	0.000	sig. at 0.01
	post test	30	14.833	4.136			

Effect size table

	t value	η2	D	Effect size.
Total	7.316	0.649	2.717	large

The statistical result shows that the posttest scores mean, which is (14.833) outperforms the pretest scores mean, which is (11.933), and the effect size is large. Such a result assures the positive effect of utilizing collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussions as means of improving learning outcomes, particularly in the subject-verb- agreement.

5. Discussion of the findings

The progress the participants made in the posttest is attributed to the advantages of the above-mentioned learning strategy, Collaborative Zoom Breakout Rooms Discussion. with its psycho, social, technological, and cognitive positive aspects. Those positive aspects facilitated learning and pushed progress forward. To explain, the Collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussions strategy is tailored to support collaborative interaction, peer and group learning, high engagement, group problem-solving, and building social skills. (Chandler, K. 2016) stated, "The main core aim of breakout rooms is to increase students' engagement and interaction", reflected in the Breakout rooms where learners interact more and more together and later in the main room with the whole class. Another aspect of the current experiment that promoted the participants' performance was the heterogeneity of groups participating in discussions in break-out rooms. Such Heterogeneity brought forth support to struggling

and average students' individual needs. Taking into consideration that the struggling and average participants selected the groups they wanted to join in the Zoom breakout rooms created an intimate, warm learning environment that boosted cognitive and social-emotional learning. Further, having each Zoom breakout room group consisting of five students only provided a safe psychological environment for shy and hesitant participants if compared to a big class consisting of 30 students.

That social interaction fosters learning is confirmed by the social learning theory by Bandura (1977), which suggests that the learning process and new behaviours can be acquired by observing and imitating others.

At the cognitive level, the discussions that the participants ran enhanced their deep understanding of the target items, which led to the progress up referred to in the posttest. Furthermore, the positive effect of discussion on the learning process is supported by Cognitive Learning Theory (Piaget,1896) and his followers, which suggests that knowledge is acquired through a discussion about what is being taught. Additionally, discussion helps students to explore and understand how ideas are connected and help them to justify and explain their thoughts.

Further, the progress the participants made is attributed to students' enjoyment of using electronic online tools as one of the young generation's interests. Electronic online tools affect participants' moods and cognitive abilities positively. In this concern (Firth, Torous, Stubbs, et al. 2019)) explained that studies utilizing brain imaging techniques have documented how intensive digital engagement can lead to changes in the brains of children and adolescents and affect brain functions, such as cognition, language, and visual perception. Such a learning environment deepens understanding and retention and improves learning outcomes.

Academically, the quality of exercises provided on the google documents pertaining to V/S rules and exercises to be participated by the participants were influential. That is, each rule was introduced and practiced in different contexts of exercises which simulated thinking skills, facilitated learning, and improved understanding, retention and use of forms meaningfully.

The result of the current quantitative research is confirmed by previous studies which were conducted to investigate the impact of synchronous zoom conferences and collaborative zoom breakout rooms discussion on improving EFL learning (Singh et al. 2020) highlighted the positive effect of using small group discussions through Zoom breakout room on gratifying EFL learning. (Lee, 2021). Conducted a study which confirmed positive EFL students' views of Zoom breakout room experiences (Bawanti & Arifani, 2021). (Li, Watson, & Major, (2021). (Hastomo & Marcela 2021,) (Vu & Bui. 2021) (Nisa, Prameswari, & Alawiyah, 2021) all highlighted the effectiveness of collaborative zoom breakout rooms discussion on improving participant performance and attitude on one of the language skills.

6. Conclusion
The objective of the current study is to investigate the effectiveness of collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussion in eliminating subject-verb agreement difficulties encountered by Palestinian English majors. Accordingly, the problem addressed is that Palestinian English majors are weak at achieving subject-verb agreement in English sentences. So, collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussion was adopted as a strategy to eliminate the problem of this weakness. Students worked in collaborative heterogenous groups in Zoom breakout rooms to discuss and analyze subject-verb agreement rules and to practice exercises in which they applied the use of rules in context. As a result, students made significant progress in the posttest; in that the result of the posttest outperformed the result of the pretest, and the effect size was large.

The current researcher recommends utilizing collaborative Zoom breakout rooms discussion as a strategy to upgrade EFL learners' performance in other language skills. It is also advisable to utilize collaborative Zoom breakout rooms' discussion as a strategy that can enhance higher education students' performance in any subject due to their effectiveness in boosting academic progress scale and improving students' social and psychological aspects. Additionally, in the era of online educational technology, the study is a call for curriculum designers, supervisors, headteachers and teachers to take advantage of the teaching strategy above-mentioned.

However, the current study addresses a limited sample consisting of thirty English majors at Issara University in Gaza city in 2022 and a subject-verb agreement as a grammatical topic. Furthermore, students' attitudes towards the strategy are not investigated. It is suggested that more quantitative research should be conducted on a bigger sample size that enables generalizing the results. In addition, it is suggested to investigate the effectiveness of the mentioned strategy in a variety of educational environments.

Qualitative research is suggested to reveal participants' perceptions of the strategy above mentioned. It is suggested that more empirical quantitative research in other subjects should be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of collaborative Zoom

breakout rooms discussion on the teaching-learning process.

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Appendix A
Pre-posttest content.
Q/1/Choose the correct form of the verb that agrees with the subject. Explain the reason of your choice.

1. Annie and her brothers (is, are) at school.   Explanation-----------------------------------

2. Either my mother or my father (is, are) coming to the meeting. Explanation _____

3. The dog or the cats (is, are) outside _____

4. Either my shoes or your coat (is, are) always on the floor. Explanation _____

5. George and Tamara (doesn't, don't) want to see that movie. Explanation _____

6. Benito (doesn't, don't) know the answer.   Explanation _____

7. One of my sisters (is, are) going on a trip to France Explanation -------------------

8. The man with all the birds (live, lives) on my street   Explanation.

9. The movie, including all the previews, (take, takes) about two hours to watch   Explanation.

10. The players, as well as the captain, (want, wants) to win.. Explanation ----------------------------

11. Either answers (is, are) acceptable.   Explanation _____

12. Every one of those books (is, are) fiction   Explanation _____

13. Nobody (know, knows) the trouble I've seen. Explanation _____

14. (Is, Are) the news on at five or six? Explanation _____

15. Mathematics (is, are) John's favorite subject, while Civics (is, are) Andrea's favorite subject.   Explanation

16. Eight dollars (is, are) the price of a movie these days. Explanation _____

17. (Is, Are) the tweezers in this drawer? - Explanation ---------------------------

18. Your pants (is, are) at the cleaner's. - Explanation --

19. There (was, were) fifteen candies in that bag. Now there (is, are) only one left!   Explanation -----

20. The committee (debates, debate) these questions carefully. Explanation ----------

21. The committee members (leads, lead) very different lives in private. Explanation -----------------

22. The Prime Minister, together with his wife, (greets, greet) the press cordially. Explanation

23. All of the CDs, even the scratched one, (is, are) in this case

Question2 Edit the following sentences to eliminate problems with subject-verb agreement and write the edited sentence. If a sentence is correct, write "correct."

1) Trang, Eric, and Carlos enjoys reading and writing essays in their English 101 class.
2) There is many other classes they want to take together because they has formed a study group.

3) Everyone are welcome to join their study group if they wants to.
4) The students who joins the study group needs to meet every Friday
5) Jack's first days in the infantry were grueling.
6) One of the main reasons for elephant poaching are the profits received from
   _Not until my interview with Dr. Chang were other possibilities opened to me.
7) Batik cloth from Bali, blue and white ceramics from Cambodia, and a bocce
8) ball from Turin has made Hannah's room the talk of the dorm.
9) . The board of directors, ignoring the wishes of the neighborhood, has voted to
10) allow further development.
11) . Measles is a contagious childhood disease.
12) The presence of certain bacteria in our bodies are one of the factors that determines our overall health.
13) Leah is the only one of the many applicants who has the ability to step into this job.
14) Neither the explorer nor his companions was ever seen again
15) Lack of sleep and poor nutrition often causes in the body's breakdown.
16) Some of these facts is incorrect."
17) "Some of this information **is** incorrect."

"***End f the test paper***

Rules of subject-verb agreement

1-Compound subjects	A compound subject consists of two or more items which act as one subject linked to one verb. These items together represent a compound subject. Which is either used as singular or plural verb.
example	When items of subject are linked with *and*, they take plural verb. A bride and a bride groom <u>*are*</u> coming into the wedding hall.
Exception:	When the two items of the subject refer to a single entity, a singular verb should be used.
example	My mother and my teacher is so compassionate. (mother and teacher refer to one person)
Subjects linked with conjunction like	*or, either...or, nor, neither...nor*, singular verb should be used
example	Ahmed or Ali trims the garden trees.
example	Either Ahmed or Ali trims the garden trees.
	<u>If both subjects are plural, plural verb is used</u>
	Either mothers or fathers solve children's problems.
	If the compound subject consists of both singular and plural items, the verb agrees with the closest subject.
Example	Neither the headmaster nor the teachers are impressed with the results. Neither the teachers nor the headmaster is impressed with the results.

▪ **Appendix B/ Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement**

2-Subjects verb agreement when subject is separated from verb.
<u>Instructors *in our university* work</u> hard
<u>The instructor</u> *specialized in helping struggling students* <u>is </u>efficient   ▪
Three organizations, each participated in building   a school , were rewarded by the president. .
The president , along with his followers,   is leaving the country.
The students,   a swell as,   the principal are happy at the success news

3-Indefinite pronouns
Indefinite pronouns are words which refer to nonspecific people , things ,or places. e.g., *somewhere, someone, anyone, anything, others and none.*

Indefinite pronouns are sometimes treated as plural subject when they refer to multiple items, sometimes they are treated as singular subjects and sometimes they are treated as either singular or plural depending on the context

Rule	Indefinite pronouns	Examples
Always singular	<u>Pronouns</u> ending in *–thing, – where, –body* or *one* (e.g., *somewhere, anybody*), *every, one, each, another*	Something is burning Each student takes a role in the play. Everyone is ready to answer
Always plural	*Many, few, several, both, others*	Both of the flowers are fresh. Few know what really happened that day.
May be singular or plural	*None, all, some, most, more, any, either*	All of the cookies are gone. All of the water has dried.

Subjects that come after the verb
Sentences begin with *there* or *here*. true subject comes after the verb.
There are many flowers in the vase. Here is the milk you want.

Numbers and amounts
40% of the students have passed the exam
40% of the milk is sour..

Collective nouns

Collective nouns refer to a groups of people or things treated as single unit (e.g., *population*, herd, folk, family *team*, *committee*, *staff*)..
. If individuals in the group are acting together, as a whole, then the collective noun is treated as singular
Our football team wins matches
The football team are discussing issues about matches
A herd is shut in the shed
A herd are grazing grass in the meadow.

Uncountable nouns

Uncountable nouns refer to abstract concepts or masses that can't be counted (e.g., *freedom, power*, , independence. *water* sugar and milk). They agree with singular verbs.
Freedom is an essential need for everyone. Electric power is generated by water. Water flows down the river.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

When abbreviations and acronyms act as subjects, language user should find whether the full term is singular or plural.
E.g., FAO <u>is</u> the food and agriculture <u>organization</u>. (singular)
E.g., BCS continue to experience the side effects of the treatments they were exposed to.
"BCS" stands for "breast cancer survivors," which is plural and should be used with a plural verb.

Appendix C/ Exercises

1-Choose the form of the verb(s) that agrees with the subject. State the reason for your choice

1. Lack of sleep and poor nutrition often _____ in the body's breakdown.

Results -result   _____

2. Neither the textbook nor the lectures _____ the kind of detailed information that the instructor regularly puts on exams.

Provides—provide_____

3. Having a goal, as well as a desire to fulfill the goal, _____ extremely important in a person's future success. _____

Is- are_____

4. The build-up of gases in the air from burning large tracts of forest _____ to global warming.

Contributes – contribute_____---

5. After slash and burn, there _____ not enough nutrients in the soil to support vegetation.

Is -are

6. A safe and healthy environment _____ in the top three concerns of Canadians these days.

Ranks-rank_____

7. Every child and adult who purchases a ticket _____ eligible to receive a voucher from one of our sponsors.

Is-are_____

8. With less exposure to smoke _____ fewer illnesses and a stronger health care system.

Comes-come_____

9. Although downloading music and movies from the Internet _____ illegal, it is not practical to impose a harsh penalty.

Is-are_____

Error correction
Correct errors in the following sentences and state the reason under each sentence

1. Music soothe me. _____
2. Billy bake brownies every Halloween. _____
3. Peggy and Grace is arguing again. _____
4. Isie never takes the bus to work._____
5. The people who own that house has no insurance._____
6. One of these mechanics have a set of jumper cables._____
7. Felix and his brother is mending the wings of butterflies._____
8. Both of my essays is brilliant._____
9. The pulses emitted by a neutron star recurs at precise intervals._____
10. One of my uncles dances at the Rainbow Cafe._____
11. Phil and Jeremy has gone to the concert. _____
12. Both of my daughters are professional dancers. _____
13. Every one of the workers receive the same benefits._____
14. There is two gerbils in my bathroom.

Fill each gap with either a singular or plural verb form.

1. Everyone---------------- (want) to know the name of the newborn baby.

2. People ------------------   (like) it when you listen to them and not only talk about yourself.

3. The news ----------- (be) bad, I'm afraid. We won't be coming.