Ấn phẩm của **Tạp chí Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài,** Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội. Bản quyền đã được bảo hộ. Nghiêm cấm mọi hình thức sao chép, lưu trữ, phổ biến thông tin nếu chưa được **Tạp chí Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài** cho phép bằng văn bản. Tuy nhiên, việc sao chép độc bản các bài báo nhằm mục đích học tập hoặc nghiên cứu có thể không cần xin phép. Việc sao chép các hình ảnh minh họa và trích đoạn bài báo phải được sự đồng ý của tác giả và phải dẫn nguồn đầy đủ. Việc sao chép số lượng lớn bất kỳ nội dung nào của tạp chí đều phải được **Tạp chí Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài** cho phép theo đúng qui định của pháp luật Việt Nam.

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MỤC LỤC

RESEARCH

MOET'S THREE PILOT ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIONAL CURRICULA FOR SCHOOLS IN VIETNAM: RATIONALE, DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract: In this paper[(1)], Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)'s three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam will be discussed. In doing so, we will organize the article into four main parts. Part 1 states the reason for the choice of the topic. Part 2 examines the rationale for the development of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam. Part 3 is the focus of the article. In this part, we will first provide an overview of *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Teaching, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR) and *Threshold Level English* – two important studies that have laid theoretical grounds for the development of the three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam. Then we will describe in some detail the design of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam and discuss their trial implementation, highlighting the achievements and the problems encountered during the implementation process. In the final section, after summarizing the contents discussed, we will recommend the integration of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam into a single text presumably called *English Curriculum for Schools in Vietnam* and propose some recommendations on what should be done to overcome the problems before putting the *Curriculum* into use throughout Vietnam.

Keywords: MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula, CEFR, *Threshold Level English*, National Foreign Languages 2020 Project (NFL 2020 Project)

1. Introduction

The literature on the teaching of the kind(s) of English other than "English as the First Language or as the Mother Tongue" is replete with the topic of this conference. At the societal level, it is obvious that the range of possible contexts for the teaching of English varies from country to country.

This is reflected in the terms that have been proposed to distinguish different settings and circumstances for the use of English, such as English as a Second Languge, English as a Foreign Language, or English as an International Language. Looking a bit further down at the methodological and individual levels, it seems to me that in moving from the traditional approaches to second and foreign language teaching to the approach which has been commonly referred to as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), we have merely rediscovered what

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the good teacher in class knew all along, that in any context one does not learn another language until one actually uses it to satisfy one's genuine need to talk about something important to oneself and to others. For these reasons, in this paper I will not intend to talk about the contexts for the teaching of English in countries of the world; neither will I intend to talk in a general manner about the methods and techniques students and teachers employ to learn and teach a second and a foreign language in the classroom. What I will do is to look specifically at an issue which has been attracting much attention from education administrators, foreign language methodologists, foreign language teachers and pupils, and parents in Vietnam: **MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam**. As a way of start, I will first present the introduction to the study. Then I will discuss the rationale for the development of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula. This is followed by Section 3 – the focus of the paper – where I will first provide an overview of Council Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (2001) and *Threshold Level of English* (1980) – the two important studies that have laid theoretical foundations for the development of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula. Then I will describe the design of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula and discuss their pilot implementation in schools in Vietnam, paying particular attention to their strengths and the problems experienced during the implementation process. In the final section, having summarized what has been discussed, I will recommend some suggestions on what should be done to overcome the problems

before putting MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam into use on a large scale.

2. Why three new English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam?

Because of many misunderstandings that have occurred recently about the current situation of the learning and teaching of English in Vietnamese schools, three points should be made clear before I address the question raised in the heading. First, although MoET's three new English language curricula for schools in Vietnam have been implemented for 7 years (since late 2010), they are in their trial stage. The English language curriculum that is in use in all lower and upper secondary schools (from Grade 6 to Grade 12) throughout Vietnam is the seven-year programme. Secondly, although English is now being taught in many primary schools in Vietnam, it is an optional subject; any school may teach one, two, three, four or even more than four hours a week depending on its available resources. And thirdly, although several teaching materials (both local and non-local) are being used in Vietnamese primary schools, except for MoET NFL 2020 Project's primary English textbooks (*Tiếng Anh 3*, *Tiếng Anh 4*, and *Tiếng Anh 5*), they have not yet been evaluated and approved by MoET.

Now turing to the question, "Why three new English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam?", I would like to reveal this story: "In 2012, when we MoET NFL 2020 Project textbook development team in collaboration with our MacMillan Education and Pearson Education textbook writing colleagues were working on the new ten-year English textbook series, MoET Department for Secondary Education gathered experts and experienced teachers to come to 'reduce the workload' of the

textbooks of the seven-year programme" with the explanation that the contents of the textbooks were overloaded. On hearing this episode, one may wonder why three new English language curricula for schools in Vietnam are needed while the contents of the current one are thought to be overloaded, and a question one may raise is "Are there reasons for the change?" The short answer to this question is surely "Yes", and they can be explicated as follows:

Firstly, over the past few decades experimentation and psychological researches into foreign language learning have indicated that the earlier a foreign language is introduced in school programmes, the greater the likelihood the success in learning (see Lenneberg, 1967; Stern, 1967; Rivers, 1970; Broughton et al, 1978; Eurydice, 2005; Lightbown & Spada, 2008; Nikolov, 2009; see also Viện khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam, 2008). This view has attracted strong support from the Vietnamese Government, Vietnamese educational thinkers and administrators.

Secondly, nowadays Vietnamese parents want their children to learn English earlier than the current seven-year programme could offer. In the hope that their children will have the right kind of start for a new kind of society, many parents, particularly the young ones in urban and affluent areas send their children to private foreign language centers to learn English even when they are pre-schoolers.

Thirdly, the teaching of foreign languages, particularly English, in the primary school has been flourishing the world over. In many countries where English is taught as a foreign language such as Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherland, Norway, China, Thailand, South Korea, and many others, English is introduced in the primary school from Grade 3 and even earlier (see Nunan, 2003; Eurydice, 2005; Lee, 2005; Lam, 2005; Rubdy and Tupas, 2009; Liu, 2010; Darus, 2010; Kwon, 2010; Chan et

al, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2015; Hoang Van Van, 2010, 2017; and many others).

Finally and most importantly, the reason that accounts for the change to the three English language curricula is rapid internationalization and globalization. It is clear that in a world in which internationalization and globalization are becoming an inevitable trend, the need for high-skilled and highly qualified people who can communicate effectively in English has become an urgent requirement for Vietnam. This has made it difficult for the country to sustain the current standards of teaching, learning and use of English. Increasingly, decision-making bodies were becoming aware that without a radical change in the English curriculum, Vietnamese learners' standards of performance in English would be left behind. Recognizing the importance of foreign languages in the context of globalization and internationalization, on 30th September, 2008, the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam signed Decision N⁰ 1400/QĐ-TTg to promulgate the National Project entitled *Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008-2020*. In this special document, a very important part is devoted to the learning and teaching of English in Vietnamese schools which states: "To implement a ten-year foreign language programme, starting from Grade 3 with the compulsory foreign language" (Page 1), and "To organize the design of the ten-year curricula for the foreign languages being taught in schools in Vietnam, from Grade 3 to Grade 12, and the compilation of textbooks and other learning and teaching materials suitable to the requirements for each level and each grade" (Page 2).[2] In the rest of the paper, I shall be concerned exclusively with

2 Unless otherwise stated, I am responsible for the Vietnamese-English translation throughout this paper.

the design and implementation of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam.

3. MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam

3.1. Theoretical foundations

The last three decades of the second half of the 20th century saw a number of new and significant developments in Western Europe, both theoretical and pedagogical, on foreign language learning and teaching. One such significant development was that pioneered by the Council of Europe group. This small committee of language teaching experts was set up in 1971 with the purpose of examining the feasibility of developing a unit/credit system for foreign language learning by adults as proposed by a Council of Europe symposium held in the same year. The group's work has resulted in a number of fundamental studies and practical applications, two of which are *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR) and *Threshold Level English.* As these studies have been most widely used and have had direct and indirect influences on the design of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam, they will be reviewed briefly below.

CEFR, ever since its inception, has had profound impacts on language teaching, learning, and assessment not only in Europe but also in other parts of the world. In its 2001 version, CEFR consists of 9 chapters and four appendices. Chapter 1 places the framework in the political and educational context. More specifically, it presents in some detail what CEFR is, what are the aims and objectives of Council of Europe's language policy, why the framework is needed, for what uses it is intended and the criteria the framework

must meet. Chapter 2 presents the approach adopted in CEFR which consists of four main sections: Section 1 presents the action-oriented approach; Section 2 is concerned with common reference levels of language proficiency; Section 3 looks at language learning and teaching in the action-oriented approach; and Section 4 discusses some issues of language assessment. Chapter 3 is concerned with global scale of common reference levels consisting of three broad levels – A, B and C and their six branching levels: A – A1 and A2, B – B1 and B2, and C – C1 and C2, presenting each of them in a single holistic paragraph, and providing illustrative descriptors referring to the three metacategories of communicative activities, strategies, and communicative language competences. One interesting point that should be noted here is that the framework suggests a scheme of flexibility in a branching level. This is a very important suggestion for curriculum designers (and textbook writers as well) because without a flexible branching scheme, it would be difficult for them to cut a common set of levels "into practical local levels at different points by different users to suit local needs and yet still relate back to a common system" (Council of Europe, 2001: 32) and to make further subdivisions without losing the reference to the main objective being referred to. The three broad reference levels, their six branching levels, and their more delicate levels can be represented in Figure 1 below.
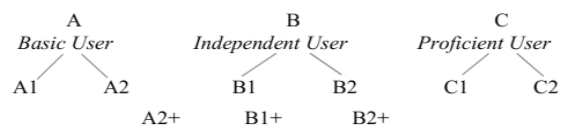

Figure 1. The three CEFR broad reference levels (Council of Europe, 2001: 32)

Chapter 4 explores issues such as context of language use and the language learner (including domains, situations, conditions and constraints, the learner's and the interlocutor's mental context), communication themes and topics, communicative tasks and

purposes, communicative language activities and strategies, communicative language processes, texts. Chapter 5 discusses the user/learner's competences at each specified level of proficiency which includes general competences: declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence and ability to learn, and communicative language competences: linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competences, and pragmatic competences. Chapter 6 presents language learning and teaching which includes what the learner has to learn or acquire the processes of language learning, and some methodological options for modern language learning and teaching. Chapter 7 discusses learning tasks and their role in language teaching which includes task description, task performance, and task difficulties. Chapter 8 explores linguistic diversification and the curriculum which includes options for curricular design, towards curriculum scenarios, some examples of differentiated curriculum scenarios, with particular attention being paid to the multidimensionality and modularity in developing a sound basis for linguistic diversification in the curriculum and in assessment. And Chapter 9 describes the assessment of the proficiency of the language user. It presents in detail the framework as resource for assessment which consists of a number of issues such as specification of the content of tests and examinations, criteria for attainment of the learning objective, description of the levels of proficiency of tests and examinations to aid comparison, and types of assessment.

Each of the four appendices is concerned with one aspect of proficiency descriptors. Appendix A - *Developing Proficiency Descriptors* – presents technical aspects of describing levels of language attainment which consists of formulating criteria for descriptors and listing methodologies for

scale development. Appendix B – *The Illustrative Scales of Descriptors* – is about a description of the Swiss project which developed the illustrative descriptors for CEF. Appendix C – *The DIALANG Scales* – contains a description of the DIALANG language assessment system which is an application for diagnostic purposes of CEF, focusing on the self-assessment statements used in the system and the calibration study carried out on them as part of the development of the system. And Appendix D – *The ALTE* (Association of Language Testers in Europe) *'Can Do' Statements* – focuses on describing the nature of the 'Can Do' statements, the ways the statements are developed, related to ALTE examinations and anchored to the CEF.

As mentioned, CEFR was developed in Western Europe and was targeted mainly at adult foreign language instruction. Van Ek and Alexander, two of the leading members of the Council of Europe group, have adapted this framework for foreign language learning and teaching in schools in their best known publication entitled *Threshold Level English* (1975/1980) and in van Ek's own publication entitled *The Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools* (1977) (hereafter referred to as "the van Ek & Alexander syllabus model"). Many of the insights from these works have been employed for foreign language syllabus design in other contexts (cf. Chamot, 1987; Finch, 2009; Broek, S. I. van den Ende, 2013; Bučar, et al, 2014; and many others). This is because they are a typical example of the emphasis and mood of the new "communicative movement" in that, to the authors, *meaning*, *function* and *use* of language are more important than its *form*. They are an attempt at defining the basic minimum needs of foreign language learners in order to be able to communicate non-professionally with foreign language speakers in everyday situations on topics of general

interests. The basic characteristic of the van Ek & Alexander syllabus model is that it tries to specify foreign language activity as *skill* rather than knowledge. It focuses on what the learner will have to be able to *do* in the foreign language and determines in the second place what language-forms (words, structures, etc.) the learner will have to be able to handle (van Ek & Alexander, 1975/1980; van Ek, 1977; see also van Ek, 1998). This shift in emphasis was paralleled by a similar trend in the domain of linguistics itself, where functional linguists and sociolinguists like Halliday (1973, 1978, 1991, 1998) and Hymes (1972 and elsewhere) had for some time argued for greater attention to be paid to the communicative function of language rather than its structural form – the vigorous emphasis by earlier structural linguists like Bloomfield, Fries, and Chomsky and his followers. "There are rules of use without which rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes, 1972: 278). And more importantly,

> In communication, speakers and hearers (and writers and readers) are most often engaged in the work of sharing meaning which are both dependent on the conventions of interpersonal behaviour and created by such behaviour. Similarly, the ideas or concepts which are communicated about contain different potential meanings and such potential meanings are expressed through and derived from the formal system of text during the process of communication. To understand the conventions which underlie communication, therefore, we not only have to understand a system of ideas or concepts and a system of interpersonal behaviour, we have to understand how these ideas and this interpersonal behaviour can be realized in language – in connected texts. Mastering this unity of ideational, interpersonal and textual knowledge allows us to participate in a creative meaning-making process and to express or interpret the potential meanings within spoken or written texts.

(Breen & Candlin, 1980: 90)

3.2. The design of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam

3.2.1. Introductory notes

It should be noted here that up till now nothing has been done to move from the centralized English language curriculum prepared and issued by MoET. Therefore, all schools in Vietnam, termed either public or private, come under the administrative umbrella of MoET. As such schools are strongly influenced by the policies and guidelines that stem from the Ministry. These policies and guidelines touch on all aspects of school administration, and school learning and teaching. Among the documents prepared and issued by the Ministry are the three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam which are prescribed for all schools.

To design the three pilot English language curricula, a team was appointed by MoET in mid 2010 with the Vietnam National Institute for Educational Sciences (VNIES) working as the organizing institution. The team consisted of English curriculum specialists, native speakers of English language specialists from the British Council, university and college lecturers, evaluation specialists and experienced school teachers. One of the first tasks the team had to set for itself was to take a closer look at the target learners and to re-identify their needs to learn English in the professional and social world relevant to the national and international situations in the first decades of the 21st century. A consensus was reached, and due to time and human resource constraints, MoET decided to break down the ten-year English programme into three separate curricula (hence the term "MoET's three Pilot English Language Communicational Curricula for Schools in Vietnam"), one for primary level, one for lower secondary level

and one for upper secondary level. After two years' work, the team succeeded in producing three English language curricula for schools in Vietnam referred to respectively in MoET's three Decisions as (1) *Chương trình tiếng Anh thí điểm tiểu học* (Pilot English Language Curriculum for Primary Schools in Vietnam) (2010), (2) *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh thí điểm cấp trung học cơ sở* (Pilot English Language Curriculum for Lower Secondary Schools in Vietnam) (2012a), and (3) *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh thí điểm cấp trung học phổ thông* (Pilot English Language Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Vietnam) (2012b).

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam are communication-based, drawing on insights from several English language school curricula of countries in the region and in the world such as Singapore, Malaysia, China, Thailand, South Korea, and Japan. In particular, they draw heavily on insights from the CEFR model developed by Council of Europe (2001) and the van Ek & Alexander syllabus model. They all are structured into two main parts. Part 1 presents the curriculum framework and Part 2 provides a sample syllabus outline.

3.2.2. The curriculum framework

The curriculum framework contains the following sections: (1) principles of curriculum design, (2) curriculum objectives, (3) curriculum contents, (4) teaching methodology, (5) assessment, and (6) conditions for successful curriculum implementation.

(1) Principles of curriculum design. Although there are differences in the number of principles of curriculum design in each of the three curricula (6 in the primary curriculum, 10 in the lower secondary curriculum, and 9 in the upper secondary curriculum), they all lay

emphasis on seeing as principle the learning needs of the students, the development of students' positive attitudes towards English, the contribution of English learning to the overall educational development of the students, the development of communicative competences through integrated practice of four communicative macroskills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, the delivery through coherent themes and topics which are meaningful and relevant to the students' worlds, the learning-centred teaching approach, the coherent integration and articulation between the three curricula, the flexibility to reflect local concerns, needs and capacities across a wide range of contexts in Vietnam, and the alignment of the learning outcomes with CEFR Level A1 in the primary curriculum, CEFR Level A2 in the lower secondary curriculum, and CEFR Level B1 in the upper secondary curriculum.

(2) Curriculum objectives. This section includes two subsections: general objectives and specific objectives. The general objectives section states the general aims of the three curricula in terms of global scale related to what students will have reached by the end of each level. The global scale statements are taken from the first three levels of CEFR's "Common Reference Levels: global scale". Accordingly, by the end of the primary level, students will have reached the equivalent of CEFR Level A1; by the end of the lower secondary level, students will have reached the equivalent of CEFR Level A2, and by the end of the upper secondary level, students will have reached the equivalent of CEFR Level B1. The global scale statements of these levels are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Global scale statements of CEFR Levels A1, A2 and B1

B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

(Council of Europe, 2001: 24)

The specific objectives section is related to what students can do in terms of their knowledge and ability to use English, their change in attitude towards English, and their learning strategies on completing each level. It is also concerned what students can do in terms of four communicative areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing at three levels of education which cover all ten grades.

In any foreign language programme, especially in one that is comprised of a number of levels like MoET's three pilot English language curricula project, there is danger that the learning contents could be broken, discontinued, fragmented, incoherent, and unsystematic. In order to overcome these problems and to systematically move students along the path towards the level of proficiency required for upper secondary school leavers, the overall perspective of the development path from Grade 3 through to Grade 12 needs to be specified. Drawing on the insights from CEFR's flexible branching scheme, MoET's three pilot English curricula for schools in Vietnam define levels of English proficiency

at 3 level points along the path from Zero to CEFR Level B1. Then based on the structure of the Vietnamese general education system (which is comprised of 12 grades), each level point is broken down into more delicate levels for further definitions. The definitions provide some detailed descriptions of language knowledge and language skills to allow the curriculum designers (and textbook writers) to perceive how each grade and each level fit into the total pattern of proficiency development. Thus in Moet's three pilot English language curricula, three sets of specifications are developed spanning the three levels from Zero to Level A1 which includes Level A1-1 for Grade 3, Level A1-2 for Grade 4 and Level A1-3 for Grade 5, to Level A2 which includes Level A2-1 for Grade 6, Level A2-2 for Grade 7, Level A2-3 for Grade 8, and Level A2-4 for Grade 9, and to Level B1 which includes Level B1-1 for Grade 10, Level B1-2 for Grade 11, and Level B1-3 for Grade 12. Below is an extract taken from the *Pilot English Language Curriculum for Lower Secondary Schools in Vietnam* describing the specific objectives students must achieve on finishing Grade 6.

Table 2. Specific objectives of Grade 6

When finishing Grade 6, pupils can:

Listening	• Recognize and repeat sounds, stresses, intonations and rhythms in different short and simple sentences. • Understand short and simple instructions that are used in learning activities in the classroom. • Understand the main ideas and details of simple dialogues and monologues of 60-word length about the topics suggested in the curriculum such as family, school, friends, festivals, tourist attractions, famous people, television, sports… • Understand the main ideas of information exchanges between friends of the same age about the topics suggested in the syllabus.
Speaking	• Pronounce correctly sounds, stresses, rhythms and intonations in short and simple sentences. • Produce short and simple instructions that are used in learning activities in the classroom. • Ask and give short answers about the topics in the curriculum such as family, school, friends, festivals, tourist attractions, famous people, television, sports… • Produce simple and connected sentences with suggestions about familiar topics.
Reading	• Understand the main ideas and details of simple dialogues and monologues of 80-word length about the topics suggested in the syllabus such as family, school, friends, festivals, tourist attractions, famous people, television, sports… • Understand the main ideas of personal letters, notices, short and simple paragraphs about familiar topics (possibly with some new words and structures).
Writing	• Write short and simple instructions of about 50-word length about the topics suggested in the curriculum such as family, school, friends, festivals, tourist attractions, famous people, television, sports… • Write short and simple letters, postcards, messages or personal notes related to daily communication needs,… about the topics that are suggested in the syllabus.

(Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2012a: 7)

(3) Curriculum contents (Syllabus). This section provides the total time frame allocated for the three pilot English language curricula whose contents include themes, topics, communicative competences, and linguistic knowledge. These are designed to be delivered in 1155 periods of which 420 (35-minute) periods are for the primary level, 420 (45-minute) periods are for the lower secondary level, and 315 (45-minute) periods are for the upper secondary level.

The theoretical foundation on which the design of the three pilot English language curricula is based can be found in the CEFR (2001). The theoretical foundation on which the design of the three syllabuses, for the most part, can be found in the notional/functional syllabus developed in *Threshold Level English* by van Ek & Alexander (1975/1980) and in *The Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools* by van Ek (1977). The notional/functional syllabus is

communicative in that it represents a radical departure from grammatical/structural approach to foreign language syllabus design. It looks at foreign language from a pragmatic rather than a descriptive point of view. It sees foreign language as a skill that allows one to get things done. It takes as departure general notions which are expressed in spatial and temporal and specific notions such as personal identification, house and home, relations with other people, travel, education, and so forth. The things that can be done are described in functions such as greeting, leave-taking, complementing, expressing attitudes, etc. These functions are stated in terms of skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and are realized in linguistic structures (phonetics, vocabulary and grammar).

As mentioned above, the notional/ functional syllabus was initially developed for adult foreign language learning and teaching. Later van Ek (1977) and van Ek

and Alexander (1975/1980) have adapted it for foreign language learning and teaching in schools, so it can be applied to designing foreign language syllabus in other contexts. Drawing on insights from CEFR's notional/functional syllabus, MoET's three pilot English language syllabuses for schools in Vietnam are designed into 4 components: (1) **Themes** (≈ general notions in the van Ek & Alexander syllabus model), broken down into (2) **topics** (≈ specific notions in the van Ek & Alexander syllabus model), (3) **communicative competences** (≈ functions in the van Ek & Alexander syllabus model), and (4) **linguistic knowledge/language items** (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar).

One of the key elements in MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam is the development of students' capacity to take increasing responsibility for their own learning as they progress from the primary through to the lower secondary and then the upper secondary level. To accomplish this process, students must learn to use effective language learning strategies. All the three pilot English language curricula recommend that "learning how to learn" should be included in textbooks and other teaching materials and should be incorporated by teachers in their lessons. To guide textbook writers and teachers to translate this recommendation into reality, a list of language learning strategies is provided in each of the three curricula. (For detail, see Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo [MoET], 2010a, 2012a, 2012b).

(4) Teaching methodology. MoET's three pilot English language curricula strongly recommend that teaching English in schools in Vietnam should be based on a locally appropriate application of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and an understanding of psychological characteristics of students who are moving from childhood to adolescence. The ultimate

goal of learning is to cultivate in students the ability to understand and to communicate in English in a variety of real-life contexts. To achieve this goal, English teaching in schools in Vietnam should focus on a learning-centred approach in which teachers must see students as active participants in the language learning process and their own role as an organizer and facilitator of students' learning. Wherever possible, teachers should make use of electronic teaching and learning resources to foster students' interest in the subject and to help them achieve the objectives of the curricula. It is suggested that the three pilot English language curricula be implemented in the classroom through tasks and activities for all four skills which require students to engage in meaningful interaction using the language.

(5) Assessment. Students' achievement in English shall be based on evidence of their use of communicative competences gained during the learning process. The three pilot English language curricula require that assessment conform to the teaching and learning approaches used in the classroom and that throughout the school year assessment should be primarily formative, enabling both students and teachers to see progress towards achieving the curriculum objectives for the year. At designated points throughout the school year, such as at the end of each term and at the end of the year, summative assessment will also be required to gauge students' achievement of the objectives. To assess students' communicative competences, it is recommended that formats of assessment be diverse in nature and include assessment of speaking and listening as interactive skills, as well as reading and writing skills.

(6) Conditions for successful curriculum implementation. For the three curricula to be successfully implemented in schools, the following conditions are proposed:

1. Adequate teaching time shall be

available. The three curricula are designed to be delivered in a total of 1155 periods, 420 periods for primary level, 420 periods for lower secondary level and 315 periods for upper secondary level.

2. Students finishing a grade should have achieved the required branching proficiency level. Accordingly, Grade 3 students should have achieved a level equivalent to CEFR A1-1, Grade 4 students – CEFR A1-2, Grade 5 students – CEFR A1-3, Grade 6 students – CEFR A2-1, Grade 7 students – CEFR A2-2, Grade 8 students – CEFR A.2-3, Grade 9 students – CEFR A.2-4, Grade 10 students – CEFR B1-1, Grade 11 students – CEFR B1-2, and Grade 12 students – CEFR B1-3.

3. There shall be a sufficient number of teachers with qualification at college or university level and with an English qualification equivalent to CEFR Level B2 for primary and lower secondary teachers and Level C1 for upper secondary teachers.

4. Teachers should be adequately trained to teach these curricula in the manner specified.

5. The number of students per class should not exceed the number prescribed by MoET.

6. Besides MoET's textbooks (student's books, teacher's guides, and workbooks), other material resources which have been assessed by a competent authority may be used.

7. A variety of audio-visual and electronic resources should be made available to support learning and teaching.

8. School managers should be given an opportunity to participate in in-service training for these curricula so that they are able to support teachers in their schools as they implement the new curricula.

9. Textbook writing teams should receive appropriate training to ensure that new textbooks are designed to meet the specifications and requirements of the new curricula.

3.2.3. The sample outline syllabus

A syllabus is usually a specification of what is considered to be the basic units of learning in the language. "Syllabus design does not take place in a vacuum. It is one stage within a broader sequence of curriculum development process" (Long & Richards, 1987: 73). "The syllabus embodies that part of language which is to be taught, broken down into 'items' or otherwise processed for teaching purposes" (Strevens, 1985). Based on the insights from the Curriculum contents section, The MoET English curriculum designers provide three sample outline English syllabuses for schools in Vietnam. They recognise 12 themes (accompanied by the reasons for the choice), 4 for each level of education, as follows: primary level: *Me and My Friends*, *Me and My School*, *Me and My Family*, *Me and the World Around*; lower secondary level: *Our Communities*, *Our Heritage*, *Our World*, *Visions of the Future*; and upper secondary level: *Our Lives*, *Our Society*, *Our Environment*, *Our Future*. These themes are broken down into around 150 topics to cover the whole school programme of 1155 teaching periods of which 420 periods are for the primary level, 420 periods are for the lower secondary level, and 315 periods are for the upper secondary level. These topics are followed by a suggested inventory of specific language functions (communicative competences) stated in terms of four communicative skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and a suggested inventory of linguistic knowledge consisting of phonic/phonological, lexical and grammatical items. These socio-cultural and linguistic resources enable students to develop their communicative competences in the selected themes and topics. Cultural

knowledge is a compulsory component in the three syllabuses; it is stated in the three curricula and is realized in textbooks and teacher materials. Below is a segment representing a sample outline syllabus of the primary level.

Education counterparts. The development of the textbook series was based on the guidelines of MoET's three pilot English language curricula and, in particular, on the contents suggested in the three syllabuses. Like the textbooks of the current seven-

Table 3. A segment of a sample outline of the primary English syllabus

1. Lớp 3

4 tiết/tuần x 35 tuần = 140 tiết

THEMES	TOPICS	COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES	LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE
Me and My Friends	Meetings	Greeting Saying goodbye	**Pronunciation:** Vowels Diphthongs
	Myself	Introducing oneself Spelling someone's name	**Vocabulary:** Words to greet friends
	Thanking	Greeting (Asking how someone is) Thanking someone	The English alphabet Words to indicate proper names Words to name school facilities and objects
	Our names	Asking someone's name Introducing others	Words to describe school objects Words to indicate actions Words to name family members
	My Friends	Identifying someone Greeting someone friendly	Words to describe people Words to name rooms in the house Words to name house objects Words to describe the weather
Me and My School	My school	Introducing someone's school Asking for the name of someone's school	Words to name flowers, pets and toys Words to describe flowers, pets and toys Words to indicate colours
	School objects	Naming school facilities/objects Describing school facilities/objects	Cardinal numbers: $1 - 20$ Ordinal numbers: $1^{st} - 20^{th}$
	My classroom	Naming classroom objects	

(Source: Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2010)

3.3. Implementation of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam

3.3.1. Textbook development

To assist implementation of the three English language curricula, a ten-year English textbook development project was set up by MoET. This was a collaborative project between MoET Vietnam Education Publishing House (MoET VEPH) and MacMillan Education for the development of primary English textbooks and Pearson Education for the development of lower and upper secondary English textbooks. The project consisted of three Vietnamese textbook writing teams and their MacMillan Education and Pearson

year programme, the new ten-year English textbook series is communication-based. It is comprised of 10 textbooks; each is designed for students to finish a grade and is structured around several units of lessons. A typical unit of lessons in the new textbook series begins with a topic, followed by language components (pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar) related to the topic, four macroskills of speaking, listening, reading and writing about the topic, communication and culture for further practice, and a project to help students to use real language in real contexts. The typical structure of a unit of lessons in the new ten-year textbook series, its component parts/headings and time allocated for each component part is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Unit structure, component headings and time allocated for each component heading in the new textbook series

	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary
Number of unit	20	12	10
Number of components per unit	3	7	8
Component heading	Lesson 1 Lesson 2 Lesson 3	Getting Started A Closer Look 1 A Closer Look 2 Communication & Culture Skills 1 (Reading & Speaking) Skills 2 (Listening & Writing) Looking Back & Project	Getting Started Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Grammar Reading Speaking Listening Writing Communication & Culture Looking Back & Project
Time allocated for each heading	2 periods	1 period	1 period

(Hoang Van Van, 2015: 9)

The ten-year English textbook development project started from the second half of 2010 and ended in mid-2016. The result of the project is that a complete series of the ten-year English textbooks for schools in Vietnam was produced with the total number of 54 books (including student's books, teacher's books, and workbooks) and 20 CDs. The new textbook series adheres to the goals, the principles, the objectives, and in particular, the contents suggested in MoET's three curricula. The whole textbook series consists of 140 teaching units and 40 review units. It covers the total number of 1155 periods, of which 420 periods are allocated for the primary level (from Grade 3 to Grade 5), 420 are allocated for the lower secondary level (from Grade 6 to Grade 9), and 315 are allocated for the upper secondary level (Grade 10 to Grade 12). (For a fuller description of the ten-year English textbook series for schools in Vietnam, see Hoang Van Van, 2015, 2016).

Apart from Student's books, Teacher's books and Workbooks, the textbook development project in collaboration with MoET VEPH has produced a resource package including iebooks, a test banks and other supplementary materials. This resource package is to support students and teachers to employ the textbooks more effectively so that they can learn and teach English better. (For more detail of the resource package, visit the website sachmem.vn).

3.3.2. Pilot teaching

MoET required that any school that wishes to join in the trialling of the three new curricula should meet MoET's standards such as standard classrooms, standard teachers, and standard students. By standard classrooms is meant those classrooms that have sufficient learning-teaching equipment and resources, and the number of students in each class will not exceed 35. By standard teachers is meant those teachers who must achieve an English qualification equivalent to CEFR Level B2 for the primary and lower secondary levels and CEFR Level C1 for the upper secondary level. And by standard students is meant those students who must pass the English test designed and approved by MoET. Having considered all these conditions, on October

15, 2010, MoET issued Decision N$_0$ 4674 / QĐ-BGDĐT on the *Implementation of the Pilot English Curriculum for Primary Schools in Vietnam*, on September 5, 2012, MoET issued Decision N$_0$ 3456/QĐ-BGDĐT on the *Implementation of the Pilot English Curriculum for Lower Secondary Schools in Vietnam*, and on September 10, 2012, MoET issued Decision N$_0$ 3702/QĐ-BGDĐT on the *Implementation of the Pilot English Curriculum of the Pilot English Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Vietnam*. (For details of these Decisions, see Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2010b, 2012c, and 2012d).

It should be noted that the trialling of the three new English language curricula involved a great number of provinces, schools, teachers and students throughout Vietnam. At the times the three Decisions were issued, 50 provinces, 267 schools, 702 classes, 497 teachers and 27,275 students took part in it, of which 20 provinces, 94 schools, 377 classes, 95 teachers and 12,866 students took part in the trialling of the primary curriculum; 30 provinces, 88 schools, 184 classes, and 9,099 students took part in the trialling of the lower secondary curriculum; and 36 provinces, 85 schools, 141 classes, 172 teachers and 5,280 students took part in the trialling of the upper secondary curriculum. Details of these are provided in Table 5.

particular, the teaching of the new textbooks at all three levels of education, a key-personnel system of teacher-orientation was employed by both MoET NFL 2020 Project and MoET VEPH. Key personnel were teachers who manifest outstanding professional skills and leadership qualities and were selected to undergo intensive orientation in the new curricula and textbooks in order to be able to pass on the message as well as to give guidance to their colleagues – other teachers. They thus had the multiplier role of ensuring positive snowballing of the new curricula and textbooks. They were selected from different provinces and were given centralized intensive training. They then went back to their respective provinces where they trained their colleagues in batches at provincial level. At first, the resentment they met from the teacher-trainees outweighed and outlived the cheers and compliments. This was not surprising as the new curricula and textbooks were new to them and they were not yet acquainted with them. Further, the textbooks seemed a bit too demanding on the teachers because it required more knowledge and skills from them and they were expected to base themselves on the contents of the textbooks to work out more activities/tasks relevant to

Table 5. Number of provinces, schools, classes, teachers and students taking part in piloting the three curricula

Level	Provinces	Schools	Classes	Teachers	Students
Primary	20	94	377	95	12,866
Lower secondary	30	88	184	230	9,099
Upper secondary	36	85	141	172	5,280
Total	50[3]	267	702	497	27,275

3.3.3. Orientation of teachers

In order to reach all the teachers involved in the trialling of the new curricula and, in

the interests and capability of the students they would be teaching. But later on, as they got acquainted with the textbooks through actual teaching, their cheers and complements outweighed and outlived their resentment.

Along with the teachers' orientation courses held by MoET NFL 2020 Project

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[3] The reason why the total number of provinces taking part in the trialling of the three curricula is 50 is that of the 50 provinces, some take part in the trialling of one curriculum; some others of two curricula, and still some others of all the three curricula.

and MoET VEPH, some foreign language tertiary institutions (e.g. VNU University of Languages and International Studies, Hanoi University, etc.) have also been offering training courses to further develop English teachers' professional skills, ICT skills and English language skills. In their training courses, teachers are introduced to the new curricula and are helped to develop new methods and techniques of exploiting the new textbooks for more effective teaching (for more detail, see Đề án Ngoại ngữ Quốc gia 2020 & Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ [MoET NFL 2020 Project & VNU University of Languages and International Studies], 2017).

3.3.4. Merits and achievements

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam are going to finish their trial phase. A summative evaluation project on the design and implementation of these curricula is currently in progress. However, prior to this project several formative evaluation projects at ministerial and institutional levels have been conducted such as *Report on the Evaluation of Pilot English Language Curriculum and Textbooks for Primary Schools in Vietnam* by Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET] (2015), *The Project "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period of 2008-2020" - Results of the Period of 2011-2015 and Implementation Plan for the Period of 2016-2020* by Ban quản lý Đề án NNQG 2020 [MoET NFL 2020 Project Management Board] (2016a), *Report on the Results of the Test for Grade 12 Students in the Pilot English Language Curriculum for Upper Secondary School in 2016* by Ban quản lý Đề án NNQG 2020 [MoET NFL 2020 Project Management Board] (2016b), *Report on the Evaluation of the three Pilot English Language Curricula and Proposals for the Ten-year and Twelve-year English Language Programmes* by Viện Khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam [VNIES]

(2016), *Report on the Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages at Primary Level and Proposals for a Suitable Age for Children to Start Learning Foreign Languages* by Vụ Giáo dục Tiểu học [MoET Department for Primary Education] (2017), *Report on the Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages at Lower and Upper Secondary Levels* by Vụ Giáo dục Trung học [MoET Department for Secondary Education] (2017), and *Evaluative Report on the Implementation of the Project "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008-2020" in the Period of 2008-2016* by Ban quản lý Đề án NNQG 2020 [MoET NFL 2020 Project Management Board] (2017). These formative evaluation projects all show that MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam have gained many merits in terms of both design and implementation.

3.3.4.1. Merits in design

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam are designed following the communicative approach and adhere strictly to the time frame prescribed in the Prime Minister's Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg. They set clear principles of design; contain logical sequence of contents which include three systems of themes, broken down into three system of topics, three lists of specific communicative functions (communicative competences) stated in terms of four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing; and three inventories of linguistic knowledge needed for teaching English as communication, assisting students to develop their communicative competences in the selected topics.

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam have clearly defined outcomes and specific objectives for each stage of learning; have demonstrated the flexibility by taking into consideration

the needs of the students and the learning and teaching conditions of different regions across the country: any learning and teaching contexts across the country can adapt the curricula for practical use (Bộ Giáo dục, 2015; Viện Khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam, 2016).

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam emphasize the formation and development of communication skills; shifting focus from teaching language knowledge to teaching language skills so that students can communicate in international contexts; using English to introduce Vietnam, the land and the people to foreigners (Viện Khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam, 2016).

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam have met the practical needs of Vietnamese general education, have had many innovative points as compared to the previous English curricula, and have created a compelling appeal to students and teachers (Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo, 2015).

3.3.4.2. Merits in implementation

The ten-year English textbook series has achieved the criterion of modernity in terms of content, method and design; has been developed in accordance with MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam with linguistic knowledge and contents being correct and consistently linked between levels and grades; has incorporated in it cultural features of Vietnam, of major English-speaking countries and of other countries of the world; has focused on developing students' communicative skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and thus have aroused students' interest in learning English, helping them get better results (Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo, 2015; Viện Khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam, 2016).

Since 2010, MoET has issued a number of directives. Most of these documents are clearly articulated, helping the provincial departments

of education & training and the pilot schools to overcome the problems experienced during the implementation process. The provincial departments of education & training also have issued timely documents to direct the implementation of the tasks and requirements from MoET and to orient and support the pilot schools in their implementation of the pilot curricula. They have also issued guidance documents on teaching and learning, testing and assessment, teacher training, facility preparation to support the pilot schools (Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo, 2015; Vụ Giáo dục Trung học, 2015).

The implementation of MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam has gained strong support from the society, competent authorities of different levels, provincial departments of education and training, parents and students themselves. Since 2010 the number of provinces, schools and the number of students participating in the pilot programme has increased dramatically (Vụ Giáo dục Trung học, 2015: 5; Ban Quản lý Đề án NNQG 2020, 2017).

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam have direct influence on the compilation of textbooks, paving the way for the implementation of the "one curriculum, multiple textbooks" policy; providing orientation for textbook writers to select themes, topics, communicative competences, and linguistic and intercultural knowledge suited to each grade and each level of education. The new ten-year English textbook series is communication-based, giving priority to the development of the four communicative skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The components of each unit of lessons in the textbook series are coherently and logically sequenced and graded. The activities are designed following the current communicative "pre-, while-, and post-" teaching procedure to help students

communicate effectively in English (Viện Khoa học Giáo dục, 2016).

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam have positive impacts on the professional development of the teachers: they are given opportunities to attend English language enrichment courses and training courses in methods of English language teaching and testing; those teachers who have not yet met the required English proficiency qualification (CEFR Level B2 for primary and lower secondary teachers and CEFR Level C1 for upper secondary teachers) will be trained (or even retrained) to the required level; those teachers who have achieved the required English qualification are given further training courses in English language teaching methodology and ICT applications (Viện Khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam, 2016).

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam have a positive impact on students. Many students are aware of the importance of English in the context of globalization and have built up positive attitudes towards English and the culture of English-speaking countries, and have shown interest and curiosity in exploring the language and its diverse culture (Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo, 2015; Viện Khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam, 2016).

MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam have positive impacts on the perception and action of the Vietnamese society: the advocacy to improve English language proficiency of school students has gained strong support from parents because their children are given an opportunity to receive 10 years of English language education to be able to communicate with foreigners in English and to go to study abroad after finishing upper secondary schools. Many parents are willing to provide their children with resources such

as time, books, cassettes, iPads, hand phones, computers, etc. to help them learn English better (Vụ Giáo dục Trung học, 2015; Viện Khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam, 2016).

The implementation of MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam has yielded positive outcomes. By the end of 2016, MoET Department for Secondary Education in collaboration with MoET NFL 2020 Project held an online English test to assess the English language proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of 5,000 twelfth graders participating in the trialling of *The Pilot English Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Vietnam*. The results showed that 78.15% of the test takers obtained from average to excellent scores, of which 28.01% achieved excellent scores (76-100 points), 24.02% achieved above average scores (65-75 points), and 28.01% achieved average scores (50-64 points). (For more detail, see Ban quản lý Đề án NNQG 2020, 2016a, 2016b, 2017; Vụ Giáo dục Trung học, 2017).

3.3.5. Problems

Curriculum design is complex, but because it is textual, it can be adjusted and modified to suit the new learning and teaching context and to promote more effective learning. The implementation of the curriculum seems to be much more complex, because it is social, involving so many participating variables such as policy making, steering, management, physical facilities, learning, teaching, materials (textbooks), and many others. Along with their merits and achievements as pointed out above, MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam have revealed a number of problems.

3.3.5.1. Design problems

The first problem related to the design of MoET's three pilot English language curricula

for schools in Vietnam is that they seem to be heavy for normal students, particularly for those students who are in rural and mountainous areas. Some of the contents of the three curricula are not quite appropriate for Vietnamese students. However, because the requirements in these curricula are thought to be legal-bound and mandatory, teachers who have spotted the inappropriate and overloaded contents do dare to not adjust them (Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo, 2015; Vụ Giáo dục Trung học, 2015).

The second problem has to do with the language proficiency requirements imposed on the teachers in MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam. The requirements that to be able to teach English at primary and lower secondary levels, a teacher must have a B2 certificate and to be able to teach English at upper secondary level, a teacher must have a C1 certificate seem to be unrealistic if not unnecessary in the present teaching context of Vietnam. This explains why although many teachers express positive attitudes towards the requirements, there are still some who express their resentment against these standards. Experience has shown that if a primary or a lower secondary teacher who has a B1 certificate or an upper secondary teacher who has a B2 certificate has a good teaching method, s/he can still teach his/her students effectively at the respective levels (cf. Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo, 2015).

The third problem is that the requirement that the number of students per class not exceed 35 seems to be infeasible, especially for classes in big cities (Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo, 2015: 9; Viện Khoa học Giáo dục, 2016).

3.3.5.2. Implementation problems

A number of implementation problems has also been identified in the evaluative reports; among them 9 seem prominent.

First, MoET's directives on the implementation of three pilot English curicula

often do not reach the provincial departments of education & training and the pilot schools in time; inspection and supervision of the implementation process are not conducted timely and regularly. Personel for directing and managing the implementation of the three pilot English curricula are inadequate: most of the directors and managers of the three pilot English curricula at the provincial departments of education & training and the pilot schools are working part-time, and do not have enough experience in programme management and implementation (Ban Quản lý Đề án NNQG 2020, 2016a).

Secondly, plans for the implementation of the three pilot English curricula for each semester and each school-year of the provincial departments of education & training and the pilot schools are often made later than scheduled (Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo, 2015).

Thirdly, information and communication work is not commensurate with the nature, the nationwide proportion and scope of the implemention of the three pilot English curicula. Information about the pilot implementation of the three curricula is not disseminated in a way that can attract attention of teachers, students and society, and thus is unable to address timely the anxiety and frustration of the teachers and students and the problems arising during the teaching and learning process (Ban Quản lý Đề án NNQG 2020, 2016a).

Fourthly, remuneration policies for teachers and students participating in pilot teaching and learning have not been properly implemented. Most teachers in the three pilot English language curicula have to teach more hours than prescribed. Students in the three pilot English language curicula are taught in CLT approach (focusing on developing their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills), and they are expected to do communicative tests, but at the national

matriculation and general certificate of secondary education English exam, they have to do the test of traditional and non-communicative format (mainly focusing on testing their linguistic knowledge) (For details of the national matriculation and general certificate of secondary education English exam, see Hoang Van Van, 2017).

Fifthly, there is a serious shortage of English teachers. The Prime Minister's Decision 1400-TTg prescribes that English is officially taught in Vietnamese schools for ten years (from Grade 3 to Grade 12), four hours a week at the primary level, three hours a week at the lower secondary level, and three hours a week at the upper secondary level. According to Ban Quản lý Đề án NNQG (2016a), the total number of school teachers of English in Vietnam is 69,375, of which 18,228 are primary teachers, 33,315 are lower secondary, and 17,232 are upper secondary. Due to the fact that English has been taught throughout the country three hours a week at lower secondary and upper secondary levels since 2006, there are enough teachers for the new lower secondary and the upper secondary curricula. The biggest problem, however, lies in the lack of primary teachers. At present because English is taught as an optional subject at this level, some schools are teaching two hours a week, some others – three, and some others – four or even more than four hours a week, while some others do not teach English at all. It is estimated that if all primary schools throughout the country are required to teach four hours a week, 7,000-8,000 primary teachers of English will be needed (cf. Vụ Giáo dục Tiểu học, 2017). Surely this is a problem that cannot be solved overnight.

Sixthly, there is a shortage of qualified English teachers. Since 2013, the NFL 2020 Project has been organizing training courses for in-service English teachers of all three school levels to help them get the required qualification. However, according to the latest statistics, as of March 2017, of the 18,228 primary teachers of English, only 58% have got B2 certificate (Vụ Giáo dục Tiểu học, 2017); of the 33,315 lower secondary teachers, only 56% have got B2 certificate; and of the 17,232 upper secondary teachers of English, only 48% have got C1 certificate (Ban Quản lý Đề án NNQG 2020, 2016a). It is not an easy task to help the remaining 42% of the primary teachers, 44% of the lower secondary teachers, and 52% of the upper secondary teachers get through to the required qualification standards within one or two years. The problem seems to be compounded when it is found that it is almost impossible to recruit primary teachers of English for rural and out-of-the-way areas, while it is quite easy for qualified teachers of English in urban and affluent areas to be attracted to work in places such as private schools, international schools, private English centers and foreign business companies as these institutions often offer them a much higher pay (see Bộ Giáo dục & Đào tạo, 2015; see also Hoang Van Van, 2010).

Seventhly, there is a big mismatch between teaching and testing. It is ironical that while the three pilot English language curricula require that teaching should follow the communicative approach, the current testing practice in schools in Vietnam is, for the most part, non-communicative, with tests/exams being designed in traditional/structural formats to test students' linguistic knowledge rather than their communicative skills (for more detail on this point, see Pham Viet Ha, 2016; Hoang Van Van, 2017). This big mismatch between teaching and testing is sure to hinder the success of the implementation of the new English curricula.

Eighthly, although English is recognized as one of the very few important subjects in school curriculum in Vietnam, it is not

an entrance examination to all colleges and universities. In addition, many school students think that they can start learning English after leaving school when needed, but they cannot do the same thing with content subjects such as Maths, Physics, and Chemistry. For this reason, students often pay more attention to learning these subjects in schools.

Ninthly and finally, although English is the Number 1 foreign language being taught in Vietnam and the number of students learning English in schools accounts for 99% (Ban quản lý Đề án NNQG 2020, 2017), it is not the language of communication in the country. For this reason, students do not have what I would refer to as "quality communication environments in English" and, as a result, they do not have the need to communicate in the language. It should be noted that although officially all lower secondary school children start learning English from Grade 6, it would be misleading to suggest that they all can speak English. In some schools, students come from situations where they are motivated to speak English, but in the majority of others they come from situations where English is not needed at all unless they are required to say a few single words in the language in the classrooms. Further, most of school pupils in Vietnam are monolingual, speaking mainly Vietnamese in almost all situations. While English is learnt in school, for quite narrow domains, and for speaking only with very few people, its use in other situations, especially in rural and mountainous areas, would be strained and unnatural, in effect, artificial. How then can one communicate in a code which one is incompetent and does not normally use for practically any situation outside the classroom? Even in urban centers, how is one to speak of communication and to stimulate a desire to communicate in English when there is precious little use for English in his/her environment?

4. Conclusion

4.1. Summary

In this paper, I have discussed in some detail the rationale, the design and the implementation of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam. I have pointed out that there are good and compelling reasons – scientific, political, and practical – for schools in Vietnam to change to a new English language curriculum. I have also pointed out that the design of MoET's three English language curricula for schools in Vietnam is based on two well-established theoretical foundations which have been most widely used in designing communicative foreign language curricula and syllabuses in many countries around the world: the CEFR framework and the *Threshold Level English* framework. In examining these important frameworks, I have tried to establish their points of relevance to the design of MoET's three English language communicational curricula and the compilation of the new ten-year English textbook series for schools in Vietnam. The discussion of the design of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula has proved that these curricula are up-to-date and communication-based and are, for the most part, suitable to the English language teaching and learning context of Vietnamese schools at present and in the years to come. The presentation of MoET's 10-year English textbook series has demonstrated that this is a new textbook series, compiled in accordance with the goals, the objectives and the standards set forth in MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula. The presentation of the formative evaluation reports by MoET and other institutions has shown that MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula have gained many merits in terms of design and many achievements in terms of implementation. However, there still remain

problems that need to be addressed before they can be officially issued and put into use in all schools throughout Vietnam.

4.2. Recommendations

MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam are in essence the most important sub-project of the Vietnamese Government's Project, "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008-2020". Due to its nationwide proportion and scope, this sub-project will surely not stop at the pilot stage. To date, *The Pilot English Curriculum for Primary Schools in Vietnam* has been trialled for nearly seven years, *The Pilot English Curriculum for Lower Secondary Schools in Vietnam* and *The Pilot English Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Vietnam* have been trialled for nearly 5 years. It is therefore high time MoET officially promulgated these three important documents and put them for use on a large scale throughout Vietnam. However, to help MoET to do these things, a more comprehensive research project should be conducted to evaluate the strengths and drawbacks of the three curricula both in terms of design and their pilot implementation.[4]

For MoET's three pilot English language curricula to be put into use on a large scale throughout Vietnam, all the problems discussed in Section 3.3.5 should be solved, but the following are immediate:
1. Some of the contents of MoET's three pilot English language curricula and of the 10-year English textbook series should be improved to meet the requirements of international integration and the realities of English language learning and teaching in Vietnamese schools.
2. MoET's three pilot English language curricula for schools in Vietnam should be combined into one single curriculum, and to attract the engagement of overseas educational publishers in producing suitable English textbooks for schools in Vietnam, the document should be issued in both Vietnamese and English.
3. The remaining 42% of the primary English teachers, 44% of the lower secondary English teachers, and 52% of the upper secondary English teachers should be trained and retrained (if need be) for the required qualification standards so that they can function their role effectively in the new ten-year English language education programme.
4. English should be made a compulsory subject in the primary school from Grade 3 to Grade 5, and 7,000 to 8,000 primary teachers of English should be recruited to ensure that all primary students of these grades across the country receive 4 periods of English per week.

The trial phase of MoET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam is in essence a stepping stone preparing for them to be put for use on a large scale throughout Vietnam. This phase has revealed a number of problems that need to be solved. But it does not mean that we will stop, but instead we must move forward. After the pilot phase is completed and the three pilot curricula being combined into one single English language curriculum, the new ten-year English language curriculum for schools in Vietnam will be promulgated and put for use nationally. Every year, more than 15 million school pupils and approximately 80,000 teachers of English will use and benefit from this English language programme. So we should not play safe; we should not wait until all 80,000 teachers of English, all schools and classrooms across the country have reached the required standards.

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[4] This project is being carried out by a team of both local and international curriculum experts at MoET NFL 2020 Project Management Board.

Nevertheless, in order for the new English programme to be successful, the stages that follow the pilot phase should be carefully and frugally planned, and perhaps a "slowly but surely" policy should be exercised. It is hoped that despite the problems experienced in the trial stage and those that lie ahead, with the determination of the Government and the strong support from the society, teachers, students and parents, the new ten-year English language communicational curriculum for schools in Vietnam will achieve its final goal.

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BA CHƯƠNG TRÌNH TIẾNG ANH GIAO TIẾP THÍ ĐIỂM DÀNH CHO CÁC TRƯỜNG PHỔ THÔNG Ở VIỆT NAM CỦA BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO: CĂN CỨ THIẾT KẾ, CÁCH THIẾT KẾ VÀ TRIỂN KHAI THỰC HIỆN

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Tóm tắt: Trong bài viết này, chúng tôi sẽ thảo luận ba chương trình tiếng Anh giao tiếp thí điểm dành cho các trường phổ thông ở Việt Nam của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo. Để làm việc này, chúng tôi sẽ tổ chức bài viết thành bốn phần chính. Phần 1 nêu lí do chọn đề tài. Phần 2 trình bày các căn cứ để phát triển ba chương trình tiếng Anh giao tiếp thí điểm dành cho các trường phổ thông ở Việt Nam của Bộ Giáo dục và đào tạo. Phần 3 là trọng tâm của bài báo. Trong phần này, trước hết chúng tôi sẽ trình bày tổng quát nội dung của *Khung Tham chiếu chung châu Âu đối với Ngôn ngữ: Học tập, Giảng dạy, Đánh giá* (CEFR) và *Tiếng Anh bậc cơ sở* (Threshold Level English) - hai công trình nghiên cứu quan trọng đặt nền tảng lí luận cho việc phát triển ba chương trình tiếng Anh thí điểm dành cho các trường phổ thông ở Việt Nam của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo. Sau đó, chúng tôi sẽ mô tả chi tiết cách thiết kế của ba chương trình tiếng Anh thí điểm dành cho các trường phổ thông ở Việt Nam của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo và thảo luận về quá trình triển khai thực hiện dạy và học thí điểm ba chương trình này, nêu bật những thành tựu đạt được và những vấn đề gặp phải trong quá trình triển khai thực hiện thí điểm. Trong phần cuối cùng, sau khi tóm tắt lại những nội dung đã thảo luận, chúng tôi sẽ khuyến nghị tích hợp ba chương trình tiếng Anh giao tiếp thí điểm thành một chương trình thống nhất có thể được gọi là *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh* và đề xuất một số kiến nghị về những việc nên làm để khắc phục những tồn tại trước khi đưa *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh* vào sử dụng trên phạm vi cả nước.

Từ khoá: chương trình tiếng Anh giao tiếp thí điểm của Bộ GD & ĐT, khung CEFR, *Tiếng Anh bậc cơ sở* (Threshold Level English), Đề án Ngoại ngữ Quốc gia 2020 (Đề án NNQG 2020)

EFL STUDENTS' VOICES ON LEARNER AUTONOMY AT A UNIVERSITY IN THE MEKONG DELTA

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Abstract: The present study aimed to investigate students' learner autonomy (LA) at tertiary education in Vietnam. The study participants were 60 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students from a single rural university, South Vietnam. Narrative interview was used to collect the required data. The findings disclosed that most of them had positive views of LA as well as its role at higher education. Yet, in LA practices, they gained achievements of different degrees and related problems were found. Thereby, it implied that since LA was a long process, students should patiently keep on cultivating it by virtue of both their own sufficient ongoing efforts and instructor's supports in need.

Keywords: learner autonomy, student, EFL, learning, practice

1. Introduction

In the past years, researchers have studied the importance of autonomy in second language learning. Autonomy plays a vital role in language education because in any educational contexts, learners are autonomous when they establish their own learning goals and have responsibility for planning, managing and evaluating particular learning activities and the learning process overall. In the changing setting of English language teaching and learning in the 21st century, LA is deemed to be an important goal in the teaching and learning process. Hence, Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has conducted the Law of Higher Education to enhance the quality of the tertiary educational system approaching international standards in the 21st century. Recently, MOET has integrated and developed LA in the credit education system. A number of new policies have been issued.

At Article 40, the Vietnamese Education Law (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2005) mentions the requirements on contents and methods of education in higher education, in which LA plays a crucial role: "Training methods in higher education must be brought into play to foster the learners' ability to be active learners, to study and research by themselves, and to foster their practical abilities, self-motivation, creative thinking, and ambition" (p.13). Therefore, teaching and learning methods in tertiary education need to be promoted with three main aims: (1) fostering students to learn, self-research autonomously and actively, (2) increasing their creative thinking and practical abilities, (3) cultivating their self-motivation and ambition to achieve life-plans. What is more, in the developmental education policy in 2011-2020 period, accompanying the Decision number 711/QD-TTg, 13 June 2012 issued by Prime Minister (Vietnamese Prime Minister, 2012), the Government has identified to go on innovating teaching methods and assessment, training students

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with the aim of developing their activeness, creativity, and learning autonomy.

However, for certain reasons, traditional teaching and learning English, or teacher-centered approach in Mekong Delta still somehow exists, (especially in local colleges/ universities where most freshmen are at low academic level) although educational reforms of English subject in Vietnam have been conducted for over ten years. In the rapid technological information era these days, students can easily use a wide variety of technological devices for English learning (Hoang, 2017). As a consequence, teachers' role should change so as to help students to foster their LA ability effectively. Moreover, like many other countries in the world, Vietnam higher education has applied a credit system for recent years. Under this system, students are required to rely more on themselves in learning rather than on their instructors in classroom. The problem that appears here is how students are able to study independently of teachers given that they did not experience this during high school.

Although there have been a number of studies of EFL students' perceptions and practices regarding LA in Asian contexts generally and in Vietnam particularly (i.e. Balcikanli, 2010; Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys, 2002; Dang, 2012; Joshi, 2011; Le, 2013; Talley, 2014), their results have yet to be comprehensively generalized and final conclusions of this field have yet to be made. Hence, further research needs conducting about this field in such rural areas as in the Mekong Delta, South of Vietnam, especially in Dong Thap University (DTU). The present study makes an attempt to clarify this as well as to provide more insights about LA in the views of Vietnamese-speaking EFL students, who are actually the insiders of the LA developing process.

2. Literature review

2.1. Learner autonomy and theoretical framework for the study

A number of definitions of LA in language education have been established so far. Holec (1981) defined it as the "ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p.3). Wenden (1991) believes that autonomous learners are the ones who "have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher" (p.15). Similarly, Littlewood (1999) identifies autonomy should consist of two characteristics: (1) Learners should have a duty to their learning process; (2) Learners have to design their learning objectives, find their learning styles and assess their learning process. Little (1999) claims that autonomy is a popular kind of learning and can apply in any culture. Then, Little (2000) highlights the notions of individuality and independence as being the nucleus of the concept of LA. Holliday (2003) suggests a type of LA which learners can learn after school. Meanwhile, Nguyen (2014) states "learner autonomy is defined as learner's willingness, and ability to take responsibility, to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate his/her learning with tasks that are constructed in negotiation with and support from the teacher" (p.21). Alhaysony (2016) lists different definitions of LA defined by many language researchers and concludes that most of them have focused on learners' "ability, capacity, take responsibility, take control, learner's demonstration, attitude, willingness, mode of learning" (p.46).

Thus, current definitions of LA are *not* unanimously shared by researchers around the world, probably because LA is a multidimensional construct. It, however, unanimously includes (1) the learner's *awareness of his/her learning responsibility*

at the baseline dimension; and at the higher ones (2) *ability and willingness to set learning plans/objectives,* (3) *choosing methods, strategies, resources to perform learning actions with and without instructor assistance,* and (4) *evaluating/self-assessing learning processes and outcomes.*

With the purpose of investigating EFL students' perceptions and practices regarding LA, this LA framework of four major dimensions is chosen for this study.

2.2. Learn autonomy role in EFL higher education

Learner autonomy is recently one of the central topics and a major objective, especially in higher education (Sinclair, 2000). Moreover, LA can make learners gain their creation and independence at high levels. In recent years, there has been a growing body of research evidence about LA benefits and the importance of fostering it in foreign/second language education. More specifically, Dafei's (2007) results proved that learners' English competence had a close-knit relationship with their LA ability. It means that when learners have good LA ability, they will learn language better and vice versa. In Balcikanli's (2010) study, when students had chances to decide their learning process, they showed their positive attitude and it made their learning more and more focused and purposeful. However, it was difficult for them to involve in making decisions on some aspects such as choosing time and place of a class, or selecting materials in learning because they were not allowed.

Additionally, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) found out that 93.4% of teachers agreed LA contributes to language learners' success remarkably. In addition, Dang (2012) indicates LA "directly contributes to both processes and outcomes of learning activities" (p.26), helps "students to face the challenge of technical difficulties", and "is especially important

for knowledge construction and sustainable learning in today's globalized world" (p.27). And for Bajrami (2015), LA has promised "the positive outcomes at the university level, such as flexibility, adaptation, self-initiative, and self-direction" (p.149). Also, Duong and Seepho (2014) indicate that LA has had an important role in both academic study and teaching practices in the 21st century step by step. According to new standards in education today, students are taught not only knowledge but also the methods of LA. In a new millennium, a modern education of a country should give a lot of attention to the complete student like a thoughtful, emotional, creative individual who has become a responsible citizen of that country.

And one more major reason for continuing exploring and developing LA at tertiary education is for the purpose of life-long learning for students. According to Thomson (1996, p.78), language learning is "a life-long endeavor". LA lays the foundation of lifelong learning. Jacobs and Farrell (2001) show that LA emphasizes the process of learning and students have to "see learning as a lifelong process" (p.5). Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) consider LA "prepares individuals for lifelong learning" (p.3). Azizi (2014) indicates that LA is "a matter of lifelong process rather than a need for a particular situation or course" (p.130). In addition, LA is the necessary base of learners' lifelong learning process after they graduate university. It is of course possible to apply this idea to English lifelong learning.

Recently, some Vietnamese researchers have studied LA in language learning in different approaches in the Vietnamese university context. More specifically, Trinh (2005) focused LA on curriculum for EFL students at Can Tho University. He used a three-dimension model of planning, monitoring, and regulating to conduct his study. Next, Nguyen (2009) worked on creating

autonomous students basing on learner-based approach and the task-specific training, and focused on strategy-based instruction by using a model with two dimensions, namely self-initiation and self-regulation in Writing 4. After that, Dang (2012) explored EFL students' perceptions and performances of LA in online and offline learning environments through developing a four-dimension model, namely monitoring, initiating, goal-setting and evaluating, and using Information Communication Technologies. Moreover, Le (2013) studied Vietnamese students' belief about and performance of LA, and designed an integration between learner training with language courses of Listening and Speaking 3 at a private university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Additionally, Nguyen (2014) presented EFL teachers' beliefs about LA in university level in Hanoi. She found that nearly 40% of participants considered that their students could manage their own learning process. Up to 85% of them believed that they had a duty to decide learning objectives, to choose learning content as well as to evaluate students' learning process.

The studies cited above have focused on promoting LA in main big cities such as Can Tho City, Ho Chi Minh, and Ha Noi in Vietnam. Although they have different approaches toward the ongoing issue, one common thing among them is the concern related to application of LA into the Vietnamese context. Besides, those studies used questionnaires and interviews, especially semi-structured for focus groups to explore the findings. From the above research results, it is currently raising the concern among EFL teachers (the present author included) at DTU whether or not these growing reported results through narratives are reasonably and comprehensively applied to the case of EFL students at this rural university, and if based on the 4-dimensional LA framework, where

do they appear to demonstrate? This concern has motivated the present study.

3. Research method

3.1. Research questions

To its end, the present study needs to answer the three following questions:
1. What do EFL students perceive of LA?
2. What have they done to develop LA?
3. How do students self-assess their LA?

3.2. Participants

They were 60 English majors from Faculty of Foreign Language Education, Dong Thap University, South Vietnam (www.dthu.edu.vn), where the author has been working as an EFL lecturer for nearly 10 years. They were 6 males and 54 females from 18 to 22 years old (which represented well a male-female student ratio in this faculty in the current years), including 15 freshmen, 15 sophomores, 15 juniors, and 15 seniors (2016-2017 academic year). After being fully informed of the purpose of this study by the author, all of them volunteered to join and answered narrative interview questions relating to both their perceptions of LA and what they had done to develop LA in their learning. It should be noted that none of them had ever attended any training programs exclusively on EFL students' LA.

3.3. Data collection instrument

Why is narrative interview used?

As a research tool in a qualitative research, narrative interviews are considered as "unstructured tools, in-depth with specific features, which emerge from the life stories of both the respondent and cross-examined the situational context" (Muylaert et al, 2014, p.185). Additionally, they confirm that narrative interview is a research tool to be able to contribute to a specific study area and someone's critical reflection. Furthermore, given that they are all peers

from the same university, group interview is clearly a more favorable environment for their reflection than individual interview because they tend to positively stimulate one another to talk. Meanwhile, no previous LA studies (Dang, 2012; Le, 2013, Nguyen, 2009) used exclusively narrative interview. Thus, exclusively using narrative interview in groups of five as a data collection tool (with a larger number of participants, mentioned just above) made a principal difference between this study and the previous ones. Additionally, the reason for narrative interview to be used was to help the current researcher explore EFL students' perceptions and practices based on the 4-dimensional LA framework as presented above. Interviewing questions were divided into three parts: (1) students' perceptions of LA in language learning at higher education, (2) students' reflections on their LA practices, (3) students' self-assessment of their LA ability (see Appendix). It aimed to have EFL students tell what they thought about LA and what they implemented LA activities outside classroom. The information collected from the students' anecdotes helps to answer the three research questions above.

3.4. Procedure

All 60 students took part in the interview face-to-face in groups of five about one hour for each. Students were asked to share their cognition of LA and tell how they practiced autonomous learning in their early and current learning. For convenience and absolute understanding, the interview was administered in Vietnamese, and was all recorded by the researcher. Every participant was coded. For instance, student No.1, No.2, No.3 was coded S1, S2, S3 and so on. Every group recording was saved in a separate file. After the transcription finished, it was sent back to the participants, respectively, in both Vietnamese and English version by the researcher for confirmation and back-checking. The transcription was then read carefully several times by the current researcher to code meaningful categories. Then, based on above framework, transcribed and translated information from narrative interviews of EFL students was being analyzed to respond question 1, 2, and 3. These qualitative data were interpreted their meaning to be considered the reality of how students understand the concept, the role of LA at university environment and what they did or did not carry out LA outside classroom.

4. Findings

What do students perceive of LA?

In the interview, 60 participants showed their LA perceptions in three main concepts as "*ability*", "*responsibility*", and "*attitude*".

First, for them, LA means "*ability*" to analyze their needs, set up objectives and design clear study plans for gaining high results (5% of interviewed students), to arrange time to self-study (5%), to control and divide time to learn each skill of English equally (3.3%), to balance time to study inside and outside classes, and join other daily activities (3.3%), or learn to know scientific learning methods (1.7%).

Second, it involves their "*responsibility*" to autonomously prepare and search learning materials/resources and before or after classes for better class-participations and understandings, especially English language skills and culture (5%), to watch English movies or music to develop new words (3.3%), to practice English with foreigners in case they come across them (5%), to make groups for self-study (3.3%), to actively participate in school extra-curriculum activities (3.3%), even to consult upper-class students for learning experiences (1.7%), and make reflections on what has been done for reinforcements (1.7%).

Third, it also includes their "*attitude*" towards English learning. More specifically,

students should have passion and enthusiasm in learning autonomously (1.7%), be able to control themselves in all aspects of learning achievements instead of relying totally on instructors (1.7%), i.e. carry out autonomous learning without waiting for their teachers' instructions (1.7%).

When asked about the importance of LA to EFL students during university life and later, all 60 informants (100%) agreed that it was significantly important.

Their typical accounts are "*I think autonomy is prerequisite to determine a student's learning quality. Through it, students can find more knowledge resources than learning in the classroom*" (S16), "*Learner autonomy occupies 90% learning results of students as well as makes a chance for them to get a job. If we have learner autonomy ability, we will have benefits at work in the future*" (S34), "*Up to 80% of English-major students' success will be determined by their learner autonomy ability, and even when at work in the future*" (S59), "*If they [English-major students] do not learn autonomously, not self-research, and not self-find materials on the Internet, they cannot gain their learning objectives established at the beginning of the course*" (S15), or "*If students learn it autonomously, their ability of using English language is getting gradually better and better because learning English is a long process*" (S52).

Most of them concurred that teachers could not convey all relevant knowledge in class and the information or the lecture that teachers delivered to students was just basic knowledge because of the limited time; therefore, they had to self-study at home to improve their learning results. And some stated that teachers only orientated their learning methods or guided them how to learn and thus if they did not have their own LA ability, they could not be excellent in English or widen their knowledge though they were taught by good teachers and that teachers

hardly understood all about their students' learning ability and students themselves knew well where their learning level was; therefore, autonomy helped them improve their weaknesses as well as develop their strengths.

What have students done to develop LA?

The most interesting section in the interview process was that every and each student took turn to narrate their real LA activities at university. They all eagerly shared ways to learn English outside classes, set up goals, plan study, revise previous lessons, arrange time reasonably to learn, and look for materials. The following are typical ones.

For S11, she is a sample of doing homework more than other LA activities. She practiced listening to PET, KET, videos, music much, and watching movies in English. She rarely practiced writing skills, but often did TOEFL reading tests. She just revised grammar because she had no difficulty in learning it. For Speaking, she imitated English songs and found some topics to practice. Furthermore, she did homework given by her teachers and other exercises found by herself. She spent more time on doing homework more than others. She just set up general goals such as getting A marks or winning a scholarship. Her long-term goals were to graduate from university in time with a good Bachelor Certificate and to get a job. Additionally, she could balance her time for her daily activities and her study; however, she thought she arranged her time for learning autonomously and other activities unreasonably because she still stayed up late to learn her lessons. She found materials recommended by her teachers such as englishtips.org, Cambridge website, Oxford website. Normally, after school, she revised her lessons again and when she had tests she would review them again.

Meanwhile, S16 is a typical example for practicing Speaking more. He had a study plan at the middle of the first semester.

He practiced Speaking by means of ELSA Speaker and English-English dictionaries. He listened to them and repeated. He analyzed and memorized each type of writing; then practiced writing introduction and conclusion as well as body paragraphs. Besides, he watched Mr. Dan's videos and listened to English songs but did not understand them completely. When coming across new words, he looked up them in the dictionary as well as their synonyms, antonyms, and usages. He said that he was finding the most effective way to learn grammar since he found that learning grammar by heart was not effective. Therefore, he had to find some tips to memorize it more deeply. Besides, the time he learned autonomously was not fixed because of his timetable in classes, daily activities, university or class activities, so he practiced LA about thirty minutes in the morning, and thirty minutes in the afternoon. In general, he spent about two hours of four days a week learning autonomously.

For S36, he seems to be a student using many types of learning resources. He explored various resources for learning: read BBC news, listen to tapes in textbooks or IELTS books of Cambridge from volume one to volume nine, use Cambly software to practice speaking three times a week (The software allowed him to speak directly to foreigners from seven to ten minutes), and go to the library to read topics, write them, and submit them on Making Mate web to be corrected. On the contrary, S17 was very conscious of her child-like learning style in that she watched English videos and repeated, and listened to English stories to relax. And this is how S22 learned English vocabulary: he wrote one word he did not know, and then omitted vowels; then wrote many words and did the same. After ten minutes, he remembered vowels and filled them again. This made him impressive and easy to learn vocabulary. But S23 shared a different way to learn English vocabulary: she wrote new words on small pieces of paper and stuck them on the wall so that she could see them to memorize.

When asked about advantages of practicing LA activities outside classroom, all 60 students responded that they achieved a lot. First, they got new knowledge, websites, and materials (21.7% of students) because they learned what they liked first, and they understood what they liked faster (10%). Second, they could memorize lessons more clearly, deeply, and longer, and what they found when they learned autonomously belonged to theirs (15%). Third, they felt learn autonomously at home more comfortably and effectively than in class (13.3%). Next, learning English autonomously made them feel good and inspired (11.7%). Besides, they saw that they actively used their time (13.3%), and increased self-consciousness (3.3%). They could find which fields they were weak to improve (8.3%), ask their friends (5%), and summarize their lessons (1.7%). Also, they gained autonomous learning experience (6.7%), more effective learning methods (3.3%) and problem-solving skills (6.7%).

With regard to possible difficulties, many of them found that it was hard for them to self-assess their LA assignments or to ask whom for help. For instance, S27 said that after writing papers/essays, she needed someone to correct them to help her know where she was wrong, but she had no one. Or when making an essay outline, she thought of many ideas and selected main ones put into three body paragraphs; however, when writing essays she only used the words she already knew before. After that she opened her notebook and saw that she wrote good words in it, but could not apply or use them. Thus, she felt her memory which was not bad, and did not know why it was. So, she felt somehow angry at herself, and had no solution to that problem.

For S31, she could not learn in groups for four skills of English because she and her friends had different timetables, while S39 revealed that although she liked to read bilingual stories such as Harry Potter any time during the day and understood them, she could not answer the questions that followed. Interestingly, S58 confessed that since there was no one controlling her, she easily neglected her learning duty or plans. Or they were easily attracted by other inducements (28.3%) such as chatting, going out with friends, surfing webs, Facebook, Zale and so on.

Next, some students considered that their alone learning was not effective, especially in speaking skill (13.3%) and their living environment was noisy (5%). They did not have enough techniques to search materials in the library (1.7%). Or when they wanted to share or ask something with their friends, they were not available online (1.7%).

How do students self-assess their LA?

Most of the interviewed students evaluated their LA poor (13 out of 60, 21.6%) or around average (over 50%), while the rest (7/60, 11.7%) self-assessed their LA good. Some detailed accounts are provided below.

For S53, she felt her LA ability was effective since when undertaking her study plans, she gained certain promotions. In the same line, S54 found that LA implementation enabled her to reap better learning results. By virtue of LA practices, she usually discovered something new and interesting. That stimulated her to explore it more and increased her LA time. Meanwhile, S59 explained her increasing LA efficacy in the sense that despite her poor LA capability, she found her LA ability during the late college semesters was increased significantly more than when she was as a high school student. At high-school time, the concept of LA seemed very strange to her. Similarly, S57 said that comparing with the first year; she self-assessed her LA ability better in her second year. Unfortunately, S52 and 60 considered that their LA ability was ineffective because they had no clear learning goals, were unable to successfully fulfill study plans as expected or were somehow affected by unwanted incidents like health problems, extra-curriculum activities, family or friendship affairs. Thus, S10 admitted that LA is crucial but difficult to put into practice.

The data of this study were analyzed according to the framework of four dimensions mentioned above. The results proved that this framework is completely suitable for this research to investigate EFL students' perceptions and practices regarding LA.

5. Discussion and implications

The findings confirm that all the students have clear insights of LA as *ability*, *responsibility*, and *attitude* in language learning (at the baseline dimension of LA). In other words, they know what they should do to be EFL autonomous learners at university. Furthermore, all of them are aware of the vital role of LA for students in higher education and after they graduate from university (i.e. life-long learning).

At the higher dimensions (*ability and willingness to set learning plans/objectives; and choosing methods, strategies, resources to perform learning actions with and without instructor assistance*), they did set up their own learning objectives, their learning plans (though not all of them functioned well); they actively chose suitable methods, strategies, materials subject to their learning styles and looked for materials and learnt by themselves without waiting for teachers' instruction or request; they autonomously practiced four skills of English, learnt new words and grammar structures as well, got prepared before class, and asked teachers or others in case of having problems; they took part in college extra-activities, and had self-consciousness in learning. These findings echo those in the previous studies (i.e. Azizi,

2014; Balcikanli, 2010; Chan et al, 2002; Dang, 2012; Joshi, 2011; Le, 2013).

However, basing on Nunan's (1997) five-level sample of learner action continuum running from awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence, it cannot deny that EFL students' LA ability at DTU just got levels of awareness and involvement of LA. In other words, most students were aware of what they should do to become autonomous learners and involved in some LA activities while a few of them got level "intervention" like modifying and adapting the goals and content of the learning program. Also, Scharle and Szabó (2000) when discussing the growth of autonomy introduced a three-stage model as "raising awareness", "changing attitudes", and "transferring roles" (p.1). According to Bodenhausen and Hugenberg (2009), one's perception guides his/her actions. From the results of this theme, although students had their positive perceptions of LA, its vital role at higher education, as well as advantages of LA in learning English, they have not gained the highest rest. They had their certain difficulties to conduct LA activities outside the classroom as S10, S59, and S60 stated above. Moreover, Littlewood (1999) developed definition of learner autonomy in two levels of proactive autonomy and reactive autonomy. He indicates that East Asian students own reactive autonomy as Western ones get proactive autonomy. In the way of proactive autonomy, learners work individually and set up their "directions which they themselves have partially created" while reactive autonomy "which does not create its own directions but, once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal" (p.75). So, in case of EFL students at DTU, they still possessed reactive autonomy like ones somewhere in East Asia.

In comparing with the findings of the previous studies of LA in Vietnamese setting, this study has obtained its own values in this field. For example, the number of interviewed students in this study is 60, more than all previous others and they were from freshmen to seniors while Nguyen (2009) and Dang (2012) both interviewed 11 ones; and Le (2013) interviewed 18 ones in three focus groups. Interviewing 60 students helped the current researcher get huge, various data to explore and then to give reliable results for this study. Additionally, students could learn LA methods each other when interviewing groups of five students was conducted. Next, researching purposes of using interview tool in those studies are different. Nguyen (2009) used interview to ask students about three purposes: (1) their strengths and weaknesses in learning English and their understanding of "student and teacher responsibilities in learning process" (p.121), (2) their "writing behaviors", (3) their activities to enhance English inside and outside the classroom while Dang (2012) reported his interview data to discuss effect of preference on LA, effect of motivation on LA, and effect of attitude on LA. Also, Le (2013) asked her interviewed students about their assessment of the effectiveness in implementing the learning contract and writing the learning diary. Meanwhile, narrative interview in this study was used with the aim of creating many opportunities for students to talk about their LA activities, their benefits, their difficulties, their needs, as well as their self-assessment of their LA activities more clearly, in details and emotionally which the researcher maybe did not find in questionnaire. The results of this study showed that students reported their LA process in different ways depending on their learning styles and their kinds of multiple intelligences they possess. In addition, although they had a common in practicing

four skills of learning English, vocabulary, and grammar, they conducted LA activities according to their hobbies, their needs, their strengths, and their weaknesses, and had their own autonomous learning method as shown above. This cannot be found in questionnaire or in previous studies.

Thus, EFL learners, including those from DTU, now have positive views on LA values. Thereby, the present study also reflects EFL learners' current vision of the necessity to develop LA one way or another. As mentioned above, although EFL students from DTU entered college education with low entrance grades and none of them have attended any exclusive training on LA training courses, they are all aware of its crucial role and are trying their best to develop it in language learning. And gladly, they did acknowledge achievements of different degrees thanks to LA practices at the college setting, which was unknown to them in the previous education. As a result, they are all moving on the right tracks of LA development, though not at the same pace and level. This is quite understandable because LA ability is made up of multiple dimensions and two students are not exactly the same in terms of personal traits, learning styles and characteristics.

Thanks to narrative interview, the researcher could find out learners' experiences at real school contexts because it gave a clear, deep, real, particular understanding of complicated problems or situations (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the present findings also confirm that there still exists quite a noted mismatch between what students perceived and what they actually obtained from LA developments through their stories about their perceptions and practices of LA activities. Most of them responded in the interview that they did not know how to set up their specific learning goals at the beginning in the first year or they only established general goals.

Normally, after one or two first semesters, they began to set up their specific goals. A large number of them did not have their own learning plan daily or weekly. There are some students who designed their study plans but did not make it effective because they did not manage their time for these plans or were attracted by other unplanned activities or lacked sufficient efforts and strong will. They confided that they easily felt bored when learning alone. Specially, when they surfed the Internet, they were easily attracted by social websites such as chatting with their friends on Facebook instead of paying attention to their learning practice. In addition, most of them have not known what websites on the Internet are reliable to study. One more difficult thing they met was that they had no one to share their problems or to correct or explain their writings or their LA exercises or practice tests. Clearly, the relationship between their perceptions and their practices is not strong. All this, on the one hand, says that the present students appeared to be proceeding to dimension 4 of LA ability, where they self-assessed and reflected on the outcomes realizing relevant constraints. On the other hand, it shows that LA does not mean an absolute absence of teacher role, especially at the first college stages.

As educators, teachers should understand learners' perceptions and their needs towards LA to be able to promote LA in many aspects. It is implied that EFL students at DTU have lacked LA skills because they were not trained those ones at schools before. To solve these problems, consequently, it is advisable that at the very first semester of the training course, EFL students should be made fully aware of LA by instructors in charge, specifically they should be guided (1) how to set up feasible learning goals, based on a thorough analysis of their individual needs, strengths and weaknesses, (2) make compatible plans down to monthly, weekly and daily ones if possible,

and appropriately choose learning methods, strategies, activities and materials for the set goals, (3) consciously and closely monitor learning processes to constantly ensure things going right, (4) patiently work hard and build effective ways to combat stress, boredom and other unexpected problems or out-of-plan inducements, (5) frequently make reflections, self-assessments and draw experiences from what have been done.

Secondly, this guidance should be regularly repeated throughout the training course to reinforce LA ability. Thirdly, instructors should always get prepared to willingly provide further guidelines, assistance and encouragements in case students get astray, feel demotivated and search for help or feedback on their ways because LA is a long-term process, even throughout an entire life.

6. Conclusion

The present study has provided evidence about EFL students' perceptions of LA role and their practice of LA in the Mekong Delta context. Although placed in a rural area and never trained exclusively on it before, they all have positive perceptions towards the LA role for college success and later life, and fully awareness of their learning responsibility. Furthermore, they are trying various ways to reach the set learning goals. Since LA is multidimensional and developed throughout one's college time and later life, what the interviewed students have gained is rather limited and it also uncovers spaces where they face problems and need supports and feedback. Thus, the present study maintains the instructor's clear, specific and helpful guidance, not only right at the beginning at but also during the training program whenever students, especially less strong ones, are in need because most students trust their teachers and think that they can learn something new from them (Wang, 2010), and because while students are still in short

of self-discipline in learning, teachers might interfere to guarantee that learning happens (Yao & Li, 2017).

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QUAN ĐIỂM CỦA SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH VỀ TỰ CHỦ HỌC TẬP TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở ĐỒNG BẰNG SÔNG CỬU LONG

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm khảo sát thực trạng tự học của sinh viên đại học ở Việt Nam. 60 sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh của một trường đại học vùng sâu ở miền Nam, Việt Nam đã tham gia trả lời cho nghiên cứu này. Phỏng vấn dạng tường thuật đã được sử dụng để thu thập các dữ liệu cần thiết. Kết quả của nghiên cứu cho thấy hầu hết sinh viên có nhận thức tích cực về tự học và vai trò của tự học ở bậc đại học. Tuy nhiên, sinh viên đạt được những kết quả học tập khác nhau và có những khó khăn trong khi thực hiện tự học. Từ những kết quả này, nghiên cứu chỉ ra rằng vì tự học là một quá trình lâu dài, sinh viên nên tiếp tục kiên nhẫn nỗ lực tự học và nhờ giảng viên hỗ trợ khi cần thiết.

Từ khóa: tự học, tiếng Anh, sinh viên, học tập, thực hành

APPENDIX
INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

I. Students' perceptions of definition, role, and demonstration of learner autonomy

1. How do you understand the term "learner autonomy" in case of EFL students?

2. What do you think about the role of learner autonomy to English majored students at Dong Thap University in the integrated time today and when you are employed to be English teachers or officers in the future?

II. Students' practices regarding leaner autonomy

3. Could you share what and how you have learned English autonomously in details? How much time do you spend on learning English every day out of class? How often? Have you set your goals in learning English? How? When? Have you planned your English study? How? When? Can you arrange reasonable time for your English study and your life? How?

 How can you search English materials for your study? How do you revise your old English lessons before every test/exam? And when?

4. Which advantages do you meet when learning English autonomously? Give reasons.

5. Which disadvantages do you meet when learning English autonomously? Give reasons.

III. Students' self-assessment of their LA

6. You self-assess your LA in which level: poor, average, good, or excellent.

TRANSLATING PROPER NAMES IN A LITERARY TEXT: A CASE OF HARRY POTTER NOVEL IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: Translating literary proper names is regarded as one of the challenging but inspiring issues in the field of Translation Studies. Given this context, the present paper aims to analyze the strategies undertaken by the translator when rendering proper names from the English literary text "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (2014) into its Vietnamese translation "Harry Potter và Hòn đá phù thuỷ" (2016). To fulfill the research purpose, a descriptive and comparative analysis was made between the source and target text. The analysis of translation strategies was grounded on the theoretical frame of Davis (2003). The findings reveal that the translator adopted the strategy of preservation for most of the proper names in the chosen literary text. Several recommendations for translating proper names in the literary texts are finally drawn out.

Keywords: translating proper names, literary text

1. Rationale

Hermans (1988, p.12) accentuates that proper names "occupy an exceptional position with regard to the language system". Accordingly, translating literary proper names is one of the challenging but inspiring issues in the field of Translation Studies. It is sufficiently challenging when it comes to the translation of the phenomenal Harry Potter novel because this literary text embraces a myriad of unique features, including literary meaningful proper names. Given this context, the paper aims to analyze the translation strategies adopted by the translator in rendering the proper names from the English source text "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (2014) into the target culture of Vietnam.

2. Literature review

2.1. Literary proper names

According to the Oxford Dictionary of English (hereafter ODE), a proper name is broadly perceived as a name for an individual person, a place, or an organization having an initial capital letter. In literary texts, proper names merit close attention because of their roles to the characterization, their functions and their effects to the entire text. Therefore, Hermans (1988) generally classifies proper names into conventional and loaded names in which loaded names are commonly employed in literary texts.

More specifically, Fernandes (2006) groups literary proper names into three categories, including semantically loaded names, semiotically loaded names, and phonologically loaded names. Firstly, semantically loaded names display the distinctive qualities of the characters and are common in allegorical literary works. In other words, the name of the character reflects his or her personality, furnishes the readers with obvious clues about the destiny of the character or discloses the way the storyline develops.

Secondly, semiotically loaded names might associate with mythology, social

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class, nationality and gender. As an example, "Minerva" in Harry Potter novel is imbued with a mythological Latin name for Athena who is a cerebral Roman goddess of wisdom. Besides, names carrying semiotic meaning disclose the gender of the character. For example, it is possible for the readers to notice that Harry is a male name, and Ginny is a female name. Names carrying semiotic meaning might suggest social class and nationality. For instance, Sir Nicolas De Mimsy-Porpington is a name of aristocratic class, and "Padma" and "Parvati Patil" are from Indian.

Thirdly, phonologically loaded names are comprised of imitative and phonesthetic names. Regarding the former, imitative names make use of onomatopoeia. For instance, Mrs. Norris is a cat in the Harry Potter saga, and her name imitates the sounds she emits when she is irritated. As for the latter, phonesthetic names are grounded on the employment of sounds or sound clusters, which firmly links with a meaning. For instance, the cluster /gl/ are in glisten, glow, glimmer, glitter, etc., words that are commonly connected with light.

Concerning the literary text "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (hereafter HPPS), the findings from previous studies (Inggs, 2003; Wyler, 2003; Nilsen and Nilsen, 2005; Nilsen and Nilsen, 2009; Brondsted and Dollerup, 2010) confirm that the proper names in HPPS demonstrate the multilayered meanings to develop the general theme of the story. The names in HPPS fulfills the manifold functions of provoking connotations, specifying the roles of the characters, providing the portrayal of individual traits, creating the aesthetic appeal of a literary text, entertaining and assisting the readers in absorbing an abundance of names.

Overall, the author agrees that proper names are of significance in literary texts. As a magnetic field attracting other characteristics that constitute the character (Barthes, 1970), proper names serve as an ideal vehicle of characterization. Wellek and Warren (1976, p.219) adopt the similar standpoint that proper names in literary texts serve as "a kind of vivifying, animizing and individuating". Manini (2014) also reaffirms the close bond between the personal attributes and the character names to achieve artistic expression in the narrative fiction.

2.2. Strategies to translate proper names

In the present paper, the analysis of translation strategies is grounded on the theoretical frame of Davis (2003). Her model of translation strategies has generally been conducted to deal with culture-specific references in Harry Potter saga in the language pair of French-German and Italian-Chinese. Since proper name is a sub-category of culture-specific references (Klingberg, 1986; Newmark, 1988; Aixela, 1996), the frame of Davis is adopted for the translation strategy analysis of proper names in this paper.

Davis (2003) proposes seven strategies, including preservation, addition, globalization, localization, transformation, creation and omission. Regarding preservation, there are two types of preservation. The first type is keeping the original non-translated in the target culture, which is similar to the strategy of transference offered by Newmark (1988). The second type is literal translation without any attached explanation. As for "Addition", the translator preserves the original item but adds the text with the essential explanation. The additional information could be inserted in the main text or outside the text as a footnote or as a glossary at end of the book. "Globalization" means replacing the cultural item with a more neutral and general term so that it is accessible to the readers from a wider range of cultural backgrounds. Localization is the opposite of Globalization. By adopting localization, the translator "anchors a

reference firmly" in the target culture rather than providing "culture-free description" (Davis, 2003, p.83). Transformation means adapting the original that goes beyond globalization or localization. Finally, "Creation" touches on the creation of a reference that is different from the source reference. The aforementioned translation strategies are grouped under the overall pattern of source and target text-oriented translation as follows:

been translated into more than 73 languages with over 400 million copies sold.

To fulfill the research purpose, a brief overview on HPPS is provided. Rowling creates the narrative of the protagonist Harry Potter, a young wizard studying first year at the Hogwarts School of Wizards. Harry faces the resurrection of the dark wizard Lord Voldemort who killed his parents. The wizard world is separated into two sides representing the utmost good and the utmost evil during an on-going
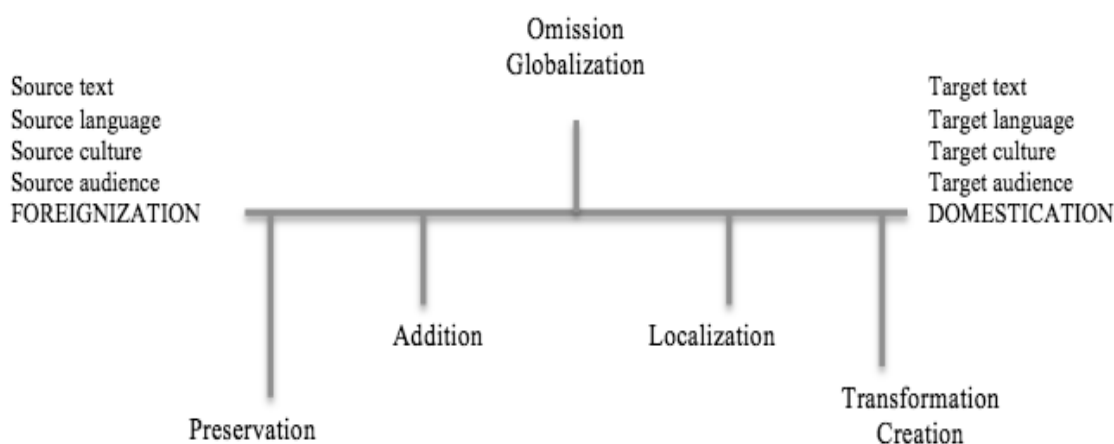
Figure 1. The spectrum of translation strategies of Davis (2003)
as cited in Jaleniauskiene & Cicelite (2009, p. 33)

3. Methodology

The present paper is a descriptive and comparative analysis of translation strategies in dealing with literary proper names in "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (HPPS). The English literary text chosen is "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (2014) by J. K. Rowling, and its comparative Vietnamese translation is "Harry Potter và Hòn đá phù thuỷ" (2016) translated by Lý Lan. Both Harry Potter saga and "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (2014) have gained huge popularity and notable literary prizes across the globe since 1997, which clearly merits the research attention. The original has

battle. Harry, his best friends, and the headmaster Dumbledore of Hogwarts school represent the good wizards, whereas the evil side gets support from the Lord Voldemort, the Malfoys, and their friends. The narrative covers the subject matters of boarding school life, mysteries, adventures, battle between the good and the evil that are situated in both the real-life British background and the fantasy wizard community.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Proper names of students

The comparative analysis reveals that the strategy of "preservation" was adopted for most of the proper names of students in HPPS. In HPPS, there are conventional

names of minor characters merely performing the referential function, serving to create the milieu of the Hogwarts' school environment. They are Abbott Hanna, Adrian Pucey, Alicia Spinnet, Angelina Johnson, Bones Susan, Boot Terry, Brocklehurst Mandy, Dean Thomas, Brown Lavender, Mulstrode Millicent, Finch Fletchley, Finnigan Seamus, Marcus Flint, Parkinson, Perks Sally Anne, and Parvati Patil. These conventional names appear once when the Sorting Hat classifies students into four Houses at Hogwarts school. It is stressed that these names merely play the role of creating an overall atmosphere of the boarding school, and the functions of these names are mere identification. Accordingly, the preservation of these names brings the exotic scent and foreignness to the target readers.

More significantly, there are loaded names not only performing the function of identification but also bearing connotations in HPPS. Likewise, the strategy of preservation was adopted for the rendition of these names into the Vietnamese culture. They are the names of the protagonist and other major characters such as "Harry", "Hermione", "Ron", "Draco Malfoy", which stores information about the distinctive traits of the characters. The author believes that the strategy of preservation in these cases possibly makes the target readers difficult to get accessible to the intended implications.

Take the name of the protagonist "Harry" as an example. First, it is a prototypical British name and among the top five most trendy baby names in Britain (Office for National Statistics, 2011). For this reason, the author agrees that the Vietnamese readers are sent abroad to savor the British flavor through the strategy of preservation. Nevertheless, the name "Harry" rings a bell with the British readers of a medieval English form of Henry, a favorite name of English rulers from Henry

I (1087-1121) to Henry VIII (1509-1547). There comes an anonymous poem about the Kings and Queens of England taught at English schools to show that Harry is a common name of English rulers:

Willie, Willie, Harry, Ste,
Harry, Dick, John, Harry three;
One two three Neds, Richard two,
Harrys four five six, ... then who?
Edwards four five, Dick the bad,
Harrys (twain), Ned (the lad)…[1]

Evidently, the sense of leadership runs deep in the name Harry, supplying the readers with the clues about the destiny of the protagonist. As this name is continuously repeated all over the story, it brings a fragrance reminiscent of the Britishness and evokes the sense of leadership of a great hero. Therefore, the strategy of preservation might challenge the general readers in the target Vietnamese culture in interpreting such positive connotation connected with the name.

As Harry's best friends, the names of "Hermione" and "Ron" should be taken into account. Historically, the name "Hermione" carries mythological connotation. "Hermione" is a derivative feminine inflection of the name Hermes of a Greek god. In an interview[2] with the author of Harry Potter novel, Rowling (1999) also confirms that she borrows her character names from medieval saints. Additionally, Hermione rings a bell with the British readers of the daughter of the King Menelaus of Sparta and Helen of Troy. For the educated Britons, this name alludes to the wife of the King Sicily in the masterpiece "The Winter's Tale" of William Shakespeare (Brondsted and Dollerup, 2010). For the name "Ron" (Ronald), there exists a close bond between the name and the role of this

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[1] Retrieved 25th January from http://www.britannia.com/history/h6.html
[2] Retrieved 22 January 2018 from http://www.accio-quote.org/articles/list1999.html

character in the narrative. Ronald[3] is derived from a Scottish name "Rögnvaldr", which alludes to the adviser of a ruler. This name clearly reflects the role of Ron who serves as an adviser of the protagonist. Meanwhile the strategy of preservation effectively escorts the Vietnamese readers to the European foreign culture, it possibly makes them demanding to decode the purposeful meanings embedded in these names.

The negative connotation is vividly evoked from the name "Draco Malfoy", one of Harry's enemies at Hogwarts wizard school. Likewise, this name was preserved in the target culture. "Draco" remains deeply rooted in Latin for dragon that reminds the readers of "dracula or dragons" (Oittinen, 2008, p. 125). In Western culture, dragon is associated with the evil (Compagnone and Danesi, 2013; Nguyễn Văn Trào, 2014) because it stems from the dragon image of Satan in the Bible. Furthermore, "dragon" has the disapproving connotation especially in British English, referring to a woman who behaves in an aggressive and frightening manner (ODE). Concerning "malfoy", "mal" is a prefix to provoke something bad in English, and "foy" means "faith" in French. There are sufficient examples containing the prefix "mal" to convey the meaning of "bad" such as "malnutrition-a poor condition of health", "maltreat-to be very cruel to a person or an animal", "malpractice-careless behavior while in a professional job", "malfunction-the failure of a machine to work correctly", "malodorous-having an unpleasant smell". On the one hand the strategy of preservation serves to perpetuate the exoticism of the original, but on the other hand it can be tough for the general recipients in Vietnam to explore the semantic implications conveyed through this meaningful name.

4.2. Proper names of Hogwarts professors

HPPS is situated in the context of a magical boarding school; hence, not only students but also professors play a crucial role in developing the theme of the narrative. The title "Professor" is employed at the beginning of each name of the teachers, and it is literally translated into Vietnamese as "Giáo sư".

Similarly, the strategy of preservation was adopted for the names of the professors, which poses both pros and cons for the translated text. An instance is "Albus Dumbledore", the headmaster at Hogwarts school. "Albus" is firmly rooted in Latin bearing the meaning of "white", which vividly describes his distinctive appearance with the noticeable long white beard. In the story, Rowling (2014, p.6) describes the character in details: "He was tall, thin and very old, judging by the *silver* of his hair and beard". For Dumbledore, this word means "bumblebee in Old English... seemed to suit the headmaster, because one of his passions is music and I imagined him walking around humming to himself[4]", Rowling (1997). By the same token, the non-translation of "Albus Dumbledore" preserves the far-flung fragrance of this name and creates the uniqueness of the wizarding world in the translated text, but it would be demanding for the Vietnamese audience to perceive the semantic meaning that fits the character appearance through his name.

It also poses the target readers tough challenges in interpreting the name "Minerva McGonagall" when being preserved in the target culture. Minerva is imbued with a mythological Latin name for Athena who is a cerebral Roman goddess of wisdom. According to the description in the story, Minerva McGonagall is perfectly a "strict and clever" professor (Rowling, 2014, p.101).

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[3] Retrieved 24 January, 2018 from https://www.behindthename.com/name/ronald

[4] Retrieved 22 January 2018 from http://www.accio-quote.org/articles/list1999.html

The Scottish surname McGonagall can be traced back to the Celtic name "Conegall", implying the "bravest". It can be seen that this name evokes both Roman and Celtic mythic traditions and contributes to expressing the striking personality of the character Minerva McGonagall.

Another case is the name of Professor "Severus Snape". This name is alliterative to fill the story with the beauty of the poetic language. Thus, the non-translation in the target culture preserves the alliteration, contributing to the aesthetic beauty of the target literary text. Nonetheless, Severus is indicative of Latin that means "severe", which is true to the vivid account of this character in the story "Snape had the gift of keeping a class silent without effort" (Rowling, 2014, p.109) and "Snape liked hardly any of the students" (Rowling, 2014, p.112). For a British reader, the surname "Snape" might provoke negative connotation. It derives from "the sound-symbolism of the initial _sn_-cluster, which features in words such as _sn_eer, _sn_ide, _sn_oop, _sn_eak, _sn_ap or even _sn_ake" (Davis 2003, p. 79), which is closely associated with the "Snake" symbol of Slytherin House where this character is the head teacher. Since this name serves the function of reflecting the personality of characters, the target book lovers might find it arduous to notice the sound symbolic meaning through non-translation.

In the same way, Quirrell in the name of Professor Quirrel appears as always "nervous" (Rowling, 2014, p.54, p.55, p.101) and squirrelly all over the story. There is sufficient evidence reflected through his utterances such as "P-P-Potter, stammered Professor Quirrel […] c-can't t-tell you how p-pleased I am to meet you". As this name performs the function of developing the personality of the character, the author believes that the strategy of preservation possibly poses a comprehension-related problem to the target

readers in interpreting the semantic meaning of the name.

The Vietnamese rendition might also partially lose the information about the character Professor Sprout through her name "Sprout". The name "Professor Sprout" firmly links to the subject of Herbology that she teaches at the wizard school. "Three times a week they went out to the greenhouses behind the castle to study Herbology, with a dumpy little witch called Professor Sprout, where they learned how to take care of all the strange plants and fungi" (Rowling, 2014, p. 106). Semantically, a sprout is a part of a plant that begins to grow (ODE). It can be seen that this name effectively aids the audience in recalling the clear role of the character among an abundance of character names in the story.

4.3. Proper names of Hogwarts founders

The Hogwarts school is comprised of four Houses and established by four founders, namely Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Salazar Slytherin. All of these names are alliterative to create the artistic beauty of the literary text, and the strategy of preservation was adopted to deal with them. Hence, the Vietnamese audience can enjoy a sense of rhythm and distinctly remembers all of these names.

Nonetheless, the names of Hogwarts founders perform the function of imparting information about each House. For instance, "Gryffindor" is the combination of "gryffin" and "d'or". "Gryffin" alludes to a creature with the body of a lion and the wings and head of an eagle (ODE), and "d'or" literally means golden in French, which is the symbol of the Gryffindor House. Regarding "Ravenclaw", "raven" makes reference to a large bird of the crow family with shiny black feathers, and "claw" literally means one of the sharp curved nails on the end of a bird's foot (ODE). The image of a bird is seen as the symbol of the Ravenclaw House. Likewise, Slytherin

becomes a pun "slithering" that means sliding as an action of a snake. In the story, a snake is adopted as the symbol of the Slytherin House.

To put it in a nutshell, the names of Hogwarts founders provide vivid description associated with each House. In this sense, the author assumes that it can be challenging for the target readership to access these intentional implications via non-translation.

4.4. Proper names of other characters

The implications are evident in not only student and professor names but also an abundance of characters in the wizarding environment. Similarly, the proper names of other characters were preserved in the Vietnamese text.

The antagonist of Harry Potter is Voldemort. "Voldemort" is comprised of "volde" and "mort", which reveals considerable details about this character. In French, the word "mort" means "death", and the combination of "voldemort" means the flight from the death. Throughout the whole story, "Voldemort" desires to resurrect from his own death and brings the tragic death to the entire magical world. The employment of French in creating this name takes the audience back to the tradition of Normans French as the language of government in England. Historically, the Norman conquered England in 1066, replacing the native English nobility with Anglo-Normans and introducing Normans French as the ruling language in England (Algeo, 2010). By borrowing a French name, the author clearly highlights the ruling power of the Dark Lord along with his aspiration to dominate the wizard community. Hence, the overall name "Voldemort" vividly evokes his will to fly from the death, his corpse, and his yearning for murder. For that reason, it would be intricate for the general target readers to grasp the purposeful messages through the preservation of "Voldemort".

"Sirius Black" is a case that cultivates the sense of myth and displays the traits of the character. "Sirius" is well known as the brightest star visible from any part of the Earth. It is also noted as the "Dog Star", which is honored in the ancient Egyptians. In ancient Egypt, the name Sirius is associated with the Egyptian gods Osiris, Sopdet and other gods. It is common to see numerous Egyptian temples designed with the architecture with the light of Sirius reaching the inner chambers. In the story, Harry sees a giant black dog hanging around him, and it is then disclosed that Sirius Black is that giant black dog. There comes an obvious clue that Sirius is able to transform himself into a black dog. It can be seen that Rowling successfully constructs the magical theme of the story and depicts the peculiarities of the character through this mythological name. The target recipients might find it hard to explore the implicit meaning of this name via the strategy of preservation.

It is also true for the case of Harry's mother "Lily"; this name is deeply rooted in Latin of "lilium". In the prehistoric Greek, white lily belonged to Hera, an ancient Greek goddess who represents the ideal woman. In Christian symbolism, the lily is associated with the Virgin Mary[5], and this kind of flower makes a reference to purity and innocence. These properties fit the description of the character Lily as an outstanding girl at school in the story. By contrast, the implication of intense irritation is provoked from the name "Petunia[6]". In the story, Petunia possesses a "shrill voice" (Rowling, 2014, p.13) and "nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came very useful as she spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the neighbors" (Rowling, 2014, p.1).

For Harry's cousin, Dudley Dursley has

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[5] Retrieved 24 January, 2018 from http://www. traditioninaction.org/religious/f034_EasterLily.htm

[6] Retrieved 24 January, 2018 from http://www. flowermeaning.com/petunia/

a name carrying the unappealing connotation because it reminds the readers that he is a dud. This name is alliterative, aiding to the memory of both the source and the target readers. At home, Dudley is commonly called as "Dinky Duddydums" or "Icke Dudleykins" by his mom. In these cases, the translator adopts literal translation for the descriptive part and non-translation for the proper name. Dinky Duddydums" and "Icke Dudleykins" are rendered into "Dudley cục cưng" and "bé Dudley-đờ-tí-tẹo" respectively. The descriptive translation creates the same humorous effect as the source text and expresses the affectionate emotion of Dudley's mom in using these nicknames.

Messages embedded in proper names are scattered all over the story. The names of authors who wrote magical books closely connect with the contents of the books. For instance, Phyllida Spore is the author of the book entitled "*One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi*". "Spore" is one of the tiny cells that are produced by some plants and develop into new plants. Newt Scamander is the author of "*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find them*", and Newt refers to a small animal with short legs, a long tail and cold blood living both in water and on land. Arsenius Jigger wrote the book "*Magical Drafts and Potions*", and Arsenic refers to a chemical element, an extremely poisonous white powder. Evidently, there exists a strong bond between the author names and the contents of the books. Therefore, the author believes that the general target readers might not notice such linkage when these names are preserved in the translated text. Adopting a similar standpoint, Juzelėnienė, Petronienė, Kopylov (2016, p.1) also remind that "all languages have particular personal names, some of which are deeply rooted in the culture of the speakers of the specific language; consequently, they can pose unique difficulties

in the comprehension of culture-specific texts. It is interesting to note that some personal names have various allusions indicating sex, age, geographical belonging, history, specific meaning, playfulness of language and cultural connotations when omitting this implied information results in unacceptable translation".

4.5. Proper names of ghosts

Rowling creates ghost names to paint a vivid picture about an ancient Hogwarts castle as a haunted place in Britain. "Peeves" is a mischievous ghost at the Hogwarts community, and the name of this ghost is preserved in the target text. According to ODE, "peeve" literally means a cause of annoyance. "Peeve" is evident in the idiom "somebody's pet peeve" that means something a person intensely dislikes. In the story, this ghost is mischievous, and it causes constant irritation among students and teachers at Hogwarts school. Apparently, the semantic meaning of this name accurately reflects the striking personality of this ghost.

There are proper names of ghosts that contain an epithet in HPPS. Ephithet is an adjective or phrase that is employed to describe the characteristics of somebody, especially in order to give praise or criticism. For these names, literal translation was adopted for the descriptive part, and the proper name was preserved. The instances are "Nearly Headless Nick", "Efric the Eager", "Emeric the Evil" and their Vietnamese equivalents of "Nick Suýt Mất Đầu", "Efric Háo Hức" and "Emeric Quỷ sứ" respectively. By the combination of non-translation plus literal translation, the translator expresses her artistic creativity that makes the Vietnamese translation peppered with the eccentric humor. For instance, the equivalent "Suýt Mất Đầu" vividly depicts the ghost Nearly Headless Nick who was beheaded, and his head is still attached to the neck with a thin line connected

with his neck by a piece of skin. "Háo Hức" and "Quỷ sứ" successfully provoke the sense of humor, and the audience can recognize the traits of these mischievous ghosts through their translated names. The name "Bloody Baron" and its Vietnamese equivalent "Nam tước đẫm máu" also accurately describe the personality this ghost who is covered in blood during his life when he kills himself.

To put it simply, the proper names in HPPS can be categorized into three primary groups. The first group is the conventional names that perform the function of mere identification. In these cases, the translated text beautifully preserves the exoticism in the target culture. The second group is the loaded names that perform the multiple functions of providing not only identification but also description on the traits of the characters. On the one hand, the strategy of preservation effectively conserves the foreignness in the target text. On the other hand, it possibly challenges the general Vietnamese readers in decoding the implications embedded in these purposeful names. It is justifiable that literary proper names pose tough challenges for the translator; however, there would be partially functional loss in Vietnamese translation through mere preservation. Therefore, the following section 4.6 is devoted to discuss on the possible recommendations to deal in these meaningful literary proper names. The third group is the names containing an ephithet. In these cases, the descriptive part is functionally translated into Vietnamese, and the proper name is preserved in the target text. In these cases, the translator successfully expresses creativity and imagination in her rendition that makes the Vietnamese translation peppered with the eccentric humor.

The summary about the roles of literary proper names attached with relevant examples in HPPS is demonstrated in the Table 1. Functions of literary proper names in HPPS as follows:

Functions of literary proper names in HPPS		Examples of literary proper names in HPPS
Offer information about the characters	- Provoke connotation	Harry, Hermione, Ron, Draco Malfoy, Voldemort, Snape
	-Specify the role of the character	Ron
	-Provide the description of the physical traits	Albus Dumbledore
	-Provide the description of the personal traits	Professor Albus Dumbledore, Professor Mineva McGonagall, Professor Severus Snape, Professor Quirrel, Lily, Petunia
	-Offer information related to the character	Professor Sprout, Sirius Black
Entertain the readers, Aid the readers in remembering numerous names		Mineva McGonagall, Severus Snape, Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, Salazar Slytherin, Nearly Headless Nick, Bloody Baron
Create humor		Nearly Headless Nick
Create aesthetic appeal		Mineva McGonagall, Severus Snape, Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, Salazar Slytherin, Nearly Headless Nick, Bloody Baron, Fat Friar

4.6. Recommendations for the strategies in translating proper names in a literary text

As discussed above, the strategy of preservation was adopted for the rendition of most of the names. The names of characters in HPPS are derived from Latin, French, Greek, and old English to create the milieu of a magical school in an imaginary world, and they carry the multilayered meanings. The findings of the present paper reveal that the names in Harry Potter book pose the translator huge challenges because they are constructed with an inherent Britishness that taps into specific historical naming practices in English literature (Brondsted and Dollerup, 2010; Compagnone and Danesi, 2012). However, the author believes that if no effort were made for the rendition of proper names, there would be partially functional loss. The author agrees with Bantas (2010, p.82) that "if we are pledged to give reader of translations what the author intended for the readers of the original, translators have to find-even hunt-these intentions, discern them, make sure we have fully grasped or understood them and strive to render them".

To compensate for the possible loss, the following translation strategies have been proposed. Early in the vast body of literature, Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) offer the translation technique of explicitation. It means that the translator adds implicit information in the source text to the translation. The addition can be in the form of the text gloss, footnotes, chapter-end notes, end-of-volume glossary, or separate volume glossary. Newmark (1988) continues to recommend footnotes as a translation procedure to deal with culture-specific concepts such as proper names. Though different in wording, Coille and Verschueren (2006), Cui (2013) arrive at the similar solutions, including calque, translator's note, borrowing and paraphrase, non-translation plus additional explanation.

More recently, Manini (2014) argues that interpreting and selecting an interpretation are obviously essential elements of any exercise in translation, but it can also a risky business for the translators in general; therefore, "if explanatory footnotes serve the translators' purpose, they can be inserted with relative ease into a work of narrative fiction to inform the reader about what had to be left out" (Manini, 2014, p. 173). Additionally, Manini (2014, p. 173) suggests that "the use of explanatory notes-or other forms of meta-textual comment such as the translator's preface, etc. can perfectly well be envisaged to compensate for the semantic loss that occurs when loaded names are not translated". In accordance with previous authors (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1958; Newmark, 1988; Coille and Verschueren, 2006; Cui, 2013; Manini, 2014), the author of the present paper suggests that adopting non-translation plus additional explanation could be considered for literary proper names in HPPS, so that the target readers can fully grasp the intentional ideas conveyed through literary meaningful names.

5. Concluding remarks

As a challenging issue, the strategy of preservation was adopted for the rendition of most of the literary meaningful names in HPPS. While the strategy of preservation advantageously remains the foreignness of the original to the target text, there would be partially functional loss via the mere preservation. To make up for the semantic loss, the strategy of addition is proposed. Through the strategy of addition, the translator could still adopt preservation to conserve the exoticism in the target culture, but supplement the text with necessary information (Davis, 2003). The additional information could be in the form of end-of-volume glossary or separate volume glossary, which facilitates the accessibility of the target audience towards the purposeful implications in literary meaningful names.

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DỊCH TÊN RIÊNG TRONG VĂN HỌC: TRƯỜNG HỢP DỊCH TÊN RIÊNG TRONG TẬP TRUYỆN HARRY POTTER SANG TIẾNG VIỆT

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Tóm tắt: Dịch tên riêng trong văn học là một trong những vấn đề đầy thách thức nhưng rất thú vị của chuyên ngành Dịch thuật. Chính vì vậy, bài báo này đã tiến hành phân tích các chiến lược dịch tên riêng trong văn học, cụ thể là nguyên tác "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (2014) sang bản dịch tiếng Việt "Harry Potter và Hòn đá phù thuỷ" (2016) thông qua phương pháp mô tả và so sánh dựa trên khung phân tích các chiến lược dịch của Davis (2003). Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy dịch giả đã áp dụng chiến lược chuyển nguyên ngữ (không dịch) đối với hầu hết các tên riêng trong tác phẩm này. Từ đó, chúng tôi đưa ra các gợi ý và đề xuất đối với dịch tên riêng trong văn học từ Anh sang Việt.

Từ khoá: dịch tên riêng, văn học

THE APPLICATION OF STRATEGY-BASED INSTRUCTIONS TO TEACH WRITING TO FIRST-YEAR ENGLISH MAJORED STUDENTS

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Abstract: Learning strategies (LS) have been a salient field of study in English Language Teaching (ELT) globally for the last few decades. In Vietnam, however, while the role of teachers is undeniable and teachers' action research has proliferated exponentially, the unequal number of studies on a subject of equal importance, i.e. the local learners' learning methods, is conspicuous. Additionally, the "how" is as important as the "what", especially for the first-year university students, who experience a great change of learning and teaching methods when entering universities. This study examines the range of writing LS used by 50 first-year English majored students at a teacher training university in Vietnam, and the differences between more and less skilled students in writing, after being instructed on LS for one year. The study found four groups of LS of different popularity, and significant variations in LS use between the two groups of students.

Keywords: strategy training, learning strategy, English as a foreign language (EFL) writing

1. Introduction

If students are asked about their LS, they often give various answers and even one student can change the answers in different interview sessions. This situation is particularly true in writing, in which the students' slow progress signifies it as the most difficult skill to teach and to learn. For those reasons, in this study, the significance of LS to the first year English majored students in learning to write in English will be addressed. To be specific, the study answers two research questions:

1. What is the range of LS that the first-year students apply in writing?

2. What LS are used by the more and less skilled student writers ?

2. Theoretical backgrounds

2.1. Learning strategies: Definitions and features

A large number of studies have been conducted on the good language learners, many of which have indicated that these learners possess special learning strategies. However, it is not simple to define the term "learning strategies". Ellis (1980) pointed out that there was no agreement on the essence, the quantity and the contents of LS. In foreign language teaching, while the initial definitions of LS were much affected by behaviourism, i.e. LS are techniques or devices learners use to acquire the language (Rubin, 1975), the newer definitions took a more "mentalist" approach. According to Cohen, "learning strategies are the **conscious thoughts** and **behaviors** used by learners with the explicit goals of improving their knowledge and understanding of the target language" (1998, p.68). It is of great importance to note the term "conscious", which indicates learners' awareness of all the processes/strategies available before

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choosing the best one. This element of freedom in choosing is the prerequisite factor identifying learning strategies.

Nunan, however, is not so much concerned about the consciousness in learners' choice. As for him, learning strategies are "the mental processes which learners employ to learn and use the target language" (Nunan, 1991:168) or "the specific mental procedures for gathering, processing, associating, categorizing, rehearsing, and retrieving information or patterned skills" (Nunan, 1988: 7). He also considers learning strategies the act of learning viewed at micro level, or one unit of learning.

As for this study, the most complete definition of learning strategies is developed by Chamot and O'Malley, stating that *learning strategies are special ways of processing information which help enhance comprehension, learning and retention of the information* (Chamot and O'Malley, 1996). They share Nunan's definition, that *learning strategies are procedures/steps undertaken by the learners in order to make their own language learning as effective as possible* (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). LS are strongly linked to the underlying learning styles of learners whether they are called "steps', "processes', " procedures" or 'ways'.

2.2. Strategy training approaches

Strategies training explicitly informs students on how, when, and why strategies are used to facilitate their efforts at learning and using a foreign language (Cohen, 1998). Cohen also summarized that all the researches on strategies training more or less fall into two main frameworks:

- Pearson and Dole's approach: this is mainly for training a specific strategy in teaching the first language with the following steps:
  + the teacher demonstrates the strategy with direct explanation of the strategy's use and importance

+ learners receive guided practice with the strategy
+ the teacher helps the learners to identify the strategy and decide when it may be used
+ learners practice the strategy independently
+ learners apply the strategy to new tasks

- Oxford et al.'s approach

Many strategies are trained in foreign language learning situations. For an instance, learners are asked to do a task without any strategy training, then they can discuss how they have done the task and how these ways facilitate their learning. The teacher praises the good strategies and suggests more useful strategies. The learners may suggest ways to integrate these strategies into their learning, practice the new strategies before the teacher shows how the strategies can be transferred to other tasks, provides tasks and asks the learners to choose appropriate LS and helps students to evaluate the success of the strategies.

- Chamot and O'Malley added another approach of strategy training: after assessing the learners' use of strategies initially, the teacher can conduct a training programme based on the following eight steps:

  Step 1. Determine the learners' needs and the time available.

  Step 2. Selects the relevant, useful, easy, valuable strategies to learning

  Step 3. Consider the integration of strategies training into authentic language learning situations

  Step 4. Consider motivational issues

  Step 5. Prepare materials and activitie in a way that supplement strategies training, and develop more materialswhen necessary

  Step 6. Conduct "Completely Informed Training": the learners are provided with all necessary knowledge of the LS

  Step 7. Evaluate the strategy training

Step 8. Revise the strategy training:teachers make some adjustments for the programme, which will trigger a new strategy training circle to restart.

(Chamot and O'Malley, 1990)

The three approaches/procedures can be realized in several ways such as General study skills training, Awareness training, Peer tutoring (the learners are arranged to meet regularly and discuss about the language LS they typically use), or the strategies can be inserted into textbooks. Strategy-based instruction (SBI) is also a recently mentioned alternative. In light of the learner-centred approach, SBI contain both explicit and implicit strategy training. The teacher may follow these steps:

- o describe, model and give examples of potentially useful strategies.
- o elicit additional examples from students based on the students' own learning experiences.
- o lead small-group/whole-class discussion about strategies.
- o encourage their students to experiment with a broad range of strategies.
- o integrate strategies into everyday class materials, explicitly and implicitly embedding them into the language task to provide contextual strategy practice.

(Cohen and Weaver, 1998, p.81)

Thus, the teacher's role in SBI is that of a diagnostician of learners' current strategies, a learner trainer, a coach, a coordinator of learners' learning process, a language learner in order to be able to sympathize with the learners' status in the classroom (both good and bad moments), and lastly, as a researcher who judges him/herself on all the process mentioned so far.

It is important to note down some important empirical studies realized within these three approaches. One study involving the training of strategies for listening was developed by Fujiwara in 1990 for 45 Japanese learners of English, finding that 80% of the students found that their listening skills were improved and 16% felt that the training was extremely helpful. Another study on listening strategies was by Thompson and Robin (1996) with Russian learners of English in a true experimental research. It was found that the experimental group did better on a test of video comprehension. In training speaking strategies, Nunan (1996) also studied 15 strategies with 60 undergraduates in a compulsory English to Arts Students course. There were two experimental classes and two controlled ones, the formers received key learning and strategies incorporated in their language teaching program. The students' motivation and strategy use were assessed in a pre-test post-test basis. The study found that the students' motivation was improved more significantly in the experimental groups than in the controlled groups, as well as the utility of strategies. In general, most strategy training studies yield positive results.

2.3. Writing learning strategies

Chamot and O'Malley are two authors who have extensively researched into the field of LS. The strategies they have found for learning writing include 44 items, which will be used as the framework for SBI and the questionnaires in this study.

A. Memory strategies

A.1. Placing new words into a context
A.2. Using key words
A.3. Using mechanical techniques

B. Cognitive strategies

B.1. Repeating
B.2. Formally practicing with sounds and writing system
B.3. Recognising and using formulas and patterns
B.4. Recombining

B.5. Practising naturalistically

B.6. Using resources for receiving and sending messages

B.7. Reasoning deductively

B.8. Translating

B.9. Transferring

B.10. Taking notes

B.11. Summarising

B.12. Highlighting

C. Compensation strategies

C.1. Selecting the topic

C.2. Adjusting or approximating the message

C.3. Coining words

C.4. Using a circumlocution or a synonym

D. Metacognitive strategies

D.1. Overviewing and linking with already known materials

D.2. Paying attention

D.3. Finding out about language learning

D.4. Organizing

D.5. Setting goals and objectives

D.6. Identifying the purposes of a language task

D.7. Planning for a language task

D.8. Seeking practice opportunities

D.9. Self-monitoring

D.10. Self-evaluating

E. Affective strategies

E.1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation

E.2. Using music

E.3. Using laughter

E.4. Making positive statements

E.5. Taking risks wisely

E.6. Rewarding yourself

E.7. Listening to your body

E.8. Using a checklist

E.9. Writing a language learning diary

E.10. Discussing your feelings with someone else

F. Social strategies

F.1. Asking for correction

F.2. Cooperating with peers

F.3. Cooperating with proficient users of the language

F.4. Developing cultural understanding

F.5. Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

Basing on this repertoire of LS for writing, we studied the strategies the targeted students apply in their learning how to write English at the first year.

3. The study

3.1. Participants of the study

Two classes of first-year English majored students (N = 50, 4 males and 46 females) at a language teacher training university in Vietnam were sampled with random cluster sampling from 17 first-year mainstream classes and involved in this study. It was only possible for the researcher to conduct the study with two classes so that she could teach the class herself and monitor the SBI procedure. The students' English proficiency may be roughly attributed to B1 (CEFR) as they have passed the university entrance exam. The students learnt the coursebook *From writing to composing (*Ingram and King, 2004*)*, and the teaching methods for writing skills combines product-oriented approach and process-oriented one. The students' scores for the first composition in the first semester was taken as the pre-test scores and their scores in the final test was taken as the post-test scores.

3.2. The intervention: Strategies-based Instructions-Procedures

The procedures and schedules for completing SBI are presented in brief as follows:

Determine students' needs

The teacher and students talk about the prior teaching and learning methods in writing skills. Advantages as well as disadvantages of these methods are discussed, along with the teachers' presentation of LS for writing.

Raise awareness on 44 strategies for learning writing by giving strategy inventories to students, giving explanations and checking comprehension

Explicit initial training is given to student in a workshop. First, they are to read the list of LS useful for writing skills (previous section). The teacher then asks them to work in groups or pairs to discuss how they understand each strategy and then correct their comprehension.

Pre-test to check the original writing proficiency and frequency of using LS of students (using a writing task)

Immediately after the 45-minute writing test, the students were asked to complete the questionnaire with 44 LS.

Train various strategies based on the course book

All the LS in the Strategy Inventory were taught to students through tasks and exercises in the coursebook in prepared lesson plans.

Limit the number of LS to train

A class discussion is held in order for the students to state the LS they want to be more thoroughly trained in the second semester. The teacher then bases on this and the content of the coursebook for the second semester to decide the 25 LS to be trained.

Continue training the 25 short-listed LS explicitly and implicitly

All the lessons in the second-semester coursebook are planned according to the LS-oriented approach. The teacher's instructions for coursebook tasks compulsorily include remarks and exemplification on the use of LS. Moreover, the LS are trained in the suitable stage of writing as presented in the previous section.

Post-test on the students' writing proficiency and frequency of using LS

The students took the official final test in which they had to perform a writing task. Their scores in this task were used as their post test results and to classify writers. They also did the second questionnaire on LS frequency, with 25 LS.

3.3. Instrumentation and data collection

The first instrument for collecting data is two Strategy Inventories; the first one includes all the 44 strategies for writing composed by Chamot and O'Malley (section 2.3 above) and the second one includes 25 short-listed strategies. For each of these inventories, the students were required to choose a frequency that reflected their use of each strategy from Always to Never.

Other instruments are the 2 fulfilled writing tasks of students, one at the beginning of semester one (pre-test) and the other at the end of semester two (post-test). The questions in the tests have undergone strict evaluation of the first year teachers because the scores are taken as midterm and final term scores. The criteria for distinguishing more and less skilled students for research question 2 were*: skilled* **students are those with post-test score over 7.** The others were considered less skilled. According to the teachers at the research site, 7 was often the score which represents the required outcome of the first year students (B2, CEFR). The description of 7 in the rubrics represent the B2 level description. The scoring criteria in this study were as in the formal scoring instruments for first year students' writing at the study stite, consisting of five criteria named content development, coherence and organization, cohesion, lexical range and accuracy, grammatical range and accuracy. The researcher and a first-year teacher scored the writings twice before coming to the conclusion on the students' final scores.

4. Data analysis

In order to compare task performances, after all the tests were scored, means and standard deviation of each test were calculated to find out whether the students generally improved after one year of training. Secondly, basing on the post-test, the two groups of students: skilled and less skilled, were identified before their frequencies of using LS were analyzed. The differences between two groups' use of LS were revealed through Chi-square test, a popular test for comparing frequencies. Critical value for Chi-square test was determined at 0,05, which means we accepted only 5% that the differences can occur by chance. If the x^2 value we find is higher than the x^2 with critical value = 0,05 and a certain degree of freedom, we can be sure of the differences in two groups' frequency uses.

5. Results

LS use for writing by first-year students

The most apparent feature is that the students chose to use a large number of strategies *sometimes* : for 18 in 44 strategies, the rate for **sometimes** is above 30%, the highest of which is 54% in F2, and 50% in A1 and C1. Meanwhile, the rates for *always* and *never* in using these strategies are insignificant. Another frequency at which the students tent to use many LS is "usually", the most common frequency in using 16 strategies. Not many strategies were used at the highest frequency, except in some cases: B3, B8, B12, D1, D6. Specially, in B8, 48% of the students reported they "always" used, while the number fell steeply for the other frequencies: *usually* (26), *sometimes* (18), *hardly ever* (8) and *never* (0). On the contrary, there are some strategies which very few students always use: B4, C3, B11, E3, F2, F5, B10.

The strategies which are the most rarely used are B2, B11, D5, D8, E1, E8 and F5 and there are more students who never used B2, B5, B11, C4, E1, E2, E3, E9 than those who used these strategies often. More detailed discussion of the popularity of strategies are presented later.

Comparison of pre-test and post-test performance

Table 1. Pre-test and post-test performance

Descriptive statistics	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	6.958	7.674
Mode	7	7.9
Median	7	7.8
Low	3	6
High	9	8.8
Range	6	2.8
Standard Deviation	1.30	0.63

Table 1 reports the better performance of students in the post test compared to the pre-test. The mean of students' scores in the post test was 0.7 point higher than in the pre-test. All the indices of the post-tests are also higher, except for the standard deviation, which is a positive evidence for the students' improvement and narrower range of scores in writing after SBI.

Students' use of LS after SBI

Table 2. Chi-square test of more skilled and less skilled learners' frequencies of using LS after SBI

Strategy	Frequency	Always F	Always %	Usually F	Usually %	Sometimes F	Sometimes %	Hardly ever F	Hardly ever %	Never F	Never %	Total	Chi-square test
A1	More skilled	6	17	18	51	7	20	3	9	1	3	35	$x^2 = 10,93$
	Less skilled	2	13	3	20	3	20	2	13	5	33	15	df = 4
		8		21		10		5		6		50	
A2	More skilled	3	9	12	34	12	34	5	14	4	11	35	$x^2 = 2,40$
	Less skilled	0	0	5	33	4	27	4	27	2	13	15	df = 4
		3		17		16		9		6		50	
B1	More skilled	0	0	10	29	15	43	8	23	2	6	35	$x^2 = 2,78$
	Less skilled	0	0	6	40	3	20	4	27	2	13	15	df = 3
		0		16		18		12		4		50	
B3	More skilled	9	26	24	69	1	3	1	3	0	0	35	$x^2 = 18,34$
	Less skilled	2	13	4	27	5	33	3	20	1	7	15	df = 4
		11		28		6		4		1		50	
B4	More skilled	19	54	8	23	6	17	1	3	1	3	35	$x^2 = 6,18$
	Less skilled	4	27	4	27	7	47	0	0	0	0	15	df = 4
		23		12		13		1		1		50	
B5	More skilled	4	11	11	31	12	34	6	17	2	6	35	$x^2 = 2,62$
	Less skilled	0	0	6	40	4	27	4	27	1	7	15	df = 4
		4		17		16		10		3		50	
B6	More skilled	4	11	11	31	13	37	3	9	4	11	35	$x^2 = 10,32$
	Less skilled	3	20	3	20	1	7	6	40	2	13	15	df = 4
		7		14		14		9		6		50	
B8	More skilled	2	6	7	20	8	23	14	40	4	11	35	$x^2 = 9,62$
	Less skilled	4	27	6	40	3	20	1	7	1	7	15	df = 4
		6		13		11		15		5		50	
B10	More skilled	0	0	12	34	10	29	8	23	5	14	35	$x^2 = 14,89$
	Less skilled	2	13	0	0	4	27	2	13	7	47	15	df = 4
		2		12		14		10		12		50	
C2	More skilled	4	11	16	46	9	26	5	14	1	3	35	$x^2 = 4,01$
	Less skilled	1	7	4	27	4	27	4	27	2	13	15	df = 4
		5		20		13		9		3		50	
D1	More skilled	20	57	11	31	4	11	0	0	0	0	35	$x^2 = 10,86$
	Less skilled	3	20	7	47	2	13	0	0	3	20	15	df = 3
		23		18		6		0		3		50	
D2	More skilled	0	0	4	11	13	37	11	31	7	20	35	$x^2 = 3,83$
	Less skilled	0	0	3	20	4	27	2	13	6	40	15	df = 3
		0		7		17		13		13		50	
D5	More skilled	4	11	7	20	7	20	12	34	5	14	35	$x^2 = 7,12$
	Less skilled	0	0	1	7	6	40	3	20	5	33	15	df = 4
		4		8		13		15		10		50	
D6	More skilled	4	11	16	46	7	20	2	6	6	17	35	$x^2 = 1,15$
	Less skilled	2	13	7	47	2	13	2	13	2	13	15	df = 4
		6		23		9		4		8		50	

Code	Group											Total	Stat
D7	More skilled	5	14	18	51	7	20	4	11	1	3	35	$x^2 = 12,29$
	Less skilled	0	0	2	13	6	40	5	33	2	13	15	df = 4
		5		20		13		9		3		50	
D8	More skilled	0	0	4	11	12	34	16	46	3	9	35	$x^2 = 0,75$
	Less skilled	0	0	2	13	6	40	5	33	2	13	15	df = 3
		0		6		18		21		5		50	
D9	More skilled	5	14	16	46	5	14	7	20	2	6	35	$x^2 = 4,77$
	Less skilled	1	7	3	20	4	27	5	33	2	13	15	df = 4
		6		19		9		12		4		50	
D10	More skilled	6	17	21	60	5	14	0	0	3	9	35	$x^2 = 11,48$
	Less skilled	0	0	6	40	4	27	3	20	2	13	15	df = 4
		6		27		9		3		5		50	
E4	More skilled	4	11	8	23	9	26	9	26	5	14	35	$x^2 = 2,19$
	Less skilled	0	0	3	20	4	27	5	33	3	20	15	df = 4
		4		11		13		14		8		50	
E5	More skilled	1	3	4	11	12	34	8	23	10	29	35	$x^2 = 15,91$
	Less skilled	1	7	9	60	4	27	1	7	0	0	15	df = 4
		2		13		16		9		10		50	
E6	More skilled	3	9	8	23	13	37	5	14	6	17	35	$x^2 = 2,08$
	Less skilled	0	0	3	20	8	53	2	13	2	13	15	df = 4
		3		11		21		7		8		50	
F1	More skilled	4	11	16	46	11	31	2	6	2	6	35	$x^2 = 1,10$
	Less skilled	1	7	7	47	4	27	1	7	2	13	15	df = 4
		5		23		15		3		4		50	
F2	More skilled	0	0	20	57	11	31	3	9	1	3	35	$x^2 = 5.96$
	Less skilled	2	13	6	40	4	27	2	13	1	7	15	df =4
		2		26		15		5		2		50	
F3	More skilled	5	14	15	43	11	31	2	6	2	6	35	$x^2 = 13,50$
	Less skilled	0	0	1	7	8	53	5	33	1	7	15	df = 4
		5		16		19		7		3		50	
F4	More skilled	0		8		16		10		3		35	$x^2 = 5,34$
	Less skilled	0		0		6		8		1		15	df = 3
		0		8		22		18		4		50	

Table 2 demonstrates clearly the differences in LS use between effective and ineffective writers. The alpha decision level for this study (p), as previously mentioned, is 0,05 and regarding this data and the available degrees of freedoms, the critical value for x^2 is 9,4877 for *df* = 4 and 7,4187 for *df* = 3 (according to the critical value of x^2 (Pearson and Hartley,1963)). Thus, the differences between effective an ineffective writers were seen in the use of the following strategies: A1, B3, B6, B8, B10, D1, D7, D10, E5, F3 because the calculated value of x^2 in these comparison of frequencies are higher than the two values above respectively. The highest values were found in E5, B3, B10 and F3, which means there is a dramatical difference between the two groups of learners' frequency of using these strategies. On the contrary, the two groups' use of strategies is rather similar in A2, B1, D2, D6, D8, E6 as can be seen from the very low calculated value of x^2. These differences will only be significant in studies with alpha decision level of 0,20, where there

is a great risk that the differences occur by chance.

6. Discussion of research questions

Research question 1

Looking into trends of using strategies, we can classify students' use of all the strategies into four more specific groups. The most **popular strategies i**nclude the strategies which the students used the most (Recognising and using formulas and patterns; Translating; Highlighting; Overviewing and linking with already known materials; Identifying the purposes of a language task). The f**airly popular strategies** are Using key words, Using mechanical techniques; Recombining; Using resources for receiving and sending messages, Reasoning deductively, Transferring; Taking notes; Selecting the topic; Adjusting or approximating the message, etc.). Group 3 - **Fairly unpopular strategies, consists of** Placing new words into a context, Repeating, Setting goals and objectives, Making positive statements, Using a checklist, Cooperating with proficient users of the language, etc. **Unpopular strategies, the last group, are:** Formally practicing with sounds and writing system. Summarizing, Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation, Using music or a diary.

Research question 2

A comparison was made to tract the differences between effective writers and ineffective ones' use of LS. The thorough analysis tested by Chi-square test has revealed ten strategies in which the two groups of writers distinctively applied. They are:

1. Placing new words into a context
2. Recognising and using formulas and patterns
3. Using resources for receiving and sending messages
4. Translating

5. Taking notes
6. Overviewing and linking with already known materials
7. Planning for a language task
8. Self-evaluating
9. Taking risks wisely
10. Cooperating with proficient users of the language

For such difficult strategies as self-evaluating, taking risks, using resources for sending and receiving message, it is comprehensible why there are differences between two groups of writers in using LS. However, with other simpler strategies which were trained fairly regularly, these results came as a surprise.

With the first two strategies in this list, better student writers claimed that imitating was a good way to learn production skills such as writing or speaking, also good methods to remember new words and structures. Meanwhile, the less skilled said they had problems using these strategies such as imprecise use of patterns leading to mistakes, or not being in the habit of using strategies while concentrating in the task. We supposed these problems resulted from the students' carelessness and inautomatic use of strategies, which will be solved with more practice.

There are clear differences in the use of translating as a support for writing as well. While some learners claimed that this strategy helped them to express themselves better when they did not know how to express in English way, others considered this a cause of mistakes because of the differences between English and Vietnamese. Another surprising difference lay in the use of brainstorming (or overviewing and linking with already known materials). This strategy has been one of the most intensively trained one in SBI. Practice activities were provided every lessons. However, there were still learners who considered this a waste of time, especially in

test situations, which was justified by the lack of time. As for us, it was not the lack of time which counted, but it was the fact that using the strategy has not become a habit to them.

Cooperating with good learners also turned out to be uneasy. With inferiority and introvertness, a limited number of students still did not take the advantage of this strategy.

To sum up, the data have revealed that the use of some strategies contributes to the better writing results of the first-year students while the use of others obviously lead to lower scores.

7. Conclusion

The findings of the study highlight that after one year, the students generally improved their writing performance and divided themselves into two groups of writers: effective group and ineffective group, with each preferring some strategies. The effective writers frequently use such strategies as *placing new words into a context, recognizing and using formulas and patterns, using resources for receiving and sending messages, overviewing and linking with already known materials, planning for a language task, self-evaluating and cooperating with proficient users of the language*. Meanwhile, the increased use of the three strategies: *translating, taking notes and taking risks in writing without the fear of making mistakes* account for the poor performance of ineffective writers. Of all these strategies, some have been used more often than at the beginning of the year while some have lost their popularity. In other words, the students' awareness of the strategies' effect has been altered. In general, the study succeeded in completing the objectives which we had set out at the introductory stage. However, we could safely say that we only scattered the seeds of LS to the students, who then worked on them and we finally helped them collect the results. These results are their experience and can be effective for their own use in the future.

The study yields some significant implications for writing teachers and EFL teachers in general. First of all, SBI as a program of teaching strategies to students really proved its effects. Whether the relation between frequency of using LS and the students' is not linear, statistics analysis results still strongly suggest the integration of the strategies into the writing curriculum. Besides, the realization of the study has strengthened the orientation and proved the practicality of learner-centred approach in teaching English. In fact, the students have enjoyed great freedom and autonomy through discussing with their peers and their teachers about what to learn and how to learn in SBI. Materials for learning have always been adjusted with regards to learners' needs.

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ÁP DỤNG CHƯƠNG TRÌNH HƯỚNG DẪN CHIẾN LƯỢC HỌC CHO SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ NHẤT CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH TRONG MÔN VIẾT

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Tóm tắt: Chiến lược học của sinh viên là một lĩnh vực quan trọng trong các nghiên cứu về giảng dạy tiếng Anh trong nhiều thập kỷ qua. Ở Việt Nam, trong khi vai trò của người giáo viên vẫn khó có thể thay thế, vẫn chưa có nhiều nghiên cứu về vai trò của người học và sự khác biệt giữa các đối tượng người học. Với sinh viên năm thứ nhất chuyên ngành tiếng Anh, vấn đề này càng cấp thiết vì họ phải đối mặt với những thay đổi sâu sắc và toàn diện trong phương pháp dạy và học tiếng Anh khi bước vào môi trường mới tại trường đại học. Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện trên 50 sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tại một trường đại học ngoại ngữ ở Việt Nam với hai vấn đề: những chiến lược học nào đang được sử dụng, và có sự khác biệt nào giữa đối tượng sinh viên giỏi và sinh viên chưa giỏi sau một năm được hướng dẫn về chiến lược học viết. Nghiên cứu chỉ ra 4 nhóm chiến lược viết với tần suất sử dụng khác nhau và những khác biệt lớn trong việc sử dụng chiến lược học viết của sinh viên.

Từ khóa: hướng dẫn chiến lược học, chiến lược học, kỹ năng viết bằng tiếng Anh

AN EVALUATION OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE FILM "RIO" BASED ON NEWMARK'S MODEL

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Abstract: The study evaluated the translation quality of the Vietnamese version of the film "Rio"*,* which was translated and dubbed in the project of MegaStar Media Ltd. Company, Vietnam in April 2011. To reach its aim, the study used four methods including *analysis* and *comparison*, which were based on Newmark's model. In addition, *statistical* and *observational* methods were also applied to examine the synchronisation of each utterance and its translated version. The research instrument was "Aegisub", a free open-source cross-platform subtitle editing program designed for timing and styling of subtitles. The researcher's purpose was to see how well utterances in both versions of the film are synchronised with each other. The research findings showed that in general, the film was well-translated in terms of structures, proper nouns, hierarchical pronouns, borrowed words and puns. Weaknesses of the translation were found in the title and several mistranslations. The study also revealed that the translated utterances were synchronised with the original ones quite well, especially in terms of duration.

Keywords: film translation, translation quality evaluation, synchronization, dubbed film, Newmark's model

1. Introduction

It is said that translation has received a lot of attention from linguists, scholars and especially translators. Typically, in the era of globalization and integration, interaction among nations and the need to exchange information and cultures have become greater. Translation has been regarded as one of the most effective tools that satisfy people's need to entertain and enrich their knowledge about the world. It is undeniable that translating a film from one language into another is really a challenging task because of its important role in bringing understanding of the texts to the "readers" with different knowledge backgrounds.

Film translation is a widely discussed topic among linguists. Adapting a film from the source language to the target language requires a lot of translators' efforts. In film translation, not only is the translator dealing

with basic issues of translation, such as linguistics, ideological and cultural barriers, but he is also facing with the multimedia constraints such as synchronisation in dubbing or the appropriateness of the characters' lip movements, the syllables or even the number of syllables.

In the field of film industry, "Rio" is the first Hollywood 3D cartoon dubbed in Vietnamese under a project of MegaStar, one of the biggest film importers in Viet Nam, and the 20th Century Fox (Sai Gon Times Online Newspaper). Review from website Rottentomatoes.com, an 18-year-old American review aggregator website for film and television, and a variety of others, indicates that "Rio" is really highly appreciated by viewers and critics. From the day of its release, "the film was also a box office success, grossing over $143 million in the United States and $484 million worldwide" (Wikipedia). The evaluator is impressed with the high elaborateness in the

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process of dubbing. According to Vietnamnet Online Newspaper, Vietnamese voice actors, including actress Minh Hang, actors Minh Tiep and Dai Nghia, were selected by the film director himself. Then the voice dubbing was carried out under the supervision of American experts. Furthermore, the dialogues were translated in Vietnam while songs were translated in the United States of America. After that, Vietnamese musicians edited the songs. Next, Vietnamese artists sang the songs and sent them back to the United States for editing.

Indeed, there are different ideas about how film translation should be defined and what should be the methods, as well as the criteria to assess its quality. Therefore, conducting a research to examine the success and drawback of the translation of a film is expected to bring about benefits to language learners, translation assessors and especially to the film industry.

2. Research methodology

2.1. The film

The study is conducted on the American 3D computer-animated musical adventure-comedy entitled "Rio". This highly-appreciated film with a feature of length of nearly 100 minutes was produced by Blue Sky Studios and directed by Carlos Saldanha in 2011, and then it was dubbed in Vietnamese in May 2011. The reasons for choosing this film are:

(i) This is the first Hollywood 3D cartoon dubbed in Vietnamese under a project of Mega Star and the 20th Century Fox;

(ii) The author of the study is inspired with the success of the film when it has received generally positive reviews from film critics (Rottentomatoes.com). In addition, the film has been widely welcomed by not only children but also adults. The audience not only enjoys the

film in their own mother tongue but also is able to hear background sound like melodious music in a scene. This factor reflects how the film is outstanding in comparison with others as it applied Hollywood dubbing technology;

(iii) The author of this study is impressed with the high elaborateness in the process of dubbing. According to Vietnamnet Online Newspaper, Vietnamese voice actors, including actress Minh Hang, actors Minh Tiep and Dai Nghia, were selected by the film director. Then the voice dubbing was carried out under the supervision of American experts. In addition, the dialogues were translated in Viet Nam while songs were translated in the United States of America. After that, Vietnamese musicians edited the songs. Next, Vietnamese artists sang the songs and sent them back to America for editing.

2.2. Research question

The study focuses on seeking answer to the sole research question below:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the translation of the film "Rio", according to Newmark's model?

2.3. Research approaches

2.3.1. Qualitative analysis approach

The original and the translated film scripts were examined thoroughly and comprehensively in terms of the author's purpose, the topic, characteristic of the audience, the title, as well as several linguistic features such as structure, pronouns or puns, etc.

In addition, phonetic features in the close-up of each utterance in both versions were also examined to see how well the translation was adapted to suit the on-screen characters' lip movement.

2.3.2. Quantitative approach

In order to get the quantitative data, the software "Aegisub" was used to measure the duration, starting and ending time of each single source text and target text when they were uttered. The process of collecting this kind of data was a quite complex and challenging task as it took much time to measure time exactly.

2.3.3. Contrastive analysis approach

In this study, the source text was compared to its translation under the framework of Newmark's translation quality assessment model.

Besides, another comparison was made to see how well the target text was synchronised with the source text in terms of duration, starting time, ending time and phonetic features in the close-up of an utterance**.**

2.4. Research instrument

In order to obtain the quantitative data, the software named "Aegisub" was applied to measure the duration, starting time and ending time of each utterance in the original film and its translated version.

According to Wikipedia, "Aegisub" is a free open-source cross-platform subtitle editing program, which has been designed for timing and styling of subtitles. The software is considered the standard in well-known subbing groups and is extensively used in creating subtitle for films.

2.5. Data collection and analysis procedure

This study was conducted in stages as follows.

Firstly, general information about the film such as its context, scenario writer, producer, plot or characters was collected.

Secondly, both the English and Vietnamese film scripts were noted by watching the two versions of the films. The researcher could make use of the English script which was

available on the Internet while the Vietnamese one was transcribed by the researcher herself when watching the dubbed film many times.

Thirdly, the translated text was compared to its original text under the framework of Newmark's Translation Quality Assessment model with five steps as follows:

- A brief analysis of the source language text stressing its intention and its functional aspects. This may include a statement of the author's purpose, that is, the attitude he takes towards the topic; characterization of the readership; an indication of its category and type;
- The translator's interpretation of the SL text's purpose, his translation method and the translation's likely readership;
- A selective but representative detailed comparison of the translation with the original in terms of both semantics and syntactic. You do not take the points successively; you group them selectively under general headings: the title; the structure, including the paragraphing and sentence connectives; proper names; cultural words; shifty metaphors; translationese; neologisms; "untranslatable" words; ambiguity; level of language; and, where relevant, meta-language, puns, sound-effect.
- An evaluation of the translation: (a) in the translator's terms, (b) in the critic's terms, (c) as a piece of writing, independently of its original.
- Where appropriate, an assessment of the likely place of the translation in the target language culture or discipline. In the case of a serious text, say a novel, a poem, or an important book, you assess the work's potential importance within the target language culture.

(Newmark, 1988: 186-189)

Fourthly, the software named "Aegisub", a free open-source cross-platform subtitle editing program designed for timing and styling of subtitles, was applied to measure the duration, starting time and ending time of each utterance in both versions of the film.

Fifthly, phonetic features of an utterance in both versions were also examined.

In steps four and five, a comparison between the original utterance and its translation were made in terms of timing and phonetic features to see how well the two versions are synchronised with each other.

Finally, data were consolidated and categorized. The results then were analysed and presented in forms of tables.

3. Analysis and discussion

3.1. A brief analysis of the source text

3.1.1. The author's purpose

According to Wikipedia, director Saldanha developed his first story concept of Rio in 1995 when a penguin was washed up in Rio. Then, he learned of the production of some other films and changed the concept to involve macaws and their environments in Rio. It is obvious that the title "Rio" refers to the magnificent Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro, where the film is set. It is said the filmmakers aim at introducing the landscape beauty and culture of Brazil in general, and of Rio de Janeiro in particular, to the audience worldwide.

Especially, the film describes the relationship between the macaw, namely Blue, and Linda, the main supporting protagonist in "Rio". Through the film, the audience can see how they and other birds fight against smugglers to escape to freedom. It is obvious that the scenario writer's purpose is to celebrate love and freedom spirit, which can fight against all smugglers or traffickers.

On the other hand, it could be easily seen that, at the beginning and the end of the film is the image of birds singing and dancing happily together. It is reflected that the birds in particular, and animals in general, also have feelings and emotions like human. They feel happy when living in freedom; they are wretched when being kidnapped; and they have solidarity and willing spirit to help each other. That is also another message the scenario composer wishes to bring us.

3.1.2. Characteristic of the readership

As an animated film with colourful scenes and cute characters, "Rio" centres on children viewers. Besides, the film tells the story of Blu, a male Spix macaw who was taken to Rio de Janeiro to mate with a free-spirited female Spix's macaw, Jewel. The two eventually fell in love, and together they had to escape from being smuggled by Nigel, a cockatoo. In the film, the audience can see a few flirting scenes between the two birds or between Linda and Tulio. Hence, the audience could also be young adults as well. Both kinds of audience, children and young adults, are those whose love discovering novel and creative things.

3.1.3. The topic

As discussed in the above section, there are various ideas about the topic or the theme of this adventure cartoon; however, the most outstanding one is that true love can conquer all. The love between Linda and Tulio, or the love between the two macaws, as well as the relationship between Linda and the bird Blue finally win all ferocious smugglers to have freedom.

3.2. The translator's interpretation

3.2.1. Omission of original text

Careful analyses of the SL text of the film Rio reveal that a few words, phrases and even sentences in the translation of the film have been intentionally or deliberately left out. As previously discussed, in most cases, the omission of the words or phrases has no significant impact on general meaning of the original text. It is supposed that conveying the whole meaning of the dialogue is more important than translating every single word. Besides, as the influence of this on the audience' understanding is immaterial and they can still grasp the main gist of the film, this kind of

translating is still acceptable. However, it seems insupportable in one case: the phrase *Hasta la vista* is not translated, which affects the understanding of the audience who only have chance to watch the Vietnamese version of the film. This may result from literary translation where the translator has to comply with the principles of the target language; hence, he might not be able to maintain the format of the original version.

3.2.2. The translator's method

Viewers praise "Rio" not only because the message and meaningfulness the film brings about but also because its language is simple and easy to understand. In fact, the glossary and expressions in the film are not complex; hence, translating the film is not a hard job. Nonetheless, how to convey as much as the beauty of the content of the film, especially of content of the song, is a challenging task. Generally, the translator has stuck to the ***communicative translation method*** as it attempts to produce the message from the original film to the audience in a very smooth and natural way. The Vietnamese version of "Rio" can be considered a target language biased translation because of its accessibility of thought and cultural content of original to viewers. On the other hand, in a long and complicated work like a film, the complexity of communicative language is inevitable; therefore, the translator certainly has to combine some methods of translation along with a chief method. Especially, for the song sung by the birds in the film, adaption translation method is also utilized.

3.2.3. The translation's prospective readership

Resembling the original, the translated version generally aims at young audience such as children or young adults who love watching foreign animated cartoons. The methods and language the translator has used

suggest that the targeted readership is mostly of these two types of audience and even those who are interested in discovering Brazilian culture.

3.3. Comparison of the translation with the original

3.3.1. The title

Titles of films need to be attractive, allusive, and suggestive in order to catch the attention of the viewers (Newmark, 1988). For this purpose, titles should be able to attract the readers emotionally because, as Nida and Taber (1974: 91) states, "we do not only understand the reference of words; we also react to them emotionally... This aspect of the meaning which deals with our emotional reactions to words is called connotative meaning."

Concerning the film, both the original and the translated name is "Rio". The title itself refers to the magnificent Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro, where the film is set. It seems that one of the film-makers' purposes is to introduce the picturesque scenery and culture of Brazil in general, and of Rio de Janeiro in particular to the audience worldwide. The title is quite interesting, especially with those who have already had some knowledge about Rio de Janeiro or at least they have heard this name before. However, for those who have never heard of Rio, then the title seems to carry too little information to attract potential viewers. Hence, it is suggestible that the translated title should have additional features to be more attractive, allusive, and suggestive.

3.3.2. The structure

3.3.2.1. Simple sentences vs. compound sentences

After the thorough examination of the source text and the target text, it is noticeable that in general, structures in both versions are mostly retained. Reasons for this may come

from the fact that most of the texts in the film are parts of dialogues or of a song, which usually does not contain long and compound sentences. Thus, it is obvious that the translator does not have to modify structures from the original to the translated version.

3.3.2.2. Active voice vs. passive voice

Basing on the difference between the two languages – the source language and the target language – in using active and passive voices, the translator has skilfully switched between the two voices, helping viewers understand the text more easily and clearly. However, in most cases, it is noticed that passive voice in English has still been maintained in Vietnamese. In spite of great efforts of the translator, several instances seem to sound strange to the Vietnamese people as they are more familiar with active voice. Hence, it is more judicious to alter the original structure of the text in the translated version.

3.3.2.3. Order of clauses

Original version	Translated version
There is nothing natural about *being thrown halfway across the room.*	(A.111 – p.XI) *Bị ném quăng ở phòng*, chẳng có gì là tự nhiên cả.

As the example above indicates, the structure in the target text is a complex sentence whose complement is a dependent clause. The translator has transported the position of the clauses when translating this source text into the target text. In this way, the translator has solved the complexity of the sentences and made them easier to understand as well as more natural in the target language.

3.3.2.4. Use of antonym

Original version	Translated version
…but I wouldn't make you do this if it wasn't the *right* thing to do.	(A.134 – p.XIII) … nhưng tớ sẽ không ép cậu làm điều này nếu như nó là điều *sai trái.*

In this example, instead of translating the present word used in the original film, the translator has conveyed the connotation of the dialogue by using antonym of the word together with a negative elimination. This helps the utterance become colloquial in the target language.

3.3.2.5. Change of subjects

Original version	Translated version
No! *It*'s not what you think.	Không! *Tôi* có nghĩ thế đâu.

The example above demonstrates the adjustment in the structure of the target text. In the source text, subject *it* is not translated. Instead, *Tôi* is added as the subject of the translated sentence. Obviously, this modification in the target text makes the text much more intelligible to the audience.

3.3.3. Proper names

3.3.3.1. People's names

It is noticed that in this film, animated characters are humanised, therefore, their names are regarded as people's names and will be discussed in this section.

According to Newmark (1988: 214), normally, people's first and surnames are transferred, thus preserving their nationality, and assuming that their names have no connotations in the text. Moreover, currently, more people have some knowledge of English and are more familiar with English names, most translated version of foreign works retain the spelling of characters' names. In the film, it is shown that names of main characters such as Linda, Blu, Jewel, Tulio, Fernando, Nigel, Nico, Pedro, as well as other names such as Marcel or Lionel appear with the same spelling in the translated version.

In short, all people's names in the film remain the same in both original and translated versions.

3.3.3.2. Geographical names

According to Newmark (1988: 216), "we have to respect a country's wish to determine its own choice of names for its own geographical features". Furthermore, it is advised that we distinguish between toponyms as names or items in an address, when they are transferred, and as cultural scenery in an advertising brochure, when at least the classifiers such as "river", "plain", "mountains", "church", or even "street" can be translated.

The analyses show that that all geographical names are the same in both original and translated versions. The retention of these names is reasonable and appropriate as it is necessary to respect the wish of the countries, states and cities mentioned above to determine their own choice of names for their own geographical features.

3.3.4. Hierarchical pronouns as a cultural feature

In the source text, 6 personal pronouns *(I, you, we, they, he, she)* have been used to describe the characters, while the target text employs 22 words. More specifically, there are 6 variants of the first pronoun *I* in the translated text *(tớ, cháu, tao, tôi, ta, anh)*, 9 variants of *you (cậu, mày, em, anh, chú, đại ca, mình, hai đứa, chúng mày),* 3 variants of *we (chúng tôi, (chúng) ta, bọn tao),* 4 of *they (chúng, họ, cả hai, bọn chúng),* 4 of *he (cha này, nó),* and 2 of *she (bà ấy, con bé)*. The reason for this variety is that Vietnamese has a very detailed system of hierarchy when addressing other people. Therefore, when translating a text into Vietnamese, especially dialogues, the translator has to be extremely careful and meticulous in choosing suitable pronouns or forms of address for each situation. Through the illustrated examples, it can be stated that the translator has succeeded in applying complex Vietnamese addressing system to convey the meaning of the original text to make it reasonably familiar to Vietnamese.

3.3.5. Borrowed words

The film translator has kept a few words in the original version instead of translating them into pure Vietnamese.

Most of the borrowed words in the target text have the same spelling as in the source text. In case of the word *maraca,* the translated version is added *cái trống* to clarify its denotation. In fact, *vector, cái trống maraca*, *samba*, *soda,* and *carnaval* are widely accepted and used in the target language. Thus, Vietnamese viewers may have no problem understanding their meaning and the things they refer to.

In conclusion, the translator has fulfilled his/her task of conveying meaning of those from the source text to the target text since these words in the translation are popular and widely understood in the Vietnamese language.

3.3.6. Puns

Newmark (1988: 211) states that a pun is made when there is a word, or two words or a group of words with the same sound are used in their two possible senses, usually for the purpose of arousing laughter or amusement, and sometimes also to concentrate meaning.

In the film, after Blu imitates the song lyrics (Tico, taco, ya, ya, ya) to express his boredom with the journey, he continues to emphasize his desire to come back to his hometown by saying 'I'm **tico, taco** out of here'. It seems that the translator retains this pun in the translation to make the translated version more interesting to viewers.

3.3.7. Some minor issues

3.3.7.1. Mistranslation

Through a careful examination of both the source text and the target text, the researcher found several words, phrases or even sentences translated incorrectly in comparison with the original version.

Typical illustrations of the translator's mistranslation were found as the meaning of the source text are totally different from the translated one. Obviously, there is no relation in meaning between *Wait, wait, wait* with *Á,… cô làm gì đấy!* Furthermore, in other examples, the translator has mistranslated *really* into *có vẻ, tell* into *nhìn*, *TV show* into *gameshow*, *people* into *mày*, *have to* into *có thể*, *we* into *mày*, *burgled* into *đồ* (it should be "*đồ ăn cắp*"), *starting* into *đang*.

3.3.7.2. Sentences which sound unnatural in the target language

The only unnatural-sounding sentence

3.4.1. Duration synchronisation

In regard to timing feature, it is clear that both the starting time and the ending time of each utterance in the target text are slightly later than those of each utterance in the source text. However, all the starting time in every single pair of utterances in both original text and translated text are nearly the same; and so is the ending time. A very small difference in timing exists in milliseconds. However, the duration for an utterance in both source text and target text is exactly the same. To be more specific, several illustrations are presented in the following table:

No.	Translated version (Starting time, ending time, text)	Original version (Starting time, ending time, text)
	00:07:27,784 --> 00:07:29,451 Throw all the snowballs you want.	00:07:27,697 --> 00:07:29,364 Các chị cứ tha hồ ở đó mà ném tuyết.
	00:10:01,271 --> 00:10:04,691 It was very nice of you to stop in and squawk around…	00:10:01,183 --> 00:10:04,603 Cảm ơn anh vì đã ghé ngang hiệu sách của tôi, quàng quạc khắp nơi..
	00:13:30,482 --> 00:13:33,484 Come tomorrow night, everyone will be dressed like that.	00:13:30,392 --> 00:13:33,394 Đêm mai cô mà tới, tất cả mọi người sẽ ăn mặc y như vậy.
	00:16:02,594 --> 00:16:03,969 I'll say.	00:16:02,503 --> 00:16:03,878 Khỏi phải nói.
	…	…

found in the target text is *Một câu hỏi **công bằng,*** whose original version is *Well, that's a **fair** question.* This translated text seems to be not very smooth in Vietnamese. Hence, in this case, a revision is needed in order to have a better translation.

3.4. Synchronisation of the translated film

As discussed in the previous section, in order to evaluate the synchronisation of each single utterance of the source text and the target text, the analysis will focus on several elements including timing and features of visual phonetic of the original version of the film.

In example 1, the starting time of the English text is at 00:**07:27**,784 while of the Vietnamese text is at 00:**07:27**,697. Also, the ending time of the original text in this example is at 00:**07:29**,451 whereas of the translated one is at 00:**07:29**,364. Result from calculation shows that timing imbalance in this case is only **0,087** second in both starting time and ending time. The duration for the original text to be uttered is **1,667** second, and for the translated text is also **1,667** second.

Similarly, in example 2, the starting time of the English text is at 00:**10:01**,271 while of the Vietnamese text is at 00:**10:01**,183. Also, the ending time of the original text in this

example is at 00:**10:04**,691 whereas of the translated one is at 00:**10:04**,603. Result from calculation shows that timing imbalance in this case is only *0,088* second in both starting time and ending time. The duration for the original text to be uttered is *3.42* second, and for the translated text is also *3.42* second.

By the same token, it is reflected from the other illustrations in the table that the duration for an original text to be uttered is the same with the duration of its translated text.

3.4.2. Lip synchronisation

It is essential to examine the ***features of visual phonetic*** of the close-up in each utterance in both versions of the film.

From the analysis, there are some utterances in source text and its equivalence share exactly the same phonetic features, for example, *Samba* vs. *samba*, *Ah* vs. *A*.

Besides, the phonetics of other final vowels (for illustrator, *want* vs. *tuyết*, *that* vs. *vậy*, *fault* vs. *tôi*, *boys* vs *bay*) are quite similar. On the other hand, in many utterances*,* the visual articulatory movements of characters on screen are quite different in comparison with the voice actors' lip movements when pronouncing the translated text (for instance, *say* vs. *nói*, *continued* vs. *tục*, *beak* vs. *ta*, *safe* vs. *á, now* vs. *giờ, yeah* vs. *đủ).* This slight difference is in the level of roundness of characters' lips.

In short, two synchronisation factors of the translated film are discussed in this section. The findings show that although the voice actors or actress uttered all translated texts merely milliseconds later than the original texts, the time length of these pairs of utterances are the same. Besides, some phonetic features of the close-ups of translated utterances are not synchronised very well with the original.

3.5. Further discussion of the translation

The translator of the film "Rio", as pointed out above, has chosen communicative translation method as his/her main method; hence, the referential and pragmatic accuracy should be viewed as both denotative and connotative accuracy, with focus on the sentence level meaning accuracy. From that point of view, the assessor would like to make the following evaluations for the translation.

Firstly, it is quite a clear version of the original in that most sentences have been translated with accurate meaning and well-structured sentences. The translator has proven his/her flexibility and competence in translating the whole film of nearly 100 minutes with thousand words except for the commented changes in active and passive voices. The translation of proper names and borrowed words have been quite appropriate. Especially, the hierarchical pronouns are translated really reasonably and skilfully. However, several mistranslations of words and phrases that are presumably due to limit of time for the workload, or the translator wishes to change the content a little bit out of his/her own interest. Finally, with enormous effort in translating the whole movie, the professional translator has generated only one sentence that sounds ludicrous and absurd in the target language.

Another criterion in translation quality evaluation, according to Newmark (1988), is to examine whether the translator has omitted any section of the original text and whether it affects the message that the author wishes to express. The finding from the translation is the translator has unintentionally or deliberately left out a few words and phrases. Due to time constraints, the researcher could not conduct an audience survey to measure how much this omission affects the general meaning of the sentences or dialogues. However, it is very likely that if there is, such impact is believed to be minimal.

Generally, it can be concluded that the translator has successfully created a high-

quality and enjoyable Vietnamese version of the film. It is undeniable that mistakes during the translating process are unavoidable, and the mentioned weaknesses should be reviewed in order to have a better edition in the future.

3.6. Potential importance of the work within the target language culture

In this last step of Newmark's model, especially for the case of an animated film dubbed in Vietnamese under the supervision of its own director like "Rio", it is necessary to assess the work's potential importance within the target language culture by seeking answers to such questions as *Was it in fact worth translating*? *What kind of influence will it have on the language, the literature, the ideas in its new milieu*? (Newmark, 1988: 189).

For the initial question, the certain answer is yes. As mentioned in the previous section, the original version is highly appreciated by the audience worldwide. After a year on screen, it is regarded as a box office success, grossing over $143 million in the United States and $484 million worldwide (Wikipedia). Therefore, the translation of this film into Vietnamese is certainly indispensable. Thanks to the translated version of the novel, fans of *Rio* in Viet Nam and fans of adventure-comedy animated film have the chance to enjoy another magnificent cinematographic work.

With regards to the second question, a well-known film and its well-translated version would be an invaluable contribution to both the source language and the target language. "Rio" shines with a beauty that is rarely found in Vietnam film industry. This Vietnamese version of good quality is a valuable addition to the literature and cultural hoard of Viet Nam.

In short, the film and its Vietnamese version are both appreciated and well received. "Rio" itself is an excellent work of free spirits, and its Vietnamese version would be perfect one as well.

4. Conclusion

In general, the translated version has conveyed really well the author's ideas using brief and succinct target language of an experienced translator with communicative translation as the main method. In terms of syntax, it has successfully transferred English sentence structures into Vietnamese structures flexibly and naturally. Moreover, the translator has made good choice of words and expressions, which goes well with the context and Vietnamese way of thinking and expression. Additionally, the translator has also skilfully used equivalent Vietnamese idioms and phrases. Especially, the translated text is also wisely synchronised with the original text in terms of duration, that is, most translated utterances have the same length of time as the original. This successful synchronisation of the translator helps accomplish the naturalness and smoothness for the Vietnamese version of the film, and brings about an enjoyable "Rio" to Vietnamese audience in their mother tongue.

Though overall the translation of the film is a good one, there are still shortcomings that should be considered for future editions. Firstly, the translator has omitted some words and phrases in comparison with the original. However, such omission is believed to marginally affect the core meaning of the whole film because viewers still can get the meaning by visual factors on screen such as characters' movements or the scene background. Secondly, the translator's use of borrowed words is also reasonable. Last but not least, as pointed out in the third step of the assessment, mistranslation must also be revised in upcoming editions. From the researcher's point of view, this kind of mistakes may be owing to the translator's negligence in translating process rather than by his lack of linguistic knowledge. With regard to the phonetic synchronisation, there exist several mismatches of characters' lip movements in the

close-up of translated utterances in comparison with the original. Although it does not cause much impacts on viewers' feeling of characters' mouth movements, it is suggested that if this limitation is overcome, the translation of the film will be much improved.

Furthermore, it is undeniable that Peter Newmark's translation quality assessment model is highly applicable in evaluating translation quality as it is practical and easy to follow. Also, it is considered an effective tool for the evaluators to get a deep insight into the strengths as well as weaknesses of the translated text. However, concerning the translation of dubbed films, Newmark's model works well only in assessing the translated text but not with other factors such as time, visual or sounds... With complex features of a dubbed film that requires naturalness to make it appear less foreign and more familiar to viewers, the model appears to be lack of criteria such as duration synchronisation or phonetic synchronisation to assess the translation quality of the dubbed version of the film.

Additionally, from the results achieved, some suggestions and implications for the translation of the film from English into Vietnamese might be offered. Firstly, it is suggested that during the whole process of interpreting a film from English into Vietnamese, the translator should always bear in mind criteria for a high quality translation; and, among many translation quality assessment models, the one proposed by Newmark can be regarded as a good choice. Besides, a thorough review of critic relating to the original text would be useful because when some small details are omitted or mistranslated, general meaning of the whole sentence may be affected and lead to misunderstanding from the viewers. More critically, the message that the author wishes to communicate will be changed entirely. For this reason, translators should be very cautious when translating any works from the source language into the target language. Especially, the translator should be really cautious with features of a dubbed film that require synchronisation in duration or lips' movement between the source text and the target text. In other words, it is advisable for translator to adapt each utterance of the translated film in order to have the same uttering duration with the original. Furthermore, the starting time and ending time of an utterance should also be the same, or at least nearly the same. The slight difference in timing, if any, should be at millisecond level. In addition, the translator should pay attention to the articulatory movements of the on-screen characters and the phonetic features of the translated text, especially in close-ups and extreme close-ups, in order to attain lip synchronisation.

In conclusion, the findings of this paper are expected to be useful to teachers and students in their studying Translation Studies. Additionally, it is helpful to translation critics since it shows that to improve the quality of translation in general and of film translation in particular, it is essential to evaluate basing on a certain model to make the assessment more adequate and objective. Furthermore, the study is hoped to help the future versions of the dubbed film "Rio" in particular to have higher quality, and bring about some implications for film industry in general.

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ĐÁNH GIÁ BẢN DỊCH BỘ PHIM "RIO"
DỰA TRÊN MÔ HÌNH CỦA NEWMARK

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này đánh giá chất lượng bản dịch tiếng Việt của bộ phim "Rio" – bộ phim được hãng phim MegaStar Việt Nam lồng tiếng vào tháng 4/2011. Để thực hiện điều này, nghiên cứu đã sử dụng các phương pháp bao gồm: *phân tích* và *so sánh* dựa trên mô hình của Newmark. Ngoài ra, nghiên cứu cũng sử dụng phương pháp *thống kê* và *quan sát* để đánh giá sự đồng bộ hóa của mỗi phát ngôn trong bản gốc và bản dịch. Công cụ được sử dụng trong quá trình nghiên cứu là phần mềm "Aegisub" – một chương trình biên tập phụ đề miễn phí dựa trên nền tảng mã nguồn mở được thiết kế cho việc đo thời gian và tạo hiệu ứng phụ đề. Nghiên cứu này cũng nhằm đánh giá mức độ hoàn thiện về mặt đồng bộ hóa giữa phát ngôn trong bản gốc với bản lồng tiếng. Kết quả cho thấy, về cơ bản, bộ phim đã được dịch khá tốt về cấu trúc, danh từ riêng, đại từ nhân xưng, cách chơi chữ và từ mượn. Các mặt hạn chế của bản dịch cũng đã được nêu ra ở phần tiêu đề và một số lỗi dịch chưa chính xác. Song, nhìn chung, sự đồng bộ hóa trong phát ngôn giữa bản gốc và bản lồng tiếng được đánh giá là tương đối tốt, đặc biệt là về mặt thời gian.

Từ khóa: dịch phim, đánh giá chất lượng bản dịch, sự đồng bộ hóa, phim lồng tiếng, mô hình của Newmark

ENGLISH ARTICLE CHOICES BY VIETNAMESE EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract: This paper investigates the choice of articles by L1 (first language) Vietnamese learners of L2 (second language) English under the framework proposed by Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004). According to their Fluctuation Hypothesis and Article Choice Parameter, L2 learners of English whose L1 does not have articles have direct, universal grammar-mediated access to universal semantic features of the article system, i.e. definiteness and specificity. The dual article system of English encodes definiteness, which leads L2 learners whose L1 lacks a proper article system to fluctuate between the two values of the Article Choice Parameter, that is, definiteness and specificity. Although empirical research has been done to examine the acquisition of article system by both L1 and L2 learners as well as to validate the hypothesis, the results obtained from the research appear to be inconclusive, laying a fruitful area for further investigation. The current research was carried out with the aim to enrich L2 data with respect to the article acquisition domain and, more importantly, to examine Ionin et al.'s (2004) conclusions regarding the effect of specificity on the choice of article. The study was also motivated by the scarcity of research looking at how Vietnamese learners of L2 English acquire the target article system.

Keywords: universal grammar, article system, article choice parameter, second language acquisition

1. Introduction

It is often acknowledged that the English article system is particularly problematic to its learners at every proficiency level. Challenges associated with this grammar notion are often explained from a cross-linguistic perspective in which obviously not every language has an article system like that of English. On the surface level, the English article system does not seem intricate at all compared to other grammatical aspects such as the various forms of verb tenses and complex structures of relative clauses. Nevertheless, difficulties in acquiring the article system may stem from the lack of direct form-function mapping in article uses. Moreover, to L2 learners of English, article choices are not only rule-based but also semantic-based and pragmatic-based. In other words, L2 learners need to rely on the semantic complexity of English articles along with the discourse context in order to use articles correctly, which makes it exceptionally difficult for L2 learners to master the seemingly simple use of articles.

When examining the errors of article uses by L1 Korean and L1 Russian learners of L2 English, Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004) found that L2 learners often substituted the definite article *the* with the indefinite article *a* in definite contexts where specificity is not well in place and vice versa. Moreover, L2

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learners also displayed a fluctuation pattern in which they switched between distinguishing *the* and *a* on the basis of definiteness and distinguishing them on the basis of specificity. From these evidences, they concluded that L2 learners have direct access to a universal grammar-based semantic parameter and specificity as a universal semantic feature of article system does play a role in L2 interlanguage grammar. To further support for this claim, Kim and Lakshmanan (2009) tested the Fluctuation Hypothesis with L1 Korean L2 English speakers and indicated that Korean learners' choice of articles were affected by specificity as can be seen in their interpretation of *the* as a specificity marker. Meanwhile, Tryzna (2009) presented some evidence against the Fluctuation Hypothesis. In her study, the fluctuation effect was not present in the Polish data group and was found only within a subset of the Chinese data (indefinite singular contexts). Given the inconclusive evidence for the hypothesis, the study will look for and analyze more article acquisition data drawn from speakers of a new language background – also an article-less one – Vietnamese.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, previous studies on the L2 acquisition of English articles that examine the hypothesis proposed by Ionin et al. (2004) are reviewed. A small portion of the paper is devoted to exploring Vietnamese nominal phrases, which lends more support to the fluctuation phenomenon. In the next section, I present my experimental results on the L2 acquisition of English articles by Vietnamese learners. In Section 5, I will discuss the role that specificity plays in the acquisition and provide some additional accounts for article omission. The final section concludes the paper with some follow up questions.

2. Literature background

2.1. Article semantics

Cross-linguistically, articles encode semantic distinctions such as *definiteness* and *specificity* (Ionin et al., 2004). The former notion refers to the state of knowledge shared between the speaker and hearer (or writer/ reader) while the latter refers to the state of knowledge known to the speaker (writer) only. It is important to note that the detailed definitions of *definiteness* and *specificity* are not uniform among researchers. Nevertheless, in this study the author adopted the definitions proposed by Ionin et al. (2004), which is given in (1) below:

(1) Definiteness and *Specificity*: Informal definitions

> If a Determiner Phrase (DP) of the form [D NP] is . . .
>
> a. [+definite], then the speaker and hearer presuppose the existence of a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP.
>
> b. [+specific], then the speaker intends to refer to a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP and considers this individual to possess some noteworthy property.

<div align="center">(Ionin et al., 2004: 5)[1]</div>

In referring to English article system, the definite article *the* indicates that the referent is already shared between the speaker and the hearer. It marks old, given, or presupposed information while the indefinite article *a* marks new or asserted information. It is also suggested that *the* signals referential coherence while the use of *a* in discourse informs the listener that a new entity is introduced (Murphy, 1997). It is essential to note that English language distinguishes two types of articles on the basis of *definiteness*, not *specificity*.

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[1] NP is the conventional abbreviated form for noun phrase.

2.2. Article choice parameter

Ionin et al. (2004) speculated that if article acquisition is constrained by universal grammar (henceforth UG), article choices must be derived from parameter settings. Therefore, they proposed that article uses are regulated by the Article Choice Parameter (henceforth ACP) whose two settings, *specificity* and *definiteness*, determine the overall makeup of the article system in a given language. The ACP is given in (2) below:

(2) A language that has two articles distinguishes them as follows:
a. The Definiteness Setting: articles are distinguished on the basis of definiteness.
b. The Specificity Setting: articles are distinguished on the basis of specificity.

In a cross-linguistic examination of article system in world languages done by Ionin (2003), they observed that English articles exemplify the definiteness setting of the ACP; hence *a NP* is always indefinite while *the NP* is always definite. On the other hand, Samoan article system represents specificity setting of the ACP. Its two article *le* and *se* in turn denote specific and non-specific DPs. A DP introduced by *le* can be either definite or indefinite whose reference may be unfamiliar to the hearer. By contrast, *se* indicates no specific referent and denotes a particular referent whose identity is not known exactly to the speaker. With that in mind, Ionin et al. (2004) concluded that Samoan articles are marked for specificity.

2.3 Fluctuation Hypothesis

In an attempt to account for error patterns in L2 article use, Ionin et al. (2004) proposed the Fluctuation Hypothesis. This hypothesis posits that L2 learners have full access to UG principles and parameter-settings and L2 learners fluctuate between different parameter-settings until the input let them to set the parameter to the appropriate value manifested in the target language. Therefore, L2 learners of English whose L1s lack articles may fluctuate between the two settings of the ACP and opt for definiteness (target pattern) or specificity (non-target but expected pattern). Fluctuation manifests itself in the overuse of the definite article *the* in indefinite specific contexts (henceforth [-definite, +specific]) and indefinite article *a* in definite non-specific contexts (henceforth [+definite, -specific]).

2.4. Recent studies on the Fluctuation Hypothesis

The following table provides a brief summary of six seminal studies that attempted to either validate or argue against the Fluctuation Hypothesis (henceforth FH) and extended to examine the effect of L1 transfer on the acquisition of L2 articles. Acquisitional data were elicited from learners of various language backgrounds and by different task types, most of which were adopted from Ionin (2003) and Ionin et al. (2004), only differed in the method of data collection.

Table 1. A summary of recent studies on the acquisition of articles

Studies	Purposes	Methods	Results
Article semantics in L2 acquisition: The role of specificity by Ionin et al. (2004)	Ionin et al. (2004) proposed the FH for L2 acquisition of articles. L2 learners from L1 article-less have full access to UG and two settings of the ACP, and thus are expected to fluctuate between the two settings.	Two groups of intermediate to advanced level: 30 Russians and 40 Koreans Tasks: a forced-choice elicitation task and a written production task	The data supported their FH: in the absence of L1 transfer, Russian and Korean learners of English have access to article semantics provided by UG but they fluctuate between the two options.

Article choice in L2 English by Spanish speakers by Mayo (2009)	Test the FH with data from speakers of an L1 with articles encoding definiteness (Spanish)	Sixty participants of two different proficiency levels Tasks: a written forced-choice elicitation similar to Ionin et al. (2004)	Spanish speakers overwhelmingly chose *the* to mark definiteness and *a* to mark indefiniteness and fluctuation was insignificant. This results provided robust evidence supporting the idea that there is semantic transfer of the properties of Spanish articles onto English counterparts.
The acquisition of articles in child second language English: fluctuation, transfer, or both? Zdorenko & Paradis (2008)	Examine the acquisition of articles by children from both article and article-less languages to determine the role of L1 transfer and test the FH.	Longitudinal corpus of narratives from 17 L2 children learners of English (mean age 5.4 years). Narratives were elicited from picture books. Adopt Ionin et al. (2004)'s analysis of definiteness and specificity. Analysis included article uses with singular common nouns. All NPs were specific.	Directionality effect: Majority of children were more accurate with article choice in definite than in indefinite contexts. There is a fluctuation pattern in their article choice. There is little evidence of L1 transfer as both L1 groups misused *the* in [-definite] contexts, which is presented as counterevidence to Ionin, Zubizarreta, and Maldonado (2008)'s claim that transfer overrides fluctuation in the acquisition of article systems by L2 learners whose L1 lacks articles.
Acquisition of article semantics by child and adult L2-English learners Ionin et al. (2009)	Examine English article use by L1 Russian adults and children to see whether the fluctuation pattern is observed for both age groups. Examine whether the specificity effect is present in both groups and tease apart three different explanations for article misuse – egocentricity, specificity and explicit strategies.	*Task*: Written elicitation test modeled after the tests used by Ionin et al. (2004): forced choices are replaced by blanks. Fillers targeting items other than articles are included and used as a cut-off. Twenty-one adults (aged 18-22) and 18 children (5th-6th graders) satisfied the cut-off condition.	Both age groups display specificity effect in their choice of articles; however, adults overextended specificity distinction to definites as well as indefinites while children made the specificity distinction with indefinites only. Older learners' choice of articles is more governed by explicit strategies than by domain-specific linguistic knowledge. Overuse of *the* in children's article choice can be attributed to egocentricity.

Questioning the validity of the Article Choice Parameter and the Fluctuation Hypothesis Tryzna (2009)	Argue for the reduced version of the Article Choice Parameter Examine the predictive power of the Fluctuation Hypothesis	A field study of Samoan article 19 L1 Polish and 17 L1 Chinese (article-less languages) *Task*: a forced-choice elicitation task in Ionin et al. (2004): 10 context types, 4 each covering four categories with singular and plural NPs both included.	All [+specific, -definite], [-specific, +definite], and [+specific, +definite] NPs require the same specific article *le* (as opposed to the previous claim made by Ionin et al. (2004) that *le* mark [+specific, +definite] and [+specific; -definite] NPs). This evidence lent support for a reduced version of ACP. The fluctuation effect was not present in the Polish data group and was found only within a subset of the Chinese data (indefinite singular context).
Article choice and article omission in the L3 German of native speakers of Japanese with L2 English Jaensch (2009)	Investigate article choice in the third language acquisition of German. Examine the possible fluctuation effects in L3 acquisition of DPs and the effect of proficiency levels on the acquisition of DPs	39 native speakers of Japanese learning L3 German; categorized in four proficiency levels (elementary to advanced) Tasks: A written gap-filling task which was designed using similar categories to those in Ionin et al. (2004). An oral elicitation task which requires description of colored pictures involving noun phrases.	Little evidence of fluctuation in participants' article choice on the basis of definiteness/ specificity; Persistent omission of German articles in speech by the participants unaffected by their proficiency level.

The first four studies mentioned above either provided support for the UG-based explanation for the acquisition of article that is, both L1 and L2 learners have direct access to universal article semantics, or further strengthen the specificity effect on article acquisition. Data from Mayo (2009) reinforced the claim that L2 English learners whose L1 has the similar article semantics transfer the propeties of their L1 to L2 English. Evidences from child language data in Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) supported the fluctuation hypothesis but provide counter evidence to L1 transfer as shown in the children whose L1 has article still misusing *the* in [-definite] contexts. In Ionin et. al (2009), this finding was accounted by pragmatic egocentrism in young learners. On the other hand, the next two studies presented some evidence against the Fluctuation Hypothesis and thus concluded that the Article Choice Parameter should be considered as linguistic variability other than a parameter. Notably, Tryzna (2009) has provided convincing data that showed Samoan marks the specificity distinction with indefinites but not with definites, which leads to the revised cross-linguistic article grouping as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. The revised article grouping cross-linguistically: Two-article language

Article grouping by definiteness				Article grouping by specificity		
	+definite	-definite			+definite	-definite
+specific				+specific	le	
-specific	the	a		-specific		se

Under this new grouping, it is expected that if the Fluctuation Hypothesis is validated, the fluctuation effect will be more powerful in [-definite] contexts where L2 learners overuse *the* in [-definite; +specific] contexts.

3. Vietnamese nominal phrases

There he following table presents cross-linguistic comparisons of English and Vietnamese with respect to the semantic properties of DPs.

Table 3. Cross-linguistic comparisons of English and Vietnamese with respect to DPs

	English	Vietnamese
1. Determiners	Yes	No
2. [±definite]	Yes	No

Vietnamese does not have articles but has classifiers according to Thompson (1965) and Nguyen (1997). In addition, classifiers appear to be associated with specificity rather than definiteness. The following are examples illustrating some of the nominal properties of Vietnamese:

(3)

a. cốc
   cup
   "cup(s)/ the cup(s)"

b. cái cốc
   CL   cup
   "the cup/ a cup"

c. một cái cốc   *một cốc
   one CL   cup   one cup
                        (A null CL is
                        ungrammatical
                        with quantifier)[2]

   "a cup"

d. hai cái cốc   *hai cốc
   two CL   cup
   "two cups"

e. những   cái   cốc
   pluralizer CL   cup
   "some/ several (of the) cups"

f. các   cái cốc   *các cốc
   pluralizer CL   cup
   "all (of the) cups"

As we can see from (2a), a bare noun in Vietnamese is ambiguous between singularity/ plurality as well as specificity/ non-specificity. The use of a classifier in (2b) individualizes the noun and signifies specificity (but ambiguous between definite/ indefinite reading). When the numeral *một* (one) is added to CL-N string, the phrase becomes non-specific and indefinite as in (2c). From (2d) to (2f), the noun is pluralized by numerals and quantifiers.

There is no DP in Vietnamese. A bare noun in Vietnamese can be both specific and non-specific while a CL-N string is specific but ambiguous between a definite and an indefinite reading. It is speculated that [±specific] feature is on the Vietnamese CL. A null CL can be either [+specific] or [-specific] while a filled CL bears the value of [+specific].

From what is discussed above, it can be assumed that if D is absent in their interlanguage grammar, NPs will be mostly treated as bare and interpreted as either [+specific] or [-specific]. Leung (2005) theorized that if D is present in their interlanguage grammar but the feature of [±definite] is not well in place and thus learners may treat D as filled CL, DP may be interpreted as either specific definite or specific indefinite. Subsequently, learners may not be able to distinguish between a definite and an indefinite article: they may treat either the definite or the

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[2] CL is a conventional abbreviated form for classifiers; the asterisk (*) conventionally marks the ungrammaticality of the phrases and sentences.

indefinite article as default and over generalize it to both definite and indefinite contexts. This characteristic of Vietnamese CL may lend further support for the claim that specificity may play a role in the acquisition of English article system by Vietnamese learners.

4. The present study

4.1. Research question

The present study examines the use of L2 English articles by L1 Vietnamese learners. As mentioned earlier, the sole purpose of this paper is to examine the Fluctuation Hypothesis and the effect of specificity (if any) in the acquisition of English article, the research question is formulated as:

> Research question: Do Vietnamese L2 learners of English make the same substitution errors found in Ionin et al. (2004)?

Under the FH, it is predicted that *the* is overused more in [-definite, +specific] contexts than in the [-definite, -specific] context and *a* is overused more in [+definite; -specific] contexts than in [+definite; +specific] contexts.

4.2. Participants

The participants in this study are first and second year college students at a Vietnamese university located in the Hanoi capital city. All of them are native speakers of Vietnamese and major in TESOL. None of the participants have any experiences living in an English speaking country. The participants were classified into two groups of different proficiency levels as indicated by the class they were placed in. Accordingly, the 56 pre-intermediate learners were first year college students whose levels were between A2 and B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference. On the other hand, the 43 intermediate learners were second year college students whose levels were somewhere between B1 and they were

working towards B2. In total, there were 99 participants. Their proficiency level was determined by monthly assessment and final exams of four language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All the individual tests follow the Cambridge exam format (PET, FCE and CAE). For the current study, no proficiency tests were given to them. The learners were classified according to the given framework by the university together with recommendations from their teachers.

4.3. The task

The task was modeled after that used in Ionin et al.'s (2004) study. There were 40 items in total with 32 main test items and 8 additional test items targeting at the equal number of [+definite] contexts and [-definite] contexts. For the main test items, eight categories with four items each were included. Additional test item includes four first-mention indefinites and four previous-mention definites to test if the specificity effects are found in these contexts.

5. Results

5.1. Group results

In this section, I look at whether L2 learners make the specificity distinction across both definites and indefinites. The predictions examined in this section are described in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Predictions for article choice in L2 English: The specificity distinction with definites and indefinites

	[+definite] Target *the*	[-definite] Target *a*
[+specific]	correct use of *the*	overuse of *the*
[-specific]	overuse of *a*	correct use of *a*

The comparisons between categories were made with paired two-sample *t* tests for means (two-tailed). In the following tables, only the uses of *the* and *a* were reported for ease of presentation.

Intensional contexts

First the results for the effects of definiteness and specificity in contexts involving intensional operators are reported in Table 5 and Table 6 below. Table 5 reports data from pre-intermediate learners while Table 6 reports data from intermediate learners.

As seen from Table 6, there was a significant difference in the use of *a* (*t*=-2.031, *p*=.049) and *the* (*t*=2.885, *p*=.006 between two categories [+definite, +specific] and [+definite, -specific], indicating the significant overuse of *a* in [+definite, -specific] contexts.

Table 5. Definiteness versus specificity: Intensional contexts by pre-intermediate learners

Contexts	[+definite] Target: the		[-definite] Target: a	
[+specific] (wide scope)	91.1% *the*	7.1% *a*	75% *a*	24.1% *the*
[-specific] (narrow scope)	49.1% *the* *³	23.2% *a* *	83% *a*	15.2% *the*

N = 56; **p < .005*

As reported in Table 5, a statistically significant difference was found between two categories [+definite; +specific] and [+definite; -specific] with respect to the use of *a* (*t*=-3.143, *p*=.003) and *the* (*t* = 7.058, *p*=.000). L2 learners showed a significant overuse of *a* in [+definite; -specific] context. Between the two categories [-definite; +specific] and [-definite;-specific], there was no significant difference regarding the use of *a* (*t*= -1.540, *p*=.129) and the use of *the* (*t*=1.746, *p*=.086). The overuse of *the* in [-definite; +specific] context was not statistically significant. However, L2 learners still displayed an overwhelming use of *the* in [-definite] contexts. However, this result is somewhat contrast with what is expected under the new article grouping as mentioned earlier. L2 learners are expected to display a more significant overuse of *the* in [-definite] contexts than overuse of *a* in [+definite] contexts.

Similarly, the comparisons between two categories [-definite, +specific] and [-definite, -specific] indicated a significant difference in the use of *the* (*t*= -2.988, *p*=.005) and *a* (*t*= 3.313, *p* =.002) by L2 intermediate learners.

Extensional contexts

Next, the results for the effects of definiteness and specificity in extensional contexts in the choice made by two groups, i.e. pre-intermediate learners and intermediate learners, are reported in Table 7 and Table 8 respectively.

Table 6. Definiteness versus specificity: Intensional contexts by intermediate learners

L1-Vnese	[+definite] Target: the		[-definite] Target: a	
[+specific] (wide scope)	90.7% *the*	5.8% *a*	75.6% *a*	22.1% *the*
[-specific] (narrow scope)	72.1% *the**	17.4% *a**	91.9% *a**	5.8% *the**

N = 43; **p < .05*

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[3] In this result section, an asterisk (*) marks a statistically significant probability level.

Table 7. Definiteness versus specificity: Extensional contexts by pre-intermediate learners

L1-Vnese	[+definite] Target: the		[-definite] Target: a	
[+specific] (wide scope)	92.9% the	2.7% a	72.3% a	23.2% the
[-specific] (narrow scope)	59.8% the*	13.4% a*	90.2% a*	2.7% the*

N = 56; *p < .01

As reported in Table 7, a significant difference was found in L2 learners' use of *a* (*t*=-2.698, *p*=.009) and *the* (*t*=5.058, *p*=.000) in two contexts [+definite; +specific] and [+definite; -specific], indicating the significant overuse of *a* in [+definite; -specific] contexts and underuse of target *the* in [+definite; -specific] contexts. Regarding the [-definite] categories, a significant difference in the use of *the* was found between [+specific] and [-specific] context (*t*=4.509, *p*=.000). L2 learners overused *the* in [-definite; +specific] contexts.

statistically significant difference in the use of *the* in [-definite; +specific] and [-definite; -specific] contexts. Again, this is somewhat contrast to what is expected: L2 learners should have displayed a significant overuse of *the* in [-definite] contexts.

All contexts combined

The results on intensional and extensional contexts were combined and reported in graph form in Figure 1 (use of *the* in four categories) and Figure 2 (use of *a* in four
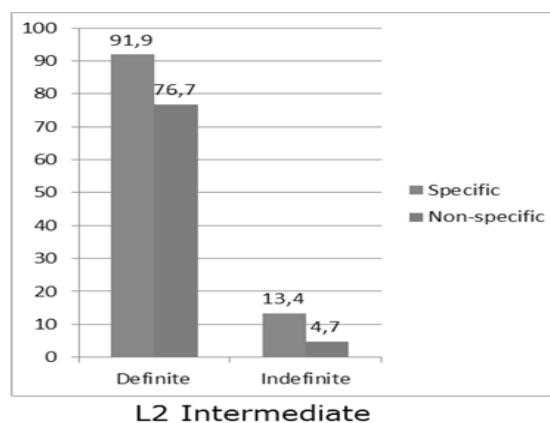
Table 8. Definiteness versus specificity: Extensional contexts by intermediate learners

L1-Vnese	[+definite] Target: the		[-definite] Target: a	
[+specific] (wide scope)	(11) (31) 93% the	3.5% a	(15) (35) 83.7% a	4.7% the
[-specific] (narrow scope)	(12) (32) 81.4% the*	9.3% a*	(16) (36) 93% a*	3.5% the

N = 43; *p < .05

As reported in Table 8, a significant overuse of *a* in [+definite; -specific] context was observed. However, there was not a

categories). The combined results were also presented in Table 9 and 10.
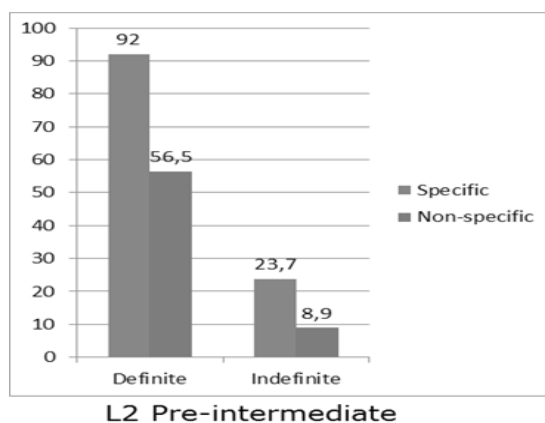
Figure 1: Use of *the* in 4 categories
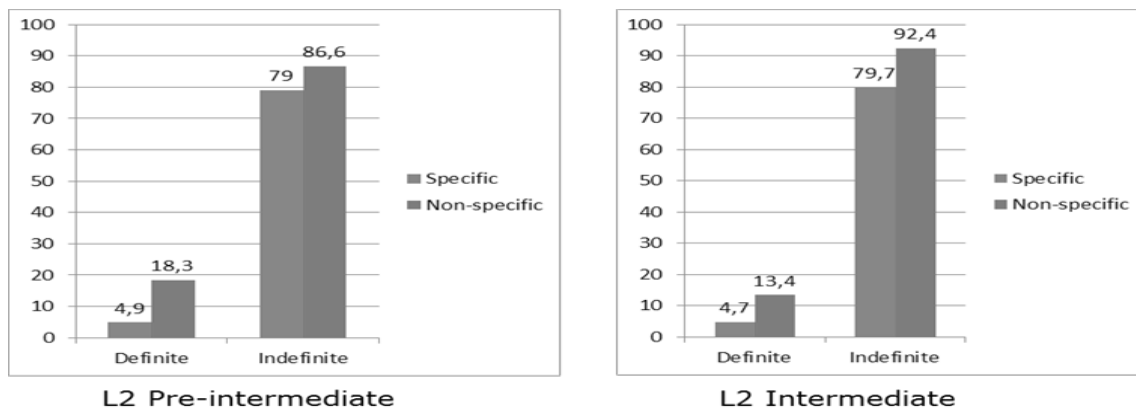
Figure 2: Use of *a* in 4 categories

Table 9. Definiteness versus specificity: All contexts combined by pre-intermediate learners

L1-Vnese	[+definite] Target: the		[-definite] Target: a	
[+specific] (wide scope)	92% the	4.9% a	79% a	23.7% the
[-specific] (narrow scope)	56.5% the*	18.3% a*	86.6% a*	8.9% the*

N = 56; *$p < .005$

When all the contexts were combined, L2 pre-intermediate learners showed a significant difference in the use of *a* between [+definite; +specific] and [+definite; -specific] contexts (t=-3.368, p=.001) and in the use of *the* between [-definite; +specific] and [-definite; -specific] contexts (t=3.886, p=.000).

learners overused *a* in [+definite;-specific] contexts where the target article *the* should be used and overused *the* in [-definite; +specific] contexts where the target article *a* should be used. This evidence is in line with the predictions above and thus shows a specificity effect in the choice of articles.

Table 10. Definiteness versus specificity: All contexts combined by intermediate learners

L1-Vnese	[+definite] Target: the		[-definite] Target: a	
[+specific] (wide scope)	91.9% the	4.7% a	79.7% a	13.4% the
[-specific] (narrow scope)	76.7% the*	13.4% a*	92.4% a*	4.7% the*

N = 43; *$p < .05$

L2 intermediate learners' use of *a* differed significantly in two contexts [+definite; +specific] and [+definite; -specific] (t=-2.415, p=.038). There was also a significant difference in the use of *the* between [-definite; +specific] and [-definite; -specific] contexts (t=3.458, p=.001). The above data suggest that in combining intensional and extensional contexts, both groups of L2 Vietnamese

Effects of definiteness and specificity

To determine the significance of the contribution of definiteness and specificity to the use of *a* and *the*, repeated ANOVAs were performed on the use of *the* as well as on the use of *a* by category. To determine the effect of definiteness on the use of *the*, the number of *the* that L2 learners used in [+definite, +specific] contexts was measured and then

compared to the number of *the* in [-definite, +specific] contexts. The effect on the use of *a* was determined by a comparison between the uses of *a* in [+definite, -specific] contexts and [-definite, -specific] contexts. To determine the effect of specificity on the use of *the*, the number of *the* that L2 learners used in [+specific, +definite] contexts was measured and then compared to the number of *the* used in [-specific, +definite] contexts. The effect on the use of *a* was determined by a comparison between the uses of *a* in [+specific, -definite] contexts and [-specific, -definite] contexts. The effects of definiteness and specificity are shown in Table 11 below:

in [+specific, -definite] contexts and the use of *a* in [-specific; +definite] contexts (r=.42, p <.005). A similar correlation was observed in the case of L2 intermediate learners (r=.46, p<.005). This suggests that learners who overused *the* with [+specific, -definite] were quite likely to overuse *a* with [-specific, +definite], and vice versa.

First-mention indefinites

Table 12 shows a comparison of article uses on different types of indefinites. As shown in Table 12, it is predicted that L2 learners should exhibit appropriate use of *a* on the category of first-mentioned indefinites with no explicit statement of speaker knowledge,

Table 11. Effect of definiteness and specificity: Results of repeated measures ANOVA

	Use of *the*	Use of *a*
L2 Pre-intermediate		
Definiteness	$F(1,55) = 210.961$**	$F(1,55) = 232.274$**
Specificity	$F(1,55) = 44.423$**	$F(1,55) = 8.98$*
L2 Intermediate		
Definiteness	$F(1,42) = 210.61$**	$F(1,42) = 274.305$**
Specificity	$F(1, 42) = 1.666$	$F(1,42) = 13.606$*

*p < .005; **p < .001

Table 11 shows that for both L2 pre-intermediate and intermediate learners, definiteness and specificity had significant effects on article use, whether the use of *the* or *a* were measured. However, in the case of L2

as this category is [-definite, -specific]. L2 learners' performance on this context was expected to resemble to that on [-definite, -specific] in intensional and extensional contexts discussed above.

Table 12. Comparison of article uses on different types of indefinites

Indefinites: Target *a*	L2 Pre-intermediate		L2 Intermediate	
[+specific] indefinites	21.6% *the**	75.7% *a*	14.8% *the*	81.4% *a*
[-specific] indefinites	6.7% *the*	84.8% *a*	5.2% *the**	88.7% *a*
First-mention [-specific] indefinites	9.4% *the*	71.9% *a*	17.4% *the*	70.3% *a*

intermediate learners, specificity did not have significant effect on the use of article *the*. For L2 pre-intermediate learners, there was a significant correlation between the use of *the*

For L2 pre-intermediate learners, the overuse of *the* with first-mention indefinites was significantly lower than overuse of *the* with [+specific, -definite]. This evidence shows that first-mention indefinites patterned

more with [-specific, - definite] than with [+specific, -definite], as predicted. However, this is not the case with L2 intermediate learners; their overuse of *the* with first-mention indefinites was significantly higher than that with [-specific, -definite], which is against the prediction.

Previous-mention definites

Previous-mention definites are obligatorily [+specific] and therefore not expected to trigger a high overuse of *a* in L2 learners. Their performance with previous-mention definites was predicted to be similar to the performance with [+specific, +definite] contexts.

b. The fluctuation pattern: Predicted L2 English learners go back and forth between distinguishing *the* and *a* on the basis of definiteness, and distinguishing them on the basis of specificity.

The L2 learners are not expected to display the specificity pattern in which they use *the* and *a* to mark [+specific] and [-specific] contexts because the input should lead L2 learners to choose the definiteness rather than the specificity setting. The hypothesis predicts that L2 learners start out fluctuating between the possible parameter-setting provided by UG until the input has informed them that English

Table 13. Comparison of article use on different types of definites

Definites: Target *the*	L2 Pre-intermediate		L2 Intermediate	
[+specific] definites	82.4% *the*	6.7% *a*	84.6% *the*	6.4% *a*
[-specific] definites	49.6% *the*	21.9% *a***	68.3% *the*	17.4% *a**
Previous-mention [+specific] definites	68.8% *the*	19.6% *a*	64.5% *the*	20.9% *a*

*$p < .05$; **$p < .001$

As from Table 13, the results with previous-mention definites are as predicted: they pattern more with [+specific, +definite]. For both groups, there was a significant difference between the overuse of *a* with previous-mention definites and [-specific] definites; however, the difference was not evident between previous-mention definites and [+specific] definites.

5.2. Individual results

Possible patterns of individual article choice under the Fluctuation Hypothesis

The Fluctuation Hypothesis predicts that L2 English learners will follow the two following patterns.
a. The definiteness pattern: Predicted L2 English learners correctly use *the* and *a* to mark [+definite] and [-definite] contexts, respectively

has the definiteness setting of the ACP. It is very unlikely that L2 learners may prefer the specificity setting to the definiteness setting.

Classification procedure

To test these above predictions, L2 learners' performance on the four main context types was individually measured. Each participant's use of *the* out of all instances of article use (excluding omission) in the four context types was determined. Afterwards, the learners were classified into four different patterns as summarized in the following procedures as described in Ionin et al. (2004). The partial fluctuation pattern is not described here as none of the participants were classified into this pattern.

Pattern 1: The definiteness pattern: Correct parameter-setting

At least 75% *the* use in [+definite; +specific] contexts

Less than 25% *the* overuse in [-definite; -specific] contexts

One of the following:

(i) no specificity distinction with definites or indefinites OR

(ii) a small (<25%) specificity distinction with definites only OR

(iii) a small (<25%) specificity distinction with indefinites only

Pattern 2: The fluctuation pattern

At least 75% *the* use in [+definite; +specific] contexts

Less than 25% *the* overuse in [-definite; -specific] contexts

Evidence for a specificity distinction

More overuse of *the* with [+specific] than with [-specific] indefinites

Less use of *the* with [-specific] than with [+specific] definites

Pattern 3: The specificity pattern: Parameter mis-setting

At least 75% of *the* use in all [+specific] contexts

Less than 25% of *the* use in all [-specific] contexts

Equally high use of *the* with [+specific; +definite] and [+specific; -definite]

Pattern 4: The miscellaneous pattern

Any patterns that do not fit into the above four categories

Individual results

In the following figures, the numbers of L2 Vietnamese learners in each pattern were reported. As shown in the figure, most L2 learners fell into either the definiteness pattern or the fluctuation pattern as expected. A comparatively small number of learners fell into the miscellaneous pattern and only one learner fell into the specificity pattern.
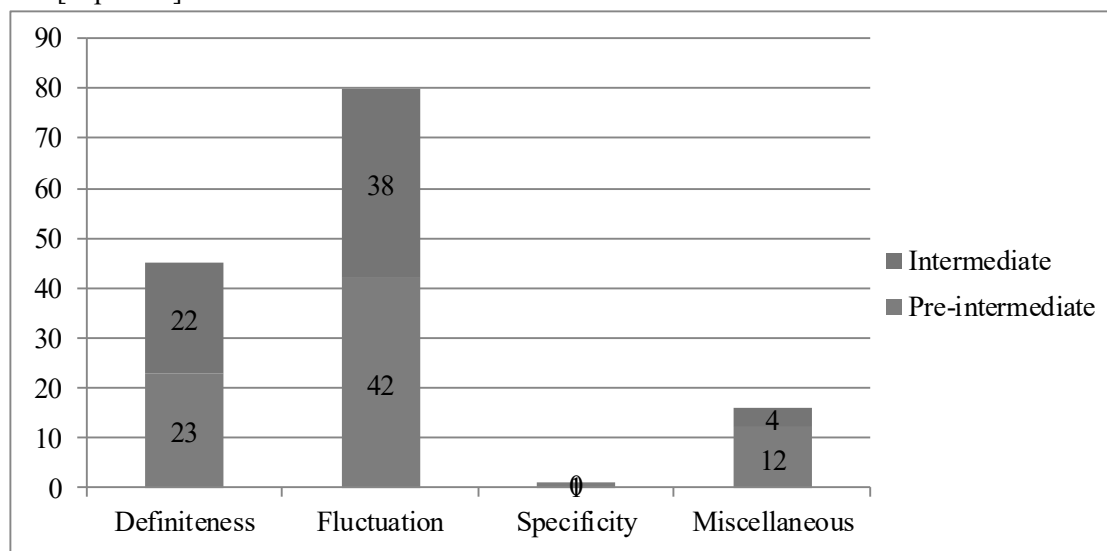
Figure 3. Number of L2 learners showing each pattern

Evidence for a definiteness distinction

More use of *the* with [+specific] definites and with [+specific] indefinites

The specificity distinction with indefinites does not exceed the specificity distinction with definites by more than 50% (and vice versa)

6. Discussion

6.1. Group performance

In what follows I will discuss the predictions regarding the role of specificity with definites and indefinites. The predictions

and actual results are summarized in Table 14 and Table 15, respectively.

Table 14. Predictions for L2 English: Definiteness vs. specificity

	[+definite] Target *the*	[-definite] Target *a*
[+specific]	correct use of *the* with items like (1) and (3)	overuse of *the* with items like (5) and (7)
[-specific]	overuse of *a* with items like (2) and (4)	correct use of *a* with items like (6) and (8)

Table 15. Summary of results in all contexts combined from both groups

	[+definite] Target *the*	[-definite] Target *a*
[+specific]	correct use of *the*	overuse of *the*
[-specific]	overuse of *a*	correct use of *a*

As can be seen from Table 15, the predictions were supported: L2 learners distinguished between [+specific] and [-specific] DPs with both definites and indefinites. Overall, the pre-intermediate group appears to show a clearer difference from its counterpart as could be explained by their being less proficient than the intermediate group. Nonetheless, qualitatively speaking, both groups used *the* more in [-definite; +specific] than in [-definite; -specific] contexts and use *a* more in [+definite; -specific] than in [+definite; +specific] contexts, signaling a specificity intervention in their choice of articles.

These results together with data analysis from individual learners suggest that L2 learners' erroneous substitution of articles are systematic, following an association of *the* with the feature of [+specific] rather than [+definite]. The data provide evidence for L2 learners' access to universal semantic distinctions of definiteness and specificity.

6.2. Accounting for article omission

The FH cannot account for the high rate of article omission made by L2 Vietnamese learners. The data showed that for item (13) and (14) about half of the L2 learners supplied

the blank before NPs with a null article. Ionin et al. (2004) data did not show the similar results. Items (13) and (14) are as follows:

(13) *Meeting in a park*
Andrew: Hi, Nora. What are you doing here in Chicago? Are you here for work?
Nora: No, for family reasons. I am visiting **(a, the, ---)** father of my fiancé – he is really nice, and he is paying for our wedding!

(14) *Phone conversation*
Mathilda: Hi, Sam. Is your roommate Lewis there?
Sam: No, he went to San Francisco for this weekend.

In explaining for this bizarre phenomenon, I come up with two possibilities. The first one can be traced back to Chesterman's (1991) continuum where the zero article is the most indefinite and null article is the most definite one. Perhaps for some reasons L2 Vietnamese learners interpret such NP as *mother* (of) and *father* (of) as extremely definite, hence the reason why they marked the NP with the null article. This high rate of article omission can also be traced back to L2 input. Participants reported some follow-up interviews that they found it rather strange to have such NPs denoting family member preceded by a determiner like *a* and *the* but favored these NPs to be preceded by possessives. Their exposure with L2 English

and most likely their production of L2 English with these NPs leads them to believe that the NPs cannot be marked with determiners but possessives instead. More research concerning this issue is definitely desirable.

7. Conclusion

In this study, I investigated under the proposal by Ionin et al. (2004) the choice of articles made by Vietnamese speakers whose L1 is article-less. The results are mostly in line with what were reported in their study. I hereby restate their conclusion regarding the proposal. In the absence of L1 transfer, L2 English learners have direct access to universal semantic features of article system. However, as they do not know which settings are applicable for their target language due to limited input and exposure, they end up fluctuating between the two possible settings, i.e. Definiteness and Specificity until the input finally leads them to set the Article Choice Parameter to appropriate value. The conclusion is supported by the data in Ionin et al. (2004), Kim and Lakshamanan (2009) and also this current study. Errors made by L2 learners of English are proved to be systematic and reflective of their access to universal semantics of article system and the fluctuation effects. However, the fluctuation effect is partially held accountable for the errors made by L2 learners; it cannot fully account for all types of errors – omission errors specifically. Therefore, it is necessary to arrive at a framework that can explain for these types of errors.

The present study is not without flaws. It is desirable to have proficiency test to group L2 learners in a more accurate way and include beginner learners so that a developmental path regarding article acquisition can be thoroughly understood. If possible, I will also try to come up with a new task type for eliciting data so that we can have a more comprehensive look at the article choice behavior of Vietnamese learners of English.

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CÁCH SỬ DỤNG MẠO TỪ TIẾNG ANH CỦA NGƯỜI VIỆT HỌC TIẾNG ANH NHƯ MỘT NGOẠI NGỮ

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Tóm tắt: Bài báo này trình bày một nghiên cứu về việc sử dụng mạo từ tiếng Anh của người Việt học tiếng Anh như là một ngoại ngữ được tiến hành trong khuôn khổ nghiên cứu của Ionin, Ko và Wexler (2004). Theo như Lý thuyết Dao động (Fluctuation Hypothesis) và Tham biến Mạo từ (Article Choice Parameter) của ba tác giả trên thì đối với người học tiếng Anh như là một ngoại ngữ - trong khi ngôn ngữ mẹ đẻ của họ không có hệ thống mạo từ, sẽ có thể tiếp cận với hệ thống ngữ pháp phổ quát cũng như những đặc trưng ngữ nghĩa phổ quát của hệ thống mạo từ, đó là tính xác định (definiteness) và tính cụ thể (specificity). Hệ thống nhị phân của mạo từ tiếng Anh được phân chia dựa trên tính xác định của cụm danh từ, chứ không phải tính cụ thể: mạo từ *the* thể hiện tính xác định và mạo từ *a* thể hiện tính không xác định. Do đó, theo hai lý thuyết trên, việc sử dụng mạo từ của người học tiếng Anh mà ngôn ngữ mẹ đẻ không có hệ thống mạo từ đầy đủ, được dự đoán là sẽ dao động giữa hai giá trị của Tham biến Mạo từ: lúc này người học sẽ dùng mạo từ dựa trên tính cụ thể của cụm danh từ và lúc khác họ sẽ dùng mạo từ dựa trên tính xác định của cụm danh từ. Trên thực tế, theo như dữ liệu nghiên cứu thu thập được trên nhiều đối tượng học ngoại ngữ thì bằng chứng chứng minh tính khả thi cho Lý thuyết Dao động chưa thực sự được đầy đủ và đa diện. Đây chính là động lực để nghiên cứu này được thực hiện: đó là để kiểm chứng lại Lý thuyết Dao động và Tham biến Mạo từ. Ngoài ra, một động lực khác để thực hiện nghiên cứu này: đó là có rất ít những nghiên cứu về việc sử dụng mạo từ tiếng Anh của người Việt.

Từ khoá: ngữ pháp phổ quát, hệ thống mạo từ, Tham biến Mạo từ, sự thụ đắc ngôn ngữ thứ hai

USING PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING TO PROMOTE STUDENTS' USE OF HIGHER-ORDER THINKING SKILLS AND FACILITATE THEIR LEARNING

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Abstract: This paper reports on an action research conducted in a university semantic course for senior students of English in Vietnam. With the assumption that problem-based learning (PBL) approach promotes students' thinking skills and facilitate students' learning, the researcher designed problem-based learning activities that required students' employment of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in their learning. By the time this paper was written, the action has finished its two cycles; each cycle lasted for nine weeks. The participants of the study were 31 students of Applied Linguistics in a college of foreign languages in Vietnam. The findings shed light on the extent to which PBL activities can promote students' use of HOTS and facilitate their learning in their English semantic class.

Keywords: higher-order thinking skills, problem-based learning (PBL), semantics

1. Introduction

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a learner-centered pedagogical approach that provides learners opportunities to engage in goal-directed inquiry. PBL is designed with the assumption that "when we solve the many problems we face every day, learning occurs" (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1980, p.1). The implementation of PBL was pioneered in medical education in 1950s and then applied at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada in 1970s to teach students of medicine (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1980). Since then, PBL has been applied in other fields; especially, PBL has been expanded to teacher education since 1980 (de Chambeau & Ramlo, 2017; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Hendry, Wiggins, & Anderson, 2016; Schetino, 2016; Sipes, 2016). Recently, PBL has been applied in teacher professional development or TESOL courses (Caswell, 2016; Hung & Holen, 2011; Pourschafie & Murray-Harvey, 2013; Zhang, Ludeberg, McConnell, Koehler, & Eberhardt, 2010). In this study, problem-based approach was taken in designing learning activities for senior students of English in Vietnam in order to promote students' employment of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in their learning.

2. Problem-based learning (PBL)

Problem-based learning (PBL) usually starts with a problem raised to students, and the process of learning happens when students try to find solution to that problem. One key feature of PBL is that learning must be situated in authentic context (Barrows, 1994). PBL is "an instructional method that initiates students' learning by creating a need to solve an authentic problem" (Hung et al. 2008, p.486). In PBL, learners

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(usually in groups) analyze an open-ended problem which involves different aspects of conceptual knowledge and which can be solved in many different ways (Barrows, 2000; Hmelo-Silver, 2004) while teachers play the role of facilitators of the learning process rather than the disseminators of knowledge (Wilkerson & Gijselaers, 1996), facilitating students in their process of thinking, reflecting, and collaborative inquiry. While solving problems, students figure out what to learn, how to learn, and finally, once they make their final decision on the best way to solve the problem, they learn both the domain knowledge and skills, and they practice using higher-order thinking skills in learning. According to Maggi (2003, p2) "in problem-based learning, the focus is on organizing curricular content around problem scenarios rather than the subjects or disciplines."

PBL is a promising approach to promote students conceptual knowledge during the learning process (Hmelo-Silver, Derry, Bitterman, & Hatrak, 2009; Lambe, 2007; vanBerkel & Schmidt, 200l; Walker & Leary, 2009; Zhang et al, 2010). Scholkmann and Roters (2009) find out that PBL can have positive influence on students' self-assessment ability. Bell (2012, p.4) believes PBL helps students "to become independent learners and take responsibility for their learning". It is considered to be an innovative approach in teaching and learning because PBL's goals consist of conceptual and pedagogical content knowledge construction, collaboration, and self-directed, life-long learning (Hmelo-Silver & Simone, 2013). However, PBL may be restrained by certain factors: "inadequate tutoring in PBL may influence the effectiveness of PBL as a strategy" (Barrows 1986, p.65). The use of PBL may also reduce teachers' control over content coverage, increase vulnerability and teaching-related workload (Bibeiro, 2011). Also, Hung, Mehl, and Holen (2013) have reported that some students found many problems in their PBL courses were too broad or vague for them to identify the goal or focus of the problem as well as the learning objectives.

3. Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) and students' learning

There are different ways to define HOTS. Brookhart (2010) classifies the different definitions of HOTS into three major categories: HOTS as skills to *transfer / apply* what students have acquired or learnt into new contexts, HOTS as *critical thinking skills,* and HOTS as *problem solving*. In the sense of problem solving, "HOTS involve analyzing information to determine the problems, evaluating the problem and creating new workable solution" (Chinedu, Kamin, & Olabiyi, 2015, p.36). HOTS are teachable and learnable, and the development of HOTS is not only for developing high cognitive capacities but also responsible for developing an all-round individual (Heong, Yunos, Hassan, Othman, & Kiong, 2011). Taking the problem-based approach in teaching and learning, HOTS are the skills that enable learners to find a solution for a particular real life or profession-specific problems which cannot be solved by simply using a memorized solution but a combination of different skills such as logical analytical reasoning, reflective thinking and creative evaluating skills to develop a creative problem solving strategy. Problem solving, as noted by Bransford and Stein (1984), is the general mechanism behind all thinking and learning for understanding. Problem solving is essential for developing critical thinking, creative thinking and effective communication.

Hung et al. (2008) state that to be an effective problem solver, students need to possess analytical, critical thinking, and metacognitive skills. Rajendran and Idris (2008) suggest that thinking skills support academic achievement while Brookhart (2010) asserts that holding students accountable for HOTS in learning enhances their motivation and learning results.

4. The need for HOTS promotion to facilitate Vietnamese students' learning of linguistics

In most Vietnamese tertiary institutions, HOTS has not become an integral part in the teaching and learning process yet. In our study conducted in 2015, my colleagues and I surveyed how students in the college under study used HOTS during their linguistic courses (Nguyen, Nguyen, Nguyen, and Doan, 2015) and it was revealed that teachers still "follow the familiar path of passing on the fragmented bits of information that students memorize, but still forget" (Newman 1990, p.41). This is understandable as in contemporary Vietnam's education system, the methods of teaching and learning are still very much teacher-centered. The primary teaching goal is to provide students with subject knowledge prescribed in the course books without adequate attention to developing the skills of utilizing what they have learnt in further study, future job, and in real life situations. After a survey on HOTS employment in linguistic courses in the college under study, Nguyen et al. (2015) report that linguistic teachers are often very successful in transferring the linguistic knowledge and skills to students, but they do not invest efforts on showing and encouraging students to be analytical and critical in their learning, or keenly discover how to apply the subject domain knowledge and skills in their current learning and in

their future job. Also, teachers of these subjects do not require students to use HOTS much; instead, they require students to use thinking skills of lower levels, making the heavy course load even heavier to students. Most students, therefore, are passive acceptors (Forester & Chau, 1999) and they were not accustomed to using HOTS such as evaluating, forming conclusion, decision making. In order to facilitate students' learning of these subjects, there seem to be a need to promote the use of HOTS in profession-specific learning. As students who take the linguistics courses were all senior student, their learning could be characterized with the adult learning characteristics coined by Knowles' (1984), including self-directedness, knowledge and life experiences, goal-orientedness, relevancy-orientedness, practicality, and collaboration. Accordingly, PBL is the appropriate teaching approach to promote students' HOTS employment, so that their learning is efficiently facilitated.

Basing on the contents of the linguistic courses, the expected learning outcomes of the learning program, and on Marzano and Kendall's (2007) four-level model of thinking skills, we, in Nguyen and Nguyen (2016) develop an evidence-based framework of how thinking skills of different levels could be used in the most popular English linguistic tasks in the college under study.

Table 1. Thinking skills required in linguistic tasks at the college under study

No	THINKING SKILLS ACTUALLY REQUIRED BY TEACHERS IN LINGUISTIC TASKS (by March 2015)	THINKING SKILLS THAT COULD BE REQUIRED IN LINGUISTIC TASKS (Nguyen and Nguyen 2016)	EXAMPLES OF LINGUISTIC TASKS	MARZANO'S TAXONOMY
4.4		*Adapt* the existing rules/framework to investigate the linguistic data	Suggest the strategy to translate English modal devices into Vietnamese	**UTILIZATION LEVEL 4**
4.3		*Experiment or test* the rules/processes in students' own learning	Speak the sentence in Singaporean English accent / using the Falling Tune / the Dive.	
4.2		*Figure out a way to solve* the existing or predicted problem	How can the given Facebook statuses be devoid of sexism?	
4.1		*Decide the best* among the alternatives	Which is the most suitable pragmatic strategy to be used in the situation?	
3.4		*Specify* (to defend or judge) the arguments / viewpoints on a certain issues	Explain how metaphors work in the chosen text.	**ANALYSIS LEVEL 3**
3.3		*Form conclusions* from the findings about linguistic data	What type of genre is being used in the text chosen?	
3.2		*Generalize* in terms of broader linguistic categories / principles / visuals	What are the communicative strategies that speaker A uses in the conversation?	
3.1	*Classify, compare and contrast* the issues / different views on the issues	*Classify, compare and contrast* the issues / different views on the issues	Classify the cohesive devices used in the texts.	
2.4	*Represent* the language chunks using the given models	*Represent* the language chunks using the given models	Analyze the constituents of the clause: *He asked* me *to open the door for him.*	**COMPREHEN-SION LEVEL 2**
2.3	*Illustrate* the linguistic concepts(s) / phenomena	*Illustrate* the linguistic concepts(s) / phenomena	Make 2 clauses in SOV pattern and 2 clauses in SVOC pattern.	
2.2	*Describe* the relationship between the language chunks	*Describe* the relationship between the language chunks	Describe the structure of this noun phrase. *The beautiful lady in pink over there.*	
2.1	*Describe the key part* of the language chunks	*Describe the key part* of the language chunks	Transcribe the following words in IPA. *watch, statue, strategic*	

1.4	*Identify* the different types of certain linguistic notions or phenomenon	*Identify* the different types of certain linguistic notions or phenomenon	State the morphological processes in the word: *interpersonal*	
1.3	*Determine* if the statements are *true* or *false*	*Determine* if the statements are *true* or *false*	Decide whether the statement is T or F: */m/ and /b/ are bilabial sounds.*	
1.2	*List* the types or *name* the concept(s)/ issue(s) being described	*List* the types or *name* the concept(s)/ issue(s) being described	What are the 3 characteristics of antonyms?	**RETRIEVAL LEVEL 1**
1.1	*Recognize* a concept from a list of descriptions	*Recognize* a concept from a list of descriptions	Circle the definition of conceptual meaning: *What the word refers to. The dictionary definition of the word. The grammatical category of the word. The speaker's evaluation on using the word.*	

Table 1 is the comparison between Nguyen and Nguyen's (2016) framework and the thinking skills that students were currently required to use in linguistic tasks at the time of Nguyen et al.'s (2015) survey. Table 1 shows that most Marzano's level 3 and 4 thinking skills were not required in the linguistic tasks. This action research, thus, aimed to foster these missing thinking skills for students, and accordingly, facilitate their English semantics learning. Marzano's level 3 and 4 thinking skills, as presented in Table 1, as well as other skills in the same levels, were integrated with the domain knowledge and skills of semantics in the problem-based tasks, i.e. the problem cases in the course were designed so that students had to employ thinking skills during the process of problem solving.

5. The study

5.1. Overview of the study

The research question of this study is: To what extent could the problem-based learning activities promote students' use of HOTS in learning, and facilitate their learning? The study was conducted in the design of an action research. PBL approach was applied in teaching English Semantics to 4th year students of Applied Linguistics (English major). By the time this paper was written, the action has completed its second cycle.

5.2. Instrumentation

The study was conducted in two stages: preliminary investigation and the action.

5.2.1. Preliminary investigation

In early summer 2015, in the role of Student Advisor, I had the chance to receive students' inquiries related to how they were going to use what they learnt in linguistic subjects in their future jobs. I then figured out that most of the students of English in my college, and also other Vietnamese students, ingenuously believe that the job of language teachers, writers, or translators could be fulfilled with good language proficiency and almost no learning of linguistics. Such a fallacy resulted from the fact that, for several decades now, the need for English in Vietnam has been so high that many of these students had already started their jobs as tutors or English teaching assistants, or tour guides, or translators before they learnt any

linguistic courses at university. Linguistic subjects were something pure theoretical and far from essential and practical to them; so their motivation to learn these subjects was often low. In my informal discussion with students of

research. By the time this paper was written, the study has gone through the preliminary investigation and two cycles (in Fall 2015 and Fall 2016), as summarized in Figure 1.
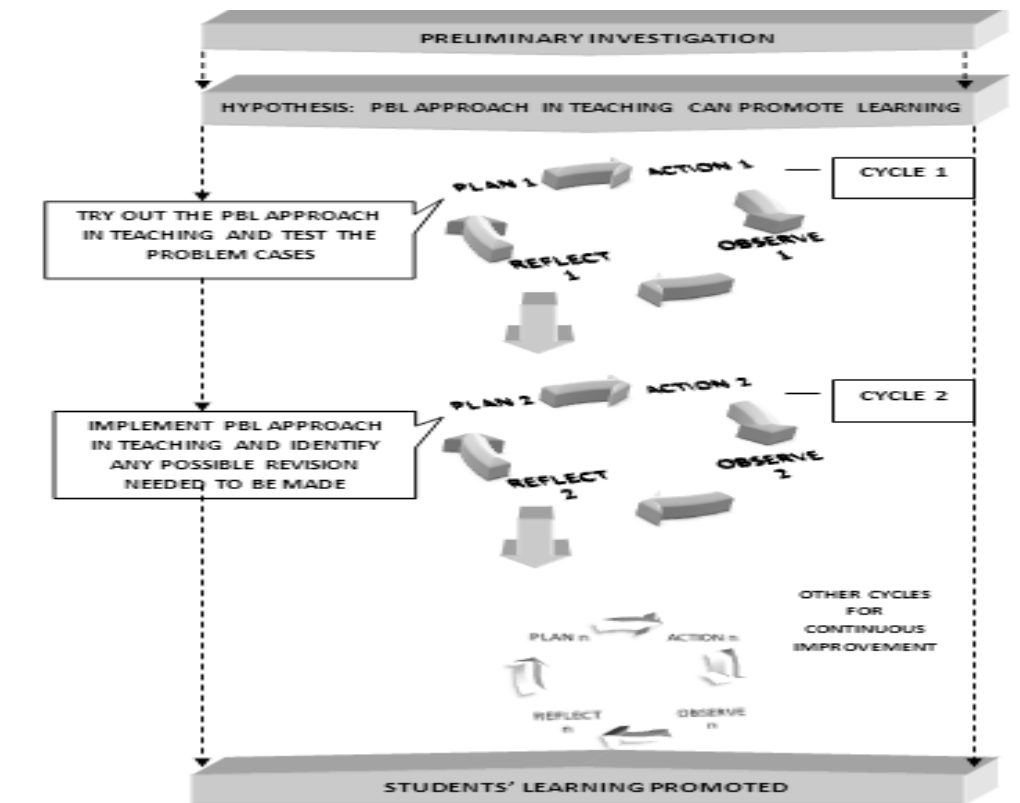

Figure 1. The action cycles in the study

Applied Linguistics in the orientation week of the English Semantics Fall 2015 course – some students still expressed their concern about "is it necessary to learn these linguistic subjects?" and about "is there any application of the concepts and analyzing skills of phonology, morphology, syntax, and even semantics in our jobs and life?" I therefore came to the hypothesis that PBL is an appropriate approach to encourage students' use of HOTS in meaningful learning activities, thus facilitate their learning.

5.2.2. The action

The action in this study was designed in Burns' (2010) cyclical model of action

The action started at week 2 and ended at week 10, and PBL was applied in a partial approach (Ribeiro, 2011), that is, problem-based approach was used in only one subject of semantics (not the whole curriculum), and at only given points of the course. The problem cases were designed using Hung's (2009) 3C3R model (Figure 2), taking into consideration the content knowledge, contextualizing domain knowledge, and the connection within each problem case, among the problem cases or between the problems and other contextual features. Each problem was designed as a chance for students to research, reason, and reflect on what they have learnt or experienced.
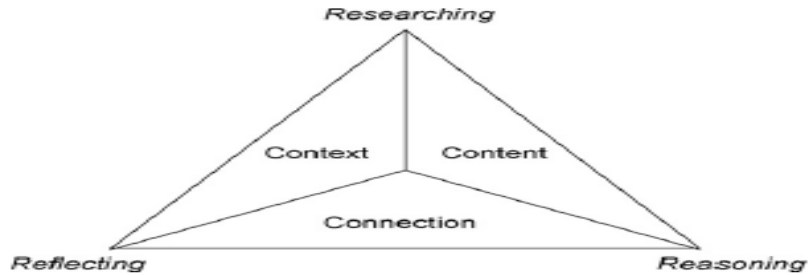
Figure 2. The 3C3R PBL problem design model (Hung 2009)

In each cycle, four problem cases, categorized to be increasing in the degree of ill-structuredness according to Jonassen's (2000) classification (Figure 3), were used: the first problem case was designed in the format of rule induction, which was classified to be rather well-structured. The last problem case was designed as strategic performance, which was classified towards the ill-structured end.
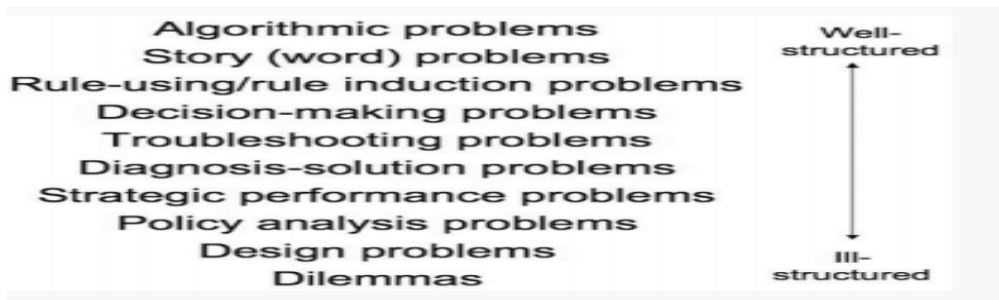
Figure 3. Typology of problem types (Jonassen 2000)
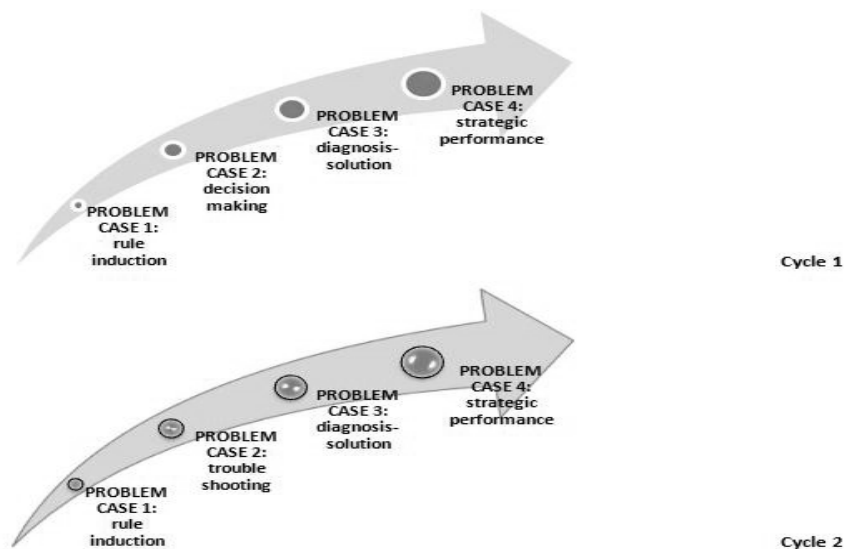
Figure 4. The problem cases in two cycles

As can be seen in Figure 4, and also Figure 5 below, the problem cases increased in terms of HOTS required to solve the problem, students' experience in problem solving, and students' reasoning skills (Jonassen & Hung 2008, p.8), i.e. the first problem case was designed so that students were required to used HOTS of level 3 in Marzano and Kendall's (2007) model of thinking skills (such as comparing and contrasting, editing, revising, evaluating, error analyzing, forming conclusion, specifying, judging), while in the other three problems cases, students were required to use HOTS of both level 3 and level 4 (low) in Marzano and Kendall's (2007) model of thinking skills (such as decision making, problem solving, developing a strategy for a certain job). The reason why I decided to start at level 3 and stop at level 4 (low) was the expected learning outcome of the course and of the program curriculum. In order to fulfill these problem-based tasks, students had to participate in goal-directed learning, participating in processes of brainstorming, group discussion, and decision making.

5.2.3. Participants

The participants of both cycles were senior students of applied linguistics (English major): 16 students in cycle 1 (coded as S1.01 to S1.16) and 15 students of cycle 2 (S2.01 to S2.15). It was expected that after graduation, they would become teachers of English, editors, translators or interpreters; those who pursue extra certificates in journalism will become journalist who write their articles in English. By the time problem-based learning was introduced to them in their English semantics course, students had learnt quite many subjects which cover different linguistic areas: phonetics and English phonology, morphology, syntax, and a brief introduction to pragmatics, discourse analysis; so they had fairly good general understanding in linguistics. Each week, they had a three-hour English Semantics session. It was expected that after finishing the course, students would grasp the fundamentals including the concepts, relations, and main issues, both traditional and modern, of semantics and would be able to conduct small research in semantics.
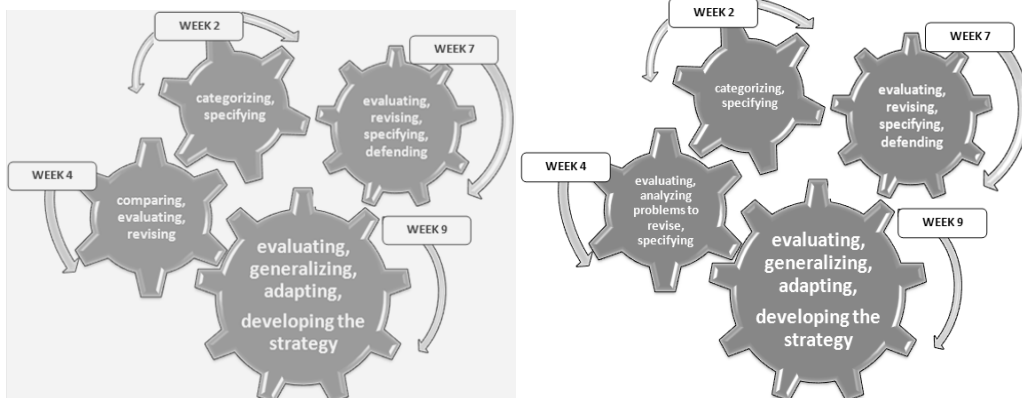
Figure 5. The requirements of HOTS throughout the PBL learning activities

In addition, the problem cases also increased in the breadth of domain knowledge and skills required. The brief description of the problem cases, requirement of HOTS, and the tasking procedures in two cycles is summarized in Table 2.

5.3. Findings and discussion.

As the study has finished its two cycles, the findings are discussed in two different cycles. The description of the intervention in the two cycles could be summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2. The description of the problem-based cases used in English Semantic course

Week	*Domain knowledge and skills required*	First cycle	Second cycle		
		The problem case	Teacher's instruction on the tasking	The problem case	Teacher's instruction on the tasking
2	*General understanding of phonology, syntax, pragmatic, discourse analysis*	**1.** How to use the linguistic knowledge and skills you've learnt in your future job?	***Task***: write in 200 – 300 words; say how linguistic knowledge and language analysis skills would help you do your future jobs. (individual, in class)	**1.** How to use the linguistic knowledge and skills you've learnt in your future job?	***Task 1:*** Discuss in pair to recall the contents of the previous linguistic courses. ***Task 2:*** Write in 200 – 300 words, say how linguistic knowledge and language analysis skills would help you do your future jobs. (in class, after orientation session).
4	*Knowledge about synonymy, antonymy, syntactic and rhetoric rules, componential analysis and sense relation analysis skills*	**2.** How to use the linguistic knowledge and skills you've learnt in the issues of synonymy, antonymy in improving job application letters	***Task 1:*** discuss in pair, give comments on the wording of the letters and make prediction about whether the writer will be called for an interview or not. (pair, in class) ***Task 2:*** substitute some words in one of the two application letters with their synonyms or antonyms, then state how the changes affect the styles and the possibility of being called for an interview (individual, at home)	**2.** The given application letters were not yet good enough for the applicants to be interviewed. What changes are to be made and why?	Students discussed in pair to identify the problems and revise them, the teacher facilitated if students needed more clarification during the discussion and give guiding questions during the presentation. (before the lecture on *Sense relations*, discuss in pair then present in class)
7	*Knowledge about synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meaning transference, meaning transference classifying, and sense relation analysis skills*	**3.** As a writer / teacher/ editor, how to use the linguistic knowledge and skills you've learnt about synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, or meaning transference in improving your own/ your students' / other writers' writing.	***Task 1***: make changes to the text (your friend's writing) by substituting the words with their synonyms, antonyms, or hyponyms, or add different types of meaning transference to the text. (in group of students' choices, at home) ***Task 2:*** present the changes they made to the text with explanation (compare and contrast the original version and the revised version, give well-supported arguments for the changes) (week 8)	**3.** The given writings are not yet good enough to be used as sample writings for students or other writers. Make changes in terms of lexical choices and figure of speech to make them the ideal sample writing.	Students discuss in group to choose the most appropriate procedure to deal with the problem case, the teacher facilitated via email when students needed clarification or further consultation on the process. (after the lecture on *Meaning Transference*, work in group (teacher assigned students into 4 groups), prepare at home and present in class)

| 9 | *Knowledge about modality, syntactic analysis skills, modality analyzing and categorizing skills, and translation skills* | **4.** As a translator / teacher, how to use the linguistic knowledge and skills you've learnt in the issues of modality when translating a text from English into Vietnamese (and vice versa) and evaluate the quality of your own / others' translated texts. | ***Task 1***: translate a text in English into Vietnamese, focusing on the equivalence of modality manifestation devices (in group assigned by teacher, at home) ***Task 2***: give comments on the equivalence in modality between the original text and your friend's translated version; give suggestions to improve the translation quality. (in group assigned by teacher, at home) ***Task 3:*** present the changes made to the translation with explanation (compare the original and the revised versions, give well-supported arguments for the changes) (week 10) | **4.** The translated versions are not yet the most equivalent enough to the original version in English, especially in terms of modality. Make changes to the translation. How is modality in English and Vietnamese the same and different? Suggest the best strategy to translate modality manifestation devices. | Students discuss in group to choose the most appropriate procedure to deal with the problem case, the teacher facilitated via email when students needed clarification or further consultation on the process. (after the lecture on *Modality*, work in group (teacher assigned students into 4 groups), prepare at home and present in class) |

5.3.1. Cycle 1

Cycle 1 was conducted in Fall semester of 2015 – 2016 academic year.

Action and Observation. As seen in Table 2, the 4 problem cases in cycle 1, all designed as lecture-based (Barrows 1986), were all accompanied by the teacher's detailed instructions on the steps to take – 2 or 3 tasks in each case – and how to fulfill the tasks. Such instructions, together with other guiding efforts, were made with the aim to offer students the most coaching possible in their very first attempts in using HOTS in their learning. The assumption behind the construction of those tasks was that: students' success in fulfilling the tasks was the evidence of their HOTS employment. While students were working (brainstorming, discussing, writing, presenting) with the problem cases in during the lesson, I observed how they struggled to solve problems, and how they contributed to the pair or group discussion. Students' motivation in problem

solving, their comments about the problem difficulty or consultation about tasking were also observed in the lesson and through informal discussion with students (in person or via email). After the intervention, I also conducted a semi-structured focused group interview with three students: S1.01, S1.07, and S1.10 (actually, four students, one from each problem-case-4 group, were invited, but only three came, one failed to come at the very last minute).

In addition, at the end of week 10, students were sent an online feedback form. Students evaluated the overall effectiveness of each of the problems cases according to a five-point Likert scales. The comments and suggestions that students did not feel free to give during the problem feedback could be given here.

Reflection. The reflection in this cycle are summarized in 5 outstanding themes.

Theme 1: Students made progress in using level 3 HOTS, employment of level 4 HOTS could not be identified

As described in Figure 4 and Table 2, the problem cases increased in HOTS requirements, and the tasks given in each case led students from using thinking skills of lower levels to thinking skills of higher levels as well.

In problem case 1, it was observed that students appeared quite puzzled having to think (for the very first time for many students) how to apply the domain knowledge and skills in answering a thought-provoking question in problem case 1. The analysis of students' writings revealed that students' ability to use the skills of *categorizing* and *specifying* were not the same: only two students managed to make clear and well-supported arguments of how domain knowledge and skills could be categorized to match the requirements of each task. In the writings of the other students, only simple elaboration could be made with almost no illustration.

In problem case 2, most pairs made detailed *comparison* between the given letters, and *evaluated* the choices of words basing on what they had just learnt from the lecture on synonymy and antonymy. On receiving the teacher's questions for clarification (eg. 'Why do you think the style of the letter/ the word is not appropriate?" "Which word is more suitable? Why?" etc.), all the pairs of students provided clarification which varied in terms of how illustration and supporting ideas were used. Task 2 - revising letters - was aimed to encourage students' further use of HOTS and domain knowledge and skills to revise the letters, but I figured out that the revision task did not work effectively with inactive students who just repeated the discussion in class. In some pairs, the revised letters of both students were identical to the other's, and to the version they presented in class, revealing that they made almost no further investment of HOTS in their home revision of letters.

In problem case 3, task 1 – revision – was

conducted at home, but I could still observe through much discussion via email that students did not need too much consultation on how to use HOTS, but mostly about how to deal with the writers' possible opposition to the revisions. The presentations showed that all the five groups of students succeeded in *evaluating* then *revising* their peer's word choices: almost all the word substitutions made were appropriate and help enhance the original writing, and their explanation of the need for revision demonstrated that they did use *analytical and logical reasoning* to prepare meticulous *specifying* of all the word substitution. Only two groups succeeded in adding figure of speech (metaphor or metonymy) to their peers' writings, which required much *abstracting* than word substitution in the preparation process. The Q&A session in task 2 might also be a chance for students to develop their *predicting skills* and *skills of solving* real problems (one student voiced up his disagreement to the suggested changes to his writing, so the presenting group had to explain with *detailed analysis* and *meticulous comparison* between the original and the changed versions to *defend* for their revision, before he finally reluctantly accepted those changes). Through the interview, all students said that they were quite confident in their own analysis because they had experience from the 2 previous cases, but in group, evaluating and judging others' suggestion of changes required much time and efforts for negotiating: *reasoning*, *defending*, *persuading*, and then *together choosing the best alternative*; much persuading and interpersonal skills were used watchfully.

In problem case 4, the analysis on students' submitted assignments and presentation showed unclear progress in students' use of HOTS: the evaluation and the suggestion for revision were quite simple. In the interview, students all agreed that the case was difficult

as all the 3 tasks were demanding to them. It took most of the groups almost 5 days to finish task1. In task 2, students managed to make *conclusions* about the similarities and differences between modality in English and Vietnamese, though most of these were adapted, not their original ideas, but the comments on the equivalence of modality between the original and translated texts were quite general, and suggestions to improve the translation quality were simple. Students explained that their understanding about modality in English and Vietnamese and their translation skills were not enough for them to make well-argued conclusions about the equivalence in terms of modality between the original text and its translated text in terms of modality. Only one group managed to fulfill task 2 quite well, but it was the contribution of one student, not the whole group.

> "The conclusion about the similarities and differences in modality (manifestation devices) received good comments, but we didn't take it as our group's success. Credit went to H, who always excelled in learning with her outstanding language proficiency, brilliant creative ideas, acute evaluation, and logical reasoning skills. Though we got higher mark than other groups, we were not so proud of ourselves." (S1.07)

In task 3, although students said they did invest tons of efforts analyzing the texts and discussing on the possible ways to improve the translation quality, not many revision alternatives could be given. Even with the changes they made, they could not give the explanation as detailed and well-supported as what they did in problem case 3. The *suggestion of an adapted or newly developed strategy* for translating modal devices from English into Vietnamese, as offered by the teacher for a bonus point, was almost neglected.

Theme 2: Learning was meaningful and

motivating if the problem cases were practical to students

While observing students in their discussion and presentation, and through the interview, I saw the possible trend that the more practical the problem case was for students' future job, the more motivated the students became. Students seemed very attentive and confident in problem case 1, 2 and 3, which were real situations that they might had tried in their internship. Meanwhile in problem case 4, they appeared to be less confident and active. It was revealed from the interview that translation was an elective subject for Applied Linguistic students. Only some students chose the translation course and learnt translation skills at a very basic level, while others found those skills unfamiliar, making the problem case rather impractical to them. This might have hindered their contribution to the group assignment.

> "We need to learn much more about modality and translation skills to do it well" (S1.01).

Through the online feedback, students' evaluation on the meaningfulness of the problem cases increased from problem case 1 to 3 (M= 4.07, 4.23, 4.38 respectively), then dropped in problem case 4 (M = 4.08).

Theme 3: PBL could contribute to change students' passive learning routines

During problem case 2 in week 4, many pairs of students did have productive discussion about "which letter to be called for the interview": the arguments they gave were no longer a recall of something they heard from the teacher or searched elsewhere, but ideas formed from their original analysis and evaluation of the letters. However, only 2 students were willing to present in class, the other 5 students reluctantly took the role of presenter after negotiation in pair. In problem case 3, I could not observe how students worked in group, but their presentation in class demonstrated good efforts in analyzing

and evaluating the input writings, which were the evidence of their employment of analytical reasoning skills.

The interview also revealed that the problem cases urged students to work hard, with intense employment of critical thinking skills.

> "I spent three nights thinking over and over again about the word substitutions. I checked the dictionaries and thesaurus again and again, […]. It was time consuming, but I was quite happy about my revision because I understood the detailed shades of meaning of the words." (S1.07)

Such demonstration of active learning was quite different from what I could observe in the previous courses of semantics, in which students were often not active in the discussion activities, just like other Vietnamese students who had long been accustomed to the role of passive acceptors in the lectured-based linguistic classes. (Nguyen et al., 2015)

Students' view on learning had changed after problem case 3. When I assigned problem case 3, many students immediately raised such questions as: "What would happen if the writing is too good to be revised?" "Might the changes we made ever spoil the original writings?" Observing students' exchange of ideas in class, I could see their hesitation in making revisions to their friends' writing, which was not surprising because disinclination to innovation had always been a typical character of Vietnamese students, and of Vietnamese people in general. In the interview, when all the tasks in problem case 3 had already been fulfilled, I could observe some change in students' view:

> "Even already good writings could still be improved." (S1.01).

Theme 4: Too high requirements in professional skills might hinder students' HOTS employment

As mentioned, in the first 3 problem cases, students met (to different degrees) all the requirements in the tasks; while in problem case 4, only one group managed to fulfill all the 3 tasks. The reason to be figured out through the interview was that: problem case 1 and 2 did not call for students' proficiency in any specific job skills; and problem case 3 required students to revise the writings – the skill that they had been using frequently in their own learning or their part-time job as tutors. Meanwhile, problem case 4 required translation skills, which were not what students had already mastered, at a quite high level. With inadequate experience and limited skills in translation, students were afraid of being criticized for their poor translation, so they spent too much time on task 1 and insufficient time on task 2 and 3. They also said they felt insecure having to give evaluation on others' translations (as their translation might had problems, too); and they were not confident in making revisions and specifying their revision on the use of modal devices "Sometimes it's hard to agree on the best translation" (S1.01). As mentioned, when I asked the students to suggest a strategy for translating modal devices, even to get a bonus point, they showed almost no motivation to do.

Theme 5: Working in groups of people of different styles and levels can be challenging but good practice for problem solving

As described in Table 2, in problem case 3, students worked in groups of their own choices, while in problem case 4, they worked in groups that the teacher assigned. I was informed from my discussion with students during their group work and from the interview that in problem case 4, students did struggle a lot more when having to work with people whose learning and thinking styles they were not familiar with. Group members tended to be more critical to others' work, and much more explanation and negotiation had to be made than in problem case 3 "We didn't have much time but too much negotiation to

be made" (S1.10). Students did not like the negotiation with group members as they had to try to specify their ideas with persuasive arguments, defend their ideas from the critical judgments of other group members. However, solving "real" problems arising when learning and cooperating within the group was practical preparation for students in their future job.

5.3.2. Cycle 2

Cycle 2 was conducted in Fall semester of 2016 – 2017 academic year.

Action and Observation. The action in cycle 2 was the revision of the action in cycle 1 as the reflection of cycle 1 informed about some limitations of the intervention.

In cycle 2, the format of problem case 2 was changed into a more ill-structured format, and from a lecture-based decision making to a close-looped (Barrows 1986) trouble-shooting case. The aim of this revision was to increase the thought provocation intensity of the problem case, requiring students to use HOTS at a higher level (as described in Figure 4). In addition, problem case 2 was revised to be conducted in class only (no more home revision of the letters).

In both problem cases 3 and 4, students worked in groups assigned by the teacher. The translation task was cut off from problem case 4, relocating the focus of the strategic performance more on linguistics and less on translation skills. Also, to prepare students better for problem case 4, I also assigned students with readings on modality in Vietnamese so that they could have a source of reference to generalize the similarities and differences of modal devices in English and Vietnamese.

The biggest revision made in cycle 2 was in the description of the problem cases and the teacher's instruction on how to proceed during their problem solving process. In cycle 1, I gave detailed instructions on which steps to take to solve the problems in the form of explicit tasks. In cycle 2, however, such detailed instructions were only given in the very first problem case. In the other 3 cases, although the detailed instructions with prescriptive tasks had been already planned by the teacher, the plan was changed right after week 2 due to a special situation observed in problem case 1 (further elaborated in Reflection). In the last 3 problem cases, students (in pairs or groups) were supposed to decide their own way to address the problems, the teacher only facilitated when students really needed clarification of the concepts, ideals, or consultation about group work skills. Instructions on how the problems should be addressed were minimized so that students were free to discuss and decide their own approach in addressing the problems.

Students' performance in response to the problem cases (writing, editing assignments, and presentations) was analyzed using the HOTS analyzing scheme (Appendix 1) to seek for the evidence of how they actually employed HOTS. Students' contribution to pair or group discussion, their motivation, their comments about the problem difficulty or their expectation for revision of the cases were also observed in the lesson and through consultation emails.

Right after the problem cases, the teacher elicited students' comments on their procedure of solving the problems through informal discussion. A semi-structured focused group interview was conducted with 4 leaders of the groups (coded as S2.4, S2.6, S2.10, S2.14).

Reflection. The reflection in this cycle are summarized in 4 outstanding themes.

Theme 1: Students made progress in their ability to use HOTS

Students' progress in their ability to use HOTS throughout the problem cases in this cycle could be summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Students progress in using HOTS

HOTS employed	Problem case 1	Problem case 2	Problem case 3	Problem case 4	HOTS utilization
CATEGORIZING (1a)	2.4				Good (Mean = 2.6 – 3.0) / Fair (Mean = 1.8 – 2.5) / Poor (Mean = 1.0 -1.7)
SPECIFYING (2c, 3c, 4c)	2.07	2.13	2.75	2.5	Good (Mean = 2.6 – 3.0) / Fair (Mean = 1.8 – 2.5) / Poor (Mean = 1.0 -1.7)
EVALUATING (2a, 3a, 4a)		2.67	2.75	2.75	Good (Mean = 2.6 – 3.0) / Fair (Mean = 1.8 – 2.5) / Poor (Mean = 1.0 -1.7)
REVISING (2b, 3b, 4d)		2.13	2.75	2.5	Good (Mean = 2.6 – 3.0) / Fair (Mean = 1.8 – 2.5) / Poor (Mean = 1.0 -1.7)
DEFENDING (3d, 4e)			2.5	2.5	Good (Mean = 2.6 – 3.0) / Fair (Mean = 1.8 – 2.5) / Poor (Mean = 1.0 -1.7)
GENERALIZING (4b)				2.5	Good (Mean = 2.6 – 3.0) / Fair (Mean = 1.8 – 2.5) / Poor (Mean = 1.0 -1.7)
ADAPTING EXISTING STRATEGY (4f1)				2	Good (Mean = 2.6 – 3.0) / Fair (Mean = 1.8 – 2.5) / Poor (Mean = 1.0 -1.7)
DEVELOPING NEW STRATEGY (4f2)				2	Good (Mean = 2.6 – 3.0) / Fair (Mean = 1.8 – 2.5) / Poor (Mean = 1.0 -1.7)
	N = 15 (students)		N = 4 (groups)		

As demonstrated in Table 3, students made progress the most in their specifying, evaluating, and revising skills; and the thinking skills to be enhanced the most was evaluating. In problem case 4, students' revision on the use of modal devices in the translated version was not as detailed as what they did in revising the writing in problem case 3. Their ability to specify for the revising options was not as good as what they performed in problem case 3, either. The interview revealed that students' revision on the translation of the modal devices was very much constrained by their understanding about Vietnamese modal devices. Students believed they need more explanation from the teacher to understand the readings thoroughly, so that they were better informed and assisted in their revision of modal devices and specification for their revision.

Table 3 also showed that the students could use level 4 HOTS such as adapting or developing the translation strategy when they were asked to, but their employment of these skills was limited as this was the first time they were required to use such skills in their learning. Also, as mentioned, their understanding about modal devices and translation skills were still limited for such a demanding job to be fulfilled.

Theme 2: Too much detailed instruction might hinder students' creativity in problem solving

As mentioned, in this cycle, I initially planned to give students a list of tasks to be fulfilled in each problem case with the assumption that the prescribed tasks could be of good assistance for students in their employment of HOTS, for HOTS requirements were made explicit in the task description. However, in problem case 1, while most students start the discussion without hesitations, one student raised questions about the tasking procedure.

> "Do I have to discuss in pair? Or could I discuss in group? Or think by myself? Do I need to write exactly from 200 to 300 words? Could I write in fewer or more words?" (S2.10)

I then observed that she did not discussed with the student who was sitting next to her (I supposed they could pair up), but teamed up with other 2 students for the discussion. The analysis of her writing then revealed that she was very creative in her thinking, and her writing were very logically structured and well argued, demonstrating her perfect logical thinking and specifying skills. I then figured out that too detailed instruction on how to address the problem did not always help students, but might even hinder their creativity in problem solving. I therefore decided to stop prescribing the tasks in the forthcoming problem cases. Instead, I encouraged students to seek for further instruction as much as they needed, and I realized that such a way of coaching students made them feel free to decide the way to address the problem, which encouraged their creativity, and might have positive influence on promoting their autonomy in learning.

Theme 3: HOTS were employed more effectively when problems were solved in groups

As demonstrated in Table 3, there was a significant development in students' ability of specifying, evaluating, and revising when they worked in groups. It was then clarified in the interview that before the assignments were presented in class, students had to use HOTS much in all the preparation activities they did in group. The group work process in problem case 3 and 4 was described as a mixture of explaining, questioning, specifying, evaluating, and defending. The group assignments went through a lot of discussion and revisions before they were finalized and presented in class. Problems emerged during group work, and then solved. Group work was therefore much more demanding to students. Before students present in class, it seemed students had the so-called "rehearsal" for their presentation, in which one's ideas must be elaborated to persuade other members, limitations were found through critical evaluation, and then fixed with careful revision.

> "I was assigned into a group of 4, all were of different working styles, all were very critical. So, usually, I needed strong and persuasive arguments for my ideas to be accepted by other members. It's like defending my ideas against others' judgment. People think differently, so it took time to discuss, modify, and agree on the final decision". (S2.14)

All the group preparation prior to class presentation functioned as a good chance for students to practice problem solving skills and the HOTS required for problem solving.

Theme 4: The use of the closed-loop problem case stimulated and drove students' learning

Problem case 2 in this cycle had been changed from a lecture-based problem case into a closed-loop problem case, and its design was also changed from a decision-making case to a trouble shooting case. Apart from increasing the degree of ill-structuredness

and thought provocation, the reason for such modification was that: the contents of week 4 lecture (sense relations: synonymy and antonymy) were neither too abstract nor too complex for students' self-direct learning. Without too specific linguistic background knowledge and without teacher's lecturing, students could still solve the assigned problem at the basic requirements in pair.

As the problem case was raised prior to students' learning of synonymy and antonymy, students, at first, could not do the revision task well. They made a lot of comments to the letters, pointing out the limitations that might be the reason why the letters were rejected, but they could not revise all those limitations. Also, the revisions were not well specified by all the pairs.

> "We just felt in many parts that the wordings of the letters were inappropriate, because you said the writers were interviewed. But we were not sure whether our revision made the letters better" (S2.04).

I could observe many students' uncertainty about whether their revised versions were a good improvement. Many questions were raised: "Do we need to change the words? Can I rewrite the whole paragraph my way?", "How many changes are enough?". However, such uncertainty was a kind of stimulus for students to learn, and it was the driving force for students' learning when they then read Chapter 2 about the types of synonyms and antonyms. I could observe students automatically paired up to check their revisions right after reading the materials about synonymy and antonymy. They discussed actively while reading; and four pairs did modify their already-revised letters.

> "Reading Chapter 2 did not take long, but our discussion took much longer. We read and found what we need for the revision tasks, so we then looked back at the letters. The types of synonyms and antonyms could help in the revision." (S02.14)

After reading the materials, not many revisions were modified, but the students were then able to explain the how each revision influenced the wording, and the impression that the letters might make on the readers. I could also observe that students' material reading, discussion and pair work became very active after problem case 2 was raised, much more active than what students did in the same class session in cycle 1 (when problem case 2 was lectured-based). Problem case 2 in this cycle functioned as the means to provoke students' thinking, opening their curiosity loop; and all the reading, discussion, and modification afterwards were to close this loop. Learning became goal oriented; the learning goal was to solve, then improved the solution to the problem raised.

6. Conclusions and recommendation

The research findings lead to some conclusions. First, PBL was proved to be an appropriate approach to promote Vietnamese students' use of HOTS in linguistic courses. The problem-based learning activities could, therefore, be designed to efficiently facilitate students' learning of linguistics or other content subjects in contexts similar to Vietnamese tertiary education context (where the teaching and learning of content subjects are still teacher-centered and HOTS are not yet an integral part of the curriculum). Also, PBL contributed to change Vietnamese students' passive learning routines into more active and responsible learning. This conclusion resonates Bell's (2012) position that PBL help students become independent learners and take responsibility for their learning, laying the ground for developing their metacoginitive skills and life-long learning skills. Second, when students were given more control to self-direct and self-regulate their learning, they could actively draw on their creativity more efficiently in learning. Therefore, the teacher in the PBL class should make careful consideration about the degree of teacher facilitation needed in

the class. Third, when the linguistics contents did not necessitate teacher's lecturing on specific abstract or complex linguistic issues, the closed-loop problem case could be more efficient than the lecture-based case in the sense that it could stimulate students' need to learn and drive students' goal-oriented learning. Fourth, students appeared more motivated in problem cases which were of their interest or which they might have experience with during their internship and part-time jobs (problem case 2 and problem case 3). This echos Hung & Holen's (2011) remark about the affective factors of problem cases. Also, when PBL was conducted in groups of different learning styles and levels, students were challenged more, but had more chance to practice their problem solving skills. They also had chance to practice and improve their persuading, presenting, negotiating, group work skills.

The limitation of this study is in the inadequate focus on level 4 HOTS. The problem cases in both cycles were designed to require students for much exploitation of level 3 HOTS in learning, but not much employment of level 4 HOTS. Evidence of students' progress in using level 4 HOTS was therefore not clearly identified. In the next cycle, the number of problem cases might be added, and the requirement on the use of level 4 HOTS might be extended so that students' thinking skills could be developed all-sidedly.

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ÁP DỤNG ĐƯỜNG HƯỚNG DẠY HỌC GIẢI QUYẾT VẤN ĐỀ ĐỂ THÚC ĐẨY VIỆC SỬ DỤNG KỸ NĂNG TƯ DUY BẬC CAO TRONG QUÁ TRÌNH HỌC TẬP CỦA SINH VIÊN

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Tóm tắt: Bài báo mô tả một nghiên cứu cải tiến sư phạm trong học phần Ngữ nghĩa học dành cho sinh viên năm cuối của một trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Với giả thuyết rằng đường hướng dạy học giải quyết vấn (problem-based learning - PBL) có thể khuyến khích người học sử dụng kỹ năng tư duy bậc cao và hỗ trợ họ trong quá trình học, tác giả đã thiết kế các hoạt động học xoay quanh việc sinh viên phải sử dụng tư duy bậc cao (higher-order thinking skills - HOTS) để giải quyết các vấn đề được nêu hoặc được yêu cầu khám phá và tìm cách giải quyết qua hoạt động học. Vào thời điểm bài báo được viết, nghiên cứu sư phạm đã hoàn thành hai chu kỳ nghiên cứu, mỗi chu kỳ kéo dài 9 tuần. Các khách thể của nghiên cứu là 31 sinh viên theo học Ngôn ngữ học ứng dụng tại một trường đại học chuyên ngữ ở Việt Nam. Kết quả của nghiên cứu được thảo luận để làm rõ mức độ tác động của đường hướng dạy học giải quyết vấn đề PBL lên khả năng sử dụng kỹ năng tư duy bậc cao của các sinh viên tham gia trong nghiên cứu và khả năng đường hướng này có thể hỗ trợ quá trình học tập của sinh viên trong học phần Ngữ nghĩa học.

Từ khóa: kỹ năng tư duy bậc cao, dạy học giải quyết vấn đề (PBL), ngữ nghĩa học

APPENDIX 1: CYCLE 2 HOTS ANALYZING SCHEME

(USED IN PRESENTATION AND ASSIGNMENT ANALYSIS)

① no evidence of use ② unclear evidence of use ③ clear evidence of use

Problem cases	Evidence of HOTS employment	Level	Notes
1. How to use the linguistic knowledge and skills you've learnt in your future job?	a. *Categorize* the aspects of knowledge and skills according to different tasks in the future jobs.	③ ② ①	
	b. *Specify* how those aspects of knowledge and skills would help students to fulfill those tasks.	③ ② ①	
2. The given application letters were not good enough so the applicants were not called for interviewed. What changes to be made and why?	a. *Evaluate* and point out the problems in the two letters with explanation.	③ ② ①	
	b. Suggest ways to *revise* the problems found.	③ ② ①	
	c. *Specify* why each revision is necessary (students give specification with or without the teacher's guiding questions).	③ ② ①	
3. The given writings are not yet good enough to be used as sample writings for students or other writers. Make changes in terms of lexical choices and figure of speech to make them the ideal sample writing.	a. *Evaluate* the wording and style of the writing.	③ ② ①	
	b. Make changes to *revise* the writing	③ ② ①	
	c. *Specify* the changes made to the writing.	③ ② ①	
	d. *Defend* their revision when the writer raised opposition to it.	③ ② ①	
4. The translated versions are not yet the most equivalent enough to the original version in English, especially in terms of modality. Make changes to the translation. Suggest the best strategy to translate modality manifestation devices.	a. *Evaluate* the translated version;	③ ② ①	
	b. *Generalize* to point out the similarities and differences in modality in English and Vietnamese.	③ ② ①	
	c. *Revise* the modal devices in the translation	③ ② ①	
	d. *Specify* the changes made to the modal devices	③ ② ①	
	e. *Defend* their revision when audience raised opposition to it.	③ ② ①	
	f1. *Develop* an *adapted* strategy (suggestions) to translate modality manifestation devices from English into Vietnamese.	③ ② ①	
	f2. *Develop* an *original* strategy (suggestions) to translate modality manifestation devices from English into Vietnamese.	③ ② ①	

READING STRATEGIES USED BY VIETNAMESE EFL AND ESL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: Reading comprehension is one of the most important factors in English language learning for all students because it is the basis of instruction in all aspects of language learning (Mikulecky, 2008). Comprehension is enhanced when the reader actively uses appropriate strategies in the reading process (Brown, 1980). This paper attempts to find out if there are any differences in the use of reading strategies between Vietnamese university students who learn English as a compulsory subject (EFL students) and those who use English as a means for their academic programs (ESL students) in their reading General English (GE) texts.

Keywords: reading, reading comprehension, reading strategies, EFL and ESL students

1. Introduction

Reading, as a receptive skill, has long been regarded as a prerequisite for foreign language acquisition (Aebersold & Field, 1997) since it functions as an essential source of input for other skills (listening, speaking, and writing) to construct language proficiency. Being the essence of reading (Durkin, 1993), reading comprehension is one of the most important factors in English language learning for all students because it provides the basis for a substantial amount of learning in education (Alvermann & Earle, 2003). Therefore, reading also plays a vital role in academic development, particularly when learners have to work over a huge amount of foreign language materials for their own specialist subjects (McDonough & Shaw, 2013).

Students nowadays need not only to acquire knowledge and theories from English reading materials but also to read many English books, periodicals or magazines for the absorption of new knowledge and information. Strengthening English reading ability will be necessary for students to promote individual ability in competing. However, though students have to read a large volume of academic texts in English many of them entering university education are unprepared for the reading demands placed on them (Dreyer & Nel, 2003). There are many factors affecting students' English reading proficiency such as text types, university and social environments, students' intelligence, learning motivation, teaching methods (Hsu, 2008), and one of the most important factors is students' use of reading strategies. The best prevention of reading difficulties is early intervention strategies (DeMoulin & Loye, 1999), since second or foreign language readers can "compensate for a lack of English proficiency by invoking interactive strategies, utilizing prior knowledge, and becoming aware of their strategy choices" (Hudson as cited in Auerbach & Paxton, 1997, p. 238).

However, in the reality of English teaching and learning, most students are unfamiliar with the utilization of English reading strategies. They show an inability to read selectively or to extract what is important for the purpose of reading and discarding what is insignificant.

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Also, they often select ineffective and inefficient strategies with little strategic intent (Wood, et al., 1998). Consequently, their reading comprehension is reduced. In their learning process, most students meet great challenges when dealing with reading texts. They usually do not understand texts and cannot complete the tasks so they feel tired and do not show enough interest in reading lessons or reading activities.

Being aware of the important role of reading in students' academic development the researcher conducted this research to find out if there are any differences in the use of reading strategies between Vietnamese university students who learn English as a subject (hereafter called EFL students) and those who use English as a means for their academic programs (hereafter called ESL students) in their reading General English (GE) texts.

The study aims to answer the following question: Are there any differences in the use of reading strategies between students who learn English as a compulsory subject and those who use English as a means for their academic study in their reading General English (GE) texts?

2. Methodology

2.1. Instruments of the study

Considering all the advantages and disadvantages of instruments applied in language learning strategy researching, Reading Strategy Questionnaire is the most preferably chosen for this study.

The questionnaire used in this study consists of two parts:

- Part One designed to gather the information about individual characteristics of the participants required the subjects to supply their ethnographic data, such as gender, age, time of English study, major, their self-assessment on English and reading proficiency, etc.

- Part Two included nineteen statements

appropriate to nineteen different strategies applied in reading comprehension.

The nineteen statements were divided into four sections, corresponding to four strategy categories: Metastrategies, Cognitive strategies, Affective strategies, and Socio-cultural Interactive strategies.

Metastrategy category consisting of eight strategies aimed to help readers manage and control the reading process in a general sense, with a focus on understanding readers' own needs and using and adjusting the other strategies to meet those needs, for example planning, organizing, monitoring, evaluating, etc.

Cognitive category included six strategies, which helped readers remember and process the reading process, such as activating knowledge, constructing, transforming, etc.

The third category namely Affective consisted of two strategies helped readers handle emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation in their reading process.

The last strategy category was Socio-cultural Interactive, which included three strategies, supported readers to deal with issues of contexts, communication, and culture in their reading comprehension.

These questionnaire statements, which are broad, teachable actions that readers choose from among alternatives and employ for second/foreign language learning purposes, were adopted from the S2R (Self-Strategic Regulation) strategy model by Oxford (2013).

The main reasons for the choice of this model is that self-regulation is one of the most exciting developments in second or foreign language learning (Oxford, 2013, p.7). In addition, Oxford's (2013) model focuses on factors that make learning easier, more enjoyable, faster, and more efficient. Specially, Oxford's (2013) S2R reading strategy classification shows its scientific elegance as it avoids the overlap of strategies in some other taxonomies.

The internal reliability of the questionnaire was high with Cronbach's Alpha= .855 for 19 items of reading strategies. The external reliability of the questionnaire was also assured as all the nineteen items in the questionnaire were replicated from Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) which has been applied by a number of other researchers across the world in the field (Kaylani, 1996; Oxford, 2001).

For each questionnaire statement, five alternative choices were provided. Participants were asked to select one from among the followings:

> 1 for Never or almost never true of me
> 2 for Usually not true of me
> 3 for Somewhat true of me
> 4 for Usually true of me
> 5 for Always or almost true of me

The higher the number that respondents indicated applied to them, the more frequent the use of the particular strategy was reflected. The whole questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese for the participants' better understanding.

2.2. Subjects

Two hundred and eighty-six students from University of National Economics and Academy of Banking majoring in Accounting and Finance participated in this study. Based on the purpose of the study, the participants were divided into two groups. Group one consisted of one hundred and twenty-two students who learned English as a subject at university and they used English as a foreign language (hereafter called EFL students). Group two included one hundred and sixty-four students who studied in advanced programs and used English as a means for their academic study at university (hereafter called ESL students). All of the participants were non-English majored second or third year students. EFL students had to study general English and professional English in their universities, of which general English course took about 9-12 credits and English for specific purposes course took 3-4 credits. Meanwhile, ESL students did not study English in their curriculum. Since their academic programs were taught in English, they were required to have good enough English proficiency (usually IELTS $\geq$ 4.5 or equivalent) when enrolling the universities.

2.3. Procedures

At the beginning of the procedures all of the participants were introduced to the purpose of the study and were explained that all information reported by them would be used for research purposes only. The main aim of using the strategy questionnaire was to draw out the types and frequency of use of reading strategies by the participants when they read EGAP texts. In addition, by requiring the participants to provide their ethnographic information, the researcher aimed to find out how the variables such as participants' gender, academic major, English learning time, self-rated English learning and English reading proficiency, etc., related to the students' English reading strategy use. The students then were given guidelines and instructions for completing the questionnaire. They were encouraged to ask the researcher for anything they did not understand or were not clear. The students then filled in the two parts of the questionnaire, which took about thirty to forty minutes.

2.4. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyze the data from questionnaires. An independent T-test and one way MANOVA were used to determine the frequency level of each strategy use between the two groups of students.

The types and frequencies of strategies used were counted and averaged by adding up individual scores from each participant

to obtain a total score for each subscale in the strategy questionnaire (Metastrategies, Cognitive strategies, Affective strategies, and Socio-cultural Interactive strategies) and for the entire instrument. The scores for respective subscale were added up and divided by the number of items in each (8 items for Metastrategies, 6 for Cognitive strategies, 2 for Affective strategies, and 3 for Socio-cultural Interactive strategies). The higher the averages the more frequently the participants used the strategy concerned. The scores were interpreted in three levels with the interpretation key based on frequency scale delineated by Oxford (1990) for general learning strategy usage. The mean of 3.50 or higher shows high usage, the mean of 2.5 to 3.49 is medium usage and the mean of 2.49 or lower is low usage. The usage levels provided a convenient standard for interpretation of the score averages.

The differences in the overall use of reading strategies and strategy categories between the two groups were also revealed.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Strategies used by EFL and ESL students in reading comprehension

An independent t-test was employed to analyze the data in this study. Regarding the total reading strategies, ESL students reported better use of reading strategies (M=3.11; S.D=1.032) than EFL readers (M=2.95; S.D=1.026). Statistical representation of the analyzed data is given in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Overall Strategy Use by EFL and ESL Students

Group	Number	Mean	S.D
EFL	122	2.95	1.026
ESL	164	3.11	1.032

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables- the four reading strategy categories, for the two groups of participants. It can be seen from the table that ESL students outperformed those of the first group in the use of all the reading strategy categories except for Affective category.

Table 2. Strategy Use by Categories by EFL and ESL Students

Category	Group	N	Mean	S.D
Metastrategies	EFL	122	2.73	0.694
	ESL	164	2.80	0.629
Cognitive strategies	EFL	122	3.28	0.865
	ESL	164	3.63	0.817
Affective strategies	EFL	122	3.06	1.016
	ESL	164	2.94	0.913
Sociocultural interactive strategies	EFL	122	2.83	0.812
	ESL	164	2.97	0.847

A one-way MANOVA was conducted to determine the effect of the characteristics of the two groups on the use of the four dependent variables. Significant differences were found between the two groups on the dependent measures, Wilks'λ=0.934, $F_{(4,281)}$=4.957, p=0.001<0.005, Partial Eta Squared=.066. This result indicates that characteristics of the groups were related to the way the participants used the four reading strategy categories.

For further examination, tests of between subject effects were conducted and the results are summarized in Table 3 below. It can be seen from the table that there were statistically significant differences in the use of only cognitive strategy category among students of the two groups with p=0.001<0.05. The results reveal that the use of cognitive strategies was significantly different between the two groups.

The scores of the use of each strategy by

Table 3. Tests of between Subject Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	Metastrategies	27.201	1	27.201	.983	.322	.003
	Cognitive strategies	304.930	1	304.930	12.071	**.001**	**.041**
	Affectivestrategies	3.461	1	3.461	.943	.332	.003
	Sociocultural interactive strategies	13.496	1	13.496	2.164	.142	.008
Error	Metastrategies	7857.401	284	27.667			
	Cognitive strategies	7174.328	284	25.262			
	Affective strategies	1042.414	284	3.670			
	Sociocultural interactive strategies	1771.231	284	6.237			

students of the two groups were also analyzed and the results are presented in Table 4. The means for the use of individual strategies ranged from a high use of 3.48 to a medium of 2.4 for EFL students and from a high of 3.6 to a medium of 2.51 for ESL students. A closer examination of the top five strategies most used among students of each group showed that strategy "Activating Knowledge" had the highest average frequency and at high level for both groups (M=3.48 and M=3.76, respectively). Two other strategies which reported being used the most by the participants of both groups were "Using the Senses to Understand and Remember", and Going Beyond the Immediate Data" (M=3.28, M=3.7; M=3.28, M=3.59, respectively). Two more strategies which were also most used by EFL students were Obtaining and Using Resources (M=3.44) and Conceptualizing with Details (M=3.24), and those by EFL students were Reasoning (M=3.6) and Conceptualizing Broadly (M=3.59). Of the strategies reported using the most by EFL students, one belongs to Metastrategy category (Obtaining and Using Resources) and the other four belong to Cognitive category. Meanwhile all strategies of the most used group by ESL students appear in the category of Cognitive strategies only.

It is noticeable that students of both groups shared the same five strategies of the lowest level of frequency, namely Planning, Organizing, Implementing Plans, Orchestrating Strategy Use, and Monitoring with M=2.48, 2.51; 2.4, 2.53; 2.49, 2.55; 2.52, 2.59; and 2.66, 2.7, respectively. All strategies of the lowest usage level fell into the category of Metastrategies.

Regarding the remaining strategies presented in Table 4, both groups showed a mixture of the four strategy categories.

Table 4. Individual Strategies Used by EFL vs ESL Students

EFL (122)				ESL (164)		
Strategies	**Mean**	**S.D**		**Strategies**	**Mean**	**S.D**
S10 Activating Knowledge	*3.48*	*1.054*		*S10 Activating Knowledge*	*3.76*	*0.947*
S3 Obtaining and Using Resources	*3.44*	*1.084*		*S9 Using the Senses to Understand and Remember*	*3.7*	*0.973*
S9 Using the Senses to Understand and Remember	*3.28*	*1.085*		*S11 Reasoning*	*3.6*	*1.032*
S14 Going Beyond the Immediate Data	*3.28*	*1.054*		*S13 Conceptualizing Broadly*	*3.59*	*1.008*
S12 Conceptualizing with Details	*3.24*	*1.053*		*S14 Going Beyond the Immediate Data*	*3.59*	*1.056*
S11 Reasoning	3.23	1.043		S12 Conceptualizing with Details	3.56	1.131
S13 Conceptualizing Broadly	3.2	1.073		S3 Obtaining and Using Resources	3.43	1.022
S15 Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes	3.16	1.109		S1 Paying attention	3.25	0.974
S1 Paying attention	3.11	1.069		S19 Dealing with Socio-cultural Contexts and Identities	3.08	0.933
S16 Generating and Maintaining Motivation	2.94	1.101		S16 Generating and Maintaining Motivation	2.99	0.959
S18 Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communicating	2.85	0.897		S18 Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communicating	2.98	1.085
S19 Dealing with Socio-cultural Contexts and Identities	2.85	1.034		S15 Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes	2.9	1.06
S17 Interacting to Learn and Communicate	2.77	1.059		S8 Evaluating	2.86	1.073
S8 Evaluating	2.7	0.995		S17 Interacting to Learn and Communicate	2.86	1.14
S7 Monitoring	*2.66*	*1.041*		*S7 Monitoring*	*2.7*	*1.028*
S6 Orchestrating Strategy Use	*2.52*	*0.989*		*S6 Orchestrating Strategy Use*	*2.59*	*1.056*
S5 Implementing Plans	*2.49*	*1.038*		*S5 Implementing Plans*	*2.55*	*1.023*
S2 Planning	*2.48*	*0.964*		*S4 Organizing*	*2.53*	*0.987*
S4 Organizing	*2.4*	*0.859*		*S2 Planning*	*2.51*	*1.006*

Furthermore, a closer look at Table 4 indicates that seven of the nineteen strategies (36.8%) reported by ESL students fell in the high use category (M=3.5 or higher), twelve strategies (63.8%) placed in the medium category of use (M=between 2.5 and 3.49). Conversely, EFL reported using none of the strategies at high level of frequency. Eighteen

of the nineteen strategies were used at medium level (M=from 2.48 to 3.48). One of the strategies was at low usage level by EFL group (M=2.4 for Organizing).

In order to find out if there were any significant differences in the use of each reading strategy, another independent samples t-test for individual strategies was performed

and the results are summarized in Table 5. As indicated in the table, seven strategies in bold showed significant differences: Using the Senses to Understand and Remember (p=0.001), Activating Knowledge (p=0.25), Reasoning (p=0.03), Conceptualizing with Details (p=0.14), Conceptualizing Broadly (p=0.02), Going Beyond the Immediate Data (p=0.16), and Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes (p=0.39). Of these seven strategies, ESL students reported to be better in using six strategies- Using the Senses to Understand and Remember, Activating Knowledge, Reasoning, Conceptualizing with Details, Conceptualizing Broadly, and Going Beyond the Immediate Data, meanwhile EFL students stated greater use in only one strategy-Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes.

Table 5. Sample t-test of Individual Strategies Used between EFL & ESL Students

Category	Strategies	EFL (n=122)		ESL (n=164)		t	p-value
		Mean	S.D	M	S.D		
Metastrategies							
M1	S1 Paying attention	3.11	1.069	3.25	0.974	-1.113	.266
M2	S2 Planning	2.48	0.964	2.51	1.006	-.311	.756
M3	S3 Obtaining and Using Resources	3.44	1.084	3.43	1.022	.077	.938
M4	S4 Organizing	2.4	0.859	2.53	0.987	-1.177	.240
M5	S5 Implementing Plans	2.49	1.038	2.55	1.023	-.512	.609
M6	S6 Orchestrating Strategy Use	2.52	0.989	2.59	1.056	-.561	.575
M7	S7 Monitoring	2.66	1.041	2.7	1.028	-.302	.763
M8	S8 Evaluating	2.7	0.995	2.86	1.073	-1.310	.191
Cognitive strategies							
C1	S9 Using the Senses to Understand and Remember	3.28	1.085	3.7	0.973	-3.457	**.001**
C2	S10 Activating Knowledge	3.48	1.054	3.76	0.947	-2.257	**.025**
C3	S11 Reasoning	3.23	1.043	3.6	1.032	-2.970	**.003**
C4	S12 Conceptualizing with Details	3.24	1.053	3.56	1.131	-2.462	**.014**
C5	S13 Conceptualizing Broadly	3.2	1.073	3.59	1.008	-3.186	**.002**
C6	S14 Going Beyond the Immediate Data	3.28	1.054	3.59	1.056	-2.430	**.016**
Affective strategies							
A1	S15 Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes	3.16	1.109	2.9	1.06	2.070	**.039**
A2	S16 Generating and Maintaining Motivation	2.94	1.101	2.99	0.959	-.370	.712
Socio-cultural interactive strategies							
S1	S17 Interacting to Learn and Communicate	2.77	1.059	2.86	1.14	-.675	.500
S2	S18 Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communicating	2.85	0.897	2.98	1.085	-1.021	.308
S3	S19 Dealing with Socio-cultural Contexts and Identities	2.85	1.034	3.08	0.933	-1.912	.057

In sum, the major findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

- ESL students reported better use of reading strategies than EFL readers when they read general English academic materials. ESL students outperformed EFL students in the use of all the reading strategy categories except for Affective category. There were significant differences in the use of Cognitive strategies between the two groups.

- All strategies ESL students used the most appeared in the category of Cognitive strategies. Both ESL and EFL students shared the same five strategies of the lowest level of frequency and all these strategies belonged to Metastrategies.

3.2. Discussion

The results showed that generally, students of ESL group reported using reading strategies more frequently than those of EFL group (M=3.11; S.D=1.026 for ESL and M=2.95; S.D=1.032 for EFL). This finding was consistent with Karbalaei's (2010) study when he found out that Indians as ESL learners reported better use of total reading strategies (M=3.16; SD=.389) than Iranian as EFL learners (M=2.90; SD= 0.592).

One important factor should be mentioned here was that ESL students used seven of the nineteen strategies (36,8%) at high level of frequency (M=from 3.76 to 3.43) and all the other strategies were reported being used at medium frequency level (M=from 3.25 to 2.51). Meanwhile, eighteen of the nineteen strategies were used at medium frequency level by the students of the EFL group; one strategy was reported being used at low level (M=2.4 for Organizing). So, it could be stated here that ESL students overwhelmed EFL students in the use of reading strategies both in the types of strategies and in the frequency level of use.

Concerning the use of reading strategy categories, ESL group reported selecting Cognitive strategies as the most used category, followed by Socio-cultural Interactive and Affective strategies. EFL group also preferred Cognitive strategies, then Affective strategies and Socio-cultural Interactive strategies. Both groups showed the least usage level of Metastrategies. This result supports Karbalaei's (2010) and Tercanlioglu's (2004) studies when they both stated that both EFL and ESL college students reported choosing cognitive strategies as the most used strategies.

However, the statistical results showed a significant difference in the use of Cognitive strategies between the two groups. Students of the ESL group used strategies of this subscale mush more frequently than those of EFL group (M=3.63 and 3.28, respectively). This result was different from the study by Anderson (2003) when he conducted a research on two hundred and forty-seven ESL/EFL students in Utah and found out that students in EFL environment reported higher use of Problem Solving (Cognitive) strategies than those in ESL environment. He concluded that this was perhaps because the EFL/ESL distinction was diminishing. According to Anderson (2003), owing to radio, television, the Internet, and availability of good pedagogical materials learners of English around the world have increased opportunities for exposure to English, which provides increased opportunities for input in English and thus decreases the traditional EFL-ESL dichotomy. However, this might not suitable for the context of this study. The participants in this study were in different English using environments and the contexts seemed to affect their English reading comprehension efficiency. The EFL students were learning English as one of their compulsory subjects at university, while their counterparts used English as a means of their academic study. ESL students had to use English in their study and English reading ability certainly was

the basic requirements for their academic course accomplishment. Therefore, the differences in the use of reading strategies by the participants of the two groups here might be caused by students' English learning motivation. The English requirements for ESL students required them a lot of efforts in their English learning. Specifically, the learning environment made ESL students read a lot in English, much more than EFL students, which forced them know how to read effectively and try to become strategic readers. Levels of motivation and engagement have been found to predict achievement and motivation is thought to be one of the most critical determinants of the success and quality of any learning outcome (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Baumann and Duffy (1997) state that ''motivation to read and reading ability are synergistic, mutually reinforcing phenomena'' (p.6). Better readers tend to read more because they are motivated to read, which leads to improved vocabulary and better skills. Therefore, reading motivation, which is defined as "the individual's personal goals, values and beliefs with regards to the topics, processes, and outcome of reading" (Guthrie et al., 2000) plays a very important role in the students' use of reading strategies.

Although there are no statistical differences in the use of Affective category between the two groups, there is a difference in the use of one item of this category - Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes. The figures also indicate that students of EFL group showed higher frequent use of this category than their counterparts (M=3.06 for EFL and M=2.94 for ESL). This indicates EFL students were better in handling their emotions, beliefs, attitudes in reading than ESL participants. Affective factors, such as attitudes, motivation, anxiety, and self-esteem, have great influence on the success of language learning since ''the way we feel

about our capacities and ourselves can either facilitate or impede our learning'' (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 8). In addition, Andres (2002) argues that ''if we want our students to develop their inherent potential to learn, the affective variables such as anxiety, motivation, self-esteem and inhibition and the inner needs of the learners can no longer be neglected'' (p. 97). Furthermore, Affective strategies, such as identifying one's mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, rewarding oneself for good performance, and using deep breathing or positive self-talk, have been shown to be significantly related to L2 proficiency in research (Magno, 2009). However, Oxford (2003) claims that affective strategies show a negative link with some measures of L2 proficiency. Although the significant role of affective strategies has been emphasized by many authors, Oxford's (2003) statement might be the explanation for the results of this study when EFL students reported higher level use of affective strategy category than ESL participants despite their lower English proficiency. Particularly, Oxford (2003) also believes that as some students progress toward higher proficiency, they no longer need affective strategies as much as before. This is also in line with Ehrman et al.'s (2003) opinion when they propose that highly advanced L2 learners who have reached distinguished levels of proficiency tend not to need affective strategies any longer.

Concerning the five most used strategies, the participants of both groups shared the same strategies but there were differences in the order and frequency degree of the strategy use. The high usage level of the strategies by the ESL group reveal that the students of this group were aware of the importance of these strategies and preferred using them during their reading performance.

Anderson (1991) emphasizes that strategic reading is not only a matter of knowing what

strategy to use, but also the reader must know how to use strategy and orchestrate its use with other strategies, it is not sufficient to know about strategies; a reader must also be able to apply them strategically. However, the results of the study indicate that Orchestrating Strategy Use was one of the five least used strategies by both groups. This means though ESL students showed higher frequency degrees in the strategy use than their counterparts, the students of the both groups were still not very strategic English readers.

4. Conclusions

Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century read and write more than at any other time in human history (Moore, et al., 1999, p.3). In the full bloom of technology, especially in the stage of the fourth industrial revolution, students' ability to read might be crucial as they will need literacy to cope with the flood of information and to feed their imaginations to create their future. Some important conclusions might be made from this study as follows.

First, the results of this study reveal that motivation of learning English in general and of reading in English in particular might be a key factor for students' reading comprehension success. Many teachers acknowledge that students' lack of motivation causes many of problems they face in teaching (O'Flahavan, et al., 1992). Reading motivation is a multifaceted construct that includes reading goals, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy and social motivation for reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), and it refers to the internal states that make people read (Mazzoni, et al., 1999). Wood et al. (1998) suggests that how a learner views himself as a social being is a crucial determiner of his motivation. Motivation and de-motivation for learning are not simply manifestations of individual cognition but consequences of a complex interaction between the person and

the social. Nearly all of the participants in this study identified the significant importance of being a proficient English reader, but not many of them showed high English reading proficiency. Therefore, teachers should certainly help students be aware of the significant role of English reading proficiency and their mission to become proficient English readers, for their university study and their future career. Then teachers might help students identify clearly their English reading goals, both long-termed and short-termed.

Second, reading strategies play positive roles in English reading comprehension as they facilitate learning to read effectively (Anderson, 1991; Carter & Nunan, 2001; Grabe & Stoller, 2001; Oxford,1990; Rubin, 2008). University teachers should raise students' awareness of equipping the strategies to help improve their reading competence. Teachers should have a clear understanding of the use of each strategy so that they could not only provide students basic knowledge of various reading strategies but also teach students how to use them effectively as "it is not the presence or absence of a strategy that leads to effective learning; rather it is how that strategy is used (or not used) to accomplish tasks and learner goals" (Rubin, 2008, p. 11).

Third, before conducting strategy instruction, it is necessary for teachers to take a survey to get information about students' strategy use and their demographic data. The questionnaire used in this study might be a good recommendation for teachers as it based on Oxford's (2013) S2R newest theoretical framework with lots of advantages.

Last, the content of the strategy instruction might be a major concern. This study reveals some good strategies that were used frequently by ESL students who self-rated high proficient English readers such as Activating Knowledge, Going Beyond the Immediate Data, Using the Senses to Understand and

Remember, Reasoning, and Conceptualizing Broadly, etc. Those strategies should be introduced to students, especially to low proficiency English readers. Besides, teachers should also show students how to combine strategies during their reading by introducing Orchestrating Strategy Use. Through reading strategy instruction teachers should help learners construct explicit knowledge about when and where to use appropriate strategies (Goh, 2008) which may enable individuals to plan, monitor, and evaluate their English reading.

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CHIẾN LƯỢC ĐỌC TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN HỌC TIẾNG ANH NHƯ MỘT MÔN HỌC BẮT BUỘC VÀ SINH VIÊN SỬ DỤNG TIẾNG ANH NHƯ PHƯƠNG TIỆN HỌC TẬP

Nguyễn Thị Bích Thủy

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Tóm tắt: Đọc hiểu là một trong những yếu tố quan trọng nhất của việc học tiếng Anh đối với sinh viên, bởi nó là nền tảng cung cấp kiến thức trong mọi lĩnh vực học ngôn ngữ (Mikulecky, 2008). Sự lĩnh hội được tăng cường khi người đọc tích cực sử dụng các chiến lược phù hợp trong quá trình đọc (Brown, 1980). Bài viết này nhằm tìm hiểu liệu có sự khác biệt nào trong việc sử dụng chiến lược khi đọc văn bản tiếng Anh thông dụng giữa sinh viên Việt Nam học tiếng Anh như một môn bắt buộc (sinh viên EFL) và những sinh viên sử dụng tiếng Anh như phương tiện học tập (sinh viên ESL).

Từ khóa: đọc, đọc hiểu, đọc sách, học sinh EFL và ESL

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE ON STUDENTS' STRATEGY USE IN READING COMPREHENSION
(For Reading General English texts)

In order to assess the use of English reading strategies of students, please answer the following questions by filling in the personal information and marking X with the appropriate choices. The information obtained is for research purposes only.

Part I: Personal Information

1. Full name: ………………………………..……… Age: ………………

2. Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐   4. Major: ……………………

5. Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, or Senior (circle one)

6. How long have you been studying English? …………………………………

   7. Do you like learning English?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Do not mind ☐

   8. Do you like reading in English? Yes ☐   No ☐   Do not mind ☐

   9. Have you ever been trained about reading strategies? Yes ☐   No ☐

   10. How do you rate your overall English proficiency?

   Very Good ☐   Good ☐   Fair ☐   Poor ☐

   11. How do you rate your English reading proficiency?

   Very Good ☐   Good ☐   Fair ☐   Poor ☐

   12. How important is it for you to become proficient in reading in English?

   Very important ☐ Important ☐   Not so important ☐   Not important ☐

Part II: Reading Strategy Use

This questionnaire has been designed to help you to identify which strategies you use in reading comprehension.

Read each statement below. Please write the respond 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

   1. Never or almost true of me

   2. Usually not true of me

   3. Somewhat true of me

   4. Usually true of me

   5. Always true of me

   (1) means that the statement is very rarely true of you

   (2) means that the statement is true less than half the time

   (3) means that the statement is true of you about half the time

   (4) means that the statement is true more than half the time

   (5) means that the statement is true of you almost always

Mark an X in the appropriate column.

Please respond to each statement quickly, without too much thought. Try not to change your responses after you choose them. Please use a pen to mark your choices.

Example:

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	I focus on the text when reading.	①	②**X**	③	④	⑤

Questionnaire statements

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
	METASTRATEGIES					
1	I focus on the text when reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	I plan for reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	I use references (dictionaries, vocabulary, etc.) to help me understand what I need to read.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	I organize reading to get effectiveness.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	I implement the reading plans.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	I Orchestrate the strategy use when reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	I monitor my reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	I evaluate my reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	COGNITIVE STRATEGIES					
9	I use the senses to understand and remember what I read.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10	I activate my knowledge to understand the reading text.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11	I reason (analyze and guess grammatical points, vocabulary, etc.) what I read to understand the text (Reasoning).	①	②	③	④	⑤
12	I guess new words or phrases while reading through the analysis of known elements (Conceptualizing with Details).	①	②	③	④	⑤
13	I guess the text based on the link between words, phrases, concepts, etc., in the reading (Conceptualizing Broadly).	①	②	③	④	⑤
14	I deduce the content of the readings from the available information (title, known vocabulary, topic sentences ...) (Going Beyond the Immediate Data).	①	②	③	④	⑤
	AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES					
15	I am self-motivated in the process of reading through activating supportive emotions, beliefs, and attitudes.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16	I generate and maintain motivation when reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	SOCIOCULTURAL- INTERACTIVE STRATEGIES					
17	I interact with others while reading to learn and communicate.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18	I overcome knowledge gaps about the text in communicating with others.	①	②	③	④	⑤
19	I try to deal with sociocultural contexts and identities when reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Thank you for your cooperation!

AN INVESTIGATION INTO EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF IN-CLASS ENGLISH SPEAKING ASSESSMENT

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Abstract: The study was conducted to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of in-class English speaking assessment. The constructs of teachers' perceptions investigated in the current research included their general understanding of speaking assessment, the task types of in-class speaking assessment, and the teachers' work involved in the assessment implementation. Questionnaire and interview were employed as data collection instruments of the study. Forty-two EFL teachers at different high schools in Quang Tri, Vietnam responded to the questionnaire and then five of them participated in the subsequent interview sessions. The findings revealed that the teachers' perceptions of in-class English speaking assessment in terms of three investigated aspects were generally appropriate. Nonetheless, the teachers showed their limited knowledge about oral portfolios as a speaking assessment type; they also articulated their need for more instruction on how to implement self-assessment as a type of English speaking assessment.

Keywords: teachers' perceptions, speaking assessment, assessment task type

1. Introduction

Along with the implementation of the English pilot program, it is required by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) that English testing and assessment be comprehensively conducted in terms of four skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening (Dispatch No 5333/ BGDĐT-GDTrH) so that students, upon their completion of high school education, will have achieved level three of the Foreign Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam, which is equivalent to B1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR). In the light of MOET document, high school students should be able to communicate in English in both spoken and written forms. Nonetheless, English speaking assessment has not been the main focus of language assessment at high school, both in one-period tests and end-of-semester tests; it has yet been administered in any formal examinations either, including the national high school graduation examination. Research has been conducted on the difficulties in implementing in-class English speaking assessment and the required resources for its effective practice (e.g., Tran & Nguyen, 2017). How EFL teachers perceive and practice English speaking assessment at high schools in Vietnam remains little known. The current research therefore took an initial step by exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of in-class English speaking assessment in terms of their general understanding, the task types of in-class speaking assessment and the teacher's work involved in the assessment implementation at some high schools in Vietnam.

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2. Literature review

Language assessment is defined as an ongoing process of judgment, encompassing a teacher's comments and written phrases responding to students' language performance as well as a form of reporting measurement (Brown, 2004; To, 2010). Brown also claimed that language assessment can be categorized in terms of intention (informal or formal) and purpose (formative or summative). Informal assessment involves any kind of incidental, unplanned comments and responses, along with coaching and other impromptu feedback to the student's work such as "nice job", "good work", etc. Teacher's informal assessment carried in classroom tasks aims to elicit students' performance, not to make final results or judge students' competence. On the other hand, formal assessment deals with the planned techniques and systematic methods used by the teacher in order to get into students' achievement. Assessment is called assessment for learning or formative assessment when it is intended to give feedback to learners during a course, whereas assessment is called assessment of learning or summative assessment when it is used at the end of a term, a semester or a year to measure students' learning (Brown, 2004; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

English speaking assessment, however, has been considered difficult and challenging (Kim, 2003; Luoma, 2004; Chuang, 2007; Waugh & Joliffe, 2008). Speaking assessment is troublesome because only a few minutes' speaking evidence is not sufficient to judge a learner's competence (Waugh & Joliffe, 2008). Moreover, the assessment of oral production is challenging due to the nature of speaking itself. Luoma (2004) argued that it is especially challenging to assess speaking because of the many different factors that influence the way teachers

evaluate oral proficiency. Elements that are considered typically important include accent, grammar, vocabulary, errors and the ability to use language appropriately for the purpose of speaking. Sharing this viewpoint, other researchers, for example, Madsen (1983), Taylor (2006), Chuang (2007), and Winke, Gass and Myford (2011), stated that speaking assessment is challenging because there are many external and internal factors that influence instructors' impression on how well someone can speak a language and these may be reflected in the assessing or scoring of learners' speaking. Since it is not easy to define the components of speaking ability clearly, the identification of the components to be assessed in a speaking test causes another difficulty (Madsen, 1983). In addition, even when test designers attempt to develop a detailed scoring rubric and conduct intensive rater training (Winke et al., 2011), the reliability of scoring has permanently been doubted since speaking assessment requires instructors' personal subjective views instead of their purely objective points of view (Chuang, 2007).

The challenging nature of English speaking assessment has inspired a growing body of research in the field. These studies focused particularly on investigating the perceptions and practice of English speaking assessment. Researchers have attempted to explore the practice of in-class English speaking assessment in different contexts, for example, ranging from Asian context like schools in Korean (e.g., Kim, 2003; Lee, 2010) to European context like schools in Norway (e.g., Agasøster, 2015). Different aspects of teacher's beliefs in the orientation and purpose of assessment practices, teachers' role in oral language assessment, and the effectiveness of classroom speaking assessment were also examined (e.g., Chang, 2006; Lee, 2010).

In addition, some other researchers were interested in investigating both the teachers' perceptions and beliefs about speaking assessment and the mismatch between these perceptions and beliefs and their assessment practice in class (e.g., Muñoz et al., 2003; Fetene, 2008; Bingqing, 2009; Grada, 2014). In the context of Vietnam, this research area has also been explored though on a relatively smaller scale (e.g., Tran, 2010; Truong, 2010; Nguyen, 2013; Tran & Nguyen, 2017).

The aforementioned studies provide insights into EFL teachers' perceptions and practice of speaking assessment in the classroom. Concerning research on teachers' perceptions, it can be said that although the number of studies on teachers' perceptions on EFL assessment is massive, that on EFL speaking assessment is still limited. Moreover, such studies on teachers' perceptions on EFL speaking assessment concentrate primarily on assessment necessity, assessment effectiveness and assessment criteria. Consequently, the current study was conducted to investigate EFL teachers' perception on in-class speaking assessment, focusing not only on the teachers' understanding of speaking assessment but also the task types of in-class speaking assessment, and the teachers' work involved in the assessment implementation.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Participants

The current study involved forty-two EFL teachers, 38 females and 4 males with their age ranging from 23 to 50, as research participants. These teachers came from 15 different high schools in Quang Tri province with their English teaching experience being from 1 to 22 years. Five out of 42 participants got MA degree and the rest (37) BA.

The number of 15 high schools accounts for almost 50% of the total high schools in Quang Tri province. Moreover, the number of 42 participants involved in the study accounts for approximately 22% of the population of English high school teachers in Quang Tri province. According to Dörnyei (2003), the minimum of sample number should be between 1-10% of the population. However, McMillan and Schumacher (1993) suggested that the largest sample possible should be used since the larger the sample the more representative it will be of the population. Therefore, 42 participants from 15 high schools were expected to provide sufficient information to guarantee the data reliability.

Since the research framework for exploratory studies like the current study has not been well established, the design of data collection instruments as well as the methods for data analysis and interpretation as presented below were primarily based on the synthesis of the findings from the available studies.

3.2. Data collection

Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were employed in this study to explore the EFL teachers' perceptions on in-class speaking assessment.

A questionnaire was designed with 44 question items being divided into three categories: *General understanding of speaking assessment* (items 1-10); *Task types of in-class speaking assessment* (items 11-21) and *Teachers' work involved in assessment application process* (items 22-44). All of these items were presented following the 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *undecided* (3), *agree* (4) and *strongly agree* (5). In the first category *General understanding of speaking assessment*, the 10 items which elicit information about teachers' perception on the necessity and

reasons or purposes for in-class speaking assessment were adapted from Kim's (2003), Munoz et al's (2003) and Lee's (2010) studies. In the second category *Task types of in-class speaking assessment*, Kim's (2003) and Munoz et al's (2003) studies provide the basis to develop the 11 items in order to obtain teachers' perception of tasks and activities which can be used in in-class speaking assessment. The last category *Teachers' work involved in assessment application process* contains 24 items which were related to the work teachers do in assessment process. The teachers' job was separated into three stages namely pre-, while- and post-, which respectively means the work teachers prepare for assessment, the work teachers do while conducting assessment and the work teachers do after completing assessment activities. The question items for the pre-stage and the while-stage were mainly synthesized from Grada's (2014) study while the items for the post stage were adapted from Fetene's (2008) study.

The participants were asked to decide if they wished to receive the questionnaire via email or face-to-face. The questionnaires were then delivered to 60 teachers, 20 face-to-face and 40 online. 42 questionnaires were returned afterwards, among which 24 were obtained from online contacts. After the questionnaire data was analyzed, 5 teachers were selected to participate in the interviews for more clarification.

Interview was selected as a supplementary data collection instrument in the current study; therefore, the interview questions were designed after the data from questionnaires were collected and analyzed. Data in the interviews were expected to provide further information and more clarification for some issues emerging from the questionnaires. Specifically, the interview consisted of 7 questions related to the questionnaire items of which the mean and standard deviation indicate much difference from the other items in the questionnaire.

3.3. Data analysis methods

All data from the questionnaire were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics. Specifically, basing on the low value 1 and the high value 5 of the Likert scale, the teachers' perceptions of in-class speaking assessment were categorized into three levels: high, medium and low. The formula to calculate the interval scale was (Max – Min)/n = (5-1)/3= 1.33. Therefore, the low level was 2.33 calculated by the low value plus 1.33 (1+1.33=2.33); the medium level was 3.66 (2.33+1.33=3.66); and the high level was 5 (3.66+1.33=5) (adapted from Pham & Tran's study, 2014). After all, the range of mean from 1 to 5 was categorized into 3 levels: low value mean from 1-2.33; medium value mean from 2.34-3.66; and high value mean from 3.67-5.0. The data of this part were presented in tables and charts with the mean score and standard deviation.

The interview recordings were first transcribed, then categorized, synthesized and analyzed using thematic analysis. The analyses were used for the purpose of supporting, clarifying and providing further information for the questionnaire findings.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Teachers' general understanding of speaking assessment

The questionnaire data about teachers' general understanding of speaking assessment were analyzed and summarized in Table 1. It is obvious that the participants have positive perceptions in terms of their general understanding of in-class speaking assessment with the total mean value being 4.17, which is within the range of high level, from 3.67-5.0.

Table 1. Teachers' perception of in-class speaking assessment - their general understanding

No	Items	N	M	S.D
1	Speaking assessment is very necessary for teachers.	42	4.55	0.59
2	Speaking assessment is very necessary for students.	42	4.64	0.53
3	Teachers should specify the purpose of assessment when they assess students' language performance.	42	4.45	0.59
4	In-class speaking assessment is conducted to give students *grade* which informs them of their own development.	42	3.83	0.76
5	In-class speaking assessment is conducted to give students *feedback* on their own progress.	42	4.36	0.79
6	In-class speaking assessment is conducted to inform teachers of students' progress.	42	4.05	0.91
7	In-class speaking assessment is conducted to set further learning objectives for teachers.	42	3.93	0.78
8	In-class speaking assessment is conducted to diagnose the students' strengths and weaknesses.	42	4.24	0.66
9	In-class speaking assessment is conducted to indicate the students' levels of speaking proficiency.	42	4.05	0.88
10	In-class speaking assessment is conducted to indicate the students' achievement of a semester.	42	3.60	1.01
Total Mean			**4.17**	

Among the 10 items, items 1 and 2 which refer to the necessity of assessment receive the highest mean scores of 4.55 and 4.64, respectively. This result is relevant to Kim's (2003) study, in which almost all the participants also had positive attitudes toward the necessity of speaking assessment.

Regarding the purposes of speaking assessment in classroom, there is a slight variation from item 3 to item 10. Specifically, item 3 reaches the highest mean value (4.45) which implies that most teachers think they should set clear purposes for assessment. In contrast, item 10 gets the lowest mean value (3.60) being in the range of medium level. In comparison with the formative purposes of in-class speaking assessment (items 4-9) at the high level, the summative purpose (item 10) is much lower, at the medium level. In

addition, item 5 (M = 4.36) gets a higher mean score than item 4 (M = 3.83), which means that within the two purposes of speaking assessment, namely *giving grade* and *giving feedback*, the participants prefers the second one.

It can be inferred that the teachers have appropriate perceptions of the purposes for in-class speaking assessment and they are in favor of the purposes of formative assessment rather than of summative assessment. Kim's (2003) and Lee's (2010) studies showed different results whereby classroom speaking assessment were conducted mainly because of the compulsory requirements. Lee (2010) claimed that the main purposes of classroom speaking assessment are to evaluate a unit of work and to follow requirements of the educational policy. Administrative and social

requirements were also reflected as speaking assessment purposes in Kim's (2003) study. The Vietnamese current context is not such a case when speaking assessment has not been officially required for the high school program by the Ministry of Education Training. This

4.2. Teachers' perception of the task types of in-class speaking assessment

The teachers' perception of the task types employed in classroom speaking assessment was analyzed and summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' perception of task types of in-class speaking assessment

No	Items	N	M	S.D
11	Teachers can use *presentation* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	4.10	0.91
12	Teachers can use *role-play* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	4.43	0.50
13	Teachers can use *informal conversation* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	4.17	0.62
14	Teachers can use *picture description* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	4.38	0.54
15	Teachers can use *portfolios* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	3.26	1.11
16	Teachers can use *games* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	3.45	1.09
17	Teachers can use *question and answer* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	3.95	0.79
18	Teachers can use *interviews* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	4.52	0.55
19	Teachers can use *information gap activities* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	3.64	1.23
20	Teachers can use *student self-assessment* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	3.40	0.99
21	Teachers can use *peer assessment* as a task type for speaking assessment.	42	3.81	0.59
	Total Mean		**3.92**	

may be one of the main reasons why the participants in this study leaned to the formative purposes. One teacher asserted by saying: "*in class speaking assessment should be conducted not only to indicate the students' achievement of a semester, but also to help students improve their speaking skills. It also helps teachers adjust their teaching methods.*"

In short, teachers' general understanding of in-class speaking assessment with regard to the necessity and the purposes of speaking assessment are highly positive. They not only realize the necessity of assessment but also prefer the formative purposes to the summative ones.

As can be seen from Table 2, the participants have positive perceptions of different task types of in-class speaking assessment with the total mean value 3.92. Seven out of 11 task types are ranged at the high level including *presentation*, *role-plays*, *informal conversation*, *picture description*, *question and answer*, *interviews* and *peer assessment*. The 4 other types: *portfolios*, *games*, *information gap activities* and *self-assessment* are at the medium level. The order from the largest to the smallest mean value according to the participants' selection is displayed in Figure 1.
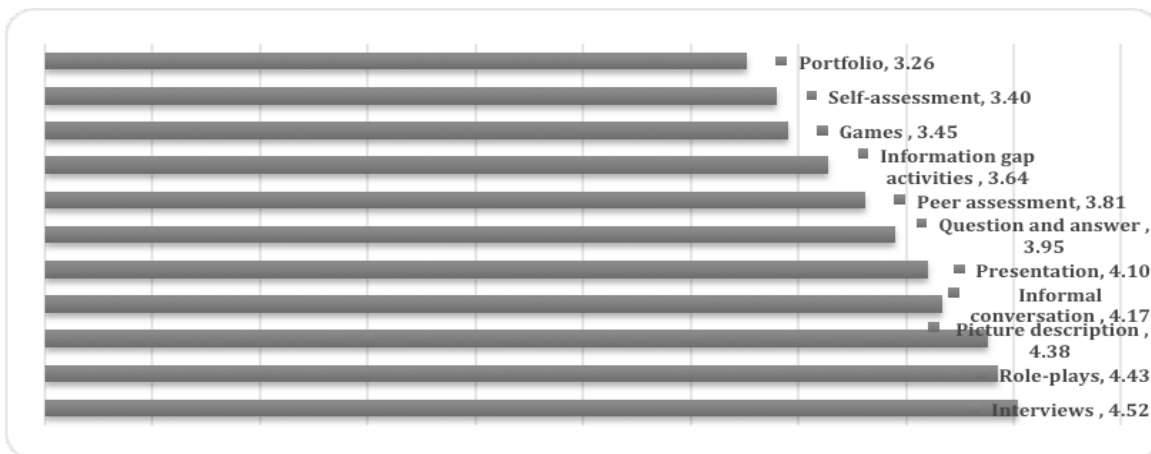
Figure 1. The order of task types of in-class speaking assessment

In Figure 1, *interviews* and *role-plays* are favored as task types used for in-class speaking assessment by all participants with the very high mean values being 4.52 and 4.43, respectively. It is also noticeable that *interviews* and *role-plays* involve very high interaction between teachers and students and/or between students and students. On the contrary, the task types that obtained the lowest mean values include *portfolios* (M=3.26) and *self-assessment* (M=3.40).

The findings from Table 2 and Figure 1 indicate both similarities and differences when comparison was made with previous studies.

The first similarity is that the participants in Kim's (2003), Munoz et al's (2003), Bingqing's (2009), and Lee's (2010) studies considered *role-plays* as the most frequently used task. *Information gap activities* were also not preferred in Kim's (2003) and Bingqing's (2009) studies; moreover, *self-assessment* was considered as an inappropriate tool of speaking assessment in Grada's (2014) study. The interviewees in Grada's (2014) study admitted that they lacked knowledge of student *self-assessment* and did not have experiences of using it. One of the teachers in the current study, despite having experienced utilizing *self-assessment,* still underestimated this task type for speaking assessment by

stating that "*from my experience, students are not really serious in assessing themselves, so I will not use self-assessment for assessing speaking*". Finally, the teachers stated that *portfolio* is not suitable for speaking skills but effective for writing skills only. This opinion is in line with the results in Shohamy, Inbar-Lourie and Poehner's (2008) study whereby 85.8% of the participants voted for writing skills as a focus of portfolio assessment while just 46.2% agreed that *portfolios* could also be used for speaking skills.

In addition to some relative parallels above, there are some differences. While *interviews* in the current research obtained the first rank, they were rated at a very low place by the participants in Kim's (2003) and Munoz et al's (2003) studies. Furthermore, *question and answer* was used most frequently in Kim's (2003) and *presentation* in Munoz et al's (2003), but these two types were at the middle rank (5-6/11) in the present study. Finally, in Grada's (2014) study, along with *self-assessment*, *peer-assessment* was also rated as an inappropriate tool of speaking assessment in a secondary school context whereas *peer-assessment* received strong agreement from the teachers in this study.

The interviewed teachers provided information that help explain further why

portfolios and *self-assessment* were least chosen as in-class speaking assessment task types although the mean scores of these two task types were still in the range of the medium level.

Concerning *portfolios* as an assessment task type for speaking skills, one of the main reasons for its least being selected is the effectiveness of *portfolios* on other skills, for example, writing, listening or reading skills, rather than speaking skill. One of the interview participants stated: "*I don't think it's a good idea. Portfolio is more suitable for listening and writing*". Another added: "*Portfolio sounds suitable for reading and writing skills rather than speaking*". In addition to the tendency to refuse using *portfolios* in speaking assessment, the participants were worried about some issues such as limited time, overloaded curriculum, etc. Hence, they were wondering if *portfolios* really helped in classroom speaking assessment. While some teachers admitted that they know nothing about *portfolios*, one teacher confirmed that it is practical only if teachers know how portfolios should be used efficiently and how students make significant improvements on their speaking skill. It can be therefore concluded that the teacher participants in this study lacked knowledge of using portfolios in general and speaking portfolios (oral portfolios) in particular.

Whether the interviewed teachers in this study have proper perception of oral portfolios or not will be clarified here in the light of the literature. Portfolios not only focus on the four macro skills of a learner as a whole, but can be developed to enhance a particular skill. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996), oral portfolios are designed to empower learners' oral skills to communicate effectively. There are some common technology-based oral portfolios such as audio, visual and electronic portfolios. Students could use audio cassettes

and place their recordings in portfolios or store their work and accomplishments through videotaping (Yoshida, 2001). Video records could be stored and shared among peers, which lends to a more visual and audio realism within the portfolios (Cole et al., 2000). Some examples of activities allowing video-record documentation such as role-plays, demonstrations, reports, discussions, and projects have been suggested by Johnson and Rose (1997). What is more, oral portfolios are proved to be effective in terms of self-reflection and self-monitoring in some studies (e.g., Bolliger & Shepherd, 2010; Wang & Chang, 2010; Castañeda & Rodríguez-González, 2011). In sum, it is obvious that portfolios can be effective and appropriate for speaking skills; therefore, the participants' view that portfolios are merely suitable for other skills is inappropriate.

With relation to *self-assessment* as an assessment task type for speaking skills, the data from the interview show that most of teachers agreed student *self-assessment* can be used in speaking assessment because it brings students many benefits such as making self-correction and self-improvement, being aware of their strengths and weaknesses, etc. In fact, *self-assessment* is beneficial to students in terms of different aspects. Oskarsson (1989) mentioned six advantages of using *self-assessment* in the language classroom: promotion of learning, raised level of awareness, improved goal-orientation, expansion of range of assessment, shared assessment burden, and beneficial post-course effects. Blue (1994) further identified the benefits of *self-assessment* such as encouraging more efforts, boosting self-confidence, and facilitating awareness of the distinction between competence and performance as well as self-consciousness of learning strengths and weaknesses. In addition, *self-assessment* is considered necessary for effective lifelong

learning (Boud, 1995). Despite its numerous advantages, *self-assessment* received the second lowest mean of the task list. The interview data indicate teachers' doubts about implementing *self-assessment*. One of the interviewees, from her experience, explained that "*students are not really serious in assessing themselves*". Another teacher suggested that teachers need detailed checklists and every single assessment be explained clearly to the students. Other teachers also confirmed: "*student self-assessment is not enough; student self-assessment, peer assessment and assessment from teachers should be combined flexibly in a language class*". Teachers should therefore take these issues into consideration when making use of self-assessment for speaking skills.

assessment and the teachers' doubts about whether and how *self-assessment* can be implemented in speaking assessment.

4.3. Teachers' perception of the work involved in assessment implementation

Because the work was separated into three stages: pre-, while- and post- which respectively means the work teachers prepare for assessment, the work teachers do while conducting assessment and the work teachers do after completing assessment activities, the findings and discussion also follow three parts of this division.

4.3.1. Pre-stage

The data about teachers' perceptions of the work involved in in-class speaking assessment application at the preparation stage were analyzed and summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers' perception of the work involved at the pre-stage of the assessment implementation

No	Items	M	S.D
22	Teachers should prepare assessment plan carefully.	4.55	0.71
23	Teachers should choose assessment tasks which help to get information about students' ability to use language effectively.	4.50	0.59
24	Teachers should inform students about assessment beforehand.	4.00	0.94
25	Teachers should consider assessment criteria to be used when they design language assessment plan.	4.43	0.70
26	Teachers should connect the selection of assessment criteria with the aim of language assessment.	4.43	0.55
27	Teachers should inform assessment criteria to students before conducting assessment.	4.10	0.69
Total Mean		**4.33**	

In general, the different task types of in-class speaking assessment were perceived positively by the EFL teachers in the current study. The interactive tasks such as *interviews*, *role-plays* were much more preferable to the others in the list whereas *speaking portfolios* and *self-assessment* were not much supported owing to the teachers' limited knowledge about *portfolios* as a type of English speaking

In general, teachers' perceptions of the work involved in in-class speaking assessment application process at the pre-stage are highly appropriate. The participants' responses to all 6 items were fairly homogeneous, in the mean range from 4.00 to 4.55. Specifically, the teachers thought that they should take into account not only the careful preparation for assessment plans but also the selection

of suitable tasks for effective assessment. In line with this finding, the participants in Grada's (2014) study also showed agreement and strong agreement (96.1%) with the use of assessment tasks which help to get information about students' ability of using language effectively.

Additionally, in order to have better speaking assessment, teachers assumed that they should be concerned about the issues such as the selection of relevant assessment criteria, the connection between the criteria and the assessment aims, as well as informing assessment criteria to the students beforehand. In particular, the findings on items 25 and 26 in relation to assessment criteria were also consistent with those in Grada's (2014) study whereby 94.7% and 93.4% of the participants showed agreement and strong agreement, respectively.

4.3.2. While-stage

This section analyses how high school English teachers perceive the work involved in in-class speaking assessment implementation at the while-stage. Table 4 below shows the means and standard deviations of the responses with reference to each item.

On the whole, the teachers showed positive perceptions of the work involved in assessment application process at the while-stage, which is indicated through the mean values in the range of high level. The highest mean score item (31) reveals that while assessing speaking, teachers should set speaking tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty. Table 4 also informs that teachers should do some other important jobs while assessing students, for example, taking notes carefully, explaining clearly to the students how to do assessment tasks, using many different assessment tasks and recording/ videotaping students' performances for more accurate assessment. Regarding the job of recording/videotaping students' performances, it does not get as very high mean (M=3.76) as the others. Nonetheless, as spoken language is transient, Heaton (1991) recommended that teachers should use a tape recorder to assist the assessment, where examiners are able to check back and forth when making assessment. In harmony with the findings of this section, a majority of the participants in Grada's (2014) study agreed and strongly agreed with two statements "teachers should use many different language assessment

Table 4. Teachers' perception of the work involved at the while-stage of the assessment implementation

No	Items	Mean	S.D
28	Teachers should record or videotape students' performances for more accurate assessment.	3.74	0.99
29	Teachers should take notes carefully while assessing students.	4.38	0.76
30	Teachers should clearly explain to the students how to do oral assessment tasks.	4.24	0.79
31	Teachers should set speaking tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty.	4.48	0.59
32	Teachers should assess the *content* of students' performance.	4.10	0.66
33	Teachers should assess students' *fluency*.	4.38	0.62
34	Teachers should assess students' *pronunciation*.	4.29	0.55
35	Teachers should assess students' *interaction*.	4.36	0.53
36	Teachers should assess students' *grammar*.	3.62	0.94
37	Teachers should assess students' *vocabulary*.	4.26	0.77
38	Teachers should make use of different language assessment tasks.	4.19	0.83
Total Mean		**4.18**	

tasks" (94.2%) and "teachers should clearly explain to the students how to do language assessment tasks" (81.6%).

Finally, the work teachers should do while assessing speaking is assessing students' performance based on certain criteria such as *content, fluency, pronunciation, interaction, grammar* and *vocabulary*. Out of 6 criteria, *fluency* (item 33) and *interaction* (item 35) received the highest mean scores, 4.38 and 4.36 respectively, whereas *grammar* was at a medium level with the lowest mean, 3.62. The order of the speaking assessment criteria in terms of the means from the highest to the lowest is illustrated in Figure 2.

lowest range of the criteria list. The teachers underlined that students are considered being successful in speaking if they can get their message across. Moreover, to reduce the students' fear of making grammatical errors in speaking, teachers should not pay too much attention to students' grammar. The interviewed teachers also suggested that only repetitive and major grammar errors should be taken into consideration. These opinions are reasonable because Thornbury (2005) advised that grammatical accuracy is only one of several factors, therefore, when assessing speaking, teachers need to bear in mind that even native speakers produce non-grammatical
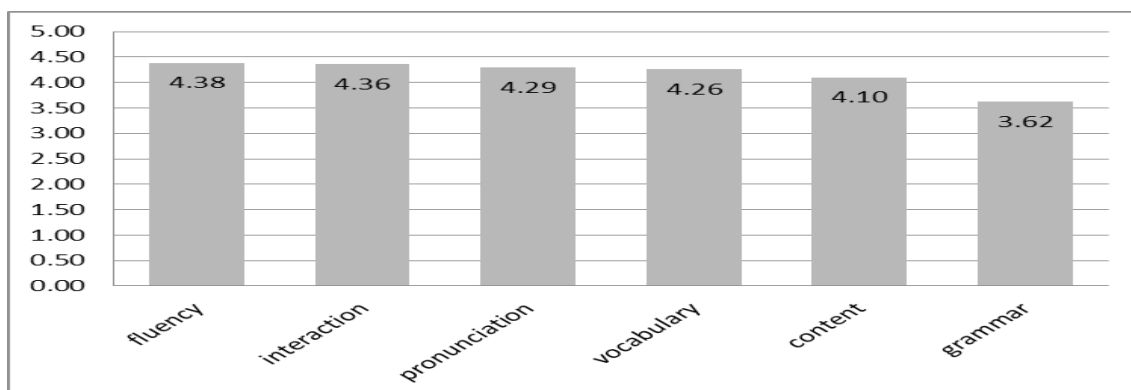

Figure 2. Criteria in speaking assessment

As can be seen from Figure 2, *fluency, interaction, pronunciation*, and *vocabulary* are in approximately equal positions, followed by *content* and *grammar* ranked as the lowest. This finding is out of line with Munoz et al's (2003) and Grada's (2014) studies in which *grammar* was firstly selected by teachers when assessing speaking. In addition, it is noticeable that the teachers' selection of the criterion *interaction* here is very consistent with their selection of assessment tasks involving high interaction level (e.g., role plays and interviews) as already discussed in section 4.2.

In relation to *grammar*, the interview data proclaims some reasons why *grammar* is at the

forms in fast, unmonitored speech. As a result, it would be unfair if teachers request that students achieve grammatical accuracy in all speaking situations.

4.3.3. Post-stage

at the two ends of the medium range, 3.62 and 2.45, respectively. Among the teachers'

Table 5. Teachers' perception of the work involved at the post-stage of the assessment implementation

No	Items	Mean	S.D
39	Teachers should give feedback to students immediately and timely.	3.62	0.91
40	Teachers' feedback should enable each student to identify his/her strengths and weaknesses.	4.43	0.55
41	Detailed comments should be given rather than marks because students benefit more from detailed comments.	4.40	0.77
42	Teachers should give students both comments and marks.	3.83	0.82
43	Giving feedback to individual students' oral performance might affect the teaching and learning process.	3.83	1.01
44	Giving frequent feedback on student performance might have a negative impact on the relationship between students and teachers.	2.45	1.33
Total Mean		**3.76**	

As shown in Table 5, item 40 obtained the highest mean score (4.43), which indicates that the teachers placed important focus on feedback which helps students to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Accordingly, in responding to item 41, the teachers emphasized meaningful comment feedback rather than marks (M=4.40). On the one hand, the teachers claimed that students can get more benefits from detailed comments than marks (item 41, M=4.40); on the other hand, they believed that both comments and marks should be given to students (item 42, M=3.83). One more item entailing teachers' high level of perception is that giving feedback to individual students might have effects on the teaching and learning process (item 43, M=3.83). These findings were in high accordance with those of Fetene's (2008) study, in which pre-service teachers perceived the pedagogical functions of feedback at high level.

On the contrary to the 4 items at high level of perception as mentioned above, the issues raised in items 39 and 44 were perceived at medium level with the mean scores being

responses to these two items, most teachers tended to disagree with the statement that the relationship between students and teachers might be negatively affected by teachers' frequent feedback. One interviewed teacher later emphasized that it was not the feedback but how the feedback was given that counts. If the teachers' feedback makes students feel comfortable and motivated, it will be effective, otherwise, the students might feel hurt. In the latter situation, that teachers' feedback might cause negative impacts on teachers and students' relationship. Another teacher added: "*giving frequent feedback on student performance will be good if teachers know how to give objective, positive and constructive feedback. Even short compliments on students' work, their attempt to accomplish the task will make them feel happy and have motivation to learn. Without teachers' giving feedback, students might think that their teachers pay little attention to their performance*".

5. Conclusion and implications

The results from both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that the teachers generally had positive perceptions towards

in-class speaking assessment. Concerning the teachers' general understanding of speaking assessment, it was highly appropriate in terms of both the necessity and the purposes of speaking assessment. The teachers also emphasized the purposes of formative assessment over those of summative assessment. With regard to the teachers' perception of the task types of in-class speaking assessment, the interactive tasks such as *interviews*, *role-plays* were perceived as the most favorite ones. Nonetheless, the teachers had limited knowledge about *portfolios* as a task type for speaking assessment and they also needed more instructions on how to implement *self-assessment* in speaking assessment. Additionally, the teachers had quite appropriate perceptions of the work involved in the assessment implementation at three stages namely pre-stage, while-stage and post-stage, whereby the most highlighted perception is that grammar was considered as the least important criterion when assessing students' speaking performance.

Although the teachers had positive perceptions of in-class speaking assessment in general, they lacked knowledge about some task types of speaking assessment. The results of this study suggest that teachers need to be offered more theoretical and practical knowledge so that they can apply meaningful speaking assessment to their teaching. In addition, in-service teachers should be allowed and encouraged to participate in the professional development activities frequently such as seminars, workshops, conferences, and training courses. Pre-service teachers should also be equipped with sufficient knowledge about language testing and assessment.

Many issues relevant to assessing speaking skills have not been exploited yet in this study; therefore, further studies should be conducted. Since this study only focused on high school English teachers'

perceptions of in-class speaking assessment, further research can explore the high school teachers' practice of in-class speaking assessment in order to see the similarities and differences between teachers' perceptions and practice. Future studies can also focus on lower-secondary school English teachers as research participants. Additionally, students' perceptions of in-class speaking assessment can be a potential area to be investigated.

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NGHIÊN CỨU NHẬN THỨC CỦA GIÁO VIÊN VỀ VIỆC ĐÁNH GIÁ KĨ NĂNG NÓI TIẾNG ANH TRONG LỚP HỌC

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm khám phá nhận thức của giáo viên về việc đánh giá kĩ năng nói tiếng Anh trong lớp học ở các khía cạnh sau: hiểu biết chung của giáo viên về đánh giá kĩ năng nói, nhận thức của giáo viên về một số hoạt động được sử dụng và về các công việc của họ liên quan đến đánh giá kĩ năng nói tiếng Anh trong lớp học ở một số trường THPT tại Quảng Trị. Dữ liệu được thu thập từ 42 phiếu điều tra và 5 cuộc phỏng vấn với các giáo viên tiếng Anh tại nhiều trường THPT khác nhau tại Quảng Trị. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy nhận thức của giáo viên về việc đánh giá kĩ năng nói tiếng Anh trong lớp học nhìn chung khá phù hợp; tuy nhiên, giáo viên vẫn còn thiếu kiến thức về việc sử dụng bộ tài liệu học tập (portfolios) như là một hoạt động có thể dùng để đánh giá kỹ năng nói và các thầy cô cũng cần có thêm hướng dẫn để áp dụng hình thức học sinh tự đánh giá kĩ năng nói của bản thân.

Từ khóa: nhận thức của giáo viên, đánh giá kĩ năng nói, dạng bài tập đánh giá

DISCUSSION

EVALUATION MODELS IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

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Abstract: In the 21st century, evaluation in education has been paid great attention and the evaluation models in education which were created in the 20th century have been further developed and widely applied in educational evaluation. The paper provides readers with comprehensive discussions on the four well-known evaluation models in education: Tyler's objective model, Stake's responsive model, Scriven's goal free model and Stufflebeam's CIPP model. These models have a long history and have been thoroughly developed over time. The application of these four models is found in many fields of evaluation, but mostly in educational program evaluation. In order to help educational evaluators have better and deeper understandings of the four models, the paper presents the nature of the models, the characteristics of the models, as well as discusses strengths and weaknesses of each model.

Keywords: educational evaluation, evaluation model, objective

1. Introduction

Educational evaluation includes a wide array of activities like student assessment, measurement, testing, program evaluation, school personnel evaluation, school accreditation, and curriculum evaluation. The term "evaluation" is sometimes used ambiguously in relation to other terms 'assessment and testing". However, evaluation does refer to the same thing as "assessment and testing" even though assessment instruments such as tests can be made use of in evaluation. Evaluation is regarded as "the systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgments or decisions" (Lynch, 1996, p.2).

Evaluation is more thoroughly defined as "the process of delineating, obtaining, providing, and applying descriptive and judgmental information about the merit and worth of some object's goals, design, implementation, and outcomes to guide improvement decisions, provide accountability reports, inform institutionalization/dissemination decisions, and improvement decisions, and understanding of the involved phenomena" (Stufflebeam, 2003, p.34).

Educational evaluation was first developed in the USA, and then spreads widely to all parts of the world (Madaus & Stufflebeam, 2000). Madaus and Stufflebeam (2000) divides the history of evaluation in education, which dates back to 150 years ago into seven different periods: *Age of Reform (prior to 1900), Age of Efficiency and Testing (from 1900 to 1930), Tylerian age (from 1930 to about 1945), Age of Innocent (from 1946 to 1957), Age of Development (from 1958 to 1972), Age of Professionalization (from 1973*

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to 1983), Age of Expansion and Integration (1983 to 2000).

A large number of evaluation models were created in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Among them are the four models: Tyler's objective model, Stake's responsive model, Scriven's Goal Free model and Stufflebeam's CIPP model, which have been developed and widely applied in educational evaluation in general and educational program evaluation in particular.

2. Tyler's objective model

Ralph W. Tyler plays an essential role in the development of educational evaluation and testing and his name is given to the period of evaluation development from 1930 to 1945 (Madaus & Stufflebeam, 2000). He is the father of the objective model, which is called Tylerian model or Tyler's objective model, which was first created in the 1940s. This model has the basic principles involving matching the pre-behavioral objectives with the actual outcome (Tyler, 1949). Evaluation is conceptualized in the view of Tyler as a comparison of intended outcomes with actual outcomes. In fact, as suggested by the name, Tyler's model is based on the objective-oriented theory. The model considers curriculum as a means of aiming toward an educational object.

2.1. The nature and characteristics of Tyler's objective model

The nature of Tyler's objective model is that it evaluates the degree to which an instructional program's goals or objectives were achieved. The model mainly involves the "careful formulation according to three educational goals (the student, the society, and the subject matter) and two goal screen (a psychology of learning and a philosophy of education)" (Popham, 1995, p.25). The result goals are then transformed into measurable objectives.

With Tyler's evaluation, the evaluator can determine the level to which the objectives of the program are achieved. Unattained objectives mean that the instructional program has inadequacies. By contrast, attained objectives show successful instructional education program. However, as the objectives can be changed during the implementation of the program or the program may not have clear objectives, Tyler's objectives model can be only used to evaluate those with clear and stable objectives.

Even though Tyler's objective model was first created for use in evaluating educational programs, objective-based evaluation can be found in all kinds of services and it is usual to see the government requirements specifying that evaluations should be carried out to determine the extent to which each funded program achieved its objectives (Stufflebeam, Coryn, & Chris, 2014). The objective-based approach developed from Tyler's objective model is especially applicable in evaluating tightly focused programs that have clear and supportable objectives. Such evaluations can be strengthened by assessing program objectives against recipients' assessed needs, looking for side effects, and studying the process together with outcomes (Scriven, 1974, 1991).

If the evaluator wishes to identify the level the program meets its intended objectives, Tyler's objectives model is the best choice. Yet, the model can only be used if the program has clear objectives. Therefore, before deciding to use Tyler's objective model, the evaluator must make sure that the objectives of the program evaluated are clear and stable during the implementation of the program.

Tyler (1976) focused the curriculum development on four areas: selecting educational purposes, selecting learning experiences, organizing learning experiences and evaluation. The principles of Tyler's model engage the answers to the questions: "What should the educational objectives of

the curriculum be? What learning experiences should be developed to enable students to achieve the objectives? How should the learning experiences be organized to increase their cumulative effect? How should the effectiveness of the curriculum be evaluated?" (p.42). The evaluation applying Tyler's objective model has three basic steps. Firstly, the instructional objectives are specified. Secondly, the performance data is collected. The final step is to compare the performance data with the objectives specified.

2.2. Strengths and weaknesses of Tyler's objective model

Tyler's objective model has several strengths in evaluation, especially in curriculum development. Obviously, Tyler's model is based on the objective-oriented theory and this model considers curriculum as a means of aiming toward an educational object. The model aims at student's developing behaviors as the curriculum target of teaching. It is certainly one innovation in the field of education in the early 20th century as the application of the Tyler's model which is now used as an approach that helps to have better curriculum development in regard to the curriculum's objectives (Chen, Chen, & Cheng, 2005). In fact, with the model's development and innovation, Tyler's objective model is now used to define objectives for the new curricula and assess the degree to which the objectives are later realized. Curriculum is viewed as a set of broadly planned school-experiences designed and implemented to help students achieve specified behavioral outcomes (Madaus & Stufflebeam, 2000).

Secondly, since Tyler's model engages internal comparison of outcomes with objectives, evaluations using this model do not apply for costly and disruptive comparisons between experimental and control groups. The model calls for the measurement of behaviorally defined objectives, so an emphasis is put on learning outcomes instead of organizational and teaching inputs. In this case, the model helps to avoid the subjectivity of the professional judgment or accreditation approach (Madaus & Stufflebeam, 2000).

However, although the model is highly appreciated in regard to curriculum development, some criticisms on it can be found in the field of educational evaluation (Chen C., Chen Y. & Cheng, 2005; Huang & Yang, 2004; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985). Huang and Yang (2004) criticize that the model does not provide feedback mechanism to tell stakeholders or evaluators on how to deal with improvements. It means that the evaluation applying Tyler's objective model has little use in improving a program and assessing the worth of a program. In addition, there is no connection between evaluation and organization. In the same way, Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985) point out some weaknesses of Tyler's model like placing the evaluator in technical role, and focusing mainly on objectives.

Furthermore, despite the benefits that behavioral objectives bring to curriculum design, evaluation using Tyler's objective model have some limitations. First, the evaluation focusing on behavior fails to evaluate objectives. Second, the objectives does not apply to all subjects or the design of a subject content (Huang & Yang, 2004). The objectives of the program or projects are not always stable and they can be changed to suit the context of the program's implementation. Therefore, Tyler's objective model cannot be applied to evaluate such programs or projects.

The final limitation of the Tyler's objective model lies in its objective- based- nature. As the objectives can be changed at any time of the implementation of the program, the evaluation fails to evaluate the program with unstable objectives. Any educational program with unclearly defined objectives cannot

be evaluated using Tyler's objective model (Chen et al., 2005).

3. Stake's responsive model

Robert E. Stake created a system for carrying out evaluation in education in 1970s. (Popham, 1995). The model was then developed with the name Stake's responsive model (Stake, 1975, 1983). Stake's responsive model is the model that "sacrifices some precision in measurement, hopefully to increase the usefulness of findings to persons in and around the program" (Stake, 2011, p.8).

3.1. The nature and characteristics of Stake's responsive model

The evaluations is considered to be responsive "if it orients more directly to program activities than to program intents; responds to audience requirement for information; and if the different value-perspectives present are referred to in reporting the success and failure of the program" (Stake, 1975, p.14). The responsive evaluation puts an emphasis on the "concerns of the primary stakeholders, gathered through conversations with these parties on an ongoing basis during the evaluation" (Spiegel, Bruning, & Giddings, 1999, p.2).

In responsive model, the evaluator is a full, subjective partner in the educational program who is really highly involved and interactive. The evaluator's role is to provide an avenue for continued communication and feedback during the evaluation process (Stake, 1975).

According to Stake, there is no single true value to anything, but the value is in the eye of the beholder. It means that there may be many valid interpretations of the same events, based on a person's point of view, interest, and beliefs. The duty of the evaluator is collecting the views, the opinions of people in and around the program (Stake, 1983).

3.2. Strengths and weaknesses of Stake's responsive model

Responsive model has several advantages. First of all, in responsive evaluations, questions are allowed to emerge during the evaluation process rather than being formulated. The evaluation applying responsive model helps evaluators to acquire a rapid understanding of the program and to determine which issues and concerns are the most important to various groups of stakeholders. Secondly, the responsive evaluation uses content-rich information to describe the program in the way that is readily accessible to audiences (Stake, 1983; Hurteau & Nadeau, 1985). Furthermore, the responsive evaluation provides audiences with the chance to react to the evaluator's feedback and interact with the evaluator regarding their issues and concerns (Paolucci-Whitcomb, Bright, Carlson, & Meyers, 1987). In other words, the values and perspectives held by different audiences are explicitly recognized, which provides a context to examine different concerns. To sum up, Stake's responsive model is really successful in producing such evaluation accessible to a large variety of stakeholders.

However, besides some advantages, Stake's responsive model also has drawbacks. The first disadvantage is that the application of the model requires much time as the process of evaluation using the model takes a long time (Popham, 1995). Secondly, it is not easy to apply the model to evaluate educational programs if the evaluator is not an experienced one (Hurteau & Nadeau, 1985). The third disadvantage comes from the high level of interaction between the evaluator and stakeholders. With such high interaction, the role of the evaluator is ambiguous and in this case the evaluator "serves as a resource person rather than a researcher" (Popham, 1995, p. 3). Finally, the model is very flexible; as a result, it may be not easy to maintain the focus of the evaluation, which may result in a failure to answer specific questions (Hurteau & Nadeau, 1985).

4. Scriven's goal free model

Goal-free evaluation model was created in 1972 by Michael Scriven. At that time, for the more effective management practice of education, much money was invested in education. Such action raised the need for evaluating the educational projects which were funded by the government. As one person taking part in the evaluation of these projects, Scriven realized that the evaluations were influenced by the project's goals, which led to the low quality of evaluations. Therefore, he proposed the new model called 'goal-free evaluation" in program evaluation which is defined as "a model in which official or stated program goals and objectives are withheld or screened from the evaluator" (Youker & Ingraham, 2013, p.51).

The term "goal" used here is different from the term "objective". Goals are defined as "broad statements of program's purposes or expected outcomes, usually not specific enough to be measured and often concerning long-term rather than short-term expectations"(Weiss & Jacoss, 1988, p.528). By contrast, objectives are 'statements indicating the planned goals or outcomes of a program or intervention in specific and concrete terms" (Weiss & Jacoss, 1988, p.533).

4.1. The nature and characteristics of Scriven's goal-free model

As opposed to goal-based evaluation, goal-free evaluation puts a focus on the outcomes of the educational program, intended and unanticipated. The goal-free-evaluator does not deal with the rhetoric of the instructional designers regarding what they want to achieve, but rather pays attention to the results accomplished by the designers' educational programs (Popham, 1995).

The goal-free evaluation works in the way that it tries to discern what a total effects of the project are while assiduously avoiding the "false" information coming from the program or project goals. In this way, the side-effects

that may come from the goals of the projects or educational programs can be reduced. In other words, evaluators are not influenced by the goals of the projects or programs. However, it does not mean that the goal-free evaluation is recommended as the replacement of the goal-based evaluation. Goal-free evaluation is suggested to be used as a supplementary to goal-oriented framework by Scriven (Popham, 1995).

Youker and Ingraham (2013) suggested a guideline for evaluators to follow when they conduct a goal-free evaluation. The guideline proposes four main steps that evaluators should take as follows (p.7):

"1. Identify relevant effects to examine without referencing goals and objectives

2. Identify what occurred without the prompting of goals and objectives

3. Determine if what occurred can logically be attributed to the program or intervention

4. Determine the degree to which the effect is positive, negative or neutral"

4.2. Strengths and weaknesses of Scriven's goal free model

One of the main benefits of the goal-free evaluation model is that it allows evaluators to be attentive to a wider range of program outcomes rather than just look for the program results that are stuck to the program aims/ goals. In this case, goal-free evaluators function as internal or external evaluators. For example, in a curriculum development project, one member of the project can be an internal evaluator who assess the worth of various project endeavors in terms of their results while another evaluator who is not the member of the project works as an external evaluator.

The second advantage of goal-free evaluation is that it can be used to supplement goal-based evaluation (Youker & Ingraham, 2013; Youker, Hunter, Bayer, & Zielinski, 2016). For instance, an evaluation may begin goal-free but later become goal-based using goal-free data for preliminary investigation

purposes while the evaluation is ensured to examine goal achievement (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985). In other words, the findings from GFE can be utilized as baseline information for subsequent GBEs. Moreover, a more comprehensive review can be accomplished when goal-free evaluation is used to supplement the findings from goal-based evaluation.

Another advantage of goal-free evaluation is avoiding the rhetoric true goal. " It is tragic when all resources go to goal-directed evaluation on a program when the stated goals do not even begin to include all important outcomes."(Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p.85). Identifying which goals the evaluator should use is, in fact, a difficulty if the program has multiple stakeholders with different goals. GFE can avoid this issue by eliminating the distraction of goals (Youker & Ingraham, 2013).

Finally, goal-free evaluation can be adapted or adjusted to suit the sporadic changes in consumer needs, program resources, and program goals (Scriven, 1991; Davidson, 2005). Consumer needs, program foundation and environment are dynamic and may change over time; therefore, the goals of the program may not be relevant any more. In this case, the goal-free evaluator still continues with his task of recognizing and recording the effects providing that changes in goals or objectives are reflected in program's actions and outcomes.

Nevertheless, even though goal-free model has a long history, it has remained conceptually abstract and highly theoretical with very few practitioners and others who have written about it (Youker & Ingraham, 2013). "Goal-free evaluation has been widely criticized for lack of operations by which to conduct it" (Shadish, Cook, & Levinton, 1991, p.61). In other words, it is quite hard for evaluators to assess educational programs using GFE as they just know the model in theory and there is a lack of knowledge of the model in practice (Irvin, 1979; Mathison, 2005). The lack of knowledge in practice leads evaluators to the belief that they cannot use GFE in practice (Shadish, Cook & Levinton, 1991). More researches should be done in order to have a clear methodology and guidance for the GFE model to be effectively exploited in the world of evaluation.

5. CIPP model

Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) model is one of the oldest and thoroughly tested model which was developed by Daniel Stufflebeam in the late 1960s (Stufflebeam, 2000, 2003, 2014). The model was first created for helping improve and achieve accountability for the United States school programs. Later on, the model has been widely applied in many fields such as social programs, health professions, business, even in military and so on (Daniel L. Stufflebeam, 2000). The model is defined as "a comprehensive framework for guiding evaluations of programs, projects, personnel, products and evaluation system" (Stufflebeam, 2003, p.31).

5.1. The nature and characteristics of CIPP model

CIPP model has four different dimensions: Context evaluation, Input evaluation, Process evaluation and Product evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2000, 2003; Vo, 2017). Context evaluation deals with assessing needs, problems and opportunities within a defined environment. In put evaluation is used to evaluate competing strategies, the work plans, and the budgets for the strategies chosen to implement programs or projects. Process evaluation is used to monitor and assess activities carried out during programs or projects' implementation. Product evaluation helps to identify and evaluate short term, long term, intended or unintended outcomes of programs or projects (Shtufflebeam, 2000, 2003, 2014; Vo, 2017a, 2017b).

The model is based on "learning by doing" (Stufflebeam, 2014, p.318). CIPP model is a continuous effort to identify and correct mistakes made in evaluation practice, and it is also the way to invent and test needed new procedures for more effective practices. The underlying theme of CIPP model is that the most important purpose of evaluation is "not to prove but to improve" (Stufflebeam, 2003, p.58).

CIPP model underlines both summative and formative evaluations. CIPP evaluations are formative when keying the collection and reporting information for improvements while they are considered to be summative when they assess the completed project or program activities or performances of services. With the summative role, the evaluations sum up the value meanings of relevant information and put a focus on accountability (Stufflebeam, 2000, 2003). Besides, the model has objectivist orientation based on the theory that "moral good is objective and independent of personal or merely human feelings" (Stufflebeam, 2000, p.281). In other words, the evaluation applying CIPP model is free from human subjective feelings to reach a more precise conclusion.

Evaluator can use the whole CIPP model for their evaluation or just select one dimension of CIPP model for use. Stufflebeam (2000) proposes a specific guideline for evaluators, which states the objectives, methods and the use of each component of CIPP model. Based on the guideline, evaluators can decide which component or dimension of CIPP they should use for their evaluation, and what method they should adopt.

Table 1. Objectives, methods and relation to decision in the change process of four CIPP dimensions

	Objectives	Methods	Relation to decision making in the change process
Context	- To define the institutional/ service context - To identify the target population and assess its needs - To identify pertinent area assets and *resource opportunities* for addressing the needs - To diagnose *problems* underlying the needs - To judge whether goals are sufficiently responsive to the assessed needs	- By using such methods as survey, document review, secondary data analysis, hearings, interviews, diagnostic tests, system analysis, and the Delphi technique	- For deciding on the setting to be served - For defining *goals* and setting *priorities* - For surfacing and addressing potential *barriers* to success - For providing assessed needs as a *basis for judging outcomes*
Input evaluative	- To identify and assess system *capabilities* and alternative service *strategies* - To closely examine planned *procedures, budgets*, and *schedules* for implementing the chosen strategies	- By *inventorying* and *analyzing* available human and material resources - By using such methods as *literature search, visits to exemplary programs, advocate teams, and pilot trials* to identify and examine promising solution strategies - By *critiquing* procedural designs for relevance, feasibility, cost and economy.	- For selecting *sources of support* and solution *strategies* - For explicating s sound procedural *design*, including a budget, schedule, and staffing plan - For providing a basis for *monitoring and judging implementation*

Process evaluative	- To identify or predict *defects* in the procedural design or its implementation - To provide information for the programmed decisions - To record procedural events and activities for later analysis and judgment	-By *monitoring* the activity's potential procedural barriers and remaining alert to unanticipated ones - By obtaining specified *information for programed decisions* - By *interviewing* beneficiaries, *describing* the actual process, maintaining a *photographic record* and continually *interacting* with and observing the activities of staff and beneficiaries	- For *implementing and refining the program design and procedures*, i.e. for effecting process control - For lodging the actual process to provide a *basis* for *judging implementation* and *interpreting outcomes*
Product evaluative	- To collect descriptions and judgment of *outcomes* - To relate outcomes and judgment of *outcomes* - To relate outcomes to goals and to context, input and process information - To interpret the efforts' merit and worth	- By operationally defining and *measuring* outcomes - By *collecting judgments* of outcomes from stakeholders - By performing both *qualitative* and *quantitative* analyses - By *comparing outcomes* to assessed needs, goals, and other pertinent standards	- For deciding to *continue*, *terminate*, *modify* or *refocus* a change activity - For presenting a clear *record of effects* (intended and unintended, positive and negative) - For *judging* the effort's merit and worth

(Stufflebeam, 2000, p.302)

5.2. Strengths and weaknesses of CIPP model

CIPP model has a long history and it has been updated regularly, so it proves to be extremely beneficial in evaluation. First of all, the model is not designed for any specific programs or solution in mind; therefore, it is easily applied to multiple evaluation situations. It is used by "evaluators, program specialists, researchers, developers, policy groups, leaders, administrators, committees or task group, and layer persons" (Stufflebeam, 2014, p.310). Zhang from East Carolina University stated that while she searched for relevant literature on CIPP model, she found about 200 CIPP related evaluation studies, journal articles, and doctoral dissertations in many nations and in many fields (Stufflebeam, 2014). The model is also found to be applied in 134 doctoral dissertations at eighty- one universities involving 39 disciplines. CIPP model is employed in such disciplines as agriculture, aviation, business, communication, distance education, elementary, tertiary, and secondary religion and sociology.

Secondly, the four different dimensions (Context, Input, Process, Product) of CIPP model can be used as the whole process to evaluate programs or projects or can be applied separately to suit the need of the evaluation. Context evaluation is used for planning decisions to determine objectives; Input evaluation helps to structure decisions to design instructional procedures; Process evaluation is to implement decisions to use, monitor and improve procedures; Product evaluation is applied for recycling decisions to judge and to react to the outcomes produced by procedures (Popham, 1995).

Thirdly, it is easy to apply CIPP model in evaluation as the model has a clear guidance developed by Daniel Stufflebeam and his colleagues. Stufflebeam (2000, 2003, 2014) provides evaluators with in-depth guidance

on when, why and how to use CIPP model. Based on such guidance, evaluators can decide whether they apply all CIPP model or just choose a particular dimension to use in their evaluation. A comprehensive framework of CIPP model is very useful for evaluators during their evaluation. Besides, Stufflebeam (2007) assists evaluators by a checklist that they can use to figure out what they need to do during the evaluation. The checklist also helps evaluators to know what they should deal with in their evaluations.

Despite its being widely used, CIPP has some drawbacks that should be considered before it is applied for evaluation. First of all, it is said to be similar to the needs assessment. Context evaluation has some features in common with needs assessment when it also deals with needs. Secondly, the application of the model takes much time if the whole model is applied.

6. Conclusion

Currently, evaluation in education is greatly paid attention when the quality of education and the improvement that needs to be made to educational programs are the main concern of the whole educational system. The application of the above discussed models is essentially useful for evaluators in Vietnam. Universities can make use of any of the above discussed models to evaluate their programs for improvement. These models are also useful for curriculum development of the new programs in Vietnam. Among the four models, the theory of Tyler's objective model is often applied in curriculum development or evaluation. Evaluators in Vietnam can apply Tyler's four principles to develop the program's curriculum. Besides, Tyler's objective model can be used to assess whether the program meets its intended objectives. Responsive model is used when the time for evaluation is limited. In case, program's designers want to have information for the

program's improvement quickly, responsive model is a good choice. Scriven's goal-free model is carried out as a supplement for goal-based model to increase the effectiveness of the evaluation. The final model, CIPP, is widely used for educational programs or projects in many fields for not only accountability but also improvements. The whole CIPP model is suitable for universities which are under accreditation because the model provides chances for evaluators to assess not only programs' implementation but also universities as the system.

All in all, the four models discussed above are well-known evaluation ones with long history. Each model has its own strengths and weaknesses when being applied for evaluation. Therefore, evaluators should consider their needs and also their evaluation experiences to select the one suitable for their evaluations.

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MÔ HÌNH ĐÁNH GIÁ CHƯƠNG TRÌNH GIÁO DỤC:
ƯU VÀ NHƯỢC ĐIỂM

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Tóm tắt: Đánh giá giáo dục đã được chú trọng và các mô hình đánh giá giáo dục được đề xuất trong thế kỷ 20 đã được phát triển và áp dụng rộng rãi trong đánh giá giáo dục ở thế kỷ 21. Bài báo cung cấp cho độc giả cái nhìn tổng thể về bốn mô hình đánh giá nổi tiếng trong lĩnh vực giáo dục: mô hình khách quan của Tyler, mô hình phản hồi của Stake, mô hình phi mục tiêu của Scriven và mô hình CIPP của Stufflebeam. Những mô hình này có một bề dày lịch sử và được phát triển theo thời gian. Bốn mô hình này được áp dụng rộng rãi trong nhiều lĩnh vực đánh giá, nhưng chủ yếu là trong đánh giá chương trình giáo dục. Với mục đích giúp các nhà đánh giá giáo dục hiểu rõ hơn về các mô hình này, bài báo trình bày bản chất của các mô hình, đặc điểm của mô hình, cũng như thảo luận điểm mạnh và điểm yếu của từng mô hình.

Từ khóa: đánh giá giáo dục, mô hình đánh giá, mục tiêu

THE DIFFICULTIES IN ESP READING COMPREHENSION ENCOUNTERED BY ENGLISH–MAJORED STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study aimed at exploring difficulties of ESP (English for specific purposes) reading comprehension faced by English-majored students at one university in Vietnam. Eighty English-majored students were involved in answering a close-ended questionnaire, and three ESP teachers were invited to participate in semi-structured interview. The findings showed that students did not have much trouble in dealing with reading ESP texts; nonetheless, it was sometimes seen that two common areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension students were faced with were unknown words and background knowledge of subject matters. This study further revealed that students did not confront much with difficulties of text coverage, organization structure, and grammar used in ESP reading texts.

Keywords: difficulty, English-majored students, ESP, reading comprehension, Vietnamese context

1. Introduction

It has been widely noticed that ESP (English for specific purposes) has gained much concern in English language teaching and learning, and accordingly ESP courses are designed in accordance with learners' need (Hutchinson & Water, 1987). In ESL/EFL courses, learners are prepared with knowledge of ESP by having to read a large volume of academic texts in English; however, many of them fail to acquire such knowledge due to difficulties in comprehending such texts. Different researchers have pointed out the reasons learners encounter difficulties in dealing with ESP texts are a lack of both reading strategy knowledge and necessary reading strategies (Dreyer & Nel, 2003) and unfamiliarity of English use (Allen & Widdowson, 1978).

In the context of Vietnam, although English is taught as a foreign language, ESP courses are in high demand since there has been a growing need for learning ESP among EFL learners in order to meet the working requirements in their later professions. Notwithstanding, EFL learners are faced with difficulties in ESP learning, especially in ESP reading comprehension. As for English-majored students at one universtity in Vietnam, it is not an exception. They still confront some discernible problems when reading ESP texts, which hinders them from being successful in their ESP learning process. For such reasons, this study aims at investigating the difficulties in reading comprehension for ESP encountered by English-majored students at tertiary level. The research questions are formed as follows:

1. What are the difficulties in reading comprehension for ESP encountered by English-majored students?

2. What are the most and least common difficulties in reading comprehension for ESP encountered by English-majored students?

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2. Literature review

It is agreed that reading comprehension is the ability to read the text and understand its meaning. In that sense, comprehension requires the reader to be an active constructor of meaning by dint of comprehension strategies. Many scholars (e.g., Eskey, 2002; Gascoigne, 2005; Khalaji & Vafaeeseresht, 2012) have asserted that reading comprehension is a complex process to which different approaches, viz. top-down, bottom-up and interactive approach, are applied. The top-down approach is the way in which learners use their knowledge of the genre to predict what will be in the text (British Council, 2006), whereas the bottom-up approach is the process in which readers must recognize a multiplicity of linguistic signals (e.g., letter, morphemes, syllables, words phrases, etc.) and use their linguistic data-processing mechanism to impose some sort of order on these signals (Brown, 2001). The interactive approach combines the interactions between readers and text with the bottom-up and top-down elements (e.g., Aebersold & Field, 1997; Gascoigne, 2005) because it is argued that neither bottom-up nor top-down could successfully describe the reading process (Eskey, 2002).

Regarding ESP, a general understanding of ESP is that it refers to the teaching and learning of English for particular learners and purposes (e.g., Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Widdowson, 1983). Since ESP contains both content-based and language-based knowledge, learners of ESP courses are required to be good at a specific field of knowledge and language. The reality, nonetheless, has shown that ESP learners often suffer from various problems ranging from acquiring the content to mastering language. It is further pointed out that ESP learners who struggle to comprehend the content have limited knowledge of language must (e.g., Ho, 2016; Pulido, 2004),

and those who cannot tackle ESP content in depth cannot recall information learned or locate information explicitly stated in a text (Abdulghani, 1993).

Recent studies (e.g., Ali, 2012; Mehdi & Mansoor, 2013; Rosyidah; 2013) have recognized different obstacles of ESP reading comprehension. Rosyidah (2013) conducted a study determining the students' difficulties in reading comprehension in ESP and their efforts to solve those difficulties at University of Muhammadiyah Malang. The subjects of the study were seventy-five students. The results of the study showed that difficulties faced by the students in reading ESP were from language and metalinguistic, phonological processing, word recognition problems, text-processing problems and other difficulties such as lecturers, teaching methods or uninteresting instructions. In the context of Vietnam, different studies in ESP (e.g., Ha, 2011; Nguyen, Pham & Nguyen, 2016) have been found. Most recently, Nguyen et al. (2016) conducted a study to analyze the effects of applying reading through ESP materials under the criteria of the communicative approach among a large group of senior law students at a university in Vietnam. The findings showed that reading ESP materials motivated students to increase both vocabulary and knowledge of their own field of study and encouraged them to use English in everyday situations.

3. Methodology

Research context

This mixed-methods study was conducted at one university in Vietnam offering two training programs in English, namely Technical English language teaching methodology and English language. Although both programs have many courses different from one another, students from both programs are required to study various ESP two-credit courses such as English

for Electrical and Electronics Engineering, English for Mechanical Engineering, English for Information Technology, English for Environment Technology, and Business English, which aim at providing students with technical and language knowledge for different working environments, viz. vocational colleges, industrial parks, export processing zones, companies, etc. where technical English is required.

Research participants

This study involved eighty English-majored students (male: 20%; female: 80%) conveniently sampled in answering a questionnaire. Their age ranged from nineteen to twenty-seven. In addition, 59% of students allocated from one to three hours per week to ESP learning at home, while there were 27%, 10% and 4% of students spending three to five hours, five to seven hours and more than seven hours weekly respectively to study ESP at home. Three ESP lecturers (1 male; 2 females) who had more than five years of teaching experience were purposively invited to participate in a semi-structured interview.

Research instruments

Two research instruments (questionnaire and semi-structured interview) were employed to collect data. The questionnaire for students, which was adapted from Nguyen's (2012) questionnaire, includes two parts: Background and content. The former features questions about students' background information such as gender, age group, and time spent on ESP at home. The latter includes thirty five-point Likert-like scale (*never true, rarely true, sometimes true, usually true,* and *always true*) items divided into six categories (Table 1) asking about difficulties of ESP reading comprehension. This questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese in order that participants would not have any difficulties in understanding the questions.

Table 1. Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

No.	Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension	Number of items
1	Unknown words	4
2	Text coverage	2
3	Background knowledge	2
4	Organization structure	2
5	Grammar (Tenses, linking words, Pronouns)	4
6	Others (motivation, timing, strategies, materials)	18
Total		32

Regarding semi-structured, two main interview questions and follow-up questions were used to collect ESP lecturers' in-depth information of difficulties encountered by students when they read ESP materials.

Data collection procedures

With respect to the questionnaire, one hundred questionnaires were delivered to students in person, and it took the participants about twenty minutes to answer it; however, eighty questionnaires were collected.

As far as the semi-structured interview is concerned, three interviewees were invited to take part in a 30-minute interview conducted individually in Vietnamese and recorded for later analysis.

Data analysis procedures

This study generated two types of data: quantitative and qualitative data. The former obtained from close-ended items in questionnaires were analyzed by using SPSS to do descriptive statistics. The latter garnered from interviews were analyzed by using content analysis approach, i.e., by dint of three steps, viz. familiarizing and organizing, coding and recoding, and summarizing and interpreting. Three interviewees were coded as T1, T2 and T3.

4. Results and discussions

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

As seen from Table 2, two categories, namely *unknown words* (M=2.9, SD=1.43) and *background knowledge* (M=2.9, SD=1.40) were the biggest factors hindering students' ESP reading comprehension, followed by *others* (M=2.8, SD=1.45). Noticeably, *text coverage* (M=2.5; SD=1.51) and *organization structure* (M=2.5, SD=1.50) also contributed to students' low ESP reading comprehension. It is further observed from Table 2 that students sometimes had difficulties with *grammar* (M=2.4, SD=1.53) in reading ESP texts.

Table 2. Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

No.	Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension	n=80	
		M	SD
1	Unknown words	2.9	1.43
2	Text coverage	2.5	1.51
3	Background knowledge	2.9	1.40
4	Organization structure	2.5	1.50
5	Grammar (Tenses, linking words, Pronouns)	2.4	1.53
6	Others (motivation, timing, strategies, materials)	2.6	1.45

With respect to the qualitative data garnered from interviews, it was revealed that all three ESP teachers stated that their students could not understand accurately the meaning of the unknown words and their background knowledge was not substantial enough to understand the content of ESP reading texts. For example, two interviewees shared that:

> Their most common problem is their background knowledge in ESP. There are some contents that they have never or rarely approached so they do not

understand what they read. However, firstly, students usually get stuck with vocabularies (T2). When students face new information in ESP reading texts, they have difficulties in terminologies and background knowledge (T3).

Furthermore, interviewees also mentioned that their students did not face any difficulties in understanding the grammar used in ESP reading texts as they were English majors. A particular example of this is that one teacher confirmed that "Well, the grammar problem is almost nonexistent, they do that part very well."(T1)

Hence, ESP teachers suggested some ways in order to help students overcome such difficulties. They said:

> Before learning this subject, [students] should be well-prepared, looking through the contents of the lesson and read the materials in Vietnamese, so they can understand how the machine works, then they can use it effectively (T1).
>
> The common solution for this problem is that students should read ESP materials as much as possible in order to be familiar with terminologies and reading might become easier for them. In addition, they should cooperate with non-English majors in other faculties to help them work with their ESP project in order to get full exposure to ESP materials (T2).
>
> Students should practice at home as much as possible to be well-prepared before learning new lesson (T3).

Specifically, in respect of the first category of *unknown word*s which consists of four items (Table 3), it was sometimes true that students were unfamiliar with terminology (item 1: M=3.2, SD=1.42), could not "guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases" (item 2: M=3.1, SD=1.42), and did not "have enough vocabularies to translate a text" (item 3: M=2.9, SD=1.42), and it was rarely true that students did not "have enough vocabularies to understand a text" (item 4: M=2.6, SD=1.46).

Table 3. Difficulties in the area of unknown words

| Item | Content | n=80 | |
		M	SD
1	The terminology is strange to me.	3.2	1.42
2	I cannot guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	3.1	1.42
3	I think I do not have enough vocabularies to understand a text.	2.6	1.46
4	I think I do not have enough vocabularies to translate a text.	2.9	1.42

The second category of *text coverage* has two items (Table 4), and it was noticed that students did not often have difficulties in "generaliz[ing] the meaning of a paragraph" (item 5: M=2.4, SD=1.54) and "explain[ing] the meaning of the passage/ the process because [they] do not understand the context" (item 6: M=2.6, SD=1.48).

Table 4. Difficulties in the area of text coverage

| Item | Content | n=80 | |
		M	SD
5	I CANNOT generalize the meaning of a paragraph.	2.4	1.54
6	I CANNOT explain the meaning of the passage/ the process because I do not understand the CONTEXT.	2.6	1.48

As observed from Table 5 containing items of *background knowledge*, participants self-reported that they sometimes did not "understand much about the content of the reading texts because of [their] limited background knowledge of the topic of the reading texts" (item 7: M=3.1, SD=1.42), and rarely did they not "know anything about the topic when [they] read" (item 8: M=2.6, SD=1.47).

Table 5. Difficulties in the area of background knowledge

| Item | Content | n=80 | |
		M	SD
7	I do not know anything about the topic when I read.	2.6	1.47
8	I do not understand much about the content of the reading texts because of my limited background knowledge of the topics of the reading texts.	3.1	1.42

Table 6 of category of *organization structure* indicates that participants seldom encountered obstacles in dealing with the complexity of the structure of the reading texts (item 9: M=2.5, SD=1.49) and the organization of paragraphs (item 10: M=2.5, SD=1.51). Nor did they, as seen in Table 7 of category of *grammar*, find difficulties in recognizing *tenses* (item 11: M=2.2, SD=1.62; item 12: M=2.4, SD=1.55), understanding the use of *linking words* (item 13: M=2.7, SD=1.44), and determining *pronouns* used in sentences (item 14: M=2.5, SD=1.52).

Table 6. Difficulties in the areas of organization structure

| Item | Content | n=80 | |
		M	SD
9	I cannot define the structure of the reading texts.	2.5	1.49
10	The text is definitely complex to understand because of the organization of paragraphs.	2.5	1.51

Table 7. Difficulties in the area of grammar

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
	Tenses		
11	The text has many tenses in each paragraph.	2.2	1.62
12	The tenses are so complex.	2.4	1.55
	Linking words		
13	The usage/ meaning of linking words in ESP is really different from what I have learnt.	2.7	1.44
	Pronouns		
14	I feel confused to determine the pronouns in sentences.	2.5	1.52

Among four areas of category of *others* (Table 8), it was found out that *timing* (M=2.9, SD=1.1) and ESP *materials* (M=2.9, SD=1.4) were the factors most affecting respondents' ESP reading comprehension, followed by *Motivation* (M=2.5, SD=1.3) which was not a serious factor causing respondents problems in ESP reading comprehension. *Strategies* (M=2.2, SD=1.4) was noticed to be the least difficult factor influencing participants' ESP reading comprehension.

Table 8. Difficulties in the area of others

No.	Content	M	SD
1	Motivation	2.5	1.3
2	Timing	2.9	1.1
3	Strategies	2.2	1.4
4	Materials	2.9	1.4

Aligning with the quantitative data, qualitative data indicated that ESP teachers confirmed that their students sometimes could not manage to finish their ESP reading texts due to the abundant number of technical words in ESP reading texts, and the designs of reading materials did not support their students in understanding ESP reading texts.

Two obvious examples are:

My students have to deal with a lot of ESP vocabulary, so sometimes they cannot read as fast as they want. (T2)
The layout of ESP reading texts also hinders my students from comprehending whole content of ESP reading texts. (T1)

What is more, two interviewees revealed that their students did not have much trouble with their motivation of ESP reading materials and reading strategy use. They shared:

My students are not faced with problems of using reading strategies to understand the reading texts. (T1)
My students feel that ESP courses are useful for their future jobs. (T3)

When it comes to category of *others - motivation* (Table 9), it was found out that students were not demotivated in reading ESP materials since they did not "think ESP is not useful to [them]" (item 15: M=2.3, SD=1.59), and they did not suppose that "The lessons are boring" (M=2.6, SD=1.47), either. Moreover, they also believed that their teachers' teaching instructions were not a factor causing them trouble in "understand[ing] teachers' instructions on ESP lessons" (item 18: M=2.7, SD=1.45), but they sometimes were not encouraged to read because their teachers did not "give [them] interesting or useful topics" to read (item 17: M=2.8, SD=1.43). In another aspect of *motivation*, it was discovered that participants had "a purpose when [they] read" (item 19: M=2.0, SD=1.73), and they self-reported that "when a text becomes difficult", they sometimes still wanted to reread it (item 20: M=2.9, SD=2.42).

Table 9. Difficulties in the area of others - motivation

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
15	I think ESP is not useful to me.	2.3	1.59
16	The lessons are boring.	2.6	1.47
17	Teachers do not give me interesting or useful topics to encourage my reading.	2.7	1.45
18	I cannot understand teachers' instructions on ESP lessons.	2.0	1.73
19	I don't have a purpose when I read.	2.6	1.47
20	When a text becomes difficult, I don't want to reread it.	2.9	1.42

The next area of difficulties is *timing* (*others*) as seen in Table 10, which reveals that it was sometime true that students had to struggle with the ESP reading texts because time constraint (item 21: M=2.7, SD=1.44); their "reading speed is slower than [their] friends" (item 22: M=2.9, SD=1.42); and they "spend a lot of time looking up the meanings of the new words in the dictionary when reading ESP texts" (item 22: M=3.0, SD=1.41). Nonetheless, the data in Table 11 of category *others – strategies* shows that respondents did not have much trouble in ESP reading strategies as they "know how to decide what to read closely and what to ignore" (item 24: M=2.4, SD=1.42), and have to "translate every word into [their] native language" when reading ESP texts (item 26: M=2.3, SD=1.41), but they could "use illustrations (tables, figures, & pictures) to help [them] better understand what [they are] reading" (item 25: M=2.4, SD=1.42).

Table 10. Difficulties in the area of others - timing

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
21	The time to read a text is short.	2.7	1.44
22	My reading speed is slower than my friends.	2.9	1.42
23	I spend a lot of time looking up the meanings of the new words in the dictionary when reading ESP texts.	3.0	1.41

Table 11. Difficulties in the area of others - strategies

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
24	I do not know how to decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	2.4	1.42
25	I cannot use illustrations (tables, figures, & pictures) to help me better understand what I am reading.	2.0	1.47
26	When reading ESP texts, I translate every word into my native language.	2.3	1.41

As shown in Table 12 of category of *others - materials*, it was found out that students "prefer watching a video of an ESP topic to reading a text" (item 29: M=3.1, SD=1.42), and they realized that "It is hard to find reliable resources of ESP documents" (item 30: M=2.9, SD=1.41). Additionally, it was sometimes true that "The illustrations of a text are complicated [for students] to understand" (item 27: M=2.9, SD=1.42), but they were not very "strange to understand" (item 28: M=2.5, SD=1.49).

Table 12. Difficulties in the area of others - materials

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
27	The illustrations of a text are complicated to understand.	2.9	1.42
28	The illustrations of a text are strange to understand.	2.5	1.49
29	I prefer watching a video of an ESP topic to reading a text.	3.1	1.42
30	It is hard to find reliable resources of ESP documents.	2.9	1.41

4.1.2. The most and least common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

Among thirty-two difficulties in ESP reading comprehension, it was discovered (Table 13) that the top five most common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension students encountered were that they were not familiar with terminology used in ESP (item 1), they could not guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases (item 2), they had to check their meanings in the dictionary (item 23), they did not have much background of topics of reading texts (item 8), and they seemed to prefer watching something rather than reading a text in terms of ESP (item 29). This means that participants lacked technical vocabulary and background knowledge, and they had problems with the current type of ESP reading materials and timing when reading ESP reading texts.

Table 13. Top five most common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

Rank	Item	Content	n=80	
			M	SD
1	1	The terminology is strange to me.	3.2	1.42
2	2	I cannot guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	3.1	1.42

3	8	I do not understand much about the content of the reading texts because of my limited background knowledge of the topics of the reading texts.	3.1	1.42
4	29	I prefer watching a video of an ESP topic to reading a text.	3.1	1.42
5	23	I spend a lot of time looking up the meanings of the new words in the dictionary when reading ESP texts.	3.0	1.41

Meanwhile, the top five least common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension(Table 14) participants faced were the lack of understanding teachers' instructions on ESP lessons (item 18), the inability to use illustrations for better understanding of what students are reading (item 25), the wide variety of tenses in each paragraph (item 11), the underestimate of the usefulness of ESP (item 15) and the word-by-word translation (item 26). This implies that participants were not much demotivated by their teachers' instructions and the usefulness of ESP courses, and they did not have difficulties in understanding grammar used in ESP reading texts and using reading strategies to read ESP reading texts.

Table 14. Top five least common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

Rank	Item	Content	n=80	
			M	SD
1	18	I cannot understand teachers' instructions on ESP lessons.	2.0	1.73
2	25	I cannot use illustrations (tables, figures, & pictures) to help me better understand what I am reading.	2.0	1.47

3	11	The text has many tenses in each paragraph.	2.2	1.62
4	15	I think ESP is not useful to me.	2.3	1.59
5	26	When reading ESP texts, I translate every word into my native language.	2.3	1.41

4.2. Discussion

The findings show that English-majored students did not often encounter difficulties in reading ESP texts; nevertheless, when getting stuck with ESP reading comprehension, two significant factors which hindered them from comprehending ESP reading texts were insufficient technical vocabulary and background knowledge of ESP subject matters. One of the possible explanations for this may be that students were not exposed to ESP terminology very often, which may cause them some problems in understanding a particular ESP reading text. Besides, students had to learn different ESP courses of various fields, so comprehensibly they lacked much background knowledge of those ESP subject matters. This finding is aligned with the results of the study conducted by Ha (2011) who concluded that students often had difficulties in dealing with ESP reading texts because of inadequate ESP vocabulary and limited background knowledge of the ESP subjects. Therefore, it is advisable that students should be an active constructor of meaning when reading since reading comprehension is not a simple skill, and it involves readers in reading between the lines. Moreover, during the process of reading, students must not only look at the words on the pages (bottom-up processing), but also activate background knowledge (top-down processing), and then build all the elements into comprehension (Rumelhart, 1980). In another aspect, it may be due to students' low autonomy in studying ESP materials, which may lead to difficulties

in ESP reading comprehension. They reported that they allocated their time to studying ESP at home not much as the majority of them spent from one to three hours on a weekly basis studying ESP at home. It should be, thus, suggested that students should allocate more time to studying ESP materials at home before class as it is noticed that "Ideally, students should allow two hours of study for every one hour spent in class" (Marie, n.d.).

It was further revealed that *timing* and *materials* were two sub-categories, which also were noticeable factors influencing students' ESP reading comprehension. This result may be explained by the fact that because of unfamiliarity with technical words, students may have insufficient time to read and be unable to read the ESP texts, and because of unfamiliarity with ESP content, they may find ESP reading materials rather difficult to understand. Therefore, it may be suggested that "[p]roviding background knowledge through pre-reading as well as previewing content for the reader seems to be the most obvious strategies for ESP teacher to come up with the problems students have in reading comprehension" (Alemi & Ebadi, 2010: 6) so that students would activate their prior knowledge as well as get familiar with unknown technical words prior to reading ESP texts.

By contrast, it was found out that students did not think that they had problems with *text coverage*, *organization structure*, and *grammar* of ESP reading texts. It may be obvious that as the respondents, English-majored students had sufficient English knowledge to understand the general content, structures, and grammar use of ESP reading texts, difficulties in such categories did not obstruct students from comprehending the content of ESP reading texts. Additionally, in respect of *strategies* and *motivation*, the results indicated that students could use reading strategies relatively well to cope with the difficulties of ESP reading texts, and they

realized their motivation in ESP courses. This result of the current study is partially supported by the previous research carried out by Mehdi and Mansoor (2013) who reported that ESP readers used different reading strategies while reading ESP texts although ESP readers' English proficiency was at pre-intermediate level.

As regards the most common difficulties confronted by students when reading ESP texts were mainly about the problems of technical vocabulary, background knowledge, type of ESP reading materials and timing in reading ESP texts, and the least common difficulties were those of motivation in reading ESP texts, grammar used in ESP texts, and reading strategies. It seems that these results further confirmed the above-mentioned findings of this study which may be due to the fact that although the students were English-majored, they were still faced with the use of technical vocabulary and lack of knowledge of ESP subject matters which may lead to unfamiliarity of ESP reading materials and hindrance of inefficient time of reading ESP texts. On the other hand, it may be understandable that students had substantial knowledge of English in order to cope with any difficulties in grammar, reading strategies and motivation.

5. Conclusion

This study has shown that it was not very often seen that English-majored students had to struggle with reading ESP texts since they possessed substantial English proficiency to comprehend ESP reading texts. Notwithstanding, students still encountered a number difficulties in ESP reading comprehension, namely technical words and ESP background knowledge, which were the most common areas of difficulties with which students had to face. Furthermore, students were found not to have any trouble with understanding the general content, structures, and grammar use of ESP reading texts. Among difficulties, the top five most common difficulties faced by students were about

problems of technical vocabulary, background knowledge, type of ESP reading materials and timing in reading ESP texts, while the top five least common difficulties were about motivation in reading ESP texts, grammar used in ESP texts, and reading strategies.

Taken together, these results suggest that students should be encouraged to be self-equipped with technical vocabulary and knowledge of ESP subject matters by searching for the meaning of new technical vocabulary and reading the in-advance-given ESP reading materials in order to get familiar with technical words and concepts used in ESP reading lessons. In respect of ESP teachers, it is advisable that different pre-reading activities should be carried out so as to trigger students' prior knowledge by applying the interactive reading method. Moreover, teachers should also supply ESP-related reading materials to students so that their students can understand concepts and terminology used in the class reading texts.

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TÌM HIỂU KHÓ KHĂN SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH GẶP PHẢI KHI ĐỌC HIỂU VĂN BẢN TIẾNG ANH KỸ THUẬT

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu những khó khăn mà sinh viên đại học chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam gặp phải trong quá trình đọc hiểu văn bản tiếng Anh kỹ thuật. Tám mươi sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tham gia trả lời bảng câu hỏi, và ba giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh kỹ thuật tham gia phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc. Kết quả cho thấy sinh viên không gặp nhiều khó khăn khi đọc các văn bản tiếng Anh kỹ thuật; tuy nhiên, nếu có thì hai nhóm khó khăn mà sinh viên gặp nhiều nhất là từ vựng chuyên ngành kỹ thuật và kiến thức chuyên ngành kỹ thuật. Ngoài ra, các vấn đề về nội dung chính, cấu trúc và ngữ pháp được sử dụng trong các văn bản tiếng Anh kỹ thuật không phải là các yếu tố gây nhiều khó khăn cho sinh viên.

Từ khóa: khó khăn, sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh, tiếng Anh kỹ thuật, đọc hiểu, ngữ cảnh Việt Nam
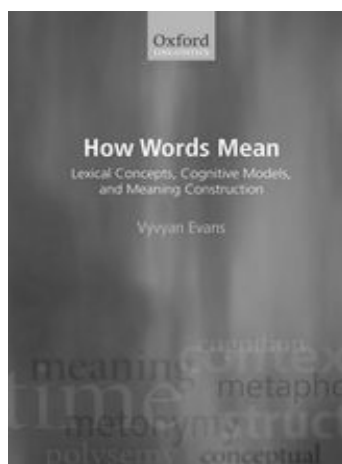
HOW WORDS MEAN: LEXICAL CONCEPTS, COGNITIVE MODELS, AND MEANING CONSTRUCTION

Vyvyan Evans
Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. xv+377

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The book "How Words Mean" by V. Evans (published in 2009 by Oxford University Press) is a great achievement with lots of principles and approaches integrated in order to deal with a number of long standing and largely unsolved issues of lexical semantics. In this book, the author tries to integrate different cognitive approaches to grammar and semantics. Basically, ideas presented by other researchers such as Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999), Langacker (1987), Croft (2002), Goldberg (2006) and others are presented, and Evans then carefully and diligently presents those theories and integrates them into his personal conclusions, while adding new aspects. The theory is termed the Theory of Lexical Concepts and Cognitive Models (LCCM for short). The book is divided into five parts with 16 chapters, each of which has an introduction and a summary. This helps readers have a quick look at the main content of the chapter and find the parts appealing to them.

1. Introduction

Chapter 1 lays the starting points for the book. Evans introduces the received view of word meaning, which he calls literalism and then criticizes it. The clear distinction between pragmatics and semantics causes the assumption that word meanings are stable and relatively delimited "atoms of meaning" which are context-independent. Instead, Evans argues that word meaning is variable in language use due to both encyclopedic knowledge and context of use. The second part of the book is for presenting lexical representation in LCCM.

According to Evans, LCCM theory has a number of primary commitments:

- Lexical representations are points of access to encyclopedic knowledge.
- Encyclopedic knowledge is structured.
- Encyclopedic knowledge is dynamic.
- Encyclopedic knowledge is distinct from contextual information.
- There is no principled distinction between semantics and pragmatics.

As the name of the theory may denote, there are, basically, two key concepts in the theory: lexical concepts and cognitive models. In Evan's view, a lexical concept is a part of the linguistic knowledge that conveys various types of highly

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schematic *linguistic content.* Specifically, linguistic content includes information relating to the selectional tendencies associated with a given lexical concept - the range of collocational and collostructional behaviour of a given lexical concept. Evans supposes that because the lexical concept of an open-class word gives access to numerous association areas within the conceptual system, it also guides to access to numerous

cognitive models. A *cognitive model profile* of a lexical concept is the range of cognitive models to which it facilitates direct access, and the range of additional cognitive models to which it therefore facilitates indirect access.

The following figure and table provide an overview of the architecture of LCCM Theory and key terms in LCCM respectively.
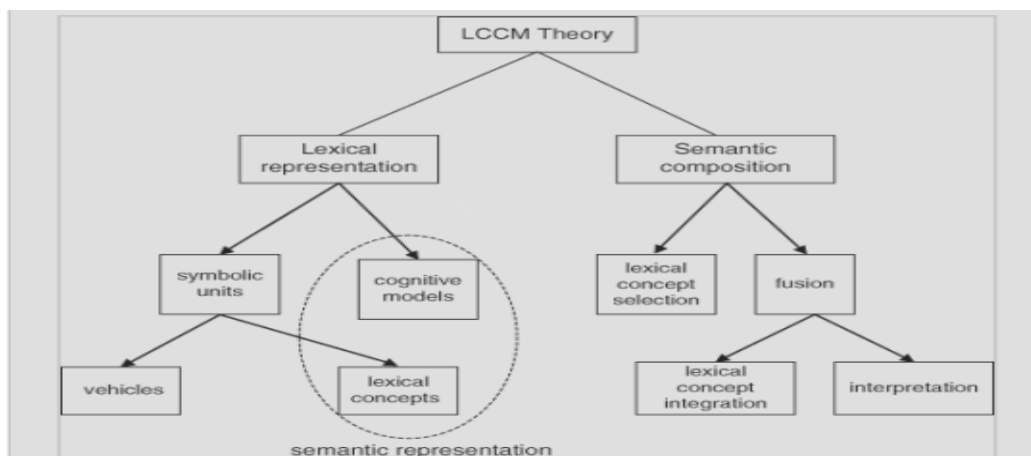
Figure 1. An overview of the architecture of LCCM Theory (Evans, 2009: 76)
Here are some key terms in the models.
Table 1. Key terms in LCCM

Terms	Description
Linguistic system	The collection of symbolic units comprising a language, and the various relationships holding
Symbolic unit	A conventional pairing of a phonological form or vehicle and a semantic element
Lexical concept	The semantic element that is paired with a phonological vehicle in a symbolic unit
Linguistic content	The type of content encoded by a lexical concept. This content is of a highly schematic type that can be directly encoded *in* language
Conceptual system	The body of non-linguistic knowledge captured from multimodal experience. This knowledge derives from sensory-motor experience, proprioception and subjective experience
Cognitive model	The representational form that knowledge in the conceptual system takes, as modelled in LCCM Theory. Consists of frames which give rise to a potentially unlimited set of simulations
Conceptual content	The nature of the knowledge encoded by a cognitive model
Lexical representation	The primary substrate deployed in linguistically mediated meaning construction, and modelled in terms of symbolic units and cognitive models
Semantic representation	The semantic dimension of lexical representations, consisting of semantic structure and conceptual structure
Semantic structure	That part of semantic representation encoded by the linguistic system. Semantic structure is modelled, in LCCM Theory, by lexical concepts.
Conceptual structure	That part of the semantic representation encoded by the conceptual system. Conceptual structure is modelled, in LCCM Theory, by cognitive models

Part III of the book is to deal with *semantic compositionality* with two mechanisms of linguistically mediated usage events namely *lexical concept selection* and *fusion*. Lexical concept selection serves to identify the most appropriate lexical concept associated with a given form during the processing of an utterance. Fusion is the integrative process and results in the construction of a conception. This is achieved by recourse to two sorts of knowledge: linguistic content and conceptual content. Fusion is itself made up of two constituent processes: *lexical concept integration* and *interpretation (see figure 2)*.

Chapter 14 and 15 comprise the fourth part which illustrates the way LCCM works on figurative language (metaphor and metonymy) and lexeme "time". Evans proves that literal meaning of an utterance is interpreted within the default or primary cognitive model profile while the nonliteral meaning must be understood in the secondary cognitive model profile. The distinction between metaphor and metonymy is due to the emergence of alignment between what were termed figurative target and figurative vehicle. In case of metaphor, there is divergence between the two while in case of metonymy, there is alignment. As for the semantics of lexeme "time", Evans presents a taxonomy of different sorts of linguistic expressions for the expression of *time* and then exploits LCCM to analyze the range of expressions addressed.
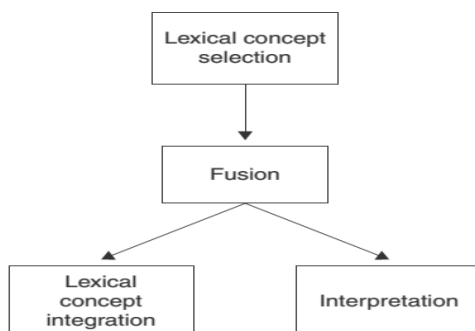

Figure 2. Processes of semantic composition in LCCM (Evans, 2009: 219)

The last chapter is for LCCM in context. It concludes the book and embeds LCCM Theory in the ensemble of other cognitive approaches to language. Evans also gives readers a glossary of terms ''that are either novel to LCCM Theory or which assume a special interpretation'' (343). This glossary is of great significance as there are many new concepts to deal with while reading the book.

2. Discussion

Four authors have written reviews for the book so far (Crombach, 2010; Taylor, 2010; Murphy, 2011; Huttar, 2011). Within this review, instead of citing or justifying the evaluation of the above-mentioned reviewers; I focus on discussing the notion of polysemy in the light of LCCM.

Polysemy is an interesting phenomena of language and at least there are three approaches to it (Falkum and Vicente, 2015). While the rule-based and coercion accounts treat polysemy as linguistic phenomena, lexical pragmatic accounts downplay the contribution of the linguistic system and emphasise instead the communicative aspect of polysemy, treating it as being governed by pragmatic inferential processes applying at the level of individual words. The third account treats it as a cognitive one, and polysemy is the result of cognitive categories structured. Famous scholars of this account are Lakoff, Langacker, Brugman, Tyler, Taylor, Alliwood, Green and Evans.

At first, Evans from the very beginning chapter mentions that he follows the usage-based model of Langacker (2000), but in fact the examples in chapter 8 (and the whole book) are invented, or in other words, he mostly relies on his native sense of language. The small number of data may lead to ad hoc or even false analyses as shown by Taylor (2010) via the example of *flying's* category [SELF-PROPELLED AERODYNAMIC MOTION]. From my perspective, Evans should have

explained why the prepositions *in, at, on* in chapter 8 are polysemous, recalling that there are four types of readers of his book.

Secondly, I see that there is a need to differentiate different kinds of polysemy. Let's see the following sets of sentences.

Set 1

(1) The book is heavy.

(2) The book is long.

(3) The book is boring.

Set 2

(4) We are in a room.

(5) We are in love/ in pain/ in shock.

Set 3

(6) We are in love/shock/pain. 'state'

Cf. We are in a room. 'spatial'

(7). We are on alert best behaviour/look-out/the run. 'state'

Cf. We are on the sand. 'spatial'

In set 1, *book* is conceptualized in different ways. In the first sentence, *book* is used to refer to a physical tome. In sentence 2 and 3, *book* is exploited to denote *a duration* and *a topic of uninterest*. In light of LCCM, the polysemy in this case is the result of situated, sense-boundary construal, can be accounted for in terms of the cognitive model profile to which a lexical concept facilitates access.

In set 2, the preposition *in* in sentence 4 refers to a *spatial relation of containment* while in (5), the *state sense* are seen. The preposition *in* has distinct lexical concepts conventionally associated with it, i.e. a [PHYSICAL CONTAINER] lexical concept and a [PSYCHO-SOMATIC STATE] lexical concept. In this case, the preposition *in* is polysemous because there is a specific set of semantic and grammatical selectional tendencies associated with it[1].

As for set 3, there is a shift of meaning from spatial to non-spatial. It is observed

from Evans' work in 2003, 2005, 2009; the state lexical concepts for the preposition *in* are different from those that are for *on*. The lexical concepts of the preposition *in* involve emotional or psychological force (*in love, in pain*). However, the lexical concepts of the preposition *on*, according to Evans, are instances of an [ACTIVE FUNCTIONING STATE] lexical concept (e.g., on duty, on sale, on the run, etc.).

3. Conclusion

In short, this is a well-structured, thoroughly analyzed book which provides readers with rich knowledge in terms of cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics. This book is well worth reading and serves as a foundation for further research study on word meaning.

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[1] We cannot say that the following sentence is grammatically correct "We are in war". This means that the preposition *in* is not compatible or can be used in any kind of abstract state.

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THỂ LỆ GỬI BÀI

1. **Tạp chí Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài** là ấn phẩm khoa học chính thức của Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội, kế thừa và phát triển *Chuyên san Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài* của Tạp chí Khoa học, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội. Tạp chí xuất bản định kỳ 06 số/năm (03 số tiếng Việt/năm và 03 số tiếng Anh/năm từ năm 2018 trở đi), công bố các công trình nghiên cứu có nội dung khoa học mới, chưa đăng và chưa được gửi đăng ở bất kỳ tạp chí nào, thuộc các lĩnh vực: *ngôn ngữ học, giáo dục ngoại ngữ/ngôn ngữ, quốc tế học hoặc các ngành khoa học xã hội và nhân văn có liên quan.*

2. Bài gửi đăng cần trích dẫn ÍT NHẤT 01 bài đã đăng trên **Tạp chí Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài**.

3. Bài báo có thể viết bằng tiếng Việt hoặc tiếng Anh (***tối thiểu*** 10 trang/khoảng 4.000 từ đối với bài nghiên cứu và 5 trang/khoảng 2.000 từ đối với bài thông tin-trao đổi) được soạn trên máy vi tính, khổ giấy A4, cách lề trái 2,5cm, lề phải 2,5cm, trên 3,6cm, dưới 4,3cm, font chữ Times New Roman, cỡ chữ 11, cách dòng Single.

4. Tất cả các bài báo phải có tóm tắt (không quá 200 từ) và từ khóa (không quá 5 từ) bằng cả tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt. Tên bài báo bằng chữ hoa in đậm.

5. Bài báo phải được trình bày theo thứ tự sau: Tên bài báo, (Các) Tác giả, Tên cơ quan của (các) tác giả, Tóm tắt, Từ khóa, Nội dung của bài báo, Lời cảm ơn (nếu có), Tài liệu tham khảo, Phụ lục (nếu có). Tác giả liên hệ phải được chỉ rõ cùng với địa chỉ cơ quan, e-mail, số điện thoại trên trang nhất của bản thảo.

6. Tài liệu tham khảo phải được chỉ rõ trong bài báo. Ở cuối bài, tài liệu tham khảo được sắp xếp riêng theo từng ngôn ngữ, trong đó tiếng Việt đầu tiên, ví dụ như Việt, Ả Rập, Trung, Anh, Pháp, Đức, Nhật, Hàn, Nga, Thái, theo thứ tự bảng chữ cái của tên tác giả Việt Nam hoặc của họ tác giả nước ngoài và được trình bày theo APA như sau:

+ Đối với các tài liệu là sách:

Nguyễn Thiện Giáp (2008). *Giáo trình Ngôn ngữ học*. Hà Nội: Nxb Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội.

Saussure, Ferdinand de (1959). *Course in General Linguistics.* Edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in collaboration with Albert Reidlinger, translated by Wade Baskin. New York: Philosophical Library.

+ Đối với các tài liệu là bài báo, báo cáo hội nghị hội thảo:

Trần Thị Cúc, Đỗ Thị Thanh Hà (2015). Patterns of Code-Mixing of English in Hoa Hoc Tro Magazine in Vietnam. *VNU Journal of Science: Foreign Studies, 31*(4), 11-24.

Lâm Quang Đông (2015). Quá trình tư duy ở người lớn học ngoại ngữ: một trường hợp điển cứu. Kỷ yếu Hội thảo quốc tế *Đổi mới việc dạy-học & nghiên cứu Hàn Quốc học tại Việt Nam.* Hà Nội, ngày 10 tháng 4 năm 2015, tr. 172-191.

+ Đối với các tài liệu truy cập trên mạng:

Baker, Mark C. (1989). Object Sharing and Projection in Serial Verb Constructions, *Linguistic Inquiry*, *20* (4) (Autumn, 1989), pp. 513-553, Cambridge: The MIT Press. Available through <http://www.jstor.org/ stable/ 4178644>, Accessed 14/03/2012 06:49

An Ngọc (2013). *Nghề biên-phiên dịch thiếu chuẩn mực nghề nghiệp*, Truy cập lúc 10:30 ngày 29/11/2015 tại http://www.vietnamplus.vn/nghe-bienphien-dich-thieu-chuan-muc-nghe-nghiep/234990.vnp.

7. Bản thảo xin gửi đến địa chỉ email của Tòa soạn (xem dưới đây). Tòa soạn không trả lại bản thảo nếu bài không được đăng.

Tác giả chịu hoàn toàn trách nhiệm trước pháp luật về nội dung bài viết và xuất xứ tài liệu trích dẫn.

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1. As a natural development from its predecessor *VNU Journal of Science: Foreign Studies*, **VNU Journal of Foreign Studies** continues to be an official, independent peer-reviewed publication of the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) under Vietnam National University (VNU). *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies* publishes bimonthly (3 Vietnamese and 3 English editions p.a. from 2018 onward) with research articles in *linguistics, language/foreign language teaching, international studies, and related social sciences and humanities*. Only papers which have not been previously or elsewhere published can be accepted.

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3. Manuscripts should be typed in Vietnamese or English (at least 10 pages, i.e. approx. 4,000 words for research article and 5 pages, i.e. approx. 2,000 words for discussion article), using A4 size, left margin 2.5cm, right margin 2.5cm, top margin 3.6cm, bottom margin 4.3cm, Times New Roman font at 11 with Single spacing.

4. All manuscripts must contain abstract (200 words maximum) and at most five (5) keywords in both Vietnamese and English. Article title should be bold and capitalized.

5. Manuscripts should be prepared according to the following order: Article title, Author(s), Workplace(s), Abstract, Keywords, Main text, Acknowledgements (if any), References, Appendix (if any). The corresponding author should be marked, with his/her postal address, e-mail, telephone provided on the first page of the manuscript.

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Nguyễn Thiện Giáp (2008). *Giáo trình Ngôn ngữ học*. Hà Nội: Nxb Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội.

Saussure, Ferdinand de (1959). *Course in General Linguistics*. Edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in collaboration with Albert Reidlinger, translated by Wade Baskin. New York: Philosophical Library.

+ Journal articles or conference papers:

Trần Thị Cúc, Đỗ Thị Thanh Hà (2015). Patterns of Code-Mixing of English in Hoa Hoc Tro Magazine in Vietnam. *VNU Journal of Science: Foreign Studies, 31*(4), 11-24.

Lâm Quang Đông (2015). Quá trình tư duy ở người lớn học ngoại ngữ: một trường hợp điển cứu. Kỷ yếu Hội thảo quốc tế *Đổi mới việc dạy-học & nghiên cứu Hàn Quốc học tại Việt Nam*. Hà Nội, ngày 10 tháng 4 năm 2015, tr. 172-191.

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