# TẠP CHÍ NGHIÊN CỨU NƯỚC NGOÀI
## VNU JOURNAL OF FOREIGN STUDIES
## ISSN 2525-2445

*Xuất bản 01 kỳ/02 tháng*



***Giấy phép hoạt động báo chí in***
***Số 550/GP-BTTTT ngày 09/12/2016***
***của Bộ Thông tin và Truyền thông***



**Tạp chí *Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài*, Tầng 3, Nhà A1, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội, Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam**

*** ĐT.: (84-24) 62532956 * Email: tapchincnn@gmail.com / tapchincnn@vnu.edu.vn**
*** Website: https://js.vnu.edu.vn/FS/**

VNU JOURNAL OF FOREIGN STUDIES
Vol.36, No.1, 2020

# CONTENTS

## RESEARCH



## INFORMATION

**TẠP CHÍ NGHIÊN CỨU NƯỚC NGOÀI**
Tập 36, Số 1, 2020

# MỤC LỤC

**NGHIÊN CỨU**



**THÔNG TIN KHOA HỌC**

RESEARCH

# THE ROLES AND STATUS OF ENGLISH IN PRESENT-DAY VIETNAM: A SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

Hoang Van Van*

*VNU University of Languages and International Studies, Pham Van Dong, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 6 October 2019

Revised 14 February 2020; Accepted 16 February 2020

**Abstract:** Starting from a collection of dialects in the southern counties in England, the English language has moved far beyond its nation and has now consolidated its power as the most widely used *lingua franca* in the world for business, science, communication and technology, and for many other purposes (Cheshire, 1996; Crystal, 1997, 2012; Halliday, 2017). In Vietnam, since *Đổi mới* (Renovation) which was initiated by the Vietnam Communist Party in 1986, English has become the most important foreign language being taught and used nation-wide, second only to Vietnamese – the national language. Why has English gained such a predominant status in the Vietnamese linguistic space? What are the roles and status of English in present-day Vietnam? Does the expansion of English pose any threat to Vietnamese? To what extent does the expansion of English challenge other foreign languages being taught and learned in Vietnam? Will English become a second official language in Vietnam? The answers to these questions constitute the focus of analysis in this paper and will be addressed throughout.

*Keywords:* English, role, status, national language, second language, foreign language

## 1. Introduction

In Vietnam, Vietnamese is both the national and official language. All other languages (indigenous as well as non-indigenous) that are taught and learned in the Vietnamese educational system are referred to as non-national languages (for indigenous minority languages) and foreign languages (for non-indigenous languages) (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2018a). Among the foreign languages being taught in Vietnam, English plays a dominant role, and thus has acquired the most prominent status. Although the English language is not spoken much by the general Vietnamese public, it is considerably visible in the linguistic space of Vietnam and prevalent in education and even some aspects of popular culture: there are English versions of Vietnamese newspapers, documents, television programmes and radio broadcasts. As such, it is safe to say that the English language is ubiquitous in Vietnam, attesting to its significance in the country. English proficiency is perceived to be an indispensable tool in helping individuals and

* Tel.: 84-946296999

Email: vanhv@vnu.edu.vn; vanhv.sdh@gmail.com

the country as a whole gain competitiveness in today's globalized world. With so much attention concentrated on English, it is not surprising to see that English language teaching (ELT) is a key agenda in Vietnam's education policy (see Thủ tướng Chính phủ [The Prime Minister], 2008, 2017; see also Do, 2007; Hoang 2010b; 2015, 2016b).

The aim of this paper is to analyze the roles and status of English in present-day Vietnam. The analysis is informed mainly by scholarly works on foreign language education as well as foreign language policy and enactment documents at Vietnamese governmental and ministerial levels. The paper falls into five parts. Following Part one which presents the rationale for the paper, Part two provides a brief overview of the growth and expansion of English in the world, offering some explanations why English has acquired the status of both an international and global language today. Based on this broader socio-cultural context of world Englishes, Part three looks in some depth at the roles and status of English in Vietnam and discusses some of the potential threats it may pose to Vietnamese and other foreign languages being taught and learned in Vietnam. Part four is concerned with the prospect of English. Finally, Part five summarizes what has been presented, provides some conclusions, and makes suggestion for planning a balanced language policy in Vietnam.

## 2. English in the world: A brief overview

### *2.1. The growth and expansion of English*

Since the second half of the 20th century, the world has been witnessing an exploding change in the role and status of some of the major world languages. One such change includes the expansion away from local, to national, and then to international domains of English and the threat it may pose to national and other little languages. The hysterical and uncontrollable expansion of English to almost every corner of the world, the measures nations-states have taken to fight this global language through their efforts to repel or slow down its ubiquitous invasion, and the constant determination of nations-states to preserve their identity through language, all these have been taking place in a drastic way, making the study of the nature and language-planning capabilities of countries in the world a fast-growing and attractive field to researchers.

Only four centuries ago, the English language as we know now was a collection of dialects, little known beyond the southern counties within the shore of a small island, and spoken mainly by monolinguals there (Halliday, 2017; see also Broughton et al., 1978; Cheshire, 1996). And yet this then local language, and then national language has grown to the status of being the most important international and global language, including such typologically distinct varieties of pidgins, creoles, 'new' English and a range of differing standard and non-standard varieties that are spoken on a regular basis in more than 75 countries and territories around the world and are being learned and used in more than 100 other countries and territories (Cheshire, 1996; Ling & Brown, 2005; Crystal, 2012). According to sociolinguists (Broughton et al., 1998; Cheshire, 1996; Honna, 2006), over three centuries ago when the British began their expeditions to colonize Asia, the number of people speaking English as the first language or mother tongue was just a few million. But now the number of people speaking this language in the world takes up an overwhelming proportion, second only to those who speak Chinese. According to Crystal's (2012) estimation, about 400 million people use English as an official language (mother tongue/first language) in the 'Inner Circle' (Kachru, 1985) countries and territories; from 300 million to 500 million people use English as a co-official language (second language) in the 'Outer Circle' countries and territories; and from 500 million to a billion people learn or speak some English as a foreign language in the 'Expanding Circle' countries and territories. Taken together, the number of people speaking English as a first, a second, and a foreign language in the world today is no less than 2 billion, accounting for nearly 1/4 of the world population.

Recent UN statistics have shown that about 85% of international organizations use English as an official language (cf. Johnson, 2009), far more than those that use four other major international languages combined: Russian, Chinese, French and German. Currently the United Nations has more than 50 agencies, dozens of programmes, hundreds of specialized agencies, regional committees, functional committees, and standing committees that use English as the official language. English has a formal role or a working role in the minutes of summit meetings and international conferences. The European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and many others, all use English as the official language. English is also the sole official language of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the only working language of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and World Economic Forum (WEF). Even the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) – an over 50-year-old association whose ten members encompass 10,000 dialects in its territory – adopts only one official and working language – English. English is so widely recognized and used that when an organization has many countries involved and it needs to select some common languages (*lingua francas*) to work, English is often the number one choice. In conferences that include limited members from the superpowers, the value of English is also more widely recognized than that of other world major languages: although the proceedings of those conferences might initially not be written in English, when the results of the conferences or the resolutions passed by the attending officials are needed to be announced to a wider audience, those documents are often published in English. Statistics have shown that only in the Asia-Pacific alone, about 90% of the proceedings of international organizations have been written in English. Those scientists who want to promote wider publicity of their research findings must also use English as a means of promotion (cf. Crystal, 2012).

English is used by international sports associations as the official language: any major sporting events from regional to international levels use English as the official language. In addition, other international organizations such as the Society of Architects and its conferences, religious conferences, etc., all use English as a means of communicating and promoting their ideas or thoughts. Even in Europe where it is often expected that languages other than English would be more widely used, English is still the most favoured, widely used and learned. According to recent statistics, the number of organizations in Europe that use English as the official language is twice the number of organizations that use French, and thrice the number of organizations that use German (cf. Eurydice, 2002, 2005, 2017). When language pairs in a European Community do not have bilingual translators, people often have to choose an intermediate language, which is always English. For example, when a Finnish person communicates with a Greek, the Finnish speaks Finnish, the first translator translates it into English and the second translator translates it from English to Greek. An obvious example of this is that as far back as the 1940s, when Japan and Germany were negotiating their alliance against the U.S. and Britain, the foreign ministers of those two Axis powers had to find a common language for their talks and decided, ironically, on the language of their adversaries: English (for more detail, see Cheshire, 1996; Kachru et al. eds., 2006; Crystal, 1997, 2012). And as Michael Skapinker of the *Financial Times*, cited in Johnson (2009: 133), has aptly put it, "It is not just that Microsoft, Google and Vodafone conduct their business in English; it is the language in which Chinese speak to Brazilians and Germans to Indonesians". The influence of English in Europe is so strong that many non-English medium universities in the world, for want of attracting foreign students, have to use English instead of their respective national/official language as the medium of instruction.[1] English makes its presence and is naturally welcomed in counterbalancing superpowers of the United States: Russia and China. According to Crystal (1997, 2012), in Russia, a superpower which is said to be rather conservative in receiving the English language, the number of English learners as a foreign language in this country reached 15 to 20 million (accounting for about 10 to 12% of the population); and according to Honna (2006), there are about 300 million English learners every year in China (accounting for about 20% of the population).

In media, in order to inform the world of what is going on domestically, many countries of the Outer and Expanding Circles have multi-lingual TV channels, in which the amount of time devoted to the programmes broadcast in English accounts for a considerable proportion. In particular, countries such as Russia, South Korea, and Japan devote a separate TV channel for broadcasting their programmes in English: the Russian RT, the Japanese NHK, the South Korean Arirang, etc. In addition, most fashion TV channels, including French Fashion, children's channels, and sports channels in the world are broadcast in English.

From what has been discussed, it can be safe to affirm without hesitation that English has really become a world language in both "international" and "global" senses (Halliday, 2017, p.103). English is used not only in monolingual environments (the environment in which it is the first language or the mother tongue), in bilingual environments (the environments in which it is the co-official language), but also in the environments in which it is a foreign language. English is used not only to communicate within English-speaking countries but also to be used as a means of communication in international and multinational events; it is the most widely used and the most popular language in books and newspapers, at airports, in international transactions, in international associations, in science, technology, medicine, sports, pop music, and in advertisements (for more details, see Crystal, 1997, 2012; Phillipson, 1997; May, 2001, p.199). English is the language whose expansion is so vigorous and whose power is so strong that the Danish sociolinguist Robert Phillipson (1997) has to coin the term "linguistic imperialism", and the Nigerian linguist Ayo Bamgbose (2006) has to coin the term "hegemony" and the metaphorical expression "recurring decimal" to refer to its unstoppable expanding power over the world linguistic space.

### *2.2. Why has English become the world's most important global language?*

In a chapter entitled "The Golden Gates of English in the Golden Context' published in RELC Anthology Series 41 *Language in the Global Context: Implications for the Language Classroom*, the sociolinguist Sarwar (2000, p.32) suggests three features that stand out as key elements in the age of globalization in our modern world: the universality of pop music, the expansion and availability of information technology even in remotest places in the world, and the use of English as an international language for educational and communication purposes. Over half a century ago since English became the most widely used and learned language in the world, many

[1] This situation can also be found in Vietnam. To attract Vietnamese students, international joint education programmes between Vietnamese universities and foreign counterparts in non-English speaking countries often have to use English instead of their respective mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

sociolinguists have been interested in studying this special socio-cultural phenomenon. They have raised a number of questions, the most common one of which is: "What linguistic, historical, or cultural factors make English an indomitable force in the development history of the world's languages?" Different scholars offer different explanations, but three are notable. The first explanation accounting for the unstoppable expansion of English is that it has linguistic features which are easy to learn (Crystal, 1997, 2012; Sarwar, 2001; Johnson, 2009). Proponents of this view argue that morphologically, English has almost no categories of gender and case; neither has it many suffixes or endings attached to the word stems like Russian and some other European languages. Learners of English, therefore, do not have to remember the detailed differences between the categories of masculine, feminine and neutral; neither do they have to remember the suffixes expressing the meanings of case such as nominative, possessive, objective, dative, instrumental, etc. This linguistic approach to the expansion of English sounds interesting but not quite convincing. The reason is that, if one looks back at the history and development of some of the major world languages in Europe, one might see that Latin was once an important *lingua franca* spoken and studied in many countries in this continent despite its morphological and grammatical complexities such as the suffixes or the inflectional endings of words, and the differences in gender, number and case of nouns, etc. French before the 1960s was a *lingua franca* in the French colonial states and territories despite the fact that French is not a morphologically simple language. Russian is perhaps a more morphologically complex language with regard to the categories of gender, number, and case of the noun; tense, aspect, and voice of the verb with inflectional items which seem very difficult to remember, but in the second half of the 20$^{th}$ century it was the language widely used and taught in countries of the former socialist eastern European bloc, including Vietnam, China and North Korea in Asia. From the above evidence, it can be asserted that the linguistic features that are supposed to be easy to learn cannot be a convincing argument to explain for the expansion of a language beyond its national territory; neither can it be convincing evidence to explain why a language has become an international and global one. In other words, a language becomes a global one not because its intrinsic structural features are simple and easy to learn; and, in contrast, complex morphological and structural features of a language cannot prevent it from acquiring a global status (for more details on this point, see Crystal, 1997, 2012; Hoang, 2010a).

The second explanation has to do with governmental and institutional support. People who favour this argument claim that the reason why the expansion of English far surpasses other major world languages such as Spanish, Chinese, French, Russian, and Japanese is that it has always received strong and intentional support from the British and American governments and their propaganda agencies. According to King (2006), over four centuries ago (on December 31, 1600) Queen Elizabeth II granted a royal charter to a group of merchants for the purpose of exploitation of trade with East and South-east Asia and India. This charter and the merchants were major facilitators of the English language, marking its expansion to the world. And then came the assignment of the tasks of spreading the language to tertiary educational institutions such as the department of linguistics in London with the writing of grammar books, textbooks, dictionaries, and the establishment of linguistic and cultural agencies abroad such as the British Council. Taking Japanese as counter-evidence in support of their view, scholars who argue for this position claim that the Japanese, who despite the earlier predominance in technology and world trade, took no steps towards internationalizing their language (Halliday, 2017, p.39). This explanation sounds interesting, too, but, like the first one, not so convincing. The Russian (formally the Soviet Union) government has established Pushkin Institutes in a number of countries in the world; the Chinese government has set up over a hundred Confucian Institutes in countries all over the world; and the government of Germany has also established over a hundred Goethe Institutes in different countries around the globe. They have done a lot of corpus planning to promote the teaching and learning of their languages and spread their cultural values beyond their countries of origin by donating the target countries with teaching and learning facilities such as textbooks, grammar books, dictionaries, computers, etc. They have dispatched their native teachers to those target countries to help teach their languages. They even have offered a donation of "a year-abroad programme" to those local teachers teaching their languages so that they could improve their foreign language knowledge and skills by having direct exposure to the languages in the countries where they are spoken. The countries that teach those languages may have benefited considerably from these donation activities, but it is doubtful if the donors' languages can become globalized like the English language.

Contrary to the first two arguments, the third explanation argues that the reason why English has become a global language is due to nothing but the military and economic power of first the British colonialists, and then the US imperialists (Crystal, 1997, p.7; 2012; Johnson, 2009). This argument sounds more convincing as it has been substantiated in world history. If one attempts to take a close look at the growth and decline of some world major languages, one can see that Greek was once the *lingua franca* in the Middle East, but the fact that it became the *lingua franca* in the region was certainly not due to the wisdom of the great scholars of ancient Greece such as Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, or Aristotle, but due much to the military power of the swords and spears of the Greek army under Alexander the Great. Latin was once used as the Esperanto throughout most Western Europe, but its prevalence and spread were due mainly to the power of the Legions under the ancient Roman Empire. Arabic was once widespread in the Middle East and North Africa, but the spread of this language was certainly not due to the moral quality or prestige of the Arabs, neither was it due to the linguistic features of the language. Rather it was the power of the Moroccan armies backing the spread of Islam in the regions in the 18th century that made Arabic the *lingua franca* of the region. The presence of Spanish, Portuguese, and French in Latin America, Africa and the Far East was not due to any other reason than the military power of these countries as the then superpowers in the Renaissance. And the reason why Russian could make its presence and was expanded throughout the former eastern European bloc and other socialist countries from the 1960s to the 1980s is no exception: it is due to the military power of the former Soviet Union as one of the two world superpowers in the second half of the 20th century.

A country with military power can impose its language on the dependent country(ies), but to expand and maintain the existence of that language in the dependent country(ies), the country having military power must have economic power (Crystal, 1997, 2012; see also Laurdes et al., 2006). English seems to be supported by both military and economic power to make it the most important global language in the world today. The history of invasion and colonization of the British imperialists has shown that from the pre-modern period, especially from the beginning of the 19th century, Britain was already a world leading state of commerce and industry: it had powerful teams of warships to conquer and colonize other nations; and it developed a strong enough economy and a modern enough science to dominate those colonized nations. Britain was not so populous in 1700, only about 5 million people; it gradually increased to about 10 million in 1800, but none of the countries in the world could match with its economic growth. Further, most inventions in the Industrial Revolution period came from England. In 1800, the growth rate in the textile and mining industries in England was so fast that the country was often referred to as “the workshop of the world” – a metaphor indicating the dynamism and rapid economic growth of the British imperialists at that time.

Following the virtually unmatched economic growth of Britain was the extremely rapid and effective economic formation and growth of the American imperialists. At the end of the 19th century, the population of the United States was about 100 million, bigger than any other Western European nations; and due to its favourable geopolitical conditions, the United States has become the world’s fastest growing and most powerful economy in the world. Along with military expansion and fast economic growth, from the middle of the 16th century to the end of the 19th century, Britain “exported” its most precious God-sent gift – the English language – to almost every corner of the world, and subsequently it became such a widely used language that many Britons arrogantly claimed that “the sun never sets on the British Empire”. From the end of the 19th century to the present, the military and economic powers of the British imperialists, reinforced by the military and economic power of the American imperialists – the present-day world’s strongest superpower – have firmly established the position of English as the most important global language, ensuring the unilateral prevalence and development of this tongue throughout the planet (for more detail, see Crystal, 1997, 2012; Honna, 2006; Phillipson, 1997; Johnson, 2009; Hoang, 2010a).

## 3. The roles and status of English in Vietnam

It is not easy to point to a specific date when English came to Vietnam. But what is certain is that English made its first presence in Vietnam as a minor foreign language from the French domination time (from 1859-1954). Since 1954, English in Vietnam has had a chequered history (Hoang, 2010b; see also Do, 2007). Unlike Singapore and many other countries which used to be Great Britain’s colonies, Vietnam was a colony of France. The French language was thus the main foreign language taught in Vietnam besides the national language – Vietnamese. During the period of 1954-1975, Vietnam was divided into two parts – the North and the South, each part was allied with world super powers of different political ideologies: the North was allied with the former Soviet Union and China, and the South, with the USA. Foreign language education policy, thus, followed different patterns. The North promoted the learning of Russian and Chinese and the South emphasized the study of English and French as the main foreign languages and the required subjects to be taught in secondary and post-secondary education (cf. Do, 2007; Hoang, 2010b). From 1975 to 1986, Russian dominated the foreign language scene in Vietnam; other foreign languages such as Chinese, French, and especially English were relegated to an inferior status. Since 1986 – the time when Vietnam initiated an overall economic reform commonly known as *Đổi mới* (Renovation), opening the door of Vietnam to the world, English has become the first and dominant foreign language taught and learned in the education system (from lower secondary level to tertiary level) and is used to serve a number of functional purposes in the country. A brief analysis of the roles and status of English in some key sectors in Vietnam will be provided below.

It should be noted that in the framework of the Vietnamese Constitution 2013, there is no status other than a foreign language given to English. But based on the official documents such as the Vietnamese Government’s decisions and decrees on education, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)’s circulars, directives and national curricula, and on what is going on in actual practice, it can be affirmed that among the seven foreign languages (English, Russian, Chinese, French, Japanese, German, and Korean) that are recognized as a subject being taught in the Vietnamese general school education system, English is given a special status, second only to Vietnamese – the national language – in terms of time allocation, and the knowledge and skills required. Along with the spread of English across many parts of the world, the spread of English across many sectors in the Vietnamese society is obvious and seems natural. The first sector that English takes up a dominant status over other foreign languages is the national formal education system: from general schools to colleges.

### *3.1. English in the general school*

English has always been given a privileged place in the general school education curriculum in Vietnam. This can be seen in the ever increasing amount of time allocated to the subject over different periods of time from the early 1980s to the present. From 1982 to 2002, English was introduced nationally as a compulsory subject at upper secondary level (from grade 10-12), 3 periods per week, making up the total of about 300 periods, and an optional subject at lower secondary level depending on the school's availability of resources (Viện Khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam [Vietnam Institute for Educational Sciences], 1989; Hoang, 2010b). In 1986, Vietnam launched its overall economic reform known as *Đổi mới* (Renovation), opening the door of Vietnam to the whole world. And then eight years later, in 1994 the US lifted its trade embargo against Vietnam. These two important events paved the way for and accelerated the boom of English in Vietnam, making it the most needed language to be taught and learnt in the country. To implement the Vietnamese Government Directive N$^0$ 14/2001 CT-TTg on the Renovation of the Vietnamese General Education Curriculum (Thủ tướng Chính phủ [The Prime Minister, 2001]), the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training organized the design of curricula for all school subjects including the *General School Education English Curriculum* (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2006). According to this Curriculum, English was taught nationally as a compulsory subject for seven years from lower secondary school through to upper secondary school (from Grade 6 to Grade 12) with the total number of 700 periods (400 periods more than it was allocated in the period of 1982-2002).

To further promote the study of English and to better the quality of English language teaching and learning in Vietnam to meet the demand of the increasing trend of globalization and international interdependency of the global village, on September 30th 2008, the Vietnamese Prime Minister issued Decision N$^0$ 1400/QĐ-TTg on approving the national foreign languages project entitled *"Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period 2008-2020"* (hereafter shortened to 'Decision 1400') and the National Foreign Languages Project (shortened as Project 2020 or NFL). And in 2017, recognizing that a number of problems might hinder the achievement of Project 2020's goal, the Vietnamese Government had it reviewed and adapted to be more suitable for the period of 2017-2025. The result was that the new extended Project 2020 came into being issued in the Prime Minister's Decision 2080/QĐ-TTg entitled *"Decision on the Approval, Adjustment and Supplementation of the Project 'Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period of 2017- 2025'"* (hereafter shortened to 'Decision 2080') (Thủ tướng Chính phủ [The Prime Minister], 2017). According to the Prime Minister's Decisions 1400 and 2080, and MoET's *General School Education English Curriculum* (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2018b), English is a compulsory subject taught nationally for ten years (from Grade 3 through to Grade 12), 4 periods per week at the primary level, 3 periods per week at the lower secondary level, and 3 periods at the upper secondary level, making up the total number of 1155 periods (455 periods more than it was allocated in the 2006 *General School Education English Curriculum*). What should be noted here is that in the new curriculum, the amount of time allocated to English accounts for over 10 per cent of the total amount of time designed for all general school education subjects in Vietnam (see Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2018a, 2018b). Further, English is recognized as one of the three major subjects whose status, in terms of time allocation, ranks third: only after Vietnamese and mathematics. It is one of the three compulsory examinations (mathematics, Vietnamese, and English) an upper secondary student has to take to be awarded an upper secondary school certificate. The need to learn English of Vietnamese children is so strong that alongside the compulsory ten-year *General School English Curriculum*, on December 26, 2018 MoET issued the two-year optional curriculum entitled *General School Education Introductory English Curriculum for Grade 1 and Grade 2*, with 2 periods per week, 70 periods per year (see Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2018c). And to meet the young Vietnamese parents' needs, English is being introduced into a number of kindergartens in big cities, towns and affluent areas for children aged from 3 to 5 (see Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], forthcoming).

The dominant roles and special status of English in the Vietnamese general school education can be seen in the fact that of the seven foreign languages that are currently recognized to be taught and learned in Vietnamese general schools (English, Chinese, Russian, French, German, Japanese, and Korean), the number of students learning English as Foreign Language 1 (compulsory subject) always accounts for over 98% (Hoang, 2010a, 2010b). English is so important in Vietnam that some attempts have been made to roll out a bilingual education policy in some sectors of the Vietnamese educational system. The concept of bilingualism has a long association with the indigenous ethnic minority groups learning Vietnamese as the "common language" (ngôn ngữ phổ thông), and bilingual education for these groups has undergone its course of trials and hopes reflecting the political realities of Vietnam. To the Vietnamese ethnic majority, which comprises about 86% of the total population, bilingual education is a remote notion. It is only due to the expansion of English in recent years that the notion of bilingual education in the sense of "content and language integrated learning" (CLIL) or "English medium instruction" (EMI) has gained some currency. For a number of people, bilingual education is seen as a useful tool for improving English skills, and for developing a workforce that combines specialized knowledge with English language skills, while still preserving the special status of Vietnamese as the national language. Across Vietnam, particularly in big cities and towns such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong, Da Nang, Can Tho, some schools begin to use the co-media of instruction in which English is used to teach math and science subjects, and Vietnamese is used to teach the remaining ones. Catalytic factors, such as Vietnam's firm belief in its "open-door" policy, membership of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), World Trade Organization (WTO), Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership – CPTPP or TPP11, and other world organizations have played a key role in promoting this mode of bilingual education. Further, against the background of the international and global status of English springs the need of many parents, particularly those living in big cities and towns that it would be better if their children were educated in a bilingual (English and Vietnamese) environment. Their need is supported by the Vietnamese Prime Minister's Decision 2080 (Thủ tướng Chính phủ [the Prime Minister], 2017) which explicitly states:

> Gradually deploying the teaching of content language integrated teaching (CLIT) mode in some subjects such as mathematics, science and other content

subjects in foreign languages.[1]

*3.2. English in the university*

There are two main categories of English language teaching in tertiary education in Vietnam. The first category consists of those universities and colleges where English is taught as a discipline or major (see Hoang, 2008; 2010a). These include departments or faculties of English language in comprehensive universities, English departments in colleges and universities of foreign languages, and teachers' training colleges or universities. The programmes of these institutions last for four years, and they are required to provide students with advanced level training in English: Level 5 as defined in MoET's *Six-level Foreign Language Competency Framework for Vietnam* (equivalent to CEFR Level C1) (see Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2014). The second category consists of those universities and colleges where English is taught as a subject or non-major. In this category, English is a compulsory subject taught from undergraduate through to doctoral level. It is treated on par with academic courses in the sense that in the degree structure equal weightage is given to English as it is to the academic courses. The amount of time allocated to English language teaching may vary from university to university, but the general pattern is: at undergraduate level, English is taught for 14/120 credit hours (equivalent to 630 learning periods); at graduate (master) level, English is taught for 7/50 credit hours (equivalent to 315 learning periods); and at doctoral level, English is taught for 4 credit hours (equivalent to 180 learning periods)[2]. The main objective of teaching English at tertiary level is to provide students with communicative competence in English and to use it as a means to science and technology; and the requirements for English at each level are: on finishing an undergraduate or a master programme, students must obtain Level 3 as defined in MoET's *Six-level Foreign Language Competency for Vietnam* (equivalent to CEFR Level B1) (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2014), and on finishing doctoral level, students must obtain Level 4 (equivalent to CEFR Level B2). Although more exact up-to-date estimate is impossible to come by at the moment of writing this paper, of all the foreign languages taught in Vietnamese colleges and universities, the number of students learning English at undergraduate and graduate (master and doctoral) levels always takes up between 94% and 96% (cf. Hoang, 2010a).

In an open world, there are a lot of academic exchanges and transfers across borders which require an open educational system. In the higher education sector, the process of integration and internationalization takes on various forms. At the state level, the Vietnamese Government has been carrying out a number of national projects (such as MoET's Project 911 and the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP)'s Project 165 to send young scientists and young leaders to study in countries which have more advanced higher educational and management systems. In addition, MoET has granted overseas tertiary institutions permits to establish their campuses in Vietnam; has allowed Vietnamese tertiary institutions to cooperate with their foreign partners to train human resources which are needed by the country's labour market; and has facilitated Vietnamese tertiary institutions to attract more and more overseas students to come and study in Vietnam. Many Vietnamese universities have actively responded to the globalization process. They have modified their curricula to meet international standards.

---

1 This passage appears in the Vietnamese original as follows:

Từng bước triển khai dạy tích hợp ngoại ngữ trong một số môn học khác (như toán và các môn khoa học, môn chuyên ngành) bằng ngoại ngữ.

2 The data was taken from VNU Hanoi's current tertiary curricula. The amount of time allocated to English as a subject may vary from one tertiary institution to another.

They have adapted their courses to create credit equivalence so that those courses could be transferred to those existing in the curricula of other tertiary institutions in the world. They have carried out joint education and joint research programmes, and faculty and student exchange programmes. They have been actively involved in sandwich programmes with tertiary institutions in various countries in the world. Several prestigious Vietnamese universities have used English as a medium of instruction for some of their key courses. All the aforementioned activities cannot be carried out successfully without the help of English, reassuring thus its special roles and status at the Vietnamese tertiary education level (for detail, see Hoang, 2013).

To further promote the use of English in the tertiary education sector, since the beginning of the 21st century, a number of national programmes to train young advanced scientists have been carried out such as the Advanced Programme by MoET (from 2008 to 2015), the Strategic Programme (or the International Standard Programme ISP) by VNU, Hanoi (Vietnam National University, Hanoi) from 2008 to 2020, and other high quality programmes by several other prestigious universities in Vietnam. How successful these tertiary English-medium programmes is still under-researched, but what is certain is that those programmes have really encouraged the teaching and learning of academic courses in English, preparing students for their participation in professional, commercial, industrial, and academic sectors.

### *3.3. English outside the formal education system*

Moving outside the formal education system, the special status of English can be seen in the fact that proficiency in English is a necessary qualification in the government services: a candidate with little or no knowledge of English is not eligible to apply for a job in any of these institutions. In certain ministries, proficiency in English is made a must qualification. In some economic sectors, hotels, business firms, and business groups will only employ executives who are able to speak English with fluency. Needless to say, airlines companies, public and private, do not only need English-speaking pilots but also English-speaking flying attendants and receptionists. Apart from those, English has become a criterion for promotion and personal advancement, and a gate keeper for many job seekers whose actual workplaces, ironically, do not need to use English.

Academia in Vietnam has not been spared the spread of the English language monopoly. To reach a larger audience, Vietnamese academics are constantly required to publish their research papers in English. To be promoted to the title of a professor or an associate professor, a candidate is required, among other qualifications, to have a high level of competence in English. Article 2, Chapter 1 in the Vietnamese Prime Minister's Decision No. 37/2018/QĐ-TTg (hereafter shortened to Decision 37) entitled *"Decision on Promulgating Regulations on Standards and Procedures for Considering and Recognizing Standards and Appointing Professors and Associate Professors; Procedures for Cancellation of Recognition and Dismissal of the Titles of Professorship and Associate Professorship"* stipulates that besides other requirements for a candidate to be eligible to the title of professor or associate professor, the ability to use a foreign language proficiently at Level 4 as defined in MoET's *Six-level Foreign Language Competency Framework for Vietnam* (equivalent to CEFR Level B2) is a must. What should be noted here is that among the foreign languages recognized in the Prime Minister's Decision 37, the ability to use English is specially emphasized: those candidates registering to present their research overview or to be tested in English language competence will not have to take a test in another foreign language, whereas those candidates registering to present their research overview or to be tested in a foreign language other than English will have to take an English test which requires them to demonstrate “the ability to understand others and to make themselves understood by others in normal conversations in English” (Thủ tướng Chính phủ [The Prime Minister], 2018). The important role and special status of English can also be seen in the number of applicants registering to present research overviews in English compared to other foreign languages. According to the Vietnamese State Council for Professorship, over the past three years, the number of professor and associate professor applicants registering to present their research overviews in English in 28 disciplinary and interdisciplinary councils always far surpassed the number of candidates registering to present their research overviews in other foreign languages: 60 per cent in English compared to 20 per cent in French, 10 per cent in Russian, 5 per cent in German, and 5 per cent in other foreign languages (personal communication with Prof. Dr.Sc. Tran Van Nhung, former General Secretary of the Vietnamese State Council for Professorship at 8.45 am, December 4, 2017).

### *3.4. English in the non-formal education sector*

Like many other countries in the world, the need to learn English of Vietnamese people is so strong that it is not just taught and learned in the formal or public education sector (the formal education system) but also in the non-formal or private education sector. Vietnam is now witnessing the presence of hundreds of English language schools, large and small, having origins from English-speaking countries such as the British Council, Language Links, Apollo, EQuest, Oxford Language UK Vietnam, Hanoi International School, Cambridge International Examinations, TOEFL and TOEIC, to name but a few (for more detail, see ESL/Base). These private institutions offer English courses and testing services at different levels of proficiency; they provide a wide range of up-to-date English textbooks and teaching materials written by both native and non-native speakers of English, meeting a wide range of specific needs of the learners, and enriching the English language teaching landscape in Vietnam.

Today many Vietnamese corporate advertisements focus not on promoting the quality of a product, but on communicating an attitude, experience, or lifestyle that is attractive to their target audience. Many Vietnamese advertising companies capitalize on lingual imagery, using Vietnamese to communicate intra-nationally and English to communicate globally. Giant in technology, industry, commerce Vingroup, giant in telecommunications Viettel, leading enterprise in finance, land, and commerce FLC Group, and leading Garment Joint Stock Company Garco 10 are notable examples here.

In summary, it can be said that English has made its presence in many domains of activity in Vietnam. It is taught and learned in education, and it is used in communication, science, technology, trade, tourism, industry, and advertising. The presence of English in these domains contributes to strengthening its uncompetable position as compared to other foreign languages recognized in Vietnam.

## 4. English in relation to Vietnamese and other foreign languages

It is obvious that there is currently no language in the world that has the spreading power like English. The spreading power of English over many parts of the world not only affects the status of the local or indigenous languages but also the status of other foreign languages being taught, learned and used. Like many other countries that are subsumed under the Outer-Circle in Kachru (1985)’s model, the expansion of English in Vietnam may be said to be beneficial on the one hand and detrimental on the other. The beneficial aspect of English can be seen in its function and role as a *lingua franca* for Vietnam to communicate with people around the world. The detrimental effects, in contrast, can be seen in what is referred to as "social stratification, exclusion, and problems associated with education and literary, status of languages other than English, and language rights" (Bamgbose, 2006, p.650). However, as the prominent American sociolinguist Fishman (1999, p.37) has aptly put it, "spreading languages often come to be hated because they can disadvantage many as they provide advantages for some". The expansion of English to many domains of activity in Vietnam sooner or later will stir up the following questions: (1) "Can the expansion of English pose any threats to Vietnamese?", and (2) "To what extent does the expansion of English challenge the status of other foreign languages being taught in Vietnam?" These questions will be addressed in the sections that follow.

*4.1. Can the expansion of English pose any threats to Vietnamese?*

When asked the first question, the answer by many people in present-day Vietnam has, of course, to be in the affirmative "No", given the fact that the language planning with respect to Vietnamese has been deliberate and explicit: Vietnamese is codified in the 2013 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as "ngôn ngữ quốc gia" (the national language) (Quốc hội nước Cộng hoà Xã hội Chủ nghĩa Việt Nam [the National Assembly], 2013). This official and irreplaceable status of Vietnamese is reconfirmed in the Vietnamese 2019 Education Law which states: "Tiếng Việt là ngôn ngữ chính thức dùng trong cơ sở giáo dục" (Vietnamese is the official language used in educational institutions) (Quốc hội nước Cộng hoà Xã hội Chủ nghĩa Việt Nam [the National Assembly], 2019). Further, in the mind of many Vietnamese people, Vietnamese is the language of tradition, the symbol, the soul, and the essence of the Vietnamese nation; it is a means of national cohesion, a badge of national identity, the medium of literary and other forms of cultural life in Vietnam for thousands of years while English in the current framework of the Vietnamese constitution has no official status; and although claimed by many to be important and beneficial, English only has a functional role: being used as a means for international communication, helping Vietnamese people communicate with the world, modernize their country, and integrate into the world in the context of globalization (cf. May, 2001). The status of Vietnamese as the national language in the current context is, therefore, not at issue.

A closer look at the current state of the art, however, will reveal that although the challenge of English to the Vietnamese language is not so much visible, with the drastic expansion of English to so many spheres of activities in Vietnam, the answer to the question "Can the expansion of English pose any threats to Vietnamese?" may be "Yes". It has been observed in recent years that apart from the activities that require the use of English, one can see increasingly more and more young Vietnamese people have been using English to communicate with each other in daily life either directly (face-to-face) or indirectly (via the Internet and other social media), and that in their interaction they have often used Vietnamese mixed with English, a phenomenon commonly referred to by sociolinguists (such as Wardhaugh, 1990; Tay, 1996; and Holmes, 2008) as "code-mixing" or "code switching". It has also been observed that over the past few years the Vietnamese Government and MoET have issued a number of policies to give priority to and to encourage the teaching, learning, and using of English throughout Vietnam such as giving permits to establish bilingual schools (using both Vietnamese and English as the media of instruction), international schools (using English as the main medium of instruction), providing fund for intensive English programmes at both general school and tertiary levels, for developing syllabuses and teaching materials for children to learn English at early age (from the first grade, even from the kindergarten); encouraging higher education institutions to use English as a medium of instruction through programmes such as MoET's Advanced Programmes and VNU, Hanoi's Strategic Programme. The increasing use of English among the young people, and the Government's policies to prioritize and promote the teaching, learning and using of English can improve the quality of teaching and learning English and enrich the Vietnamese language; but they can raise a feeling of fear that the purity of the Vietnamese language will be eroded and the language will gradually be lost. These realities, if considered seriously, can be a factor that constitutes the challenge of English to the status of Vietnamese.

Thoughtful sociolinguists such as Fishman (1991, 2001) and Rappa and Wee (2006) warn that policies and ways to encourage the use of an external language (the English language in this case) without appropriate control will diminish the use and may even exterminate an indigenous language. Rappa and Wee (2006), adapting Fishman (1991), whose study was based on North American context where several languages of the American Indian had been lost as a result of the expansion of English, provide a scale of eight stages to illustrate how in a given North American society, an indigenous language, while widely used in highly prestigious domains, can, over time, become restricted to 'mere' community and family-based interactions. They warn that as younger generations of speakers lose touch with the language so that most speakers tend to come from the older generations, there is, in the final stage, a very real possibility that indigenous language may be completely displaced, and correlating with this decline in the fortunes of the indigenous language is the rise of its potential replacement, the external language (English in this case). For reference purposes, these stages are reproduced as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Stage 1: | use of the indigenous language in prestige domains (higher level educational, occupational, governmental, media-related functions) |
| Stage 2: | use of the indigenous language in less prestigious domains (lower level educational, occupational, governmental, media-related functions) |
| Stage 3: | use of the indigenous language in the work sphere, mainly for informal interaction |
| Stage 4: | use of the indigenous language as medium of instruction in education |
| Stage 5: | informal use of the indigenous language in the home, school, and community |
| Stage 6: | intergenerational family transmission of the indigenous language |
| Stage 7: | indigenous language still spoken, but most speakers are beyond child-bearing age |
| Stage 8: | remaining speakers of the indigenous language are old and dying out |

(Rappa & Wee, 2006, p.131)

Although it may no longer be the days when English was intended to take its presence as a dominant language for granted in such a country of independence and sovereignty as Vietnam and it may be a bit too early to talk about the replacement of Vietnamese by English in Vietnam, what foreign language policies have been issued, and how English has been taught, learned, and used in Vietnam in combination with what sociolinguists have warned us from the results of their studies concerning the cause to the decline or death of an indigenous language by an external language deserve serious consideration, and can be a useful reference for Vietnamese language policy makers.

*4.2. To what extent does the expansion of English challenge the status of other foreign languages?*

In policy, MoET's (2018) *General School Education Curriculum* (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2018a) only mentions generally the terms "ngoại ngữ" (foreign language), "ngoại ngữ 1" (foreign language 1) which is a compulsory subject, and "ngoại ngữ 2" (foreign language 2) which is an optional subject. It, however, does not state explicitly how many foreign languages are taught in Vietnamese schools. Neither does it state explicitly what is/are foreign language(s) 1 and what is/are foreign language(s) 2. In practice, however, most of the Government's work has been focusing on preparing curriculum and textbooks for the teaching and learning of English as foreign language 1. Other foreign languages such as Chinese, Russian, Japanese, Korean, German, and French, by implication and if taught, are foreign languages 2 (an optional subject). Similarly, at tertiary level, the Government's Decision 2080 does not state explicitly what foreign language(s) should be taught, but what is actually happening at this level of education is that the number of undergraduates and graduates, including doctoral students enrolling for English always takes up a predominant percentage: around 94-96%. It is clear that in a multi-foreign language environment, when one foreign language prevails, the others will inevitably be relegated to an inferior position, and thus will have to suffer (cf. Herriman and Burnaby, 1996). The sufferance of other foreign languages from the dominant position of English in Vietnam can be seen in at least two respects. First, due to the dominance of English, the number of learners studying other foreign languages in the Vietnamese formal educational system (from primary to tertiary level) has declined sharply, presently accounting for very modest proportion: 2-3% in general school education and 4-6% in tertiary education. Second, the decline in status of other foreign languages may cause psychological problems to their users (those who are teaching, learning and working with those foreign languages). Many of these users express concern that with the rise of English to the monopoly position, the other foreign languages will disappear some day in the Vietnamese foreign language landscape (cf. Hoàng Thị Yến, 2014). Some people may want French, Russian, Chinese, Japanese and other languages to remain in competition with English because they see this competition as a corollary of the struggle for a more satisfactory balance among the foreign languages being taught and learned in Vietnam. They are sensitive to the need Vietnam has of these foreign languages for an open and multi-lingual world. The dominance of English in the foreign language landscape in Vietnam is regrettable, but in the present state of affairs it seems that no one could do anything except exercising the "letting do" or "leissez-faire" policy.

*4.3. The future of English in Vietnam*

> It [the English language] is everywhere. Some 380 million people speak it as their first language and perhaps two-thirds as many again as their second. A billion are learning it, about a third of the world's population are in some sense exposed to it and by 2050, it is predicted, half the world will be more or less proficient in it. It is the language of globalization—of international business, politics and diplomacy. It is the language of computers and the Internet. You'll see it on posters in Cote d'Ivoire, you'll hear it in pop songs in Tokyo, you'll read it in official documents in Phnom Penh. Deutsche Welle broadcasts in it. Bjork, an Icelander, sings in it. French business schools teach in it. It is the medium of expression in cabinet meetings in Bolivia. Truly, the tongue spoken back in the 1300s only by the 'low people' of England, as Robert of Gloucester put it at the time, has come a long way. It is now the global language. "A World Empire by Other Means: The Triumph of English,"

(*The Economist*, cited in Johnson, 2009, p.131)

The above quote is intended to arrive at two things. First, the status of English as a highly valued international and global language in the world and as the most important foreign language in present-day Vietnam is indisputable. Second, it suggests that it might be inappropriate to raise a question about the future of a world language such as English when it is in the frenzy boom. However, based on what has happened to the growth and decline of several world *lingua francas* and to some of the foreign languages taught and learned in the history of foreign language teaching in Vietnam, some thoughtful and far-seeing persons, sooner or later, might come up with a question, “How long can English exist and prevail in the world and in Vietnam?” Futurology is always a risky business; predicting the future of a world *lingua franca* and, likewise, a dominant foreign language being taught and used in a country is not an exception. But if we agree that all things have a beginning, a development, and an end, the life span of the English language as a thing probably follows the same route. The history of world languages has seen the beginning, the expansion or the spread, and the decline of several *lingua francas* such as Latin and Greek. Similarly, the history of foreign language teaching in Vietnam has witnessed the prevalence of the Chinese script used as the official written language in Court of the Vietnamese feudal dynasties and its decline during the French colonization period (from 1959 to 1954). The history of foreign language teaching in Vietnam has also experienced the decline in status of the French language in North Vietnam in the period of 1954-1975, leaving the thrown for the Russian and Chinese languages in the North and the American English language in the South. In 1975 when the Americans lost the war and were forced to withdraw from Vietnam, the English language lost its status, giving dominance to the Russian language throughout the reunified Vietnam. And since the collapse of socialist regime in the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian language began to decline, ceding its almost monopoly position to the English language until today (more detail on these points, see Do, 2007; Hoang, 2010b, 2011, 2016a). Based on these facts, it can be predicted that English may also decline and lose its status in the world as well as in Vietnam, but the question “When will the English language decline as its predecessor *lingua francas*?” has probably no definitive answer. However, judging the way the English language has expanded its presence by leaps and bounds in the world during the past few centuries and in Vietnam during the past 30 years or so, and given the current socio-cultural context in the world and in Vietnam in which English is operating, there can be no doubt whatsoever that its future is practically guaranteed for the foreseeable future and probably even beyond. In other words, no matter how the world may be changed, and, similarly, no matter how Vietnam may be changed, the status of English as an international and global language in the world and as a dominant foreign language in Vietnam will not be challenged at least in this 21st century (cf. Laurdes et al., 2006). Different from the past centuries when the expansion of English was backed up by military and economic power, English is now spontaneously evolving towards the status of the most important world language in both international and global senses. It is naturally received and welcomed in Vietnam as the language of modernity and globalization. In the current context, English is no longer the property of the British, nor is it the property of those countries in the Inner Circle; it “has already grown to be independent of any form of social control” (Crystal, 1997, p.139). Its expansion and impact on the political, economic and social life of the modern world is so strong that “Many people would like to resist the dominance of English. The strategic response would seem to be: do away with English. Don’t teach it, or do anything to perpetuate its standing in the community. But most serious thinkers believe that that won’t now work: English is too deeply entrenched, and if people are deprived of the chance of learning it they are the ones who suffer. That was not the case 50 years ago (over 60 years ago I would add to it) from now; but for the moment that is how it is. It seems that if you want to resist the exploitative power of English, then you have to use English to do it" (Halliday, 2017, p.102).

### *4.4. Will English become a second language in Vietnam?*

English is the most widely taught, learned and used in Vietnam, serving different purposes in education, science and technology, commerce, diplomacy, tourism, and culture exchanges. "English is reaching heights never before attained by any language, and it is leaving other tongues behind in the dust" (Johnson, 2009, p.143). Wherein, an important question arises here that needs to be addressed, "Can English become a second language in the Vietnam?" It should be noted that although there exist two terms "foreign language" and "second language", the distinction between them is not always clear-cut. In fact, a number of features which are found in the category of "foreign language" can also be found in the category of "second language" and vice versa. But generally we must recognize that foreign language learning is different from second language learning. In foreign language learning the target language is rarely heard and used outside the classroom. In second language learning, in contrast, the learner is surrounded by a community that uses the language for its daily purposes. In foreign language learning, the class is limited to what the teacher can give or arrange for students to receive; whereas in second language learning, the class contribution can be immediately supplemented at the will of the students who do the shopping, talk to their fellow students on a bus or on the way to school, watch the target language TV channels, or read the target language newspapers or magazines (printed or electronic), and so on. Considered from this point of view, English is and will not be a second language in Vietnam for the following reasons:

First, unlike countries which used to be Britain's colonies, English has no population base in Vietnam.

Secondly, English is not the language of official institutions: the law courts, the National Assembly, and the Government (from central to local) do not use it.

Thirdly, English it is not the language of the Vietnamese media: with some very small exception, Vietnamese newspapers, radios and television broadcasts are all in Vietnamese.

Fourthly, English is not the language of education in the sense that it is not used as a medium of instruction; it is only a subject taught in schools and universities.

Fifthly, although English is a criterion for some people to get a job or to be promoted in Government services and public institutions, the extent to which those people use English in their workplaces is very limited.

Sixthly, despite the fact that a sizeable percentage of Vietnamese people (school children, university students, scientists, and business people) are learning English, English-using population is very limited.

And perhaps finally, English is not the language used in the home, and unlike Vietnamese English does not play an essential role in the Vietnamese national or social life.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have made an attempt to examine the roles and status of English in present-day Vietnam. We have set the scene for our study by providing an overview of the beginning, the development (expansion), and the domination of the English language in the world linguistic space. From this broader context, we have examined in some detail the roles and status of English in a number of spheres in the Vietnamese society. It is evident from our examination that English is enjoying a special status in the Vietnamese linguistic space. The importance of English is seen at both state and individual levels.

At the state level, English is recognized by the Vietnamese Government as an essential means of communication to help Vietnam move forwards, a valuable resource for the implementation of national modernization programmes, and an important platform for international competition. At the individual level, English proficiency is seen by many Vietnamese people as a key to opening up a range of opportunities. Our discussion has shown that English language education takes place both formally and informally: it takes place inside, outside and beyond the Vietnamese formal education system. Inside the formal education system, English is available at all levels (from the primary to the doctoral level): it is an optional school subject from Grade 1 to Grade 2, and a compulsory school subject (foreign language 1) from Grade 3 through to Grade 12; it is a requirement for students to get high school certificates, a pre-requisite for entry into several tertiary institutions, a required subject for undergraduates, graduates, and doctoral students to be conferred respective diplomas. Outside the formal education system, English courses of all levels are offered in various private language centers. And beyond the formal education system, English plays a number of important roles: it is a gate-keeper for many job seekers, a criterion for promotion, and a must for a scholar or an academic to be conferred the title of professorship or associate professorship. There is no doubt that Vietnam has adopted English as its primary linguistic resource to complement Vietnamese. We have also attempted an answer to several critical issues such as whether the status of the Vietnamese language – our mother tongue – is challenged, to what extent other foreign languages are affected as the result of the expansion of English, and whether English will become a second language in Vietnam. It is evident from my discussion that although English is a foreign language number 1 in Vietnam, it cannot pose any significant threats to the status of Vietnamese: in the present context, the place of Vietnamese as the sole national language seems to remain unchallenged. Some people would like English to become a second official language besides Vietnamese, but, as we have argued above and elsewhere (see Hoang, 2011, 2016), no matter how important English is in the Vietnamese linguistic space, it will not be a second language in the proper sense of the term. We have also tried to show that when a language gains or is given a predominant status, the other(s) are seen to have lost status and thus have to suffer. The Vietnamese foreign language context is an obvious example: the English language has the largest number of learners, making it a foreign language of monopoly. In the years to come, English will continue to enjoy a special status and play more roles: it will continue to be the most needed and the most widely taught and learned foreign language in Vietnam; and along with its expansion it will continue to more or less challenge the status of Vietnamese and diminish the status of other foreign languages being taught in the Vietnamese education. These are the realities in the Vietnamese linguistic space that should be taken into consideration if we really want to formulate a balanced language policy for the sustainable development of Vietnam at present and in the future.

## References

### Vietnamese

Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET] (2014). *Khung năng lực ngoại ngữ 6 bậc dùng cho Việt Nam* (Six-level Foreign Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam). (Ban hành kèm theo Thông tư số 01/2014/TT-BGDĐT ngày 24 tháng 01 năm 2014 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo).

Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET] (2018a). *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông: Chương trình tổng thể* (General School Education Curriculum). (Ban hành kèm theo Thông tư số 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT ngày 26 tháng 12 năm 2018 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo).

Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET] (2018b). *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh* (General School Education English Curriculum). (Ban hành kèm theo Thông tư số 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT ngày 26 tháng 12 năm 2018 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo).

Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET] (2018c). *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông làm quen tiếng Anh lớp 1 và lớp 2* (General School Education Introductory English Curriculum for Grade 1 and Grade 2). (Ban hành kèm theo Thông tư số 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT ngày 26 tháng 12 năm 2018 năm 2018 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo).

Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET] (forthcoming). *Chương trình cho trẻ mẫu giáo làm quen với tiếng Anh* (Introductory English Curriculum for Kindergartens).

Hoàng Thị Yến (2014). Chính sách giáo dục ngoại ngữ của Hàn Quốc (Foreign Language Policy in South Korea). Tạp chí *Viện Nghiên cứu Đông Bắc Á – Viện Hàn lâm Khoa học Xã hội Việt Nam* (Journal of North-east Asian Studies – Academy of Social Sciences), *5*, 22-32.

Hoàng Văn Vân (2008). Dạy ngoại ngữ không chuyên ở các trường đại học Việt Nam: Dạy ngoại ngữ đại cương, dạy ngoại ngữ chuyên ngành hay kết hợp cả hai? (Teaching Foreign Languages as a Subject at Tertiary Education in Vietnam: Which Register should We Teach: General, Academic or a Combination of the Two?). Tạp chí *Khoa học*, ĐHQGHN (*VNU Journal of Science*), *23*(2S) (Phụ chương: Những vấn đề dạy-học tiếng Anh chuyên ngành), 181-190.

Hoàng Văn Vân (2010a). *Dạy tiếng Anh không chuyên ở các trường đại học Việt Nam: những vấn đề lí luận và thực tiễn* (Teaching English as a Subject in Vietnamese Universities: Theoretical and Practical Issues). Hà Nội: Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội.

Hoàng Văn Vân (2011). Vị thế của tiếng Anh trên thế giới và ở Việt Nam (The Status of English in the World and in Vietnam). Tạp chí *Ngôn ngữ* (*Journal of Language*), *1* (260), 10-18.

Hoàng Văn Vân (2016a). Vị thế của tiếng Anh trong thời kì hội nhập và một số hàm ý cho việc hoạch định chính sách ngoại ngữ ở Việt Nam (The Status of English in the Context of Integration and Some Implications for Language Policy Planning in Vietnam). Tạp chí *Khoa học Ngoại ngữ* (Journal of Foreign Languages Science), *46*, 12-27.

Quốc hội nước Cộng hoà Xã hội Chủ nghĩa Việt Nam [The National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam] (2013). *Hiến pháp nước Cộng hoà Xã hội Chủ nghĩa Việt Nam* [The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam]. (Ban hành ngày 28 tháng 11 năm 2013).

Quốc hội nước Cộng hoà Xã hội Chủ nghĩa Việt Nam [The National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam] (2019). *Luật giáo dục* (Education Law). Luật số 43/2019/QH14. (Ban hành ngày 14 tháng 6 năm 2019).

Thủ tướng Chính phủ [The Prime Minister] (2001). *Chỉ thị về việc đổi mới chương trình giáo dục phổ thông thực hiện Nghị quyết số 40/2000/QH10 của Quốc hội* (Directive on the Renovation of the General School Education Curriculum to Implement Resolution No. 40/2000/QH10 of the National Assembly). Số 14/2001 CT-TTg ngày 11 tháng 6 năm 2001.

Thủ tướng Chính phủ [The Prime Minister] (2008). *Quyết định về việc phê duyệt Đề án Dạy và học ngoại ngữ trong hệ thống giáo dục quốc dân giai đoạn 2008-2020* (Decision on the Approval of the Project "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period 2008-2020"). (Ban hành kèm theo Quyết định số 1400/QĐ-TTg ngày 30 tháng 9 năm 2008 của Thủ tướng Chính phủ).

Thủ tướng Chính phủ [The Prime Minister] (2017). *Quyết định phê duyệt, điều chỉnh, bổ sung Đề án dạy và học ngoại ngữ trong hệ thống giáo dục quốc dân giai đoạn 2017 – 2025* (Decision on the Approval, Adjustment and Supplementation of the Project "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period of 2017 – 2025"). (Ban hành kèm theo Quyết định số 2080/QĐ-TTg ngày 22 tháng 12 năm 2017 của Thủ tướng Chính phủ).

Thủ tướng Chính phủ [The Prime Minister] (2018). *Quyết định ban hành quy định tiêu chuẩn, thủ tục xét công nhận tiêu chuẩn và bổ nhiệm chức danh giáo sư, phó giáo sư; thủ tục hủy bỏ công nhận chức danh và miễn nhiệm chức danh giáo sư, phó giáo sư* (Decision on Promulgating Regulations on Standards and Procedures for Considering and Recognizing Standards and Appointing Professors and Associate Professors; Procedures for Cancellation of Recognition and Dismissal of the Titles of Professorship and Associate Professorship). (Ban hành kèm theo Quyết định số 37/QĐ-TTg ngày 31 tháng 8 năm 2018 của Thủ tướng Chính phủ).

Viện Khoa học Giáo dục Việt Nam [Vietnam National Institute for Educational Sciences] (1989). *Chương trình môn tiếng Anh: Trường phổ thông Việt Nam* (English Curriculum for Vietnamese Upper Secondary Schools). Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục.

## English

Bamgbose, A. (2006). A Recurring Decimal: English in Language Policy and Planning. (In) *The Handbook of World Englishes*, pp. 645-660. Kachru, B. B., Y. Kachru & C. L. Nelson (Eds.). Singapore: Blackwell.

Broughton, et al. (1978). *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*. London, Henley and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Cheshire, J. (1996). Introduction: Sociolinguistics and English around the World. (In) *English around* *the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives,* pp. 1-12. Cheshire, J. (Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (2012). *English as a Global Language*. Second Edition (Canto classics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Do, H.T. (2007). The Role of English in Vietnam's Foreign Policy: A Brief History. Retrieved 18 Apr. 2019 from https://www.worldwide.rs/en/role-english-vietnams-foreign-language-policy-brief-history/

ESL/Base. *English Language Schools in Vietnam*. Retrieved on March 24, 2019 from https://www.eslbase.com/schools/vietnam

Fishman, J.A. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Halliday, M. A. K. (2017). Written Language, Standard Language, Global Language. (In) *Halliday in the 21st Century,* pp. 87-103. Webster, J. (Ed.). Great Britain: Bloomsbury.

Herriman, M., & Burnaby, B. (1996). Introduction. (In) *Language Policies in English-dominant Countries*. Clevedon, Philadelphia, Adelaide: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Hoang, V.V. (2010b). The Current Situation and Issues of the Teaching of English in Vietnam. (In) *Ritsumeikan Studies in Language and Culture*, *22*(1), 7-18.

Hoang, V.V. (2013). The Role of English in the Internationalization of Higher Education in Vietnam. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, *29* (1), 72-80.

Hoang, V.V. (2015). The Development of the Ten-year English Textbook Series for Vietnamese Schools under the National Foreign Languages Project 2020: A Cross-cultural Collaborative Experience. Paper Addressed at the Plenary Session of the *International TESOL Symposium: English Language Innovation, Implementation, and Sustainability*, Held in Danang, Vietnam on 28-29 July, 2015. Reprinted in *VNU Journal of Science – Foreign Studies*, *31*(3), 1-17.

Hoang, V.V. (2016b). Renovation in Curriculum Design and Textbook Development: An Effective Solution to Improving the Quality of English Education in Vietnamese Schools in the Context of Integration and Globalization. *VNU Journal of Sciences – Education Research*, *32*(4), 9-20.

Holmes, J. (2008). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Third Edition. Malaysia: Pearson Education Ltd.

Honna, N. (2006). East Asian Englishes. (In) *The Handbook of World Englishes,* pp. 114-129. Kachru, B. B., Y. Kachru & C. L. Nelson (Eds.). Singapore: Blackwell.

Johnson, A. (2009). The Rise of English: The Language of Globalization in China and the European Union. *Macalester International*, *22*, 131-168.

Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. (In) *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures,* pp. 11-30. Quirk, R. & Widdowson, H. G. (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and the British Council.

Kachru, B. (1992). World Englishes: Approaches, Issues and Resources. *Language Teaching*, *25*, 1-14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kachru, B.B. et al (Eds.) (2006). *The Handbook of Englishes*. Singapore: Blackwell Publishing.

King, R.D. (2006). The Beginnings. (In) *The Handbook of World Englishes,* pp. 19-29. Kachru, B. B., Y. Kachru & C. L. Nelson (Eds.). Singapore: Blackwell.

Laurdes, M. Bautista, S., & Gonzalez, A.B. (2006). Southeast Asian Englishes. (In) *The Handbook of World Englishes*, pp. 130-144. Kachru, B. B., Y. Kachru & C. L. Nelson (Eds.). Singapore: Blackwell.

May, S. (2001). *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and the Politics of Language*. London: Longman.

Phillipson, R. (1997). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Fourth impression. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rappa, A. L., & Wee, L. (2006). *Language Policy and Modernity in Southeast Asia*: *Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand*. Singapore: Springer.

Sarwar, Z. (2000). The Golden Gates of English in the Golden Context. (In) Ho. W. K & C. Ward (Eds.). *Language in the Global Context. Implications for the Language Classroom* (RELC Anthology Series 44, pp. 32-56). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Tay, M.W.J. (1996). Southeast Asia and Hong Kong. (In) *English Around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*, pp. 319-332. Cheshire, J. (Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wardhaugh, R. (1990). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell.

# VAI TRÒ VÀ VỊ THẾ CỦA TIẾNG ANH Ở VIỆT NAM NGÀY NAY: PHÂN TÍCH TỪ BÌNH DIỆN VĂN HOÁ - XÃ HỘI

Hoàng Văn Vân

*Trung tâm Nghiên cứu giáo dục ngoại ngữ, ngôn ngữ và quốc tế học,*

*Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, ĐHQGHN,*

*Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Khởi đầu từ một tập hợp các phương ngữ nhỏ ở các quận phía nam nước Anh, tiếng Anh đã vượt xa ra khỏi phạm vi quốc gia và hiện tại đã củng cố sức mạnh của nó như là ngôn ngữ được sử dụng rộng rãi nhất trên thế giới để phục vụ cho kinh doanh, khoa học, truyền thông và công nghệ, và nhiều mục đích khác (Cheshire, 1996; Crystal, 1997, 2012; Halliday, 2017). Ở Việt Nam, kể từ *Đổi mới* được Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam khởi xướng vào năm 1986, tiếng Anh đã trở thành ngoại ngữ quan trọng nhất được dạy và sử dụng trên phạm vi toàn quốc, chỉ đứng sau tiếng Việt – ngôn ngữ quốc gia. Tại sao tiếng Anh lại có được vị thế thống trị như vậy trong không gian ngôn ngữ ở Việt Nam? Vai trò và vị thế của tiếng Anh ở Việt Nam hiện tại là gì? Sự bành trướng của tiếng Anh có gây ra mối đe dọa nào cho tiếng Việt không? Sự bành trướng của tiếng Anh thách thức các ngoại ngữ khác được dạy và học ở Việt Nam đến mức độ nào? Tiếng Anh sẽ trở thành ngôn ngữ chính thức thứ hai Việt Nam hay không? Đó là những vấn đề trọng tâm được lần lượt phân tích và giải quyết trong bài viết này.

*Từ khóa:* tiếng Anh, vai trò, vị thế, ngôn ngữ quốc gia, ngôn ngữ thứ hai, ngoại ngữ

# THE MYTH OF "THE EARLIER THE BETTER" IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING OR THE OPTIMAL AGE TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Tran Thi Tuyet*

*School of Management, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia*

Received 15 July 2019
Revised 4 December 2019; Accepted 16 February 2020

**Abstract**: A widespread belief of 'the earlier the better' in foreign language learning has led to generous investment from both families and societies on young children's foreign language learning. Nonetheless, the outcome of such investment is often under expectation. This article aims to discuss if there is an optimal age to learn a foreign language. By putting together both related theoretical and empirical research in the international literature, this article forwards the message that the general belief of 'the earlier the better' in foreign language learning is often misleading, and too early investment in children's foreign language learning may become a big waste. Ultimately, the key factor in effective foreign language teaching and learning is how to adapt the teaching style to match the learning style of students rather than when to let children start learning a foreign language.

*Keywords:* optimal age, foreign language learning, children, critical period hypothesis, Vietnam

## 1. Introduction and background context

English, under the impact of globalisation, has become the international language in science and technology (Kaplan, Baldauf Jr, & Kamwangamalu, 2011), and has been perceived by many individuals and governments as the world's *lingua franca* (Alisjahbana, 1974; Choi & Spolsky, 2007; Crystal, 2012; Graddol, 1997; Qi, 2009). For governments, English is required to increase the country's competitiveness in the world economy; for families, parents see English as the key to educational success for their children (Baldauf Jr, Kaplan, Kamwangamalu, & Bryant, 2011). Given this important role, English has been taught as an important subject in many countries where traditionally English is not officially used in everyday communication.

Is there an optimal age to start learning a foreign language (FL)? This has remained one of the most controversial issues in FL learning and teaching. While the theoretical debate and the empirical research data have revealed different complex issues and there is no easy answer as when is best to introduce an FL, there exists a widespread belief of 'the earlier the better' in FL learning. The assumption that the one who starts learning an FL very early in life would generally acquire a higher level of proficiency than those who begin at later stages (Gawi, 2012) has led to very generous investment in FL learning. Evidence indicates that a growing number of governments have lowered the age at which children are first introduced English at schools (Miralpeix, 2011). Huge investment for children FL

* Tel.: 61-451645699
Email: june.tran@rmit.edu.au

learning has been made with the expectation that an early exposure to FL instruction and interaction will result in better performance (Gawi, 2012).

Vietnam has also joined the move to begin teaching English at the primary level (Moon, 2009). English is now a popular subject from Grade 3, but in most schools in developed cities and areas, English is taught since the very first grade at school and also in different kindergartens and childcare centres. FL teaching below Grade 3 is optional and is paid for by parents. Apart from paying for these optional programs, parents are increasingly spending their pocket money for their kids' English private tuition since their child is as young as two to four years old. The number of children attending English teaching centres is increasing, regardless if they are forced or want to learn this FL.

The Vietnamese government does also not hide its ambitious aim of boosting the English proficiency level for young Vietnamese to increase the competitiveness of the country in the world economy. Since 2008 the government has generously agreed to invest 9,400 billion Vietnamese dongs (about 570 million USD in 2008) to implement Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTg "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008 to 2020" (MOET, 2008) with the key goal as: By the year 2020 most Vietnamese youth whoever graduate from vocational schools, colleges and universities gain the capacity to use a foreign language independently. This will enable them to be more confident in communication, further their chance to study and work in an integrated and multi-cultural environment with a variety of languages. This goal also makes language an advantage for Vietnamese people, serving the cause of industrialization and modernization for the country (MOET, 2008).

Despite huge investment and effort, and ambitious expectation from the government, schools and families, the English proficiency level among young Vietnamese has remained disappointing. The mean score of the English tests in High School Final Exams has remained below average mark and around 70% to nearly 90% of students often gain below 5 points (the average mark in this test) (See details in the table below) (H.Le, 2019; V.Le, 2016, 2017). In July 2019, half year before the 'deadline" set for the Foreign Language Project 2020, English together with History have remained the two subjects with recorded lowest marks in the High School Final Exams every year (Nguyen & Quy-Hien, 2019).

Table 1. High School Final Exams - English results

| Year | Number of students taking English exam | The mean score | Number/proportion of students gained below average mark (5 points) | | Note |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2016 | 634,200 | 3.48 | 559,784 | (88.27%) | The maximum score students could get is 10. |
| 2017 | 749.078 | 4.46 | 516,596 | (69%) | |
| 2018 | 814,779 | 3.91 | 637,335 | (78.22%) | |
| 2019 | 789,435 | 4.36 | 542,666 | (68.74%) | |

The Minister of the Education and Training Ministry (MOET), Mr. Phung Xuan Nha also acknowledged that Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg is unachievable (Thuy-Linh, 2016). Many students, after 10 or even 12 years of learning English at school and private language centres, are still hardly able to use English in a simple communication interaction. Many research projects have investigated the reasons for the failure to deliver several goals and objectives of the National Foreign Language Project 2020;

nonetheless, there seems to be hardly any research focusing on the area of an optimal age to begin an FL, especially English, in the Vietnamese context, and why huge investment for English learning since young ages failed to bring an expected outcome. Parents keep paying for optional language programs and sending their kids to extra English classes in children's out-of-class time since early ages, but are unsure if the investment is worthwhile.

This paper, by pulling together both theoretical and empirical research related to the issue of the age factor in FL learning, hopefully will bring about a better understanding about this matter. It will first discuss the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) and other related terminologies which support the arguments of 'the earlier the better' in second language (L2) learning. It then moves to the discussion of the FL learning context and the empirical research which largely indicates the older the better in learning a new language in a foreign context. Other related factors with then be discussed before an implication for Vietnam to be formed.

## 2. CPH and the assumption 'early is better' in language learning

There are certainly reasons supporting the intention to introduce English language learning from the pre-school years, and this is closely related to the ideas of CPH, maturation constraints, ultimate attainment in first and second language learning (Agullo, 2006; Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015; Nap-Kolhoff, 2010; Slev, 2015). The idea of critical period was first introduced in 1959 by Penfield and Roberts (1959). According to Penfield and Roberts (1959), before the age of nine, a child can learn two to three languages as easily as one, this is because their brain is much more plastic than an adult's. CPH was then theoretically formulated by Lenneberg in 1967 who, based on the neurophysiology studies, claimed that the acquisition of language is an innate process determined by biological factors. And this limits the ages for humans being to be able to learn the ***first language*** (L1) (i.e. between the age of 2 and 12 - the age of puberty) (Lenneberg, 1967). Lenneberg (1967) also believed that the plasticity of a child's brain will lose after lateralization (a process by which the two sides of the brain develop specialized functions). Puberty is normally the time the lateralization of the language function is completed, and thus, post-adolescent language acquisition becomes difficult. What is worth noticed is that the brain's lateralization can be finished at the age of five (Krashen, 1973). Nonetheless, Lamendella (1977) later argued that using lateralization as a cut-off point for language learning is too much exaggerated and he used the term 'sensitive period' instead of 'lateralization'. That means after puberty it is still possible to learn a language.

Lamendella (1977) and other subsequent authors also adapted the term 'sensitive period' to ***second language*** (L2) context. He also suggested that language acquisition is often more efficient during early childhood, but that does not mean that learning an L2 at later ages is impossible.

The argument of CPH and sensitive period in L1 and L2 learning proposes ***maturation constraints*** for language acquisition (Celaya, 2012). Evidence is found where a child living in isolation and had not developed language capability, experts suggested that that child would not be able to acquire a language after a certain age (Celaya, 2012). In the case of L2, it is suggested that adults have already stored linguistic representations, and the more established these representations are, the harder for them to change (Nap-Kolhoff, 2010). Thus, there exists a worry that learning an L2 after the critical/sensitive period would mean not achieving the ***ultimate attainment*** level (the final/optimal level of language proficiency achieved in the L2) compared to learners who had started before this period (Miralpeix, 2011).

Quite a few research findings support CPH. Research in L2 acquisition often relates CPH to such questions whether L2 learners are able to attain 'native-like' proficiency in a L2 (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003; D. Singleton, 2005) or how the way of learning a L2 should be changed when the age of onset is later (Schwartz, 2004; Unsworth, 2007). Research on L2 acquisition in a naturalistic context often found that older learners were often faster and achieved higher level of proficiency in the short term, but in the long term, the ones who had arrived in the L2 context earlier often outperformed the late starters (Birdsong, 2005; Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979; D. M. Singleton & Ryan, 2004). It is argued that young children who have opportunities to acquire both L1 and L2 from birth are extremely sensitive and finely tuned to different patterns in the input and pick up on them implicitly (Granena, 2013).

***Implicit learning*** seems to be strength of young learners, which does not mean that implicit learning mechanisms are not available in late L2 acquisition, but they decline with age (Granena, 2013; MH Long, 2010; Rebuschat & Williams, 2009; Williams, 2009). Studies on immigrants in the US suggest that early exposure to L2 (e.g. before the age of 15) would lead to higher syntactic command than the later arrival (Patkowski, 1980). Similarly, Johnson and Newport (1989), Chiswick, Lee and Miller (2004) and Hakuta, Bialystok and Wiley (2003) also found linear relationships between age of arrival and language proficiency. In short, most studies in favor of the existence of the CPH (DeKeyser & Larson-Hall, 2005; DeKeysey, 2008; Hakuta et al., 2003; Hu, 2016; Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2001; Ioup, 2005) support Krashen, Long and Scarcella's (1979) findings: older learners acquire faster than young learner at early stages, but younger learners outperform older learners in the long run.

## 3. CPH in foreign contexts and the argument of 'older is better'

CPH and the assumption of 'earlier is better' which indicates that the earlier exposure to language the more beneficial, were later assumed to be applicable in foreign language (FL) learning context (Agullo, 2006; Celaya, 2012). Nonetheless, Agullo (2006) argued that not everybody agrees that what applies to L1 and L2 can also apply to FL in an identical way. There are, in fact, many important differences between L2 and FL learning contexts. The key difference is that L2 context is a natural context and learners acquire the language where it is spoken, whereas FL leaners acquire a language which is not their mother tongue in the context where that language is not spoken. This indicates a significant difference in terms of the ***amount and the type of exposure*** to the target language in the two situations; L2 learners learn the language in both natural settings and instructional settings (e.g. class instruction), while most FL learners can learn language only under instructional/class settings.

Secondly, learning a new language is often challenging and time-consuming; being able to expose to a new language is not enough in acquiring it, and the motivation behind the learning process (such as: wanting to communicate with people speaking that language) is equally important. Children in a L2 setting (e.g. migrant children in the US, the UK or Australian schools) seem to be more motivated to learn a new language (Clark, 2000; Tabors, 1997). The massive exposure to the target language and the natural setting also enhance children's implicit learning. Based on this explanation, some researchers are against the myth of 'earlier is better' in FL learning and argue that more intensive FL learning in the late primary school years may even more effective than the 'drip-feed' method of teaching for children when they are younger and their cognitive skills are less developed (Agullo, 2006; Gawi, 2012; Lightbown, 2000). Nonetheless, Jaekel, Schurig, Florian and Ritter (2017) argue that the age of onset of FL learning cannot be investigated separately from the factor of the amount of exposure to English. In other words, age of onset and amount of exposure are two crucial and inextricable factors in FL learning (Jaekel et al., 2017).

CPH is based on the assumption of implicit learning and it clearly indicates the advantage of younger learners in a meaningful exposure and communicative activities. Implicit learning also implies that children need massive exposure to target language structures to "internalize the underlying rule/pattern without their attention being explicitly focused on it" and to "infer rules without awareness" (Ellis, 2009, p. 16). Nonetheless, in most FL learning contexts, the limited amount of exposure to FL and the instruction in a classroom-based setting place a question to implicit learning process among younger learners.

The age of onset (AO), maturation and the ultimate attainment level in language acquisition proposed by CPH are also questioned in FL contexts. Since most studies confirming and supporting CPH are conducted in L2 settings, such variables as AO or the length of residence are arguably to be indirect measures of L2 experience (Moyer, 2004). Thus experience should be considered as crucial as maturation in language acquisition (Moyer, 2004). Moyer also called for a contextualization of the critical period and challenged the assumption that ultimate attainment is primarily a function of age. She pointed out that ultimate attainment is not only a function of maturation but also of experience, psychological and social influences and that each person's experience is unique and is relevant to ultimate attainment.

Nonetheless, there are widely accepted findings in research into the CPH in L2 learning in a naturalistic context: (i) adults progress faster than children at early stages of morphology and syntax; (ii) older children acquire new language faster than younger children; and (iii) child starters outperform adult starters in the long run (Nikolov, 2009). The tendency of lowering the AO and investing in early English learning in FL contexts seems to reflect parents and policy makers' awareness of the third point, but Nikolov (2009) also claimed that there was evidence showing that there is a misconception that younger learners develop faster and that the enthusiasm towards an early start is not supported by empirical research, even the one conducted in L2 settings. Indeed, research has proved that younger is slower.

There is also another possibility leading to the increase enthusiasm towards an early start FL: the expectation to help children adopt native-like accent. Accent is at the heart of CPH, and it is suggested that the earlier the child exposes to the L2, the more likely he/she will adopt native-like accent and pronunciation (Flege, Mackay, & Imai, 2010; Nikolov, 2009; Nikolov & Djigunović, 2006). Nonetheless, the range for children to be able to pick up native accent is also wide, as Long (2005) claimed that native-like accent is hard to attain unless the first exposure to the target language occurs before age six or twelve.

Recent scholars also raised different perspectives regarding the relationship between AO and native-like accent. Some scholars provided evidence of successful adult language learners who could achieve native-like accent and proficiency (Moyer, 2004; Nikolov & Djigunović, 2006; D. M. Singleton & Ryan, 2004). Others' research findings indicate that AO is not a decisive factor for perceiving and producing English sounds in a native-like manner (Fullana, 2006; Mora, 2006). In other words, early starters do not guarantee native-like accent and pronunciation. On the other hand, researchers also support deBot's (2014) argument that the native norm becomes basically irrelevant since English has become a world *lingua franca* and is increasingly used in communication between speakers of nonstandard varieties of UK or US English.

The empirical research in FL learning indicates mixed results, but in general, most studies in FL contexts point out that older learners outperform younger learners in instructed learning contexts (Celaya, 2012; deBot, 2014; Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015; Garcia-Lecumberri & F., 2003; Garcia-Mayo, 2003; Krashen et al., 1979; Langabaster & Doiz, 2003; Larson-Hall, 2008; Munoz, 2003; Muñoz, 2006; Nikolov, 2009; Pfenninger, 2014; Pfenninger & Singleton, 2016). For example, Jaekel, Schurig, Michael, Florian, and Ritter (2017) conducted a study to compare receptive skills of two cohorts of English language learners in year 5 and year 7. The early starters (ES) (N=2,498) started learning English as FL in Year 1 (age 6-7) and the later starters (LS) (N= 2,635) in Year 3 (age 8-9). Two distinguished factors between these two cohorts (i.e. AO and the amount of language exposure) were taken into consideration in this study (the ES had received 3.5 years (245 hours) and the LS had received 2 years (140 hours) before starting Year 5). The findings showed that the early starters outperformed the later ones with less and later exposure to English in Year 5, but in Year 7, the later starters surpassed the early starter cohort. They then concluded that the one who has advantage in the long run in learning an FL is not the younger learners as widely suggested in a naturalistic language setting. It is the older starter who will outperform the younger learners in the long run in early language education with minimum input/exposure to the target language.

Jaekel, Schurig, Michael, Florian, and Ritter's (2017) findings are not in line with the research findings supporting CPH in naturalistic contexts which suggested that older learners were faster than younger learners in the short run but younger leaners would outperform older learners in the long run. However, their findings are not new. Since 1975, Burstall's (1975) study in a primary FL learning context showed that older learners outperformed younger learners in both the mid and long term. Then Krashen et al. (1979), Larson-Hall (2008), Munoz (2006), Pfenninger (2014) and Pfenninger and Singleton (2016) also confirmed that older learners are at an advantage both in the short term and long term. Older leaners are claimed to outperform younger learners on structure and vocabulary development (Miralpeix, 2006; Mora, 2006; Walsh & Diller, 1978), writing skills (Rosa-Torras, Navés, Loz-Celaya, & Pérez-Vidal, 2006), oral fluency (Mora, 2006), grammar and cognitive demanding tasks (Burstall, 1975) and rate of acquisition (Jaekel et al., 2017; Pfenninger & Singleton, 2016). Sun, de Bot and Steinkrauss's (2015) research, on the other hand, posed a question over the claim of long-term benefit for children to start learning FL early. They conducted a project on teaching English as an FL in commercial institutions in China, and the findings indicated that 3 to 4-year-old children appreciated the lessons but gained very little from them.

There are several explanations for the different findings of research conducted in L2 and FL contexts. It is claimed that when analyzing the age factor, the rate of learning, the type and amount of exposure to the target language, the ultimate attainment and the communicative needs in the two contexts also need to be taken into consideration (Muñoz, 2008; Villanueva, 1991). Obviously, both the type of exposure and the amount of exposure to the target language are so different in naturalistic and FL learning contexts. Similarly, it is impossible to compare the ultimate attainment achieved in naturalistic settings and in school contexts in FL settings where students only follow the FL program during their school years and may stop learning the language after some certain years. In terms of communicative needs, there is a tendency for the learners in naturalistic contexts to try to express themselves and make use of all possible strategies because the target language is used for real life interaction.

That is often not the case for FL learners who often use the FL in a fake situation in a learning context.

There also appear several reasons explaining why older learners are more efficient than the younger learners in FL learning. This is due to older learners' higher level of cognitive maturity, greater world knowledge, better learning capability (knowing how to learn) and their ability to learn languages through explicit instruction (Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015; Jaekel et al., 2017; Krashen et al., 1979; Muñoz, 2006). Older learners are also able to integrate new language input with their established learning experience whereas young learners often face some difficulties in learning tasks that are beyond their cognitive maturity (Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015; Walsh & Diller, 1978). Older learners also benefit from the rule-based and grammar-oriented language teaching in secondary school FL classroom environments (Jaekel et al., 2017; Pfenninger & Singleton, 2016). Studies also suggest that strong academic skills in L1 will help learners acquire an L2 faster (Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015; Jaekel et al., 2017), or in other words, "effective acquisition of the L1 plays an important role in learning an L2" (Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015, p. 859).

Strengthening and preserving L1 is, therefore, will support L2 proficiency and development (Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015; Jaekel et al., 2017). However, there is a real concern about children who start to learn another language (English in most cases now) too early before they fully acquire their L1 (Clark, 2000; Cummins, 1979; Fillmore, 1991; McLaughlin, 1984). In naturalistic settings, learning an L2 may mean losing the L1. That is often the case observed in English speaking countries where migrants' children are exposed to English when they have not fully dominated their L1. Fillmore (1991) suggests that only few American-born children of immigrant parents are fully proficient in their own language because once they learn English, they tend not to maintain, or in other words, they often drop the mother tongue even if it is the only language their parents know. This is especially the case when their L1 is considered having lower value and 'social status' than the L2. In an FL learning context, being immersed in FL learning from preschool years will possibly negatively affect both L1 and L2 acquisition (Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015). Farzaneh and Movahed (2015) also suggested that in two years of learning English, preschoolers could only understand and say simple English like naming colors, shapes, alphabet letters and speak only very simple English sentences like "I am thirsty" - they are still not at the stage of being able to communicate with native speakers or understand a native speaker when they are talking. Nonetheless, when these preschoolers move to primary school, they often bring with them all the knowledge about language learning they acquired to learn their L1. The mutual interference of L1 and FL may result in language mixing. Moreover, exposing to FL also helps young kids get a taste of foreign culture, this may insult in cultural confusion in some cases (Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015).

## 4. Other related factors

From the discussion above, it became clear that AO is not the only decisive factor in L2 and FL acquisition. Different or sometimes contrasted research findings regarding CPH and language learning indicate that research is conducted in different context settings and the results depend on other contextual factors, some of which are:

***The level of input or the type and amount of exposure to the target language:*** This factor has been repeatedly mentioned in the above sections and it is also the key difference between L1 and FL learning contexts. In the L2 learning context, learners are exposed to L2 both in instructional language setting (e.g. classroom) and in naturalistic settings outside the class. This environment is an ideal environment for young children to enhance their implicit learning process, and it is more likely for young children to adopt native-like accent if they arrive to the naturalistic language setting early in life. Nonetheless, that does not seem to be the case for children to learn FL, most in instructional language setting, where there is no need for them to communicate in that language outside the class. As suggested in the previous sections, with limited amount of exposure to the target language, adults and adolescents are often more efficient learners than children in FL learning, both in the short term and long term.

In the FL contexts, the amount of time children exposing to FL is also correlated to the scores they can achieve in that language. deBot (2014) conducted a 2-year longitudinal study measuring the achievement levels of 168 children learning English as an FL with several variables taken into account in measurement such as early or late start (age 4 or 8-9) and the number of minutes/weeks of English lessons. The results indicate that the later (8-9 year old starters) make more progress than the early starters, and there is a significant effect for the number of minutes of English lessons per week. deBot (2014, p. 412) claimed that sixty minutes or less per week leads to significantly lower scores for English, compared to children with more than 60 minutes but less than 120 minutes and the children with 120 minutes or more.

Children also seem to forget FL more quickly than adults (Clark, 2000), thus an interruptive period in FL learning may bring the child back to the beginning. In some other circumstances, not an interruptive period but the lack of continuity also creates a major challenge for FL young learners (Nikolov & Curtain, 2000). Nikolov (2009) named the reasons for the lack of continuity in children FL learning: (1) students are not offered to study at their appropriate level. This may lead to decline in motivation; (2) they are denied an opportunity to continue learning an FL due to limited access, and (3) teaching methodology in the class is not up to their expectation, and this often results in a demotivating experience for the FL learners.

***Motivation:*** The above analysis indicates that motivation is also considered a key factor in FL learning. This is supported widely in the literature (deBot, 2014; Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015; Met & Phillips, 1999; Moyer, 2004; Muñoz, 2006; Nikolov, 2009). Met and Phillips (1999) stressed the importance of motivation and language exposure that given motivation and opportunity (including sufficient time and appropriate circumstance) almost everyone can attain a degree of proficiency in another language at any age. In terms of the age-related motivation, some scholars argue that the significant advantage of the early starters over the late starters is in the development of positive attitudes and motivation (Blondin et al., 1998; Edelenbos, Johnstone, & Kubanek, 2006). It is suggested that children's attitude toward learning a new language is often positive, they are also more motivated and less anxious than older students (Nikolov, 2009). However, there are many arguments against this claim. Muñoz (2006), for example, assured that motivation toward learning a new language is stronger among older students. The findings of deBot (2014, p. 415) also indicate that the attitudes of students decline over time: "While English is something new and exciting in the first few years, it becomes an ordinary school subject in later years". It is not surprising when the ultimate success of the process of early FL learning (primary school English teaching) in Germany is defined as "high levels of motivation and continuous development of language proficiency" (Jaekel et al., 2017, p. 462).

***The role of the teacher and classroom practices:*** The motivation of students depends much on the language teachers and the classroom practices, especially in the FL contexts where teachers seem to be the only source of input for students. Norton (2014) pointed out that although children are generally highly motivated and eager to learn English, they may become disruptive and resist participation in classroom activities if the teachers or classroom practices make them unhappy or dissatisfied. It is also suggested that if the teaching practices make the students feel they lack competence, their internal motivation will decrease and they only learn because of the environmental influences, pressures and controls (such as to pass exams and to satisfy parents' expectation) (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999; Taylor, 2013; Ushioda, 2011, 2015). So the teacher language proficiency, teaching pedagogy and their background and training are very important as these all impact on the student's motivation and attitudes toward the FL. Lamp (2013, p. 26) also posed a warning that if the teacher lacks personal experience, understanding of Anglophone culture or both, the English learning and teaching process may become a 'values-free body of knowledge conveyed via official textbooks'. Nonetheless, many English teachers in Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam are not confident about their cultural understanding and their English capability. Specifically, they felt their productive skills lagged behind their receptive skills and called for an opportunity to develop their English in order to implement successfully the English language teaching programs (Moon, 2009; Nikolov, 2009; Tran, 2017). It is also suggested that children will learn better if the teachers are keen to focus on their implicit acquisition process and provide massive amount of input (Agullo, 2006). That is not often the case in many FL learning contexts, given the limit hours students can learn English in class and the limitation of their teachers' English capability. For all these reasons, the learning of English is not an enjoyable activity for many students (Pfenninger & Singleton, 2016).

Apart from the motivation and attitude, teachers, and the amount of exposure, many other factors are also considered and discussed widely in the literature as determinative factors in FL learning. ***Language aptitude*** is a factor that could be used to explain the different learning outcomes of people who study in the same context and circumstance. Language aptitude can also be able to compensate for the effects of a late start in L2 or Fl learning (Granena, 2013). ***Socio-economic status/background*** is also claimed to have a strong link to achievement and motivation in FL learning (Kormos & Kiddle, 2013; Lamb, 2012). Children from different social backgrounds get access to different types of schools (state, private or international schools), have different amounts of exposure or different inputs of the target language outside class time such as learning resources, private tuition and study abroad (Muñoz, 2008; Nap-Kolhoff, 2010; Pfenninger & Singleton, 2016). ***The close proximity between the L1 and L2/FL*** is also claimed to have an impact on FL learning outcome (Nap-Kolhoff, 2010), people from countries where their languages have the same 'roots' (Western Romanian languages: Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese; Anglo-Frisian language: German, English, Scots; Chinese, Cantonese and Vietnamese) can learn other languages which share the 'roots' with their mother tongue easier. Apart from these, individual characteristics such as ***gender*** (girls are often better than boys in FL learning (Jaekel et al., 2017), ***personal learning styles and strategies***, ***personality***, ***experience factors***, ***opportunities of use***, ***social and educational variables*** and ***the privilege of the target language*** all affect language learning (Agullo, 2006; Clark, 2000; Farzaneh & Movahed, 2015; Jaekel et al., 2017; McLaughlin, 1984; Nap-Kolhoff, 2010; Slev, 2015). Why are some people successful in FL learning and some are not? There is no simple way to explain and age is obviously not the only decisive factor.

The discussion of age and language learning reveals that there are differences in the learning styles between children and adults (Agullo, 2006; Hu, 2016; Nap-Kolhoff, 2010). Implicit learning versus explicit learning is the most obvious difference in learning approaches between small children and adolescent/adults. Teenager and adult learners often consciously reflect on language forms when learning while children often use their memory and process new information in a holistic way (Agullo, 2006). Similarly, Wray (2005) and Nap-Kolhoff (2010) also suggested that the difference between child language learners and adult language learners is the difference between holistic and analytic learning styles. They also claimed that children often acquire mostly phrases, but teenagers and adults tend to focus on learning words and ways to combine words into phrases. Children, thus, often gain more advantage in a naturalistic context with abundant language input, while adults seem to process faster in formal instructional settings.

## 5. Discussion and implications for Vietnam

This article has put together different perspectives related to the issue of age and language acquisition. It has become clear from the discussion that in FL learning contexts, where the input is minimum and where there is little or no need for the student to communicate in that FL outside classroom, older learners are often more efficient and learn faster than young children. The ultimate attainment of the older starters in FL contexts is also arguably higher than that of the young starters. The myth of 'earlier is better' may have arisen from the misunderstanding/mistranslating the CPH that children learn FL faster than adults, or from the expectation that young children will more likely to adopt native-like accent. There is also evidence from the literature suggesting that child starters outperform adult starters in the long run and that the earlier the child exposes to the L2, the more likely native-like accent and pronunciation will be adopted. However, all of these in-favor-of-CPH studies were conducted in a naturalistic learning environment (e.g. migrant children learning the host country language). The type of input, the amount of exposure and the child's motivation to use the language in that context is very different from that in an FL learning context. It is suggested that the same conclusion is not applicable in FL learning contexts.

Nevertheless, even when empirical research has clearly confirmed that older is better in FL learning, it does not mean that early FL is worthless and should be delayed (Agullo, 2006; Met & Phillips, 1999). Since it often takes a long time to gain proficiency in an FL, where the language input is limited and the amount of exposure is low, the early start will possibly lead to higher level students are likely to achieve (Haas, 1998). Met and Phillips (1999, p. 25) argued that "omitting certain academic experiences simply because older learners are more efficient may be insufficient justification for curriculum design", just like while older learners can grasp mathematics concepts faster than children, it does not mean that we should delay to start teaching Math at Grade 9. That could be a justification for the tendency of lowering the age of FL introduction in the school curriculum in many countries.

When is considered an early start, when is late? These terms used in the international debate are not always clear. In 1990s, an early start in industrialized countries may mean the age of 10 or earlier (Lambert & Bergentoft, 1994). Recently, an early start in European policy documents is at the beginning of primary education, and that could mean ages 4, 5 or 6 in different countries. In Asian countries an early start means Grade 1 or 3 but many parents send their children to start learning since children are 3 or 4 years old (Baldauf Jr et al., 2011). Although an early start means different ages in different contexts, there is a general recommended period: after children fully acquire their L1 and before their puberty (around the age of 12).

The question remains: Is there an optimal age (not a recommended period) for children to learn FL? There seem to be no clear answer as age is not the only factor determining the effectiveness of FL learning. It is suggested that the age factor needs to be viewed in its context, taken into account all other related factors such as the intensity, duration and quality of the language instruction, students' first language competence, the status of the FL course within the school curriculum (Duff, 2008) and all factors discussed in section 4 above. Since younger learners and older learners often adopt different learning styles, the teaching style also needs to be adapted to the particular age of the learners. This is one of the most decisive factors which help in raising or at least keeping the motivation of the learners in FL learning. Thus, a large body of literature now turns to discuss the question "how" rather than the when question "when" to start learning an FL (Agullo, 2006; Met & Phillips, 1999; Nikolov, 2009). Since the decision over the age to introduce FL instruction often involves political, economic and educational aspects, most teachers cannot participate in that decision making (Agullo, 2006). Then, even if the critical or sensitive period does exist, children in most educational systems have, in fact, started learning FL within or even earlier than the recommended "period" suggested by CPH. The question now does not seem to lie in when to start FL instruction, but how teachers should adapt their teaching to the age of their students, because successful learning is possible at any age (Miralpeix, 2006).

The aim of this article is not to focus on the reasons for the recently disappointing FL learning outcome in Vietnam. Although huge investment, both from the government and from each individual family, has been put on children English learning, the outcome is much below expectation. Hence, this article wants to formulate some recommendations for the FL learning in Vietnam:

- Parents should be realistic about their expectations: Many parents now spend huge money for their children to learn English early. They should understand that early exposure is good to get familiar with the language; however, it is not sufficient to predict successful FL acquisition. Formal FL instruction should not be commenced before children master Vietnamese (3 - 5 years old, depending on each child).
- No learning interruption and maintaining motivation in FL learning is important. Children tend to forget FL more easily than adults if they do not expose to that language for a period of time. By contrast, if they can have a lot of opportunities to use the language (both in and out of class, at home or elsewhere), they are often more motivated: watching interesting programs in English on TV, adults talking with children in English at home… these are all considered beneficial for children's FL development.
- Primary school English teaching in Vietnam appears to be a challenging task for English teachers. The class size is often too big (50 – 60 students), with different incoming levels (some students have exposed to the target language for 2-3 years before schooling, some others start Grade 1 with no English experience before), with minimum support from multimedia device, and teaching facility is poor. That is not to count the fact that many primary school English teachers are underqualified and have little or no prior-training about teaching pedagogy appropriate for young children (Tran, 2017). To make the FL teaching at primary school in Vietnam more efficient, students should be divided into smaller groups with similar level of understanding; supporting facility needs to be provided and teachers need to be trained to know how to adapt their teaching to the age of their students.

If the condition is not allowed, the AO can move from Grade 3 to Grade 5. It is better late than early but ruining the students' motivation in FL learning.

## References

### Vietnamese


Lê Huyền (2019). Điểm trung bình môn Tiếng Anh THPT quốc gia 2019 cao hơn năm ngoái. Retrieved from https://vietnamnet.vn/vn/giao-duc/tuyen-sinh/542-666-bai-thi-mon-tieng-anh-thpt-quoc-gia-2019-co-diem-duoi-trung-binh-549901.html

Lê Văn (2016). Môn Tiếng Anh: Gần 90% thí sinh đạt điểm dưới trung bình. Retrieved from https://vietnamnet.vn/vn/giao-duc/tuyen-sinh/mon-tieng-anh-gan-90-thi-sinh-dat-diem-duoi-trung-binh-316746.html

Lê Văn (2017). Môn Tiếng Anh: 69% thí sinh đạt điểm dưới trung bình. Retrieved from https://vietnamnet.vn/vn/giao-duc/tuyen-sinh/diem-thi-thpt-quoc-gia-2017-mon-tieng-anh-69-thi-sinh-dat-diem-duoi-trung-binh-382506.html

Nguyễn Tuệ & Quý Hiên (2019). Lịch sử và tiếng Anh vẫn 'đội sổ' về điểm thi THPT quốc gia 2019. Retrieved from https://thanhnien.vn/giao-duc/lich-su-va-tieng-anh-van-doi-so-ve-diem-thi-thpt-quoc-gia-2019-1103044.html

Thùy Linh (2016). Bộ trưởng Giáo dục thừa nhận Đề án Ngoại ngữ 2020 thất bại (MOET Ministry admitted the Failure of the Foreign Language Project 2020). Retrieved from https://giaoduc.net.vn/giao-duc-24h/bo-truong-giao-duc-thua-nhan-de-an-ngoai-ngu-2020-that-bai-post172498.gd

Trần Thị Tuyết (2017). Bồi dưỡng giáo viên và yêu cầu quan tâm tới kinh nghiệm và đặc điểm môi trường giảng dạy của người được bồi dưỡng. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, 33*(5), 131-144.


### English


Agullo, G. L. (2006). Overcoming age-related differences. *ELT JOURNAL, 60*(4), 365.

Alisjahbana, S. T. (1974). Language policy, language engineering and literacy in Indonesia and Malaysia. *Advances in language planning*, 391-416.

Baldauf Jr, R. B., Kaplan, R. B., Kamwangamalu, N., & Bryant, P. (2011). Success or failure of primary second/foreign language programmes in Asia: What do the data tell us? *Current issues in language planning, 12*(2), 309-323.

Birdsong, D. (2005). Interpreting age effects in second language acquisition. In K. J. F. & A. M. B. DeGroot (Eds.), *Handbook of bilingualism: Psycholinguistic approaches* (pp. 109-127). New York: Oxford University Press.

Blondin, C., Candelier, M., Edelenbos, P., Johnstone, R., Kubaneck, A., & Taeschner, T. (1998). *Foreign languages in primary and pre-school education*. London: CILT.

Burstall, C. (1975). Primary French in the balance. *Educational Research, 17*(3), 193-198.

Celaya, M. L. (2012). 'I Wish I Were Three!': Learning EFL at an Early Age. In M. G. Davie & A. Taronna (Eds.), *New trends in early foreign language learning: the age factor, CLIL and languages in contact. Bridging research and good practices* (pp. 2-11). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Chiswick, B. R., Lee, Y. L., & Miller, P. W. (2004). Immigrants' language skills: the Australian experience in a longitudinal survey. *International Migration Review, 38*(2), 611-654.

Choi, Y. H., & Spolsky, B. (2007). *English education in Asia: History and policies*: Asia TEFL.

Clark, B. A. (2000). First-and second-language acquisition in early childhood. In Issues in Early Childhood Education: Curriculum, Teacher Education, & Dissemination of Information. Proceedings of the Lilian Katz Symposium (Champaign, IL, November 5-7, 2000).

Crystal, D. (2012). *English as a global language*. Cambridge Cambridge university press.

Cummins, J. (1979). Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency, Linguistic Interdependence, the Optimum Age Question and Some Other Matters. Working Papers on Bilingualism, No. 19.

deBot, K. (2014). The effectiveness of early foreign language in the Netherlands. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 4*(3), 409-418.

DeKeyser, R., & Larson-Hall, J. (2005). What does the critical period really mean. In J. F. Kroll & A. M. B. DeGroot (Eds.), *Handbook of bilingualism: Psycholinguistic approaches* (pp. 88-108). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

DeKeysey, R. (2008). Implicit and explicit learning. In C. J. Doughty & M. H. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition*. London: John Wiley & Sons.

Duff, P. A. (2008). *Foreign language policies, research, and educational possibilities.* Paper presented at the APEC Education Symposium Xi'an, China.

Edelenbos, P., Johnstone, R., & Kubanek, A. (2006). *The main pedagogical principles underlying the teaching of languages to very young learners: Languages for the children of Europe*. Retrieved from Final Report of the EAC 89/04, Lot 1 study:

Ellis, R. (2009). Implicit and explicit learning, knowledge and instruction. *Implicit and explicit knowledge in second language learning, testing and teaching, 42*, 3-25.

Farzaneh, M., & Movahed, M. (2015). Disadvantage to pre-school children learning a foreign language. *Theory and practice in language studies, 5*(4), 858-864.

Fillmore, L. W. (1991). When learning a second language means losing the first. *Early childhood research quarterly, 6*(3), 323-346.

Flege, J. E., Mackay, I., & Imai, S. (2010). What accounts for "age" effects on overall degree of foreign accent. *Achievements and perspectives in the acquisition of second language speech: New Sounds, 2*, 65-82.

Fullana, N. (2006). The development of English (FL) perception and production skills: Starting age and exposure effects. In C. Munoz (Ed.), *Age and the rate of foreign language learning* (Vol. 19, pp. 41-64). Clevendon: Multilinngual Matters.

Garcia-Lecumberri, M. L., & F., G. (2003). Age, length of exposure and grammaticality judgements in the acquisition of English as a foreign. In M. P. Garcia-Mayo & M. L. Garcia-Lecumberri (Eds.), *Age and the acquisition of English as a foreign language* (Vol. 4, pp. 115-135). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Garcia-Mayo, M. P. (2003). Age, length of exposure and grammaticality judgements in the acquisition of English as a foreign. In M. P. Garcia-Mayo & M. L. Garcia-Lecumberri (Eds.), *Age and the acquisition of English as a foreign language* (Vol. 4, pp. 94-114). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Gawi, E. M. K. (2012). The Effects of Age Factor on Learning English: A Case Study of Learning English in Saudi Schools, Saudi Arabia. *English Language Teaching, 5*(1), 127-139.

Graddol, D. (1997). *The future of English?: A guide to forecasting the popularity of the English language in the 21st century*. London: British Council.

Granena, G. (2013). Individual differences in sequence learning ability and second language acquisition in early childhood and adulthood. *Language Learning, 63*(4), 665-703.

Haas, M. (1998). Early vs. late: the practitioner's perspective. In M. Met (Ed.), *Critical issues in early second language learning*. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Hakuta, K., Bialystok, E., & Wiley, E. (2003). Critical evidence: A test of the critical-period hypothesis for second-language acquisition. *Psychological science, 14*(1), 31-38.

Hu, R. (2016). The age factor in second language learning. *Theory and practice in language studies, 6*(11), 2164-2168.

Hyltenstam, K., & Abrahamsson, N. (2001). Age and L2 learning: The hazards of matching practical "implications" with theoretical "facts".:(Comments on Stefka H. Marinova-Todd, D. Bradford Marshall, and Catherine E. Snow's "Three misconceptions about age and L2 learning"). *TESOL quarterly (Print), 35*(1), 151-170.

Hyltenstam, K., & Abrahamsson, N. (2003). Maturational constraints in SLA. *The handbook of second language acquisition*, 538-588.

Ioup, G. (2005). Age in second language development. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 419-436). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Arlbaum.

Jaekel, N., Schurig, M., Florian, M., & Ritter, M. (2017). From early starters to late finishers? A longitudinal study of early foreign language learning in school. *Language Learning, 67*(3), 631-664.

Johnson, J. S., & Newport, E. L. (1989). Critical period effects in second language learning: The influence of maturational state on the acquisition of English as a second language. *Cognitive psychology, 21*(1), 60-99.

Kaplan, R. B., Baldauf Jr, R. B., & Kamwangamalu, N. (2011). Why educational language plans sometimes fail. *Current issues in language planning, 12*(2), 105-124.

Kormos, J., & Kiddle, T. (2013). The role of socio-economic factors in motivation to learn English as a foreign language: The case of Chile. *System, 41*(2), 399-412.

Krashen, S. D. (1973). Lateralization, language learning, and the critical period: Some new evidence. *Language Learning, 23*(1), 63-74.

Krashen, S. D., Long, M. A., & Scarcella, R. C. (1979). Age, rate and eventual attainment in second language acquisition. *TESOL quarterly*, 573-582.

Lamb, M. (2012). A self system perspective on young adolescents' motivation to learn English in urban and rural settings. *Language Learning, 62*(4), 997-1023.

Lamb, M. (2013). Cultural challenges, identity and motivation in state school EFL. In E. Ushioda (Ed.), *International perspectives on motivation: Language learning and professional challenges* (pp. 18-34). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lambert, R. D., & Bergentoft, R. (1994). *Language planning around the world: Contexts and systemic change*: Johns Hopkins Univ Natl Foreign.

Lamendella, J. T. (1977). General Principles of Neurofunctional Organization and their Manifestation in Primary and Nonprimary Language Acquisition 1. *Language Learning, 27*(1), 155-196.

Langabaster, D., & Doiz, A. (2003). Variation constraints on foreign-language written production In M. P. Garcia-Mayo & G.-L. M. L. (Eds.), *Age and the acquisition of English as a foreign language* (Vol. 4, pp. 136-160). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Larson-Hall, J. (2008). Weighing the benefits of studying a foreign language at a younger starting age in a minimal input situation. *Second Language Research, 24*(1), 35-63.

Lenneberg, E. H. (1967). The biological foundations of language. *Hospital Practice, 2*(12), 59-67.

Lightbown, P. (2000). Classroom SLA research and second language teaching. *Applied Linguistics, 21*(4), 431-462.

Long, M. (2005). Problems with supposed counter-evidence to the Critical Period Hypothesis. *International review of applied linguistics in language teaching, 43*(4), 287-317.

Long, M. (2010). *Towards a cognitive-interactionist theory of instructed adult SLA*. Paper presented at the Plenary address to the 30th Second Language Research Forum, College Park.

McLaughlin, B. (1984). *Second language acquisition in childhood: VOl 1. Preschool chidren*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Met, M., & Phillips, J. (1999). *Foreign language curriculum handbook*: ASCD.

Miralpeix, I. (2006). Age and vocabulary acquisition in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In C. Munoz (Ed.), *Age and the rate of foreign language learning* (Vol. 19, pp. 89-106). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Miralpeix, I. (2011). Age effects on second language acquisition: Critical issues under debate. *Language Teaching, 44*(1), 122-132.

MOET. (2008). *National Foreign Language 2020 Project*. Hanoi, VN: Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training.

Moon, J. (2009). 13. The teacher factor in early foreign language learning programmes: The case of Vietnam. In M. Nikolov (Ed.), *The age factor and early language learning* (Vol. 40, pp. 311): Walter de Gruyter.

Mora, J. C. (2006). Age effects on oral fluency development. In C. Munoz (Ed.), *Age and the rate of foreign language learning* (Vol. 19, pp. 65-88). Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

Moyer, A. (2004). *Age, accent, and experience in second language acquisition: An integrated approach to critical period inquiry* (Vol. 7). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Munoz, C. (2003). Variation in oral skills development and age of onset. In M. P. Garcia-Mayo & G.-L. M. L. (Eds.), *Age and the acquisition of English as a foreign language* (Vol. 4, pp. 161-181). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Muñoz, C. (2006). *Age and the rate of foreign language learning*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Muñoz, C. (2008). Symmetries and asymmetries of age effects in naturalistic and instructed L2 learning. *Applied Linguistics, 29*(4), 578-596.

Nap-Kolhoff, E. (2010). *Second language acquisition in early childhood: A longitudinal multiple case study of Turkish-Dutch children*. Utrecht, The Nethelands: Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics.

Nikolov, M. (2009). The age factor in context. In M. Nikolov (Ed.), *The age factor and early language learning* (pp. 1-38): Walter de Gruyter.

Nikolov, M., & Curtain, H. (2000). *An early start: Young learners and modern languages in Europe and beyond*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Nikolov, M., & Djigunović, J. M. (2006). Recent research on age, second language acquisition, and early foreign language learning. *Annual review of applied linguistics, 26*, 234-260.

Noels, K. A., Clément, R., & Pelletier, L. G. (1999). Perceptions of teachers' communicative style and students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *The Modern Language Journal, 83*(1), 23-34.

Norton, B. (2014). Identity and poststructuralist theory in SLA. In S. Mercer & M. Williams (Eds.), *Multiple perspectives on the self in SLA* (Vol. 1, pp. 59-74). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Patkowski, M. S. (1980). The sensitive period for the acquisition of syntax in a second language 1. *Language Learning, 30*(2), 449-468.

Penfield, W., & Roberts, L. (1959). *Speech and brain mechanisms*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Pfenninger, S. E. (2014). The missunderstood variable: Age effects as a function of type of instruction. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 4*(3), 529-556.

Pfenninger, S. E., & Singleton, D. (2016). Affect trumps age: A person-in-context relational view of age and motivation in SLA. *Second Language Research, 32*(3), 311-345.

Qi, S. (2009). Globalization of English and English Language Policies in East Asia: a Comparative Perspective. *Canadian Social Science, 5*(3), 111.

Rebuschat, P., & Williams, J. (2009). *Implicit learning of word order.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, Austin, TX.

Rosa-Torras, M., Navés, T., Loz-Celaya, M., & Pérez-Vidal, C. (2006). Age and IL development in writing. In C. Munoz (Ed.), *Age and the rate of foreign language learning* (pp. 156-182). Clevedon: MUltilingual Matters.

Schwartz, B. D. (2004). Why child L2 acquisition? *LOT Occasional Series, 3*, 47-66.

Singleton, D. (2005). The critical period hypothesis: A coat of many colours. *International review of applied linguistics in language teaching, 43*(4), 269-285.

Singleton, D. M., & Ryan, L. (2004). *Language acquisition: The age factor* (Vol. 9). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Slev, A. M. (2015). Reassessing age-related differences in learning English as a second language. *Academica Science Journal, Psychologica Series, 1*(6), 100-105.

Sun, H., de Bot, K., & Steinkrauss, R. (2015). A multiple case study on the effects of temperamental traits in Chinese preschoolers learning English. *International Journal of Bilingualism, 19*(6), 703-725.

Tabors, P. O. (1997). *One child, two languages: A guide for preschool educators of children learning English as a second language*: ERIC.

Taylor, F. (2013). Listening to Romanian teenagers: Lessons in motivation and ELT methodology. In E. Ushioda (Ed.), *International perspectives on motivation: Language learning and professional challenges* (pp. 35-59). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Unsworth, S. (2007). Child L2, adult L2, child L1: Differences and similarities. A study on the acquisition of direct object scrambling in Dutch. *Language Acquisition, 14*(2), 215-217.

Ushioda, E. (2011). Motivating learners to speak as themselves. In G. Murray, X. Gao, & T. Lamb (Eds.), *Identity, motivation and autonomy in language learning* (pp. 11-24). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Ushioda, E. (2015). Context and complex dynamic systems theory. In Z. Donyei, P. D. MacIntyre, & A. Neury (Eds.), *Motivational dynamics in language learning* (pp. 47-54). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Villanueva, M. L. C. (1991). Second and foreign language acquisition: two sides of the same coin? *Anuari de Filologia. Secció A, Filologia anglesa i alemana*(2), 19-24.

Walsh, T. M., & Diller, K. C. (1978). Neurolinguistic foundations to methods of teaching a second language. *IRAL-International review of applied linguistics in language teaching, 16*(1-4), 1-14.

Williams, J. (2009). Implicit learning. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *The new handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 319-353). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.

Wray, A. (2005). *Formulaic language and the lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# LIỆU CHO TRẺ HỌC NGOẠI NGỮ CÀNG SỚM CÓ CÀNG TỐT? CÓ HAY KHÔNG ĐỘ TUỔI TỐI ƯU CHO TRẺ HỌC NGOẠI NGỮ?

Trần Thị Tuyết

*Trường Đại học Quản lý, Đại học RMIT,*

*Melbourne, Australia*

**Tóm tắt:** Quan niệm ‘cho trẻ học ngoại ngữ càng sớm càng tốt’ đã dẫn tới những đầu tư khá lớn từ cả gia đình và xã hội cho việc học ngoại ngữ của trẻ nhỏ. Tuy nhiên, việc đầu tư này không phải lúc nào cũng mang lại những kết quả khả quan. Bài viết này, thông qua các nghiên cứu lý thuyết và thực tế, bàn tới vấn đề có hay không một độ tuổi lý tưởng cho trẻ học ngoại ngữ. Các lý luận chuyên ngành đã chỉ ra rằng quan niệm ‘càng sớm càng tốt’ trong việc học tiếng thường bị hiểu sai lệch, và việc đầu tư quá sớm cho con trẻ học ngoại ngữ đôi khi là một sự lãng phí rất lớn và không ít trường hợp kết quả mang về lại là lợi bất cập hại. Trẻ nhỏ học ngoại ngữ khác với người lớn. Học ngầm (implicit learning), học theo hứng và ít chịu ảnh hưởng bởi áp lực bên ngoài là đặc điểm của việc học ngôn ngữ ở trẻ. Vì vậy, vấn đề mấu chốt trong dạy học ngoại ngữ cho trẻ không phải là khi nào bắt đầu cho trẻ theo học ngoại ngữ, mà là việc tiếp cận được cách dạy phù hợp với tâm lý và cách học của trẻ ở từng độ tuổi khác nhau.

*Từ khóa:* độ tuổi tối ưu, học ngoại ngữ, trẻ em, giả thuyết giai đoạn tiên quyết, Việt Nam

# THE MEANING EXTENSION OF *OVER*: A CRITIQUE OF KEY THEORIES

Do Tuan Long*, Vu Thi Huyen Trang

*VNU University of Languages and International Studies, Pham Van Dong, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 4 April 2019
Revised 8 January 2020; Accepted 14 February 2020

**Abstract**: This paper summarizes different approaches to the meaning extension of the English preposition *over* and proposes a multimodal approach comprising three spatial image theories and one mental space theory in reference to an image-based view. It is concluded that the author's proposal is a combination of Deane's 2005 multimodal spatial representations and 2017 Kövecses's model, in which there is an emphasis that treating the spatial configurations of a spatial marker requires different frames and when the marker denotes a non-spatial sense, there exists an activation of a metaphor layered from its frame in certain context with a specific communicative purpose to the domain of which the frame is a part and finally the activation will reach the image schema that supports the frame.

*Keywords:* metaphor, over, meaning transference, mechanisms

## 1. Introduction

English prepositions are used before nouns to denote a spatial configuration between the Figure and the Ground (Talmy, 2000). However, they also indicate a "non-spatial" configuration as shown in the following two examples:

*(1) Dangers are over the man's head.*

*(2) Year on year, the company is performing below par.* (Tyler & Evans, 2003)

In the first sentence, the virtual ground is the man's head while the figure is dangers, and readers could realize the concept of imminent dangers menacing the man as if they (dangers) were just above his head. The second sentence reveals the company's worse performance than the usual/expected standard (the par). There are two main proposals giving an explanation for such a usage. Firstly, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) accounted for the meaning transference[1] in those sentences to be *image-schema transformations*, or in other words, metaphors are used to transfer non-spatial senses. Besides, Tyler and Evans (2003) analyzed the meaning transference in reference to the encyclopedic knowledge and metaphor, showing the *perceptual resemblance* and *experiential correlation* between the space and abstract domain are two mechanisms for sense extension.

However, the use of *over* in the following sentence is more complicated than it is in the previous ones:

*(3) The British Ambassador in hot water over joke.* (BBC headline)

* Corresponding author: Tel.: 84-985227867
Email: tuanlongcfl@gmail.com/longdt1990@vnu.edu.vn

[1] Two terms "sense" and "meaning" have to be distinguished here. *Sense* refers to a particular meaning of a preposition in contexts of use while *meaning* is more general, referring to the whole senses of a preposition.

A componential analysis of sentence (3) provides readers with a structure of a prepositional phrase (in hot water) + *over* + a noun phrase (joke). Do (2016) observed that if the prepositional phrase refers to an unpleasant feeling or experience, the noun phrase succeeding *over* could be the cause or reason. A further reading of the article offers the "caused by" use of *over*, which is explained by only Collins Dictionary[2]. Moreover, *over* in the previous sentence could not be represented in an image-schema as an image-schema must be specific enough to be visualized (Aitchison, 1987, pp. 42-43; Palmer, 1981, pp. 25-26; Johnson, 1980, 1999).

As being shown, the use of a preposition, e.g. *over*, is not always simple. Therefore, in this paper we would analyze different approaches to the sense extension of *over*, and then propose a potential framework to treat its role as both spatial and non-spatial markers, which might serve as a basis for the discussion of sense extension of other prepositions.

## 2. A critique of different approaches to sense extension of *over*

### *2.1. Full-specification Approach*

*Over* is treated by Lakoff as a case study in English prepositions (Lakoff, 1987, pp. 416-461) and his analysis is sometimes described as the full-specification approach to lexical semantics in later literature review (Evans, 2001; Tyler & Evans, 2003; Deane, 2005). In the analysis, twenty-two senses of *over* were accounted, mostly prepositional usages, one verb-particle construction and one verbal prefix. The core point in the theory is that the senses associated with prepositions like *over*, which are grounded in spatial experience, are structured in terms of image-schemas. Lakoff supposes that an image schema combining elements of both ABOVE and ACROSS is the prototypical sense of *over*. The distinct senses associated with *over* are structured with respect to this image-schema which provides the category with its prototype structure. Furthermore, according to Lakoff, some of the connections among schemas can only be defined in imagistic terms.

Lakoff claims that the schemas which are different from the central schema are considered to represent distinct senses associated with *over*. According to this model of word meaning, the central schema for *over* has at least six distinct and closely related variants (see Figure 1), each of which is stored in semantic memory.

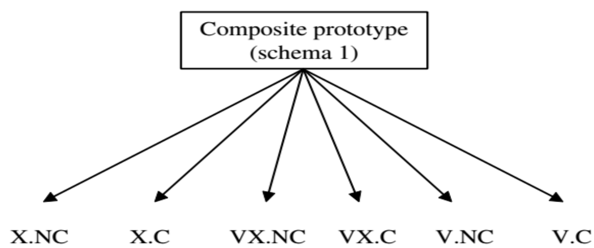



Figure 1. Central image schema (adopted from Lakoff, 1987, p.423)

Given the range of senses *over* is associated with in addition to the ABOVE-ACROSS sense (summarized in Table 1), this model results in a potentially vast proliferation of senses for each lexical item.

[2]. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/over1

Table 1. Schemas proposed by Lakoff (1987) for *over* besides the central schema (Evans & Green, 2006, p.337)

| Schema type | Basic meaning | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| ABOVE schema | The TR is located above the LM. | ***The helicopter is hovering over the hill.*** |
| COVERING schema | The TR is covering the LM | ***The board is over the hole.*** |
| REFLEXIVE schema | The TR is reflexive: the TR is simultaneously the TR and the LM. The final location of the TR is understood with respect to its starting position | ***The fence fell over.*** |
| EXCESS schema | When ***over*** is employed as a prefix it can indicate 'excess' of TR relative to LM | ***The bath overflowed.*** |
| REPETITION schema | ***Over*** is used as an adverb to indicate a process that is repeated. | ***After receiving a poor grade, the student started the assignment over (again).*** |

Here are some more examples for the table 1:

Schema 1. The plane flew over.

Schema 1.X.NC. The plane flew over the yard.

Schema 1.VX.NC. The plane flew over the hill.

Schema 1.V.NC. The bird flew over the wall.

Schema 1.X.C. Sam drove over the bridge.

Schema 1.VX.C. Sam walked over the hill.

Schema 1.V.C. Sam climbed over the wall.

Schema 1.VX.C.E. Sam lives over the hill.

Schema 1.X.C.E. Sausalito is over the bridge.

Schema 2. Hang the painting over the fireplace.

Schema 2.1DTR. The power line stretches over the yard.

Schema 3. The board is over the hole.

Schema 3.P.E. The city clouded over.

Schema 3.MX. The guards were posted all over the hill.

Schema 3.MX.P. I walked all over the hill.

Schema 3.RO. There was a veil over her face.

Schema 3.P.E.RO. Ice spread all over the windshield.

Schema 3. MX.RO. There were flies all over the ceiling.

Schema 3. MX.P.RO. The spider had crawled all over the ceiling.

Schema 4. Roll the log over.

Schema 4.RFP. The fence fell over.

Schema 5. The bathtub overflowed.

Schema 6. Do it over.

The numbers from 1 to 6 are "above and across", pure "above", "covering", "curved trajectory", "excess", and "repetition" respectively. Each schema is labelled for its salient properties. Additional specifications vary along several dimensions: the landmark (LM, or reference object), may be horizontally (X) or vertically (V) extended. It may also be one dimensional (1DTR) or not. There may be contact (C) or noncontact (NC) between the LM and the TR. The TR may be multiplex (multiple entities or locations) or mass (a continuous medium). Various remaining distinctions are indicated: P indicates a connecting path, E indicates location at the end of a trajectory (end-point focus), and RO indicates a relation rotated from its normal orientation.

According to Lakoff, metaphors take image-schemas as their input; and hence, the emergence of the metaphorical use of *over* in the sentence, *She has a strange power over me*, is explained:

*...this is an instance of a very common metaphor: CONTROL IS UP; LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN (Lakoff and Johnson,1980:15). **Over** in this sentence is an extension of schema 2, where the trajector is simply above the landmark (Lakoff, 1987:426).*

*2.2. A critique of Full-specification Approach*

In our opinion, there are four problems with the full-specification approach: (i) the methodology is unconstrained; (ii) there is a lack of a rigorous theory of images; (iii) the context-bound interpretations of the lexical networks would clear risks of misanalysis; and (iv) there is a lack of systematic analysis of how certain metaphors emerge associated with *over.*

To begin with, Lakovian approach has been blamed for a lack of methodological constraints. In other words, Lakoff provides no principled criteria for determining what counts as a distinct sense. This means that the polysemy account presented for *over* (or whatever lexical item we might apply the approach to) results purely from the intuitions (and perhaps also the imagination) of the analyst rather than actually representing the way a particular category is represented in the mind of the language users.

Secondly, though Lakoff's analysis is based on image-schema, he fails to set a rigorous theory of images. This makes the semantic description of *over* become "an informal exercise" without predictive power (Deane, 2005, p.6).

Thirdly, Lakoff used linguistic context of an utterance containing *over* to analyze its meaning, or context-bound interpretations in other words, leading to a clear risk of misanalysis. One example is the following sentences:

*(4) a. The bird flew over the wall.*
*b. Sam climbed over the wall.*

Following Lakoff, *over* in sentences (4a) and (4b) has two distinct senses in reference to contact or without contact. However, the interpretation of *over* with respect to contact or lack of contact derives from the integration of *over* with the other elements in the sentence. Human knowledge about birds (they can fly) and people (they cannot), provides readers with the inference that birds do not come into contact with walls when crossing over them while people do. In other words, the linguistic context together with encyclopedic knowledge provides the details relating to the presence or absence of contact. Therefore, *over* here is vague with respect to contact (Tyler and Evans, 2003).

Last but not least, the sense extension of *over* as a preposition is arbitrarily presented because there is no systematic analysis of the mappings from the source to the target domains.

*2.3. Reformulating the challenge of 'over'*

This is the challenge of *over*: to formulate a framework describing the process by which abstract senses are extended. We will consider the following analyses: (i) Boers, 1996; (ii) Tyler & Evans, 2003; and (iii) Deane, 2005.

*2.3.1. Image-schema transformations approach*

Boers (1996) made use of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the *standard version* in later literature, by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to treat the sense extensions of *over* (Kövecses, 2006), and the notion of image-schemas serve as a basis for further discussion. In general, Boers' analysis is in line with the previous description of Lakoff (1987). The following table summarizes Boers' analyses:

Table 2. A summary of Boer's analysis of *over*

| Senses | In physical space | In other domains |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Above and across | The TR is not in contact and higher than the LM. The shape of the TR and LM varies depending on contexts. | 1. The CONDUIT metaphor<br>E.g.: We talk about it *over* breakfast.<br>2. Linguistic (inter)action is a path<br>E.g.: Talking over his problems.<br>3. Cognitive action is a path<br>E.g.: Thinking over the results of the meeting.<br>4. An activity is a path<br>E.g.: Plenty of food is left over.<br>5. Life is a journey.<br>E.g.: "to get over this difficulty we should …"<br>6. Proximity is (near) identity and distance is difference<br>E.g.: New York swung over from opposition to ratification or the new laws.<br>7. A transaction is a path<br>E.g.: He handed over the briefcase to the mugger.<br>8. Time is a path and we move on it<br>E.g.: We have seen considerable changes over the years.<br>9. Time is a moving object<br>E.g.: Those days are now over. |
| 2. Above | The TR is higher than the LM | 1. Cognition is perception<br>E.g.: He had little hope over her recovery.<br>2. More is up, less is down<br>E.g.: They produced over 70 000 tons of iron a year.<br>3. High status is up + Having control or force is up<br>E.g.: He holds the reins of power over the party.<br>In this metaphor, the metonymic basis of these metaphors (bodily posture, etc.) may still be felt in, for example: *a tower suggesting domination over the other buildings* |
| 3. Covering | The sense is related to the Above sense, but the TR is conceptualized as a surface with or without contact with the LM. | 1. Truth is a hidden object + Cognition is perception.<br>E.g.: His reputation as an artist drew a glittering curtain over his other characteristics.<br>2. Having force or control is up; being subjected to force or control is down<br>E.g.: A wave of nostalgia swept over me… |
| 4. Reflexive sense | In reflexive schemas the TR and the LM are one and the same entity (TR = LM). | Mentally rotating an entity can also be described by means of reflexive *over*.<br>E.g.: I turned the question over in my head. |

We suppose that there are two problems with this approach: (i) the issue of methodology and (ii) the issue of the direction of analysis. In the first place, the methodology of CMT focuses on the basis of intuitive and unsystematically found linguistic metaphor (Pragglejaz, 2007). Recall the information provided in Table 2, we could realize that the metaphor of "Having force or control is up; being subjected to force or control is down" is derived from both Covering sense and Above sense of *over*. What is the difference between the two kinds of metaphor derived from the two aforementioned senses? What are the salient remaining aspects of the source domain in the target domain through the mappings? How could the conceptual metaphors emerge? Those questions do not seem to have any answers yet. Additionally, the second issue concerns the direction of analysis, whether it is top-down or bottom-up (Dobrovolskij & Piirainen, 2005; Stefanowitch, 2007). Though Boers analyzed instances of use of *over* in a corpus, he still followed the top-down direction instead of showing that a given conceptual metaphor of *over* is a result of a multi-stage procedure (Steen, 1999). All in all, the following model advocated by Kövecses (2017) is compatible with analyzing the emergence of certain metaphors associated with over from bottom-up direction:

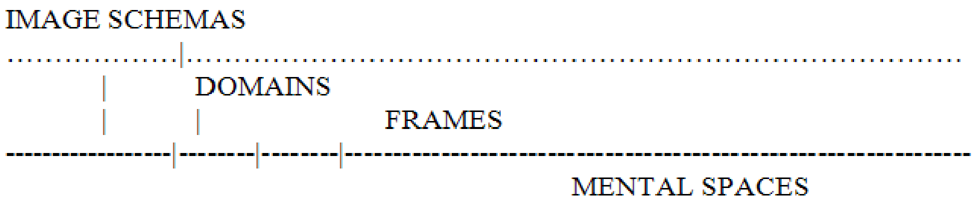



Figure 2. Activation from MENTAL SPACES to FRAMES, DOMAINS, and IMAGE SCHEMAS (after Kövecses, 2017)

The link is a continuum from mental spaces to frames, domains and finally the image-schemas. A metaphor that is used in a specific communicative situation as part of a mental space, or scene, will activate the frame structure to which it is linked, which will, in turn, activate the domain of which the frame is a part, and the activation will reach the image schema that conceptually supports the frame. This proposal is consonant with a number of others in the cognitive linguistic study of metaphor, such as Lakoff's (1991) "invariance principle" and Ruiz de Mendoza's (1998) "extended invariance principle."

*2.3.2. Principled Polysemy*

The framework Principled Polysemy first introduced in the book "The Semantics of English Prepositions" in 2003 is used to analyze the meanings of certain English prepositions and present them in semantic networks. *Over* was taken as a case study to shed light on the analysis of other prepositions. The two authors provided a semantic network for *over* with one central meaning and fifteen extended meanings (see Figure 3).

Tyler and Evans (2003) followed Lakovian idea that a preposition (or a word) has prototypical meaning and then from this meaning other extensions occur. So, it is necessary first to identify the prototypical meaning of a preposition and present other meaning extensions in a semantic network for that preposition. According to them, the prototypical meaning of a word needs to have four following characteristics: (1) earliest attested meaning; (2) predominance in the semantic network; (3) relations to other prepositions; and (4) ease of predicting sense extensions. After finding the prototypical meaning of a preposition, it is crucial to decide whether a particular sense of a preposition counts as a distinct sense and can, therefore, be established as a case of polysemy. Founders of the framework provided two criteria: (i) for a sense to count as distinct, it must involve a meaning that is not purely spatial in nature, and/or a spatial configuration holding between the TR and LM that is distinct from the other senses conventionally associated with that preposition; and (ii) there must also be instances of the sense that are context-independent: instances in which the distinct sense could not be inferred from another sense and the context in which it occurs.

The two authors when explaining the mechanisms of meaning extension relied on context-bounds and tried to provide their explanation in reference to *perceptual resemblance, experiential correlation, online meaning construction* and *pragmatic strengthening*.

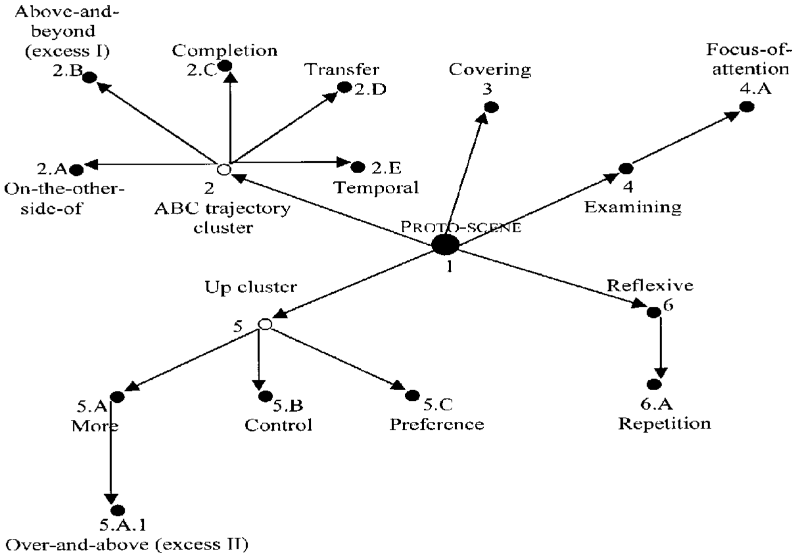
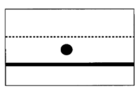
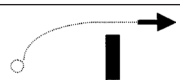
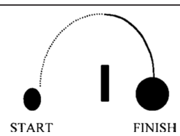
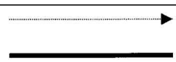


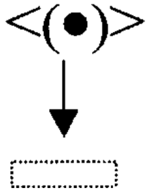
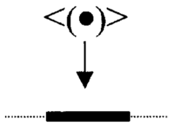
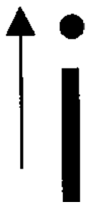
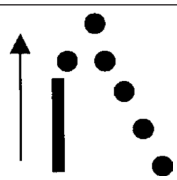
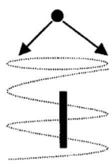
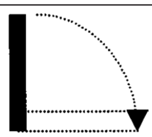
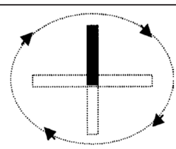

Figure 3. The semantic network for *over* (Tyler & Evans, 2003, p.80)

The review of both spatial and non-spatial senses of *over* is shown in the following table:

Table 3. The total senses of *over* in its semantic network (Do, 2016)

| Senses | Graphic Illustrations | Examples[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Proto-scene |  | *(5) The picture is over the mantle.* |
| 2A. On-the-other-side-of |  | *(6) Arlington is over the Potomac River from Georgetown.* |
| 2B. Above and Beyond (Excess I) |  | *(7) The arrow flew over the target and landed in the woods.* |
| 2C. Completion |   | *(8) Most of what he was saying went over her head, as did any conversation that was not personal.* |
| 2D. Transfer |  | *(9) Sally turned the keys to the office over to the janitor.* |
| 2E. Temporal |  | *(10) Over the waffles next morning, Pittypat was lachrymose, Melanie was silent and Scarlett defiant.* |

[1] Some examples are extracted from "Gone with the Wind" and "Vanity Fair", the others are Tyler & Evans'.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3. Covering |  | *(11) Of course, her brooch could be pinned over the spot, but perhaps Melanie had sharp eyes.* |
| 4. Examining |  | *(12) Once, in looking over some drawings which Amelia had sent from school, Rebecca suddenly came upon one which caused her to burst into tears and leave the room.* |
| 4A. Focus-of-attention |  | *(13) It was pushed out now, and Scarlett knew that Mammy was seething over something of which she did not approve.* |
| 5A. More |  | *(14) Three were killed and over 260 injured when two bombs detonated.* |
| 5A1. Over-and-Above (Excess II) |  | *(15) The heavy rains caused the river to flow over its banks.* |
| 5B. Control |  | *(16) She has a strange power over me.* |
| 5C. Preference |  | *(17) I would prefer tea over coffee.* |
| 6. Reflexive |  | *(18)*<br>*i. The fence fell over.*<br>*ii. He turned the page over.*<br>*iii. The tree bent over in the wind.* |
| 6A. Repetition |  | *(19) He played the same piano piece over.* |

From the table, it could be seen that the generic schemas of *over* is 6, similarly to what was presented by Lakoff (1987) though there are some differences. In reference to our objective in this paper, we will first present and then comment on how each non-spatial sense of *over* is derived from the spatial sense in the light of Principled Polysemy.

The first group of senses is the ABC trajectory cluster, consisting of three non-spatial senses: Completion, Transfer and Temporal. According to Tyler and Evans (2003), the three extended senses are closely related to the spatial configuration denoted in the following sentence:

*(20) The boy walked over the hill.* (Tyler & Evans, 2003)

The TR is the boy while the LM is the hill which will eventually obscure the vision of the viewers/ construers. The ABC trajectory is shown in the figure follow: the arrow is the path of walking; the emoji face represents the agent (boy):

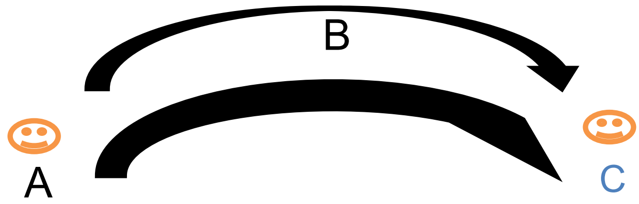



Figure 4. Schematization of "over the hill"

Three points A, B, and C are the most significant ones in the process of walking because they are salient slices in the process. The boy started at A, moved to B (the middle point) and finished at C. When the whole process completes, the utterance "over the hill" is reasonable. Cognitively, the Completion Sense conjures up a virtual process from A to C; the Transfer Sense requires the emergence of A and C while B could perhaps be replaced by the preposition *to*; the Temporal Sense is conceptualized as a straight path from A to C.

Both the Examining Sense and Focus-of-Attention Sense are conceptualized as "above and proximal" in Tyler and Evans' term. Two senses might arise from the construal of such the following sentence in which the TR and LM are schematized in figure 5:

*(21) Phillip is standing over the entrance to the underground chamber.* (Tyler & Evans, 2003, p.93)

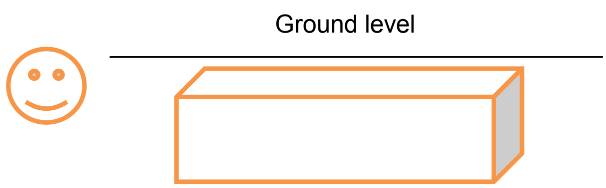



Figure 5. Schematizing the spatial configuration in Example (21)

Tyler & Evans (2003) propose that the TR is higher but proximal to the LM and in this case the TR can closely look at or observe the LM; therefore, the day-by-day experience with many recurring examples give rise to the Examining Sense and the Focus-of-Attention Sense.

According to Tyler and Evans (2003), the Repetition Sense emerges because of three possibilities of the sense emergence: (i) the iterative effect of the Reflexive Sense; (ii) the iterative application of the ABC trajectory; and (iii) the conceptual blend of both the notions of completion and reflexivity.

From the above presentation, we could realize that Tyler and Evans' analysis is based on inference of context-bound, which may result in *the vast proliferation of hypotheses*. In other words, the problem of sense contiguity comes into play (Deane, 2005). In order to illustrate our view, we will show how On-the-other-side-of Sense could emerge. Tyler and Evans (2003) suppose that the sense is a result of the reanalysis of the ABC trajectory cluster; however, we propose that it can be derived directly from the prototypical sense from a different vantage.

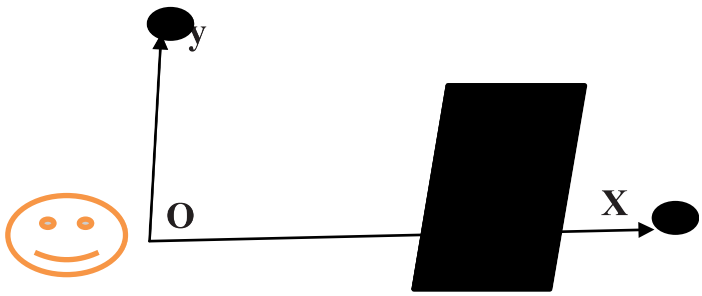



Figure 6. Egocentric view of On-the-other-side-of Sense of *over*

Provided that *x* refers to Arlington (a place) while *y* could be any place above the interlocutor; and in this case, three points Oxy constitute a space/ flat, as shown in Figure 6. If we put up the axis Ox, we would have the following figure:

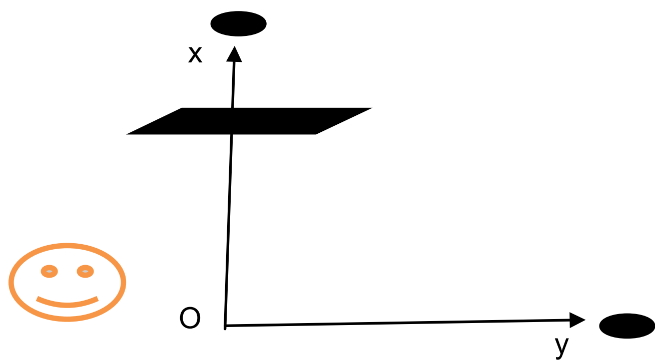



Figure 7. A converse version of Figure 6

It is seen that the spatial scene involving the Ox axis is partially similar to the spatial configuration of the Covering Sense of *under*. However, *Arlington (x) is now above the river*, and anyone to *x* must go across the river. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that On-the-other-side-of Sense could directly derive from the prototypical sense. We should also bear in mind that if the speaker and Arlington are not on the same river bank, i.e. they are on different sides of the river, the use of *over* must be changed into "next to" or "by" to locate the relative position of Arlington and the river from the location of the speaker.

The second issue with Principled Polysemy is that the semantic network for *over* by Tyler and Evans is too simple, admitted by Evans (2014):

> *...it is probably overly simplistic to assume, as has sometimes been done (e.g., Tyler & Evans, 2001, 2003) that*

*discussions of polysemy boil down to the polemic of monosemy on the one hand, versus the multiple distinct sense-units of the principled polysemy approach that I espoused with Andrea Tyler in our 2003 book. This bifurcation is too neat… (Evans, 2014)*

What is more, instances of use of *over* in such cases as sentence (3) remain unanswerable in the light of Principled Polysemy. We could not account for such cases as *online construction meaning* as if *over* is used online, it should be used once only (Croft & Cruise, 2004).

Lastly, Tyler and Evans ignore the role of mental spaces or scenarios/ scenes which are fully specific as suggested by Musolff. The elements of mental spaces are values not roles, adding new elements from the same frame, they make new inferences and evaluations possible in context; they blend source and target frames, and so on (Kövecses, 2015).

In general, the inference-based approach of Principled Polysemy seems to fail to explain how non-spatial senses of *over* emerge; and the links between each sense are arbitrarily presented.

### *2.3. Multimodal Image Theory*

Deane (2005), exploiting a multiple reference frame to treat *over* from three perspectives, shows that the seemingly distinct senses are in fact one sense being looked at from a different perspective. Three frames of Deane's multimodal spatial representations are: the *visual space* (spatial relations as image-complexes); the *kinetic space* (in reference to action and force dynamics); and the *maneuver space* (in reference to Orientation and Alignment). Particularly, Deane's model of Multimodal Image Theory is backed up by three principles in three aforementioned frames:

*(i) Preference rule principle:* A variant construal may be formed by combining a subset of images from the prototype.

*(ii) Stereoscopic Principle:* Representations employing object-centered fields are stereoscopic images, and must therefore consist of at least two images which represent the same scene but differ in the coordinates or resolution from which they view the scene.

*(iii) Distinctiveness Principle:* If an image or an image-complex is part of the prototype for a preposition, it cannot be used as a semantic variant of another preposition.

It is seen that the number of distinct senses associated with English prepositions is reducing systematically. Details of the senses denoted by *over* are discussed by Deane (ibid: 42-90). In fact, the model advocated by Deane has successfully bridged the gaps that previous approaches left. Firstly, it presents the sense development of *over* as a system from the prototypical sense to extended ones through three aforementioned principles, showing that the interpretation of *over* is a multi-stage cognitive process. Distinct sense, e.g. On-the-other-side-of or Covering sense presented by Tyler and Evans, are variants of the prototypical sense. Secondly, the framework has rigorous constraints on what counts as distinct sense, solving the issue of sense redundancy. However, the non-spatial senses of *over* are not treated in the light of Multimodal Space Image Theory. Therefore, in order to explain how non-spatial senses of *over* develop from spatial ones, there is a need of a combination between space and non-space frames of analysis.

## 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, regarding the goal of the paper, we have reviewed four notable works to treat *over* by different scholars (Lakoff, 1987; Boers, 1996; Tyler & Evans, 2003; Deane, 2005). The *Full-specification approach* advocated by Lakoff is criticized for failing to set a theoretical constraint and no advance was shown in comparison with purely descriptive account. The Principled Polysemy framework introduced by Tyler and Evans (2003) provides rigid constraints to determine the prototypical sense of spatial prepositions, and to count a sense as distinct. However, this framework is also claimed to be too simple, as admitted by Evans (2014). Boers' (1996) top-down analysis of conceptual metaphors associated with *over* seems to be arbitrary and could not show spatial cognition is a multi-stage process. Last but not least, the model of Multimodal Spatial Representations by Deane (2005) proves to be successful, solving the remaining issues that other accounts left. It is suggested that the image-schema based view of *over* is an appropriate approach including four spaces: the *visual space* (spatial relations as image-complexes); the *kinetic space* (in reference to action and force dynamics); the *maneuver space* (in reference to Orientation and Alignment); and the *mental* space (in reference to virtual relations between figure and ground, in which CMT is the analysis tool). In other words, we advocate a combination between Multimodal Spatial Representations (Deane, 2005) and Mental Space from bottom-up direction (Kövecses, 2017) to treat the issue raised in the paper.

## References


Aitchison, J. (1987). *Words in the Mind*: *An Introduction to the Mental Lexicon*. Oxford/ New York: Basil Blackwell.

Barcelona, A. (2003). *Metaphor and metonymy at the Crossroads: A cognitive perspective*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.

Brugman, C. (1981). *The story of OVER*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of California: Berkeley.

Boers, F. (1996). *Spatial Prepositions and Metaphor: A Cognitive-semantic Journey along the UP-DOWN and the FRONT-BACK Dimensions*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.

Brenda, M. (2014). *The Cognitive Perspective on the Polysemy of the English Spatial Preposition* ***over*.** Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Coventry, K. R., Richard, C. & Simon, C. G. (1994). Spatial prepositions: object specific function and task requirements. *Journal of Semantics,11*(4), 289–309.

Croft, W. & Cruise, A. D. (2004). *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deane, P. D. (2005). Multimodal spatial representation: on the semantic unity of *over*. In *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics*, Beate, H. & Grady, J. (eds), 235–284. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Dewell, R. B. (1994). Over again: Image-schema transformations in semantic analysis. *Cognitive Linguistics, 5*(4), 351–380.

Dobrovolskij, D., & Piirainen, E. (2005). *Figurative Language: Cross-cultural and Cross-linguistic Perspective*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Evans, V. (2004). *The Structure of Time: Language, Meaning and Temporal Cognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Evans, V. (2005). The meaning of time: polysemy, the lexicon and conceptual structure. *J. Linguist*, *41*(1), 33-75.

Evans, V. (2006). Lexical concepts, cognitive models and meaning-construction. *Cognitive Linguist*, *17*(4), 491-534.

Evans, V. (2009). *How Words Mean: Lexical Concepts, Cognitive Models and Meaning Construction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Evans, V. (2010a). From the spatial to the non-spatial: the 'state' lexical concepts of in, on and at. In: Evans, V., Chilton, P. (Eds.), *Language, Cognition & Space*, 215-248. London: Equinox.

Evans, V. (2010b). Figurative language understanding in LCCM Theory. *Cognitive Linguist*, *21*(4), 601-662.

Evans, V. (2013). *Language and Time: A Cognitive Linguistics Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, V. (2014). A unified account of polysemy within LCCM Theory. *Lingua, 157*, 100-123.

Evans, V. (2015). What's in a concept? Analog versus parametric concepts in LCCM Theory. In: Margolis, E., Laurence, S. (Eds.), *The Conceptual Mind: New Directions in the Study of Concepts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Evans, V., & Green, M (2006). *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Evans, V., & Tyler, A. (2004). Rethinking English prepositions of movement: the case of *to* and *through*. Belg. J. *Linguist*, Vol *18*, 247-270.

Fauconnier, G. (1985). *Mental Spaces*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fauconnier, G., & Turner, M. (1998). Conceptual integration networks. *Cognitive Science*, *22*(2), 31-187.

Fauconnier, G., & Turner, M. (2002). *The way we think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.

Fillmore, C. (1982). Frame semantics. In *Linguistics in the Morning Calm*, ed. by The Linguistic Society of Korea, 111-137. Soeul: Hanshin.

Grady, J. (1997). *Foundations of Meaning: Primary Metaphors and Primary Scenes*. Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation. Berkeley: University of California Berkeley.

Grady, J. (1999). A typology of motivation for conceptual metaphor: correlation vs. resemblance. In G.W. Gibbs & G. Steen (eds), *Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics*, 79-100. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Jackendoff, R. (1983). *Semantics and Cognition*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Johnson, M. (1987). *The body in the mind: The bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kövecses, Z. (1990). *Emotion Concepts*. Berlin and New York: Springer-Verlag.

Kövecses, Z. (1995). American friendship and the scope of metaphor. *Cognitive Linguistics*, *6*, 315–346.

Kövecses, Z. (2000a). The scope of metaphor, in A. Barcelona (ed.) *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads*, 79-92. Berlin: Mouton.

Kövecses, Z. (2000b). *Metaphor and Emotion*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor. A Practical Introduction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2010a). *Metaphor. A Practical Introduction* (2nd ed). Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2010b). A new look at metaphorical creativity in cognitive linguistics, *Cognitive Linguistics, 21(4),* 663-697.

Kövecses, Z. (2015). *Where Metaphors Come From: Reconsidering Context in Metaphor*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2017). Levels of metaphor. *Cognitive linguistics*, *28*(2), 321-347.

Kreitzer, A. (1997). Multiple levels of schematicization: a study in the conceptualization of space. *Cognitive Linguistics*, *8*(4), 291–325.

Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, Fire and Dangerous Tings: What Categories Tell Us about the Life of the Mind*. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G. (1991). The invariance hypothesis. Is abstract reason based on image schemas? *Cognitive Linguistics*, *1*, 39-74.

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *The Metaphors We Live By.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Langacker, R. W. (1987). *Foundations of cognitive grammar: Vol. 1*. Theoretical prerequisites. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Langacker, R. W. (2002). *Concept, image, and symbol: The cognitive basis of grammar*. (Originally published in 1991). Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. Lindstromberg, S. (2009). *English prepositions explained*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Linder, S. (1981). *A Lexico-semantic Analysis of English Verb Particle Constructions with "out" and "up"*. Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, University of California, San Diego.

Do, T. L. (2016). *The meanings of English prepositions over, above, under, below and their potential equivalents in Vietnamese*. Unpublished M.A Thesis, University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

Do, T. L. (2018a). Over again: Potential novel perspectives from Lexical concepts and Cognitive models. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, *34*(4), 83-103.

Do, T. L. (2018b). Over again: Novel perspectives from Lexical concepts and Cognitive models. In 2018 International Graduate Research Symposium Proceedings, *Linguistics, Foreign Language Education Interdisciplinary Fields*. Hanoi: Vietnam National University Press, Hanoi.

Musolff, A. (2006). Metaphor scenarios in public discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, *21*(1), 23-38.

Pragglejaz Group. (2007). MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse. *Metaphor & Symbol, 22*(1), 1–39.

Recanati, F. (2004). *Literal Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roussel, E. (2013). Limit, Space and the Preposition *Over*. *Cercles, 29*, 198-225.

Ruiz de Mendoza, F. (1998). On the nature of blending as a cognitive phenomenon. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *30*, 259–274.

Sandra, D., & Rice, S. (1995). Network analyses of prepositional meaning: Mirroring whose mind – the linguist's or the language user's? *Cognitive Linguistics*. *6*(1), 89-130.

So, Y. Y. (2004). The polysemy network of *over*. *SNU Working papers in English Language and Linguistics*, *3*, 63-78

Stefanowitch, A. (2007). Words and their metaphors. A corpus-based approach. In Stefanowitch, A. & Gries, S.T. (Eds.,) *Corpus-based Approaches to Metaphor and Metonymy,* pp. 63 - 105. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Steen, G.et al. (2007). MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, *22*(1), 1-39.

Sullivan, K. (2013). *Frames and constructions in metaphoric language*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Sweetser, E. (1990). From etymology to pragmatics. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Talmy, L. (1983). How language structures space. In Pick, H. & L. Acredolo (eds). *Spatial Orientation Theory, Research and Application*, 225-281. New York: Plenum Press.

Talmy, L. (2000). *Toward a cognitive semantics, vol. II, Typology and process in concept structuring*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Taylor, J.R. (1989, 2003). *Linguistic Categorization, Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thora, T. (2004). *Review of The Semantics of English Prepositions* [Retrieved from http://linguistlist.org/pubs/reviews/get-review.cfm?SubID=18309 on 20 June 2015]

Tyler, A., & Evans, V. (2000). My first husband was Italian: Examining "exceptional" uses of English tense. *Linguistic Agency of University of Duisburg* (L.A.U.D) Series A: General and Theoretical Papers.

Tyler, A., & Evans, V. (2001a). Reconsidering prepositional polysemy networks: the case of *over*. *Language*, *77*(4), 724-765.

Tyler, A., & Evans, V. (2001b). The Spatialization of Tense: A Cognitive Investigation of Exceptional Uses of English Tense. In M. Putz, S. Niemeier, & R. Dirven (Eds.), *Cognitive linguistic approaches to language pedagogy,* 63-105. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Tyler, A., & Evans, V. (2003). *The semantics of English prepositions: Spatial scenes, embodied meaning, and cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tyler, A., & Evans, V. (2004). Applying cognitive linguistics to pedagogical grammar: the case of *over*. In M. Achard, & S. Niemeier (Eds.), *Cognitive linguistics, second language acquisition, and foreign language teaching,* 257-280. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Tyler, A. et al. (2011). Applying Cognitive Linguistics to Learning the Semantics of English *to, for* and *at:* An Experimental Investigation. *VIAL*, *8*, 122-139.

# SỰ MỞ RỘNG NGHĨA CỦA GIỚI TỪ TIẾNG ANH "OVER": NHÌN LẠI NHỮNG HƯỚNG NGHIÊN CỨU CHÍNH

Đỗ Tuấn Long, Vũ Thị Huyền Trang

*Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội,*
*Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Bài viết này tóm lược và đưa ra nhận định về một vài đường hướng phân tích hiện tượng mở rộng nghĩa của giới từ *over* và đưa ra đề xuất về Mô hình Đa phương thức kết hợp giữa ba thuyết hình ảnh không gian và một thuyết hình ảnh không gian tinh thần dựa trên hình ảnh (image-based view). Đề xuất của chúng tôi về cơ bản hoàn toàn trùng khớp với mô hình nghiên cứu của Deane (2005) và Kövecses (2017), trong đó nhấn mạnh rằng khi phân tích hình ảnh không gian của giới từ, ta cần có sự kết hợp đa chiều. Xét về nghĩa phi không gian, thì mỗi nghĩa sẽ kích hoạt một ẩn dụ mang tính tầng lớp từ khung của nó trong một ngôn cảnh với mục đích giao tiếp cụ thể đến miền chứa khung và cuối cùng là hình ảnh – lược đồ, cái mà tương trợ cho khung tri nhận trong hoạt động chủ thức của con người.

*Từ khóa:* ẩn dụ, over, chuyển nghĩa, cơ chế

VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, Vol.36, No.1 (2020) 51-60

# CONFIDENCE AND MOTIVATION OF NOVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS AT VNU IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Le Thuy Lan*

*Faculty of English Language Teacher Education,*
*VNU University of Languages and International Studies,*
*Pham Van Dong, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 26 July 2019
Revised 19 December 2019; Accepted 15 February 2019

**Abstract:** The study aims to gain some insights into the confidence and motivation of young English teachers in doing research as a preliminary stage for further follow up research into the research practice of these teachers. The researcher opted for a qualitative approach by interviewing in person six novice English teachers working at a university in Vietnam National University, Hanoi. The outcomes show that the teachers had between low and medium confidence in their research ability and were motivated mainly by extrinsic factors such as school requirement while acknowledging the benefits research has on teaching practice and personal development.

*Keywords:* teacher's professional development, teacher's research, teacher's confidence, teacher's motivation

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1. Research as part of teacher's competences*

It is of a longheld belief that one significant competence that good teachers must possess is the ability to conduct research in order to inform their teaching practice. Studies have reached the general concensus that teachers who read and do research on a regular basis make research-based pedagogical decisions which in turn positively benefit both teaching and learning (Rowland, 1996; Hargreaves, 2001; McNiff & Whitehead, 2012). Moreover, research doing has also been proven to favour teachers' own professional development (Kincheloe, 2003; Lyle, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; Chow, Chu, Tarvares, & Lee, 2015).

Also, for higher education, research has been cited as one fundamental responsibility of university teachers alongside teaching (Rowland, 2006). In the book *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*, Richards and Lockhart (1994) also stated six major roles of language teachers including material developer, counselor, mentor, team member, professional and researcher. Specifically, teachers are recommended to conduct research related to the language learning and teaching, especially in their classroom context.

### *1.2. Research requirements of teachers at VNU*

In the light that Vietnam's higher education system is striving towards enhancing its quality and position in the world stage of education service, Vietnam National University, (abbreviated as VNU) – as the number one university in the country (ranked by QS Asia 2016) is playing a pivotal role in such process. The university has publicly announced its ambitious goal to become the leading research institution in the region, to make it to the top 100 universities in Asia and

* Tel.: 84-346704739
Email: lanalee9588@gmail.com

top 500 universities in the world by the year 2020 (VNU, 2014). In order to realise this goal, the university acknowledges the utmost importance of research as a central criterion to work on, and accordingly has impelled its own teaching staff to step up and get more actively involved in research-related activities. To be specific, with an aim to help VNU reach 800 articles published on international journals by 2020, the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) – a member university of VNU has required that any in-service teacher at VNU must work least 600 hours of research per year, which is equivalent to at least one research article published on internationally recognised journals or the like (University of Languages and International Studies, 2017). This is an awarding effort in order to liven up the research environment in the university, yet has inevitably caused certain challenges to its teachers, especially novice teachers with relatively little experience not only in instructional teaching activities but also research-oriented ones.

*1.3. Novice teachers*

The study into the first years of novice teachers has been a well-established literature. Novice teachers – teachers with less than five years of experience in the job – are found to encounter enormous challenges in the induction period of their career. These include classroom management struggles, unsupported working environments, inadequate preparation time, lack of administrative support (Dickson, Ridlebarger, Stringer, Tennant, & Kennetz, 2014). However, research literature leaves a gap of novice university teachers who are required to conduct research along with their teaching job but find themselves fall short in both experience and orientation in such a complicated and highly demanding academic practice.

In summary, research has become a basic requirement for teachers at VNU; however, it might pose a problem for young teachers with little experience both in teaching and researching. More specifically, in her own teaching faculty, the researcher has also noticed that many of her colleagues who are young teachers seem to have rather low confidence and little motivation when it comes to doing research. Therefore, the researcher wishes to gain a clearer insight into the exact confidence level and motivations of novice teachers in research practice by conducting this study.

## 2. Literature review

*2.1. Novice teacher's confidence in doing research*

Several definitions of confidence have been put forward. Bandura (1977) comes up with a term called self-efficacy and defines it as one's belief in their capabilities to attain certain set outcomes. Building on this definition, Craig (2007) slightly differs and thinks of confidence as a combination of self-efficacy and positive belief about future as well trust in other people. In this study, based on Bandura's (1977, p.3) original definition of self-efficacy, the researcher refers to teacher's self-confidence in doing research as teachers' own beliefs in their abilities to "organize and execute the courses of actions required to produce given attainments" in conducting research.

It is a matter of fact that even though many studies have been made into teacher's self-efficacy or confidence in their teaching practice, little has been investigated about teacher's confidence in doing research as part of their professional development, not to mention novice teachers'. Previous studies such as Hancock's (1997) study found that participating teachers did not show a high level of confidence in assuming roles of researchers but rather seemed disoriented due to the incessant reforms, revisions and adjustments initiated by the British government. The teachers also claimed to believe they themselves "have little part in making changes" and "believe less in themselves as professionals with something worthwhile to say" (p.90). One particular survey by Gray and Campbell (2002) distributed to 200 new university graduates in teaching profession shows these beginning teachers had a prevailing survival mindset but simultaneously demonstrated an open mindset to coming opportunities in their future career and confidence in joining the school community of inquiry.

*2.2. Novice teachers' motivations in doing research*

Another significant factor that might influence young teachers' research activities has to do with their motivation, which is in close connection with their confidence level. Bandura himself conducted more studies into the matter of self-efficacy or confidence and found a strong correlation between one's confidence in their own abilities to achieve desirable outcomes and their motivation in carrying out tasks. Motivation is considered the energy and drive that moves people to do something. According to Deci and Ryan's (1985) Organismic Integration Theory, there are three types of motivation, the first of which is intrinsic motivation including interest, enjoyment and inherent satisfaction or, in other words, people are driven to do something because the activity itself is interesting or enjoyable. The second type of motivation is extrinsic motivation which can be further divided into four kinds (Ryan & Deci, 2000b) known as:

(1) external regulation or behaviors to satisfy external demand or rewards (compliance, external rewards and punishment);
(2) introjected regulation or behaviors to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego enhancement (self-control, ego-involvement, internal rewards and punishment);
(3) identified regulation or a conscious valuing of a behavioral goal or regulation (personal importance, conscious valuing);
(4) integrated regulation which occurs when identified regulations are fully assimilated to the self (congruence, awareness, synthesis with self).

The final type of motivation is actually the lack of motivation or amotivation.

Based on Deci and Ryan's definition of motivation, teacher's motivation in doing research can be understood herein as a factor driving teachers to do research. Watkins' (2006) early study shows that teachers were mainly motivated to conduct research for their own professional development as it allowed them to view the teaching practice from an outsider' standpoint, learn about other teachers' techniques and relate research findings with their own classroom instruction as well as establish social networking. Borg's (2009) mix-method study on research practice among 505 English language teachers across different countries found that teachers were mainly motivated to do research by practical and professional concerns rather than external factors such as employers or promotion. Some years later, in 2015, Mehrani at the University of Neyshabur conducted interviews with 24 Iranian English teachers and found a modest level of research engagement. The Iranian teacher participating in the study reported a variety of motivations, including their professional development, pedagogical concerns, instrumental incentives, and institutional expectations, among which the first two personal motivations also played the major role. However, Ulla's (2018) qualitative research among 11 public high school English teachers in Mindanao Philippines found that participating teachers were motivated by personal rather than professional goals to do research. At the same time, they also acknowledged the benefits for their teaching practices and career development that research could bring.

In Vietnam, Phan (2011) conducted research into research activities at Hue University and found that over 65% of lecturers chose passion, realizing research ideas and supporting teaching practice as their motivations for doing research. Almost

60% of teachers claimed that they do research because of compulsory requirements. Whereas, extrinsic motivations such as to improve chance of promotion or annual performance evaluation accounted for a much smaller proportion at 30.3%.

In general, it is apparent that there exist certain discrepancies among aforementioned research outcome on the motivations of teachers in conducting research. Most of the found research was conducted in other countries, only which by Phan (2011) shed some light into Vietnamese teachers' motivations in doing research. However, Phan's research is a quantitative one, which in turn limits the insight it may provide about the matter in question. The researcher herself, hence, looked forward to conducting her own qualitative study into the motivations of novice teachers in her teaching institution to contribute to the available literature.

## 3. Research design and methodology

### *3.1. Scope of study*

The researcher has decided to look into confidence and motivation in doing research of six English teachers at Vietnam National University – Hanoi in Vietnam.

### *3.2. Research questions*

1. How confident are novice English teachers at VNU in doing research?

2. What are the novice teachers' motivations in doing research?

### *3.3. Research methods*

#### *3.3.1. Sampling*

The study employs criterion sampling method in which a number of pre-set criteria were used in selecting participants. To be more specific, participants in the study must meet the following requirements:

i. Participant must be an in-service teacher at VNU in Hanoi.

ii. Participant must have less than five years' experience as an in-service teacher.

iii. Participant must have had conducted at least one research.

iv. Participant must agree to willingly take part in the research on the grounds that their identity remains strictly anonymous and the information they provide is used only for research purpose.

After approaching all the teachers that satisfy the requirements above, the researcher received approval to interview six young teachers with under five years of teaching experience at VNU. They are predominantly holders of bachelor degrees currently pursuing master program and some are master graduates. The following table shows a description of their profile, noted that they are introduced under pseudonyms to preserve their identity and the confidentiality of collected data.

Table 1. General information about participants

| Pseudonym | Gender | Teaching experience | Research experience |
|---|---|---|---|
| Phuong | Female | 1.5 years | 2 studies |
| An | Female | 1.5 years | 2 studies |
| Binh | Female | 3 years | 2 studies |
| Ha | Female | 3 years | 3 studies |
| Thanh | Female | 4 years | 3 studies |
| Hoang | Male | 3 years | 5 studies |

All in all, by gender, there are five female participants as opposed to one single male participant. Most of them have between 1.5 to 4 years of work experience, with half of them having been a lecturer for 3 years. In terms of research experience, the participants all claimed to have certain experience, with at least two studies done for each person and at most 5 for the male lecturer. Their studies are mainly in the field of English Language Teaching and Linguistics as these are also two strong majors of the faculty. Some studies they have conducted are their graduation papers from bachelor degree or master degree course, whereas some were conducted during their working time at their faculty as a lecturer.

*3.3.2. Data collection instrument*

The researcher collected data using the qualitative method of individual face-to-face interview over the course of two months, in February and March 2019. The language medium of the interviews was English because all the participants were English language teachers with high proficiency in the language and they themselves claimed to have no problem with using the language for interviews. Each interview lasted for an average of 20 to 40 minutes. All the interviews were recorded with consent of participants for the purpose of data analysis later on. The interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner, in which a set of guiding questions and prompts were prepared in advance by the researcher, yet the questions remained open-ended and the interviewees were expected to elaborate on their points by giving details and reasons.

The interview included two major sections. The first one asked about participants' background and experience in teaching as well as researching. The next part contained questions about their self-confidence and motivation in doing research.

*3.3.3. Data analysis*

The researcher decided to opt for content data analysis upon perceiving its appropriateness. In details, after interviews took place, recordings were transcribed into written texts through the computer by the researcher herself and filed into a common database using Microsoft Excel. Importantly, it is noted that the questions in the questionnaire were organized into two themes 'confidence' and 'motivations', so the answers gained from those questions were analyzed accordingly. Specifically, the research looked for common themes among the answers of six participants for one question at a time while highlighting differences in those answers to report in the results.

## 4. Results

*4.1. Research question 1: Novice English teacher's self-confidence in doing research*

To begin with, so as to best visualize the level of confidence, the participants were first asked to rate their self-confidence in doing research on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not confident at all" and 5 being "highly confident" before they explained their choice. Most of the young lecturers in the study scored themselves between **2 to 3.5** on this question, showing that they were not quite confident in this practice. More specifically, three teachers (An, Binh, and Phuong) each chose 2 to 2.5, explaining that they do not think of themselves as good researchers.

An said "*I'll give myself 2. I don't think I have enough insights into my specialized field. I don't know what to research, what should be researched, what is the research gap we need to fill in. Most of the time, it is intuitive…*"

Meanwhile, Binh appeared to be even more negative about her research ability, *"I think would be 2. Although I've made considerable efforts, I didn't find myself good at doing research. It's not my strong point, not my interest as well. I think the most important reason for that is my lack of interest in doing research. I'm not willing to overcome difficulties to pursue it anyway; I find it really a huge weakness and a nightmare for me."*

On the other hand, the remaining teachers including Thanh, Ha and Hoang answered with a bit more confidence by giving themselves between 3 and 3.5 on this question. In response to the question why not a higher score, Hoang admitted that he has "*just a little experience, doesn't have too much passion in doing research, still has a lot of questions*". Only Ha managed to give herself a 3.5, claiming that she likes doing research, yet was "*not really confident, because I don't have much knowledge about research methods even though I've learnt a lot about methodology. When it comes to really practice researching, I have a lot of difficulties, what I need to do, what to do next, a lot of questions*."

In order to solidify the answers gained from the previous question, the researcher decided to ask a further question on how strong the participants think their research skills are, which also partly reflects their confidence level in this practice. Accordingly, the participants were requested to rate their research skills from 1 – extremely weak to 5 – extremely strong. Interestingly, a similar outcome to the first question was recorded as all of the participants chose between 2-3 points for themselves in this question, showing a rather low confidence in their research skill.

Phuong said *"It's kind of embarrassed. I think my skill is not fully developed enough for me to carry out the research on my own, I usually need the support from a lot of resources and other people that I met to figure out the way, or ask them for help or some kind of support."*

Binh went as further to show her many worries about her own research skill: *"After reading a bunch of material, after being exposed to a lot of data, I'd be really confused, overwhelmed by the huge amount of information. I would find it really difficult to analyze them, to synthesize in a logical and like… effective way to generate useful finding. How to say, even though I tried to come up with some amazing findings, my mentor said that it's not really amazing, not useful. I'm not really good at that."*

The final question in this part asks about how well-trained in research methodology they think they are. The researcher intends to find out the reason for such low level of confidence shown by participants, which might to some extent correlate to their previous training experience in research activities at school or during the induction period. Surprisingly, this time, a wider range from 1 to 4 was reported, with most participants opting for either 3 or 4. This could be put down to the fact that most of them admitted having received formal training in research methodologies through courses at university or higher education classes even though they admitted not having made good use of such knowledge until now. The only exception was Phuong who gave herself only 1, confessing to have no proper training of any kind during her time as a student, and all the research she had done so far had been based on her own experience and informal guiding from others.

To further understand the teachers' confidence in doing research, a special question was asked about how they feel when conducting studies. It is assumed that high level of confidence in doing research might be followed by positive feelings toward this practice whereas low level of confidence may lead to somewhat more negative feelings. As a result, a range of both positive and negative adjectives to describe participants' feelings toward their research doing were recorded. Specifically, on the negative side, most teachers would say they feel "nervous, pressured, stressed, confused, tired, exhausted, lost" when doing research.

*I do feel pressured that I know I must complete the scores. I must do it immediately and have enough score. Also confused as I don't know the orientation, how to do it. This feeling occurs at the beginning of each phase. And finally tired when I have done it (the research) for too long.* – Hoang.

*It's a bit stressful, exhausted. I don't think it's useful. There are many stages in doing research, right? It takes about 1 or 2 months to complete one, I have to say that's a lot of time, I kind of prefer spending my time doing other things instead of research.* – Thanh

*I think the more I dig deeper, the more I'd be lost. Because there's a lot of information, even contrasting information, even information that would make me have 2nd thought about my opinion at the first stage. Sometimes I cannot use my data because it didn't answer my research question at all, or some of the findings* *are really opposite to my hypothesis.* - Binh

On the other hand, a smaller number of positive feelings were reported as follows:

*I'm really curious about the results. Before I do the research, I have some kind of assumptions in mind, I'm really curious about what is really in reality. I also feel engaged as I really want to find out what is in the end finally. That's why I get really engaged in the research."* – Ha

*I feel deeply joyful when I read some meaningful papers around the world.* - An

All in all, it is safe to conclude from the interview findings that most of the teachers in the study showed a low to medium level of confidence in their research skills despite having been trained quite properly in research methodologies. This is further supported by the fact that most of the teachers have certain negative feelings such as being *pressured, nervous, lost* while doing research even though some of them do have positive attitude towards this practice.

*4.2. Research question 2: Novice English teachers' motivation in doing research*

As for the current study, when asked about their motivations in doing research there is a consensus among participants that the biggest impetus behind their research practice is because of external and introjected regulations. This refers to requirements such as graduation requirement from bachelor/master courses and requirement as a university lecturer to conduct research; students' learning and teachers' own career development. As put by Hoang "*My main motivation is to complete the required scores of research for the school. After the research, I receive the results on my students, that's also a motivation. But it was not a big one from the start. For the long term, of course, research has a lot of impact on my career too. It's highly beneficial to study for post doc degree, to apply for scholarships and have a better profile*."

Said Phuong *"The first thing is the requirement of the faculty, every year we need to conduct research for at least 600 hours. Secondly, the 2 research I have conducted this year it is because of the task I was assigned by the division in the faculty because I was member of the AUN group we need to conduct some survey, some research to write some report for AUN."*

*"Mostly I have to do research because I'm required to do it. For example, regarding the graduation from BA degree, I was required to complete a graduation thesis to graduate the university with a Fast track program degree. Now, I'm required by university to conduct research in order to earn enough research grades for a year. Also, some of that would be the requirement of study for higher education."* – Binh.

*"I think if we conduct a research, I mean real research that you have motivation to do it and you really want to conduct, it gives us overview in teaching, also we can learn some interesting ways to plan lessons to organize activities in class, in a micro environment, maybe it is the way for us to material development, program development."* - Phuong

Binh also mentioned some identified regulations as her motivation namely being a role model for her students, becoming more open minded and inquiring *"I think lecturer has to be a good model for her students, so the lecturer has to do research. Also, by doing research, we're exposed to a lot of different ideologies, perspectives about an issue so we'd be more open minded. For example, I've read articles and comments about the age of letting our children learn English. Before, I didn't think much about it, but after reading those comments, that somehow, like, stimulates my inquiring mind."*

On the other hand, the teachers did not forget to mention some intrinsic motivations in conducting research. Ha expressed her love for the activity itself, saying *"When I teach, I have a lot of question, and I really want to do research to find answers. I love doing research, I love collecting data and coming up with different answers with my questions."*

Similarly, intrinsic motivation also involves seeking and conquering challenges, which was showed in An's great passion for learning through research *"For the graduation thesis, we had 2 choices, the 1st one we could take some alternative courses to graduate – but then I wanted to challenge myself. I heard from some teachers saying that doing research might provide you the skill to search for information, to train yourself in the future. I want to challenge myself despite the fact that I knew it would cost me a lot of time and efforts… The strongest motivation for me is the quest for knowledge, the satisfaction of discovering something new.*

In conclusion, the participants in the study claimed to conduct research mainly out of extrinsic motivation especially the least autonomous types of extrinsic motivation like external regulation and introjected regulation. Whereas, only two of them had intrinsic one such as their love for discovering new knowledge and challenging themselves by doing research.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of the study generally match with those of previous studies (Hancock, 2007; Ulla, 2018) in that the young teachers showed a general lack of confidence and even negative feelings associated with doing research despite acknowledging certain foundation in research methodology. As pointed out by numerous studies in psychology, one's psychological state could affect their performance. Steele and Aronson (1995), Aronson et al. (1999), Gutbezhalh (1995), Bouffard-Bouchard (1990), Lane et al. (2004) find that self-efficacy, stress, mood, anxiety can affect performance in different kinds of tasks ranging from cognitive to physical ones. Accordingly, positive self-efficacy and low level of stress seem to indicate better performance whereas negative self-efficacy, high stress and anxiety level are often associated with worse performance. As a result, the participants' lack of confidence in their ability to conduct research is likely to affect their research outcomes in one way or another, predictably towards the more negative end, especially when they have reported negative feelings in this practice themselves.

Moreover, in sharp contrast to results of Borg (2009), Mehrani (2015) and Ulla (2018), the participants in the current study had a mix of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, with the latter seemingly overshadowing the former. On a special note, the participants tended to largely perceive research as a required practice if they wish to gain certain qualification or continue their career rather than something they genuinely enjoy doing. In details, the external motivations that were reported by participants had to do with the less autonomous regulation types which in turn are likely to come with effects such as "less interest, value and effort toward achievement" (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). This finding with the prevailing extrinsic motivation may be correlated to the low level of confidence and negative feelings associated with research activity reported earlier by the teachers as it has been found by previous research that extrinsic motivation is more closely linked with less confidence, greater anxiety as well as less positive emotions in the task involved (Deci & Ryan, 1991; Wolters, Yu, & Puntrich, 1996; Sénécal, Koestner, & Vallerand, 1995).

## 6. Conclusion

To summarize, six novice teachers who participated in the research seemed to report a relatively low level of self-confidence in their research capability and somewhat more negative feelings towards this practice. As regards their motivations, they point to more extrinsic motivations such as requirements from school authority but do acknowledge that research doing is beneficial for their own career development and instructional activities in class.

## 7. Limitations and suggestions for further research

Due to the nature of qualitative research and interview instrument, the research outcomes tend to be highly subjective. The question log was designed by the researcher herself and has not been subjected to peer evaluation, so there may remain validation issues with it. The small number of participants also means that the outcomes cannot be generalized to present the opinion of the larger population of novice teachers, either in the faculty or on a wider scale. Also, it is acknowledged by the researcher herself that these interviews were conducted on single-time basis with no follow-up interview so the results could be somehow limitedly explored. Further study could be conducted into real difficulties for teachers in doing research as well as specific levels of adjustments that should be made to ensure novice teachers are better supported in research activities. Moreover, the researcher also hopes to conduct a follow-up research into specific difficulties facing the 6 participants in the current study related to their working environment. Another important question that needs to be answered is the level of confidence and motivation to do research among more experienced teachers in the faculty.

A more detailed look at the results also reveals that among the teachers who took part in this research, those with the least experience in teaching and research activities (Phuong and An) tended to be less confident in their research skills, but were more motivated by intrinsic factors (the discovery of new knowledge through researching) compared to the other teachers. This also poses an interesting finding that deserves further investigation in the follow up research.

## References

### Vietnamese

Phan Thị Tú Nga (2011). Thực trạng và các biện pháp nâng cao hiệu quả hoạt động nghiên cứu khoa học của giảng viên tại Đại học Huế. *Tạp chí khoa học Đại học Huế*, *68*, 67-78.

### English

Aronson, J., Lustina, M. J., Good, C., Keough, K., Steele, C. M., & Brown, J. (1999). When white men can't do math: Necessary and sufficient factors in stereotype threat. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *35*(1), 29-46.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*(2), 191.

Borg, S. (2009). English language teachers' conceptions of research. *Applied Linguistics*, *30*(3), 358-388.

Bouffard-Bouchard, T. (1990). Influence of self-efficacy on performance in a cognitive task. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *130*(3), 353-363.

Chow, K. C. K., Chu, S. K. W., Tavares, N., & Lee, C. W. Y. (2015). Teachers as Researchers: A Discovery of Their Emerging Role and Impact through a School-University Collaborative Research. *Brock Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, *24*(2), 20-39.

Craig, C. (2007). *Creating Confidence. A handbook for professionals working with young people*. Glasgow: Centre for Confidence and Well- being.

Deci, E. L, & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.

Deci, E. L, & Ryan, R. M. (1991). A motivational approach to self: Integration in Personality. In R. Dienstbier (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation: Vol. 38. Perspectives on motivation* (pp. 237-288). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Dickson, M., Riddlebarger, J., Stringer, P., Tennant, L., & Kennetz, K. (2014). Challenges faced by Emirati novice teachers. *Near and Middle Eastern Journal of Research in Education*, *4*.

Gray, J., & Campbell-Evans, G. (2002). Beginning teachers as teacher-researchers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *27*(1), 4.

Gutbezahl, J. (1995). How Negative Expectancies and Attitudes Undermine Females' Math Confidence and Performance: A Review of the Literature.

Hancock, R. (1997). Why are class teachers reluctant to become researchers?. *British Journal of In-service Education*, *23*(1), 85-99.

Hargreaves, D. (2001). Revitalising educational research: past lessons and future prospects. *Taking education really seriously: Four years.* Hard Labour: RoutledgeFalmer.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2012). *Teachers as researchers (classic edition): Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*. Routledge.

Kirkwood, M., & Christie, D. (2006). The role of teacher research in continuing professional development. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *54*(4), 429-448.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2004). *A Handbook for Teacher Research: From Design to Implementation*. Open University Press.

Lane, J., Lane, A. M., & Kyprianou, A. (2004). Self-efficacy, self-esteem and their impact on academic performance. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, *32*(3), 247-256.

Lyle, S. (2003). An investigation into the impact of a continuing professional development programme designed to support the development of teachers as researchers in South Wales. *Journal of In-Service Education*, *29*(2), 295-314.

McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2012). *Action research for teachers: A practical guide*. David Fulton Publishers.

Mehrani, M. B. (2015). English Teachers' Research Engagement: Level of Engagement and Motivation. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, *3*(1), 83-97.

Richards, J. C., & Lockhart, C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.

Rowland, S. (1996). Relationships between teaching and research. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *1*(1), 7-20.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000a). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Education Psychology*, *25*(1), 54-67.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000b). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 68.

Sénécal. C., Koestner, R., & Vellerand, R. J. (1995). Self-regulation and academc procrastination. *Journal of Social Psychology, 135*, 607-619.

Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *69*(5), 797.

Ulla, M. B. (2018). Benefits and challenges of doing research: Experiences from Philippine public school teachers. *Issues in Educational Research*, *28*(3), 797-810.

University of Languages and International Studies, 2017. *Decision: Requirements of research and knowledge transferring for lecturers at University of Languages and International Studies, VNU*. Hanoi: ULIS.

Watkins, A. (2006). So what exactly do teacher-researchers think about doing research? *Support for Learning, 21*(1), 12-18.

Wolters, C. A., Yu, S. L., & Pintrich, P. R. (1996). The relation between goal orientation and students' motivational beliefs and self-regulated learning. *Learning and Individual Differences, 8*, 211-238.

Vietnam National University, 2014. *VNU Development Strategies to 2020*. Hanoi: VNU.

# MỨC ĐỘ TỰ TIN VÀ ĐỘNG LỰC NGHIÊN CỨU KHOA HỌC CỦA GIÁO VIÊN TRẺ DẠY TIẾNG ANH TẠI ĐHQG HÀ NỘI

Lê Thùy Lân

*Khoa Sư phạm tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, ĐHQG Hà Nội*

*Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu mức độ tự tin và động lực của các giáo viên trẻ dạy tiếng Anh trong công tác nghiên cứu khoa học như là bước đầu để thực hiện các nghiên cứu sâu hơn về hoạt động nghiên cứu khoa học của giảng viên trẻ. Người nghiên cứu chọn hướng nghiên cứu định lượng thông qua phỏng vấn trực tiếp với sáu giáo viên tiếng Anh trẻ đang công tác tại Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy các giáo viên có mức độ tự tin từ thấp đến trung bình về khả năng nghiên cứu của mình cũng như có động lực ngoại tại là chính, bao gồm yêu cầu nghiên cứu từ phía nhà trường và họ thừa nhận những lợi ích của nghiên cứu đối với việc dạy học cũng như phát triển chuyên môn của mình.

*Từ khoá:* phát triển chuyên môn cho giáo viên, nghiên cứu khoa học, tự tin, động lực

VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, Vol.36, No.1 (2020) 61-69

# FROM ABSENCE TO (RE-)PRESENTATION: A READING OF THE FEMALE SUBALTERN'S BODY IN COETZEE'S *WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS*

Duong Le Duc Minh*

*VNU University of Languages and International Studies, Pham Van Dong, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 3 September 2019
Revised 4 January 2020; Accepted 14 February 2020

**Abstract:** This research paper explores an alternative mode of knowledge-production for the representation of the barbarian girl in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*. In light of Chandra Mohanty's critique pertaining the prominent academic methodologies that subsume all Third World women as homogenous and ahistorical subject of academic investigation, the paper offers an epistemological production of the barbarian girl's representation without committing the act of 'epistemic violence': perceived from the realm of the metatextual instead from that of the textual, the girl's somatic representation via its 'presence by absence' is recalcitrant and unyielding against the violence of imperialism.

*Keywords:* imperialism, metatextual, representation, feminist criticism

## 1. Theoretical background and research rationale

### *1.1 Theoretical background: a feminist critique of a feminist methodology*

From the foundational ideas of Said's Orientalism to theoretical critiques deriving from the works of Meyda Yegenoglu's and Robert Young's, the issue of (re-) presenting the "Other" and the female subaltern in any academic discourse has been a constant intellectual struggle within the field of postcolonial theory. In 1984, Chandra Mohanty wrote "Under the Western Eye" critiquing prominent methodological approaches to feminist literary inquiry and discourse analysis concerning Third World women as subject of academic investigation. These methods of inquiry, as she elaborates, presuppose a position whereby they are seen solely as "sexual political subjects" that fall under the same group "Third World" and share the same "Third World Difference" (Mohanty, 1984, p.335). Those women are epistemically constructed and 'imagined' to be "stable" and "ahistorical" subjects; their oppressions are characterized simplistically by a seemingly universal notion of patriarchal hegemony in feminist discourse. Prescribing these subjects into a homogenous "coherent group in all contexts, regardless of class or ethnicity" (Mohanty, 1984, p. 335), emphasis in the original), this monolithic construction implicates a lack of profound relational reciprocity between "their materiality [in history] and their representation [in feminist discourse and scholarship]" (Mohanty, 1984, p. 335) in feminist writings. Having acknowledged this pitfall in feminist criticism, a fruitful investigation into the representation of the barbarian girl in *Waiting for the Barbarians* by J.M. Coetzee demands a scrupulous reading of her historical materiality in relation to her literary portrayal. However, while Stephen Watson's essay already addresses how the ambiguous depiction of the "Other" subjects — which comprises of the barbarian girl — rejects any foreclosed reading of their material substance, their abject status still alludes to an apparent hegemonic structure of imperialism. In other words, past works seem to take for granted this pertinent sense of absence in the Other's historical materiality operating within the narrative of the novel that could potentially complicate any process of articulating power dynamics between institution of imperialism and the "Other(ed)" subjects — especially at the level of the body, once the "Other" body is juxtaposed to that of the imperialist.

In addition, Spivak's "Can the Subaltern speak?" emphasizes the double-subjugation of the "Other" women in a colonial context since their subaltern state is characterized by a displacement of their agency which renders them voiceless within a double-bind hegemonic structure of colonialism and patriarchy — as iterated in Spivak's words, since "the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant" (Spivak, 2010, p. 83), and "if, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Spivak, 2010, p. 84). In that sense, if this analysis on the barbarian girl is based on a representation provided by a male imperialist — the Magistrate, will it just further reinforce her subaltern position? As a work aiming at contributing to a larger feminist scholarship, adopting such a method of inquiry will certainly classify this intellectual endeavor as an act of "epistemic violence" .

Spivak implicitly remarks that this discourse of academic representation is often aligned with the imperialist narrative, which generates a sense of linear historical and social consciousness about the native and for the natives, so that they themselves will adopt their new identity as colonial subjects and succumb to Western domination. Non-western epistemology is thus disqualified as "naïve knowledge" and gradually becomes "subjugated" or marginalized knowledge (Spivak, 2010, p. 76). Therefore, it is crucial for this paper to disregard the Magistrate's representation of the barbarian girl and embrace the alternative method of reading into the presence through her absence in the narrative—in that sense, this paper does not provide yet another representation of the unnamed girl, but rather accentuates an alternative system of knowledge-making that is both cautious of its own pitfalls — that any literary, historical, or feminist material, untreated as such, must also be recognized as "an inaccessible blankness circumscribed by an interpretable text" (Spivak, 2010, p. 76) — and reactive to the imperialist mode of knowledge-making.

### *1.2 Research rationale: an exegesis of the 'absence'*

This paper will not attempt to impose on the barbarian girl a (re-)presentation that threatens to overshadow her historical materiality; such an act conforms to the precarious methodology of literary inquiry that treats women as 'imagined' subjects for the sole purpose of academic investigation. Instead, it engages with the very absence of the barbarian girl representation as her own substance of textual materiality — in other words, the barbarian girl's representation within the narrative will be perceived to be 'present by absence'. Mobilizing this politics of absence is necessary for nuanced enunciations of power operating on and through the body of the barbarian girl during the process of colonial violence.

Even though this notion of absence hinges on the lack of representation of the barbarian girl throughout the narrative, it does acknowledge the representation of the barbarian girl within the narrative. However, the representation as such is focalized through the Magistrate – a sole narrator of the story who occupies an ambivalent position within the narrative. The word "ambivalent" distinguishes the Magistrate's conflicting complicity in the colonial violence of the Empire from Colonel Joll's apparent contribution to the consolidation of power and the performative practice of imperialism. The Magistrate manifests an identity of both a man working for the Empire, and yet that of "the [only] One Just Man" in the narrative (Coetzee, 1999, p. 152); this sense of ambivalence in determining the Magistrate's identity has been critically addressed in the work of Maria Boletsi. The problem at hand is that despite 'the benefit of the doubt' given to the complicity of the Magistrate to the Empire imperialist inclination, his perception, or representation, of the barbarian girl should not be perceived with credibility, to the extent that it cannot be employed for any works of literary inquiry since such an act will only perpetuate her already abject position as a female subaltern within the novel.

## 2. Why can't the subaltern (woman) speak?

An engagement with Brian May's essay "J.M Coetzee and the question of the body" will further illuminate the importance of perceiving the girl's representation as conspicuous by its absence since it allows the girl's historical materiality to maintain its existence at a level beyond textual transparency. May's essay provides many insightful and critical interpretations concerning the resistance and obstinacy of barbarian girl's body towards the colonial desire of the Empire; however, the argumentative foundation of the essay needs to be re-examined. While I agree that at purely textual level, "her history is a thing about which Coetzee's "barbarian girl" does not talk" (May, 2001, p. 391), and "her body, too, tells nothing" (May, 2001, p. 391), it is rather inadequate to state that the girl's body fails to signify both personal and imperial history (May, 2001, p. 392). Before May reaches this conclusion, she locates a significant amount of textual evidence that support this claim of such a failure, but all this evidence derives solely from the perspectives of the Magistrate himself. In other words, May imposes the Magistrate's representation of the girl on that of herself, which further distances her own essay from obtaining a credible representation of the barbarian girl. Indeed, it is true that the whole novel's narrativization is focalized through the Magistrate's point of view, and that her history is neither signified by her body nor told by herself, the body should not be presumptuously denied of its material existence: the body's representational absence or excess defies conventional signification but does not suggest non-signification itself. In other words, even though as a reader, May are forced to perceive the story via the Magistrate's perspective and thus is denied access to the barbarian girl's history, the two points do not hold a logical causal relation that necessarily translate into the girl's nor her body's failure to tell a history. May's statement concerning the failure of the barbarian girl's body to signify a history is a concrete example of a critic's act of epistemic violence – a work of intellect produced purely on the privileged academic distance from the necessary tainted task of approaching the subaltern body with care and caution. Here, researchers need to distinguish as clearly as possible the preliminary stage of a violent deconstructive reading of the subaltern that necessarily re-inscribes the subaltern back to the state of radical alterity as such, from the more affirmative deconstructive reading of such a radical alterity into an experience of the (im)possible – the tainted task of the affirmative deconstructor, this research argues, following Spivak, cannot remain solely at the first stage. In May's article, the historical materiality of the barbarian girl is assumed to not have any presence, and as a consequence her unique depiction is as well undermined in the narrative – as May partially quotes the Magistrate at the end of her statement about the barbarian girl in Coetzee's novel:

> Yet, to all appearances, Coetzee's barbarian girl leaves Waiting for the Barbarian just as she enters it, devoid of discernible history, not just anonymous, but anonymously piecemeal, a mere list

> of body parts, attitudes, and gestures that might belong to any "stocky girl with a broad mouth and hair cut in a fringe across her forehead staring over [the Magistrate's] shoulder" (May, 2001, p. 391-392)

May's concession to the Magistrate's representation of the barbarian girl affirms what Spivak highlights in any acts of epistemic violence — that such an act will signify a deeper level of subjugation of the subject "Other" and the perpetuation of their subaltern status. In a way, May's readily embrace of this metaphorical effacement of the barbarian girl's body renders such a subject truly anonymous and ahistorical, thus signifying the discourse — or the "heterogeneous project" — that only further subjugates the "Other(ed)" subject.

## 3. An alternative mode of knowledge-production

It is true that neither of the barbarian girl nor her body truly 'speaks' in the novel, but that should not propel scholars to impose their own representation, or a representation that they subjectively deem creditable, on the barbarian girl. If the narrative only allows a reading of the barbarian girl via absence, then it is within the 'presence by absence' that the representation of the girl remains the least treacherous. As Jenny Sharpe reads "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in her book *Allegories of Empire*, she articulates a very important point in Spivak's essay: "The story that cannot be told is the one of a subaltern woman who knows and speaks her exploitation. The story that must be told is the text of her exploitation" (Sharpe, 1993, p. 18). Indeed, since both the narrative structure and the Empire are complicit in silencing the barbarian girl from enunciating the exploitation of her body, that "text" seems to be inaccessible and absent from the narrative. However, her body still 'speaks' in its own language of resistance in silence, and this silence hence signifies its 'presence by absence'. Whether the girl is coerced into a voiceless position or she refuses to talk about her past, in either case, it does not necessarily mean her body is muted. While May's argumentative foundation claiming the failure of the girl's body to signify its history has been established as an act of epistemic violence, her analysis, which interprets the girl's body as a surface that "blocks or blanks all vision of its interior" but bears the ability to speak, still holds its validity (May, 2001, p. 413). This specific idea will be incorporated into that of mine to prove how the body claims its voice and asserts its representation via its 'presence by absence' at a metatextual level.

May argues that the Magistrate is incapable of perceiving what lies behind this surface because despite his relentless interpellations of her past (May, 2001, p. 413), all that can be achieved in the end is his feeling of rejection and alienation from that very body. While May employs the parting scene between the Magistrate and the barbarian girl to imply the insignificance and quotidian existence of the barbarian girl in the narrative — a reading in which I already criticize, I would interpret that same scene as a moment which not only punctuates the futility of all the Magistrate's attempts to understand the barbarian girl, but at the same time, allows the barbarian girl's body to 'voice' the traces of its somatic resistance without occupying any textual space in the narrative.

After the Magistrate embarks on a quest to bring the girl back to her people, there is a pertinent sense of intimacy developed between them; however, by the time he bids her farewell, he reaches an epiphany that his understanding of the girl remains as fragmented and unwholesome as when he first encounters her. As the Magistrate "[touches] her cheek [and] takes her hand" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 99), he finds no "trace in [himself] of that stupefied eroticism that used to draw [him] night after night to her body or even the comradely affection of the road" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 99). The outcome of all his effort to reach an understanding is a complete sense of "blankness" and "desolation" (Coetzee, 1999,

p. 99). The fact that he himself acknowledges the inevitability of these feelings when he utters in his mind, "there has to be such blankness," (Coetzee, 1999, p. 99) signifies his acceptance of a defeat in this quest of unravelling her body's story. In their last moment together, he is confronted with the fact that he cannot historicize, or make into his story, her story of her body since he cannot penetrate further than the surface, he "caresses" to fulfill his many nights' desire (Coetzee, 1999, p. 40). After all these times, her interior remains intact, as she to him is similar to "a stranger" or "a visitor" from this foreign land, a person whose traits can only be captured not as a whole, but only in fragments of impression – "a stocky girl with a broad mouth and hair cut in a fringe across her forehead" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 99).

Since the whole scene is focalized through the Magistrate's narrative, the portrayed representation of the barbarian girl is, as argued, completely not credible. However, while concerning its textual surface, this passage does not indicate any representations of the barbarian girl since the focus is on the Magistrate's feeling of restlessness and defeat, the success of the girl's somatic resistance can somehow be summoned from the text. It is at this point of conflicting ideas that perceiving her representation as 'present by absence' from the narrative signifies its existence through alternative textuality. Within this level of metatextuality, her body is enabled to be expressive, which allows it to pronounce its successful resistance against the Magistrate's desire "to engrave himself on her as deeply as her torturer [does] and that of the Empire to "inscribe itself on the bodies of its subject" (May, 2001, p. 79) without occupying any textual substance. As May iterates this idea of an "expressive" body, she recognizes that "that the body does not speak to the Magistrate [from within the narrative] does not indicate that it cannot speak (May, 2001, p. 79), but she fails to find an explanation - that is, it speaks and demonstrates its resistance, in a language of silence and within its absence from the narrative. In brief, because the language of her body is absent from the textual substance of the narrative; it exists in an alternative textuality — and it is at this level of metatextuality that the body not only escapes the hegemonic oppression of the Magistrate's narrativization, but also his desire to penetrate it or to impose on it a representation produced by a colonial discourse. Her body existing within the narrative — or the Magistrate's perception — is a silent, not silenced, body; yet in alternative text, it arises as an obstinate and unyielding body. The body enunciates its resistance within the language of absence, thus allowing its owner, the barbarian girl, to reclaim the agency over that very body from the hegemonic power of the narrative and the systemic violence of imperialism.

## 4. The visible body is an abject body; therefore, the visible body is NOT a muted body

This idea of the body as a site of resistance is further complicated in light of Nirmal Puwar's theories concerning "invisible" and "visible" body when it is situated in a certain space. Puwar's dialectical dichotomy of "invisible" and "visible" body can also be re-interrogated through a reading of the girl's presence by absence. According to her theories, these notions of "invisible" or "visible" body should be conceptualized from a dialectical approach which comprises the dimension of "race, gender or any other social feature (Puwar, 2004, p. 57). In that case, considering the town of the settler as a platform for spatial analysis, the Magistrate is not marked by his own body because such a body does not deviate him from the norm, which is that of the "civilized people" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 33). This signifies his somatic embodiment as "invisible" and "unmarked" within that space. The barbarian girl, on the other hand, bears an "visible" and "marked" body since her body is characterized by the savagery recognized on that of the barbarian or even of "strange animals" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 26). Puwar hence argues that "the ideal representatives of humanity are those who are not marked by their own body and who are, in an embodied sense, invisible" (Puwar, 2004, p. 58). In relation to the novel, this idea of bearing "invisible" or "visible" body illuminates the reason why there is an unequal distribution of power invested in the Magistrate's body and that of the girl. Indeed, as the girl lies on his bed, the Magistrate realizes that he has power over this girl's body - a kind of power that would allow him to satisfy his desire for a sense of intimacy that can be equally achieved both by his idea of love and torture:

> The girl lies in my bed, but there is no good reason why it should be a bed. I behave in some ways like a lover I undress her, I bathe her, I stroke her, I sleep beside her but I might equally well tie her to a chair and beat her, it would be no less intimate (Coetzee, 1999, p. 59-60)

This scene signifies the very nature of "a sexual contract" that propels colonizers to embark on their conquest to exotic land to fulfil their colonial desire as "knights in shining armor trampled here and there seeking out savagery and exotica while acquiring spices, gold, tea, sugar, cloth, jewels and land along the way" (Puwar, 2004, p. 23). More importantly, Puwar points out that "intrinsic to [this] project of despotic democracy has been the 'saving' of women from other places" (Puwar, 2004, p. 23), which is exemplified in the self-proclaimed 'rescue' of the barbarian girl from her wretched living condition by the Magistrate. Even though the girl would never have to suffer in the town of the settler if she hadn't been captured and tortured by Colonel Joll, the Magistrate still readily embraces this idea of "sexual contract" that legitimatizes his power over the girl's body as a vessel to satisfy his desire. Even he himself, by the end of the novel, acknowledges such a hypocrisy in this grotesque act of 'saving' or 'loving' the barbarian girl and her body: "For I was not, as I liked to think, the indulgent pleasure-loving opposite of the cold rigid Colonel. I was the lie that Empire tells itself when times are easy, he the truth that Empire tells when harsh winds blow. Two sides of imperial rule, no more, no less" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 180).

While Puwar's ideas concerning how power is vested on "invisible" and "visible" body is certainly not wrong, they render a rather reductive reading of how the Magistrate's "invisible" body is endowed with a sense of unchallenged power and authority from the hegemony of imperialism. Perceiving the body's "presence by absence", the novel also allows us to see this somatic power relation between that of the Magistrate and that of the barbarian girl's more nuancedly and a lot less one-sided. In one of the ablution scenes, in which the Magistrate called "the ritual of the washing", her body is disassembled into pre-processed fragments of materiality under the gaze fueled by the colonial desire. One by one — "her feet", "her legs", "her buttocks", "her thighs", "her armpits", "her belly", "her breasts", "her neck" and "her throat" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 43) — is "touched" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 44) and subjected under a sense of metaphorical violence. Indeed, in reference to Puwar's theories, her body becomes extremely "visible" and "marked" in the narrative space. However, from a state of absence, without occupying any textual substance of the narrative, her body enunciates its resistance in alter-text, disrupting this dialectic dichotomy of "visible" and "invisible" body by forcing the Magistrate to undergo the same process of disassembly, rendering the "invisible" body of the Magistrate "visible" within his own hegemonic narrativization:

> "As for me, under her blind gaze, in the close warmth of the room, I can undress without embarrassment, baring my thin shanks, my slack genitals, my paunch, my flabby old man's breasts, the turkey-skin of my throat. I find myself moving about unthinkingly in this nakedness, … (Coetzee, 1999, p. 43)".

Manifested in the relationship between the Magistrate and the barbarian girl, this political economy of power oscillating between the "visible" and the "invisible" body resonates with Judith Butler's ideas concerning the potentially subversive effect of juxtaposing "abject" body with "subject" body. The barbarian girl's body correlates with the idea of an "abjection" that signifies a "repudiation without which the subject cannot emerge" (Butler, 1993, p. 3) and affirms what Julia Kristeva claims, "[t]o each ego its object, to each superego its abject" (Kristeva, 1982, p.2). When the magistrate introspectively interrogates his feelings towards his mistress and the barbarian girl, he realizes that he never once has to question his own desire when he is with his mistress. As for the barbarian girl, "there is no link [he] can define between her womanhood and [his] desire" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 59) — or as conceptualized in Butler's theories — his desire cannot reside in her womanhood as it is an "unlivable and uninhabitable [zone]" which not only "is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject", but more importantly defines the limit of such a domain (Butler, 1993, p. 3). From the realm of alter-textuality, the girl's body serves as a "disavowed abjection" to the Magistrate's "subject" body, which "[threatens] to expose the self-grounding presumptions of [the sexed subject's desire]" (Butler, 1993, p. 3). In other words, as an abject body defining the limit of the Magistrate's subject body, the 'presence by absence' of the girl's body exists within the narrative as, in the words of Butler, "a threatening spectre" (Butler, 1993, p. 3), lurking in the novel's alter-text, awaiting not only to challenge the Magistrate's desire, but also to disavow the hegemonic power vested on his body by the act of narrativization perpetuated under the gaze of imperialism. Therefore, the girl's body, whose existence is characterized by its 'presence by absence', emerges as an abjection allowing a re-articulation of "the very terms of symbolic legitimacy and intelligibility" of the Magistrate's subject body (Butler, 1993, p. 3) — a seemingly "invisible" body in the space of the settler's town and his own narrative.

## 5. Conclusion

Aiming at offering a new mode of reading and knowledge-making when engaging with representation of investigated subject, the paper argues at length against precarious and specious attempts of imposing understanding upon such a subject at the expense of its historical materiality; this act of "epistemic violence", as a consequence, will only further subjugate the already muted subject. Inspired by Chandra Mohanty's essay "Under the Western Eye" and Spivak's influential work "Can the Subaltern Speak", this paper achieves an alternative conceptualization of the representation of the barbarian girl's 'presence by absence' in the hegemony of the Magistrate's imperialist narrativization. As a work of critical feminist criticism, it avoids committing the act of "epistemic violence" while articulating the nuances inherent in the encoding of colonial power on and through body. Within the theoretical framework constructed by the work of Nirmal Puwar and Judith Butler, these articulations are further complicated as they illuminate the subversive potential of the girl body's 'presence by absence' — an "abjection" and a "spectre" that subverts the power economy structured on the dialectical dichotomy of "visible" and "invisible" body and consequently renders the Magistrate's "subject" body highly visible in his own hegemonic narrativization.

## References


Boletsi, M. (2007) Barbarian Encounters: Rethinking Barbarism in C.P. Cavafy's and J.M Coetzee's Waiting for the Barbarians. *Comparative Literature Studies*, *44* (1-2), 67-96.

Butler, J (1993). *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. NY: Routledge.

Coetzee, J.M (1999). *Waiting for the Barbarians*. NY: The Penguin Group.

Kristeva, J. (1982). Approaching Abjection. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. NY: Columbia UP.

May, B. (2001). J.M Coetzee and the Question of the Body. *Modern Fiction Studies*, *47*(2), 391 - 420.

Mohanty, C. (1984). Under the Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse. *Boundary 2*, *12*(3), 333-358.

Puwar, N (2004). *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Sharpe, J (1993). *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Women in the colonial text*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Spivak, G. C. (2010). Can the subaltern speak? *Reflections on the History of an Idea* (pp. 21-78). NY: Columbia University Press.

---. (1999). *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present.* Cambridge: Harvard UP.

---. (2006) *In Other Worlds*. New York/ London: Routledge.

---. (2009) *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. New York/ London: Routledge.

Watson, S. (1996). Colonialism and the Novels of J.M Coetzee. *Research in African Literatures*, *17* (3), 370-392.

Young, R. (2005). *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. NY: Routledge.

Yegenoglu, M. (1999) *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# TỪ SỰ VÔ DIỆN ĐẾN SỰ (TÁI) TRÌNH DIỆN: MỘT PHÂN TÍCH VỀ NGƯỜI NỮ NHƯỢC TIỂU TRONG TÁC PHẨM *ĐỢI BỌN MỌI* CỦA COETZEE

Dương Lê Đức Minh

*Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ , Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội*
*Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu một phương thức luận tri thức khác cho sự trình hiện của cô gái man rợ trong tác phẩm *Đợi Bọn Mọi* của Coetzee. Dựa trên những phê bình của Chandra Mohanty về cách thức luận học thuật phổ biến, cách thức nhìn nhận phụ nữ thế giới thứ ba như một chủ thể đồng nhất và phi lịch sử, nghiên cứu đưa ra một thức luận khác về trình hiện cô gái man rợ mà tránh được hành vi 'bạo lực tri thức': Từ thế giới siêu văn bản thay vì văn bản, trình hiện cơ thể của cô gái hiện diện qua sự thiếu vắng có thể hiểu như một phương thức kháng cự và sự không chịu khuất phục trước sự bạo hành của chủ nghĩa đế quốc.

*Từ khóa:* chủ nghĩa đế quốc, siêu văn bản, trình hiện, phê bình nữ quyền

VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, Vol.36, No.1 (2020) 69-80

# CRITICAL CULTURAL AWARENESS: SHOULD VIETNAMESE CULTURE BE TAUGHT IN A DIFFERENT WAY?

Do Nhu Quynh*, Dao Thi Dieu Linh

*VNU University of Languages and International Studies*

*Pham Van Dong, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 17 September 2019
Revised 27 November 2019; Accepted 14 February 2020

**Abstract**: Critical cultural awareness – the key component in the framework of intercultural communicative competence of Byram (1997) – highlights the importance of training critical thinking skills for foreign language learners. Much research has been conducted on how critical cultural awareness can be developed in language classrooms, yet very few takes classroom of native culture as a fertile context for raising such awareness. This paper is to highlight the necessity of fostering that awareness in native culture classroom. We would clarify how the conventional way of teaching Vietnamese culture at the University of Languages and International Studies is inconducive to build up critical cultural awareness for learners by critiquing the essentialism that the two course books based on and the lack of dynamic reflections of stereotypical ideas for learners via the observation of teachers and students. We then proposed some ideas to make teaching and learning practices more critical.**

*Keywords:* critical cultural awareness, Vietnamese culture, essentialism, dynamic

## 1. Introduction

Michel Byram (1997) framed the five-dimension model of intercultural competence, of which four dimensions, namely *knowledge, skills of interpreting, skills of interaction, attitude of openness/curiosity*, follow a clockwise circle starting from *knowledge*, and the last dimension – *critical cultural awareness* – at the center of this circle. The first four dimensions served as the pre-requisite for the latter construct – the competence that every world language speaker should have.

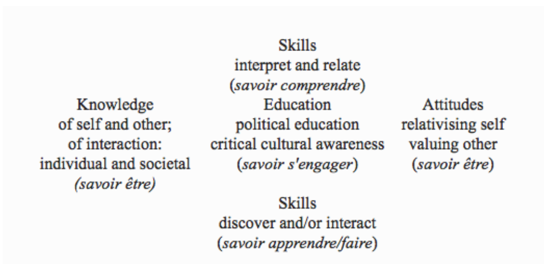



Figure 1. Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997, p. 34)

According to Oxford Learners' Dictionary, "critical" means "expressing disapproval of somebody/something and saying what you think is bad about them"; however, in the educational context of Byram's model, "critical" is more likely to hold its 1640s' etymological meaning of "having the knowledge, ability or discernment to pass judgement". In his book, Byram (1997) claimed, "Finally, in an educational

* Corresponding author. Tel.: 84-983909318
Email: quynh.dnq@vnu.edu.vn

** This research has been completed under the sponsorship of the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS, VNU) under the Project N.17.08

framework which aims to develop critical cultural awareness, relativisation of one's own and valuing others' meanings, beliefs and behaviours does not happen *without* a reflective and analytical challenge to *the ways* in which they have been formed and *the complex of social forces* within which they are experienced" (p. 35, emphasis added). Building critical cultural awareness means a constant reflection upon how our beliefs are discursively constructed in a particular social, cultural and historical context. Though it is impossible for an individual to "annul the effects of stereotypes" (Truong & Phung, 2019, p. 99), understanding the complex of social forces that form a belief does help suspending stereotypical perceptions. Delaying judgement, and then passing it, is therefore much more valuable and humane than expressing disapproval towards other interlocutors, as it has the power to unweave any potential intercultural misunderstandings. The term ***critical cultural awareness***, thereafter, refers to one's awareness of differences among cultures on the basis of passing judgement, not on showing tension.

Of the five dimensions, *knowledge* is the starting point. It can either be a door to openness or a door to lonesomeness. If the knowledge of a person is just bounded by the wisdom of a local community where he or she was born, that person's perception of the world will be shaped by some very limited points of view. Nonetheless, if a person lacks the local wisdom, he or she would be easily assimilated to a new culture and devalue his or her own culturally native society. The point here is the dynamic interrelationship, like what Sercu pointed out, "I would add that *savoirs* includes both culture-specific (of own and foreign culture) and culture-general knowledge; as well as the knowledge regarding many ways in which culture affects language and communication" (2010, p. 77). When the interrelationship among cultures is manifested, it helps diminish the monolithic perception of the native English speaker's culture, or even the local culture, as mainstream ways of thinking and behaving (Alptekin, 2002). Knowledge of specific cultures has an important role to play in developing the awareness of cultural differences; however, what truly requires our attention is "an understanding of the *dynamic* way sociocultural contexts are constructed" (Baker, 2011, p. 4, emphasis added)

Central on the key term **dynamic**, we believe that the intercultural competence can be developed in foreign language practices via two factors: (1) the dynamic knowledge of native culture and (2) the dynamic reflection of preconceived ideas towards oneself and others from target culture.

When reviewing the papers written on intercultural communicative competence (i.e. Crozet, 1996; Liddicoat, 2005; Newton, 2016), the authors noticed that this competence is usually associated with foreign language teachers; however, in our perspectives, teachers teaching native culture should share that role with their counterparts. Unlike language teachers who are often restrained by the skill-based or test-preparation practices, teachers of culture can take advantage of the content on beliefs and values that are conducive to intercultural reflection and implications.

With that mindset, we would critique the way Vietnamese culture is taught at University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS), with two main arguments in accordance with the two factors mentioned above: firstly, the static nature of the materials in use; and secondly, the non-reflectional teaching and learning practices. When critiquing the materials, we do not say that they are bad references for learning Vietnamese culture; instead, we aim at their inappropriateness in regard to official sources to develop critical cultural awareness. In terms of non-reflectional teaching and learning practices, we collect data from informal interviews with teachers of Vietnamese culture and from survey questionnaires with students of this course.

## 2. Three steps towards critical cultural awareness

Within the framework of intercultural communicative competence, Byram (1997) defines critical cultural awareness as "an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (p. 53). Though this definition is originally constructed for a language classroom, it seems more achievable in culture classroom as students have a higher chance to directly expose to "perspectives, practices and products" of their own culture.

According to Nugent and Catalano (2015), the first step in the process toward building critical cultural awareness is that "students must be given time to identify and reflect upon their preconceived ideas, judgments, and stereotypes toward individuals from the target culture" (p. 17). Byram (1997) argued that people, being affected by their social ecology or what is shaped in the media, often unconsciously bring their stereotypical ideas into intercultural conversations. Those stereotypes are not only towards other cultures, but towards oneself as well: Who we think we are? We navigate ourselves in which position: inferior, superior or equal? It can be very dangerous for the conversation when both interlocutors have false predetermined expectations to their counterpart. Learners therefore need to be aware of their stereotypes before participating in any intercultural talk.

Furthermore, this step is to unmask students' ideologies (Byram, 2008) and "critically evaluate ideological concepts they possibly lead to intercultural conflict" (Yulita, 2013, p. 205). After acknowledging the stereotypes, we need to walk a step further by figuring out what patterns of thought such as: Marxism, Capitalism, Confucianism, Buddhism, or Romanticism, are driving us in this society. If one person realizes that he or she is a small part in a repertoire of ideologies, he or she can avoid the essentialist idea of himself or herself and become humbler in communication.

The second step in the process toward critical cultural awareness begins when students engage in tasks that encourage thoughtful and rational evaluation of perspectives, products and practices related to the target culture (Byram, 1997). This step plays a crucial role in postponing judgement because instead of spontaneously concluding how a person is like, a person needs to question and reason for their beliefs about the target culture.

The final step in developing critical cultural awareness is to create real or simulated opportunities for interactions with individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds and worldviews (Byram, 1997). People often say "practice makes perfect" and this step gives learners an opportunity to practice communicating and negotiating beliefs.

In the scope of this paper, the researchers would focus on the first step. We believe that the identification and reflection upon the preconceived ideas are fundamental in shaping critical cultural awareness of intercultural communicative competence.

## 3. Research methods

This paper adopts both qualitative and quantitative approach in order to collect evidences from multiple respects to back up for the argument that the Vietnamese culture should be taught differently. In Section 5.1, the researchers use the content analysis method to analyze the two books and critique their patterns. In Section 5.2.1, an informal interview was conducted to elicit insights from teachers of Vietnamese culture. For Section 5.2.2, the researchers solicited the view of students from a survey questionnaire before carrying out follow-up interview for further investigation.

## 4. Overview of teaching and learning Vietnamese culture at ULIS

In 1995 – the year in Đổi Mới stage (Đổi Mới was an economic reform in 1986) and the dawn of globalization – the Vietnam Ministry of Education officially promulgated *Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture (Cơ sở văn hoá Việt Nam)* as a compulsory subject in the tertiary education curriculum. In the following years, the University of Languages and International Studies adopted the Vietnamese culture course for first-year students. The course accounts for 3 credits with 30 hours of lecture in class and 15 hours for self-study. Since 2014, the Division of Vietnamese language and culture has applied blended learning approach for this course, with 9 hours in-class for orientation and sum-up and 36 hours of online learning.

The three compulsory course books are *Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture (Cơ sở văn hoá Việt Nam)* of Trần Ngọc Thêm (1997), the book with the same title of Trần Quốc Vượng (1998), and *Searching for the True Nature of Vietnamese Culture (Tìm về bản sắc văn hoá Việt Nam)* of Trần Ngọc Thêm (1996).

## 5. Discussion

### *5.1 The static patterns of materials in use*

The first highlight of the two books called *Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture* is that they all follow the typological-systematic view[1] appearing in the book *Searching for the True Nature of Vietnamese Culture (Tìm về bản sắc văn hoá Việt Nam)* of Trần Ngọc Thêm (1996). The premise of this view rooted in the tenets of racial categorization, in which the categorization of cultures must begin with an understanding of the formation and distribution of human races on the earth in general[2], and the environmental determinism, which means that the habitat conditions would determine the fundamental cultural patterns distinguishing the Eastern and Western civilizations[3]. Trần Quốc Vượng stated, "Căn cứ theo nguồn gốc, ta gọi chúng là văn hoá gốc nông nghiệp, và văn hoá gốc du mục. Điển hình cho loại gốc nông nghiệp (trọng tĩnh) là các nền văn hoá phương Đông." (*Based on the origin, we categorized them into agricultural culture and nomadic culture. A typical [illustration] for the agricultural culture, which values the static, is the Eastern civilization [and therefore Western civilization belongs to nomadic culture].)* (1998, p. 71). Also, in this divide, the "authentic" East refers to the Southeast Asia, and the "authentic" West refers to the Northwest Asia – Europe today; the whole region in between the two areas above is deemed to be "vùng đệm" (*the buffer zone*) (Trần Ngọc Thêm, 1997, p. 16)[4].

---

[1] Trần Quốc Vượng self-claimed in *Chapter 2: The structures, institutions and functions of culture* that he used the findings from Trần Ngọc Thêm's research on ways of categorizing cultures (p. 66)

[2] Trần Ngọc Thêm wrote, "Văn hoá là sản phẩm của con người (tính nhân sinh), cho nên việc phân loại văn hoá cần bắt đầu từ việc tìm hiểu sự hình thành và phân bố các chủng người trên trái đất." (*Culture is a human product (human nature), so the classification of culture should start from understanding the formation and distribution of the human race on earth.*) (1996, p. 37)

[3] Trần Ngọc Thêm wrote in his book, "Theo cấu trúc 4 thành tố và trên cơ sở những khác biệt về điều kiện kinh tế và môi trường cư trú, phần 2 đi tìm những đặc trưng cơ bản nhất cho phép phân biệt các nền văn hoá phương Đông với các nền văn hoá phương Tây mà xét theo nguồn gốc có thể gọi là loại hình văn hoá gốc nông nghiệp và loại hình văn hoá gốc du mục." (*Following a four-component structure and based on differences in economic conditions and residence, Part 2 seeks out the most basic characteristics that distinguish Eastern culture – the agricultural culture - from Western cultures – the nomadic culture.)* (p. 20)

[4] Trần Ngọc Thêm wrote "…trong lịch sử ở cựu lục địa Âu-Á đã hình thành hai vùng văn hoá lớn là "phương Tây" và "phương Đông": Phương Tây là khu vực tây-bắc gồm toàn bộ châu Âu (đến dãy Uran); phương Đông gồm châu Á và châu Phi; nếu trừ ra một vùng

The second highlight of the two books lies in the clear-cut chronological transition of Vietnam *historical*-cultural process, though the word *historical* is not directly mentioned. In his book, Trần Ngọc Thêm wrote, "Tiến trình văn hóa Việt Nam có thể chia thành sáu giai đoạn: văn hóa tiền sử, văn hóa Văn Lang - Âu Lạc, văn hóa thời chống Bắc thuộc, văn hóa Đại Việt, văn hóa Đại Nam và văn hóa hiện đại." *(The process of Vietnamese culture can be divided into six stages: prehistoric culture, Van Lang - Au Lac culture, anti-Northern colonial culture, Dai Viet culture, Dai Nam culture and modern culture.)* (1997, pp. 30-41). The same thing was also recorded in Chapter 3 of Trần Quốc Vượng's book. "Vietnam"[1] appeared in their prose as experiencing a sharp movement from one culture to the other without any involvements from the previous ones.

In our perspective, the cultural dynamic crucial for developing intercultural competence could only be achieved under two conditions: Firstly, the materials of culture must stress on the *fluidity*, not the static "authenticity"[2], of each culture; secondly, the acculturalization process within that culture and with other cultures is *not a positive trajectory*. With this stand, the two books of Trần Ngọc Thêm and Trần Quốc Vượng seem to be inappropriate in building critical awareness for students. We will explain below.

Firstly, the patterns of thoughts in his book show that the two authors viewed culture as a constant. They argued that the primeval racial split has been determining "the East" and "the West" like today. Trần Ngọc Thêm stated, "Lâu nay trên thế giới phổ biến cách phân chia nhân loại thành ba đại chủng Á (Mongoloid, trong cách nói dân gian thường gọi là chủng da vàng), chủng Âu (Europeoid, dân gian thường gọi là chủng da trắng) và chủng Úc-Phi (Australo-Negroid, dân gian thường gọi là chủng da đen) […] Căn cứ vào những đặc điểm trung tính, không thay đổi trước những biến động của môi trường (như nhóm máu, đường vân tay, hình thái răng…) người ta đã chia nhân loại thành hai khối quần cư lớn: Úc Á và Phi-Âu – đó cũng chính là hai trung tâm hình thành chủng tộc cổ xưa nhất của loài người: Trung tâm phía Tây (Phi-Âu) và Trung tâm phía Đông (Úc-Á)" (1996, p. 37) *(The past scholars had argued that there were three main human races: Mongoloid, Europeoid, and Australo-Negroid […] Based on the neutral and unchanged patterns (blood group, finger print, teeth structure), it is now more common to divide human into two main groups: Africa-Eurasia and Australia-Asia – the two most ancient race-formation centers of human beings: The West center and the East center)*. This argument is not persuasive because: firstly, how can the primeval split of homo sapiens of more than 2 million years ago[3] still fiercely determine the 21st-century cultures?; and secondly, Trần Ngọc Thêm mis-cited this argument from the book of Cheboksarov (1971). Cheboksarov did mention the racial split, but he later on emphasized, "Later on people of the Homo sapiens species, settling throughout the globe, absorbed more ancient populations on the periphery of the primitive Ecumene[4], conserving the neutral features and

đệm như một dài đường chéo chạy dài ở giữa từ tây-nam lên đông-bắc thì phương Đông điển hình sẽ là khu vực đông-nam còn lại." (*"... in the history of the former Eurasian continent, two major cultural regions,"Western" and" Eastern", have been formed: the West is the northwestern region of the whole of Europe (up to the Uran Mountains); the East includes Asia and Africa; if subtracting a buffer zone as a long diagonal line running in the middle from southwest to northeast, the East would typically be the remaining southeastern region."*) (1996, p. 16)

[1] "Vietnam" is put in quotation mark because it implies different meanings in different historical periods.

[2] The researchers intentionally use quotation mark for this term as we do not believe that any culture is truly authentic.

[3] This estimation was taken from: Harari, Y. N. (2014). *Sapiens: A brief history of humankind*. Canada: McClelland & Stewart.

[4] The Ecumene was an ancient Greek term for the known, the inhabited, or the habitable world. (Wikipedia)

adjusting to new environmental conditions, and diversified into the modern races." (p. 60). Unlike Trần Ngọc Thêm, Cheboksarov supplemented for his first arguments of two "race-formation centers" with the idea that human beings changed over time. We do not see that changing-over-time reasoning in Trần Ngọc Thêm's book-writing philosophy. More noticeably, he concluded, "Các nền văn hoá hiện đại dù đang thuộc giai đoạn văn minh nào (nông nghiệp, công nghiệp, hay thậm chí hậu công nghiệp) cũng đều không thoát ra ngoài hai loại hình ấy." *(No matter at what stage of civilization cultures today might be at (agricultural, industrial or even post-industrial), they cannot escape the two basic cultural forms [of valuing the static or valuing the dynamic].)* (1996, p.41). We wonder how this mindset could help our country "xây dựng một nền văn hoá tiên tiến, đậm đà bản sắc dân tộc"[1] (*build an advanced culture imbued with national identity*). The "national identity" may be, yes, but the "progressive", we are not sure as Trần Ngọc Thêm himself viewed it as a constant.

Secondly, the typological-systematic view, as Liam C. Kelly (also known as Lê Minh Khải) argued, probably results in racialist attitude (Le, 2016). As he argued in his 5-part series "Racism in Vietnamese Scholarship", the typological-systematic view rooted from the Orientalist knowledge produced by Said (1978) that the East and the West constituted a pair of opposites. As implied from Said's book called Orientalism, this "knowledge" was used to justify Western imperialism as an effort to "rule it and regenerate it for the sake of the world at large" (Al-Marky, 1979, p. 82). Trần Ngọc Thêm and Trần Quốc Vượng, in countering this at-time dominating ideology, portrayed how "good" the Orient[2] are. Trần Quốc Vượng wrote, "Sống hoà hợp với thiên nhiên là mong muốn của cư dân các nền văn hoá trọng tĩnh phương Đông […] Bởi vậy mà các nên văn hoá phương Tây trọng động mang trọng mình tham vọng chinh phục và chế ngự thiên nhiên […] Và, vấn đề của con người không phải là chiến thắng thiên nhiên mà sống trong một sự hoà hợp có ý thức và tế nhị với thiên nhiên." (*Living in harmony with nature is the desire of the residents of the Eastern static cultures [...] Therefore, the important Western cultures focus on their ambition to conquer and overpower nature [...] And, the problem of man is not conquering nature but living in a conscious and delicate harmony with nature.)* (1998, pp. 71-72) After stating the orientation of each culture, he showed his own opinion of good-bad, and non-tacitly praised the "delicate harmony with nature" of the East. This view has committed cultural bias in the sense that either the West is "good" or the East is "good" falls into the trap of stereotypical generalization. Added to that, the way Trần Ngọc Thêm refers to other regions outside the East and West as "vùng đệm" (*the buffer zone*) also shows a stereotypical attitude towards those regions. The learners, if not actively expose to multicultural input, will stuck in the East-West network of meanings, which indeed has the power of segregation itself. As Ludwig Wittgenstein, a distinguished Austrian philosopher of 20th century, edicted, "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world." (2001), the choice of words in Trần Ngọc Thêm's book might not help a cultural learner overcome impulsive judgements.

Thirdly, the linear transition from one cultural civilization to the other would be

[1] Trần Ngọc Thêm wrote in the Preface: "Những năm gần đây, văn kiện của Đảng và Nhà nước Việt Nam nhiều lần khẳng định vai trò quan trọng của văn hóa trong việc bồi dưỡng và phát huy nhân tố con người, đồng thời đặt mục tiêu "xây dựng một nền văn hóa tiên tiến, đậm đà bản sắc dân tộc"". *("In recent years, documents of the Party and State of Vietnam have repeatedly affirmed the important role of culture in fostering and promoting the human factor, and at the same time set the goal of "building an advanced culture imbued with national identity"")* (1997)

[2] The term "Orient-East" was used in opposite with "Occident-West"

inconceivable. The movement of cultural exchanges does not follow a vertical direction with 6 stages as written in the book of Trần Ngọc Thêm: prehistoric culture (around 3000 years BC), to Van Lang - Au Lac culture (from 3000 years BC to several centuries BC), to anti-Sino colonial culture (from several centuries BC to 10th century AD), to Dai Viet culture (from 10th century AD to 18th century AD), to Dai Nam culture (from 18th century AD to 1850s) and to modern culture (from late 19th century to present). The first evidence for our argument is the continuous acculturalization with other cultures. During Dai Viet culture stage, Vietnamese culture evolved with sporadic Chinese invasions and colonization, such as the 30-year period being dominated by the Ming Dynasty. An image of "authentic" or "consistent" Dai Viet culture could be unobtainable due to that frequent acculturalization. Further evidence is in the 15th century before Le Loi's victory. During that period, most of the Confucius books and documents were burned down by the invaders, not to mention the customs and habits were assimilated, so we cannot say that Dai Viet culture now developed independently from the Sino culture. Interestingly, at the same age, gunpowder manufacturing techniques in Vietnam - the seeds of "modern" culture - achieved brilliant achievements, no less comparable to the West (Goscha, 2016, p. 59).

As Phan Ngọc (1996), a late 20th century scholar of Vietnam, analyzed, "Trong người tôi và bạn có đủ yếu tố của năm nền văn hoá. Tôi họ Phan, đó là văn hoá Trung Quốc. Đến cơ quan tôi bắt tay cả bạn nam lẫn bạn nữ. Đó là văn hoá phương Tây. Trên người tôi từ đầu đến chân đều Âu hoá và tôi có khả năng quy định sự thay đổi này theo năm tháng. Nhưng về nhà tôi giao lương cho vợ và vợ tôi làm chủ hầu hết mọi việc trong nhà. Đó là văn hoá Đông Nam Á. Khi viết bài này tôi suy nghĩ bằng tiếng Pháp nhưng viết tiếng Việt (văn hoá Đông Nam Á) để tránh những hiểu lầm tiếng Việt tự nó có thể gây nên. Chữ viết này là gốc châu Âu, ngôn ngữ đầy từ gốc Hán và những cách diễn đạt sao phỏng của Pháp. Khi viết, tôi cố gắng trình bày theo quan điểm Mác (văn hoá xã hội chủ nghĩa) nhưng sử dụng thao tác luận của văn hoá hậu công nghiệp. Cái gì ở tôi cũng là kết hợp." (*You and I have all the elements of five cultures. My surname - Phan, rooted in China. At the office, I shake hands with both men and women. It is Western culture. My costumes have been Europeanized from head to toe and I am able to regulate this change over the years. But when I get home, I give my wife all my salary and my wife manages most of the housework. It reflects Southeast Asian culture. When writing this article, I think in French but write in Vietnamese (Southeast Asian culture) to avoid the misunderstandings that Vietnamese itself could cause. This script is of European origin, yet the language is full of Chinese words and French metaphorical expressions. When I write, I try to present it from the Marxist perspective (socialist culture) but using the epistemology of post-industrial culture. Everything about me is a combination.)* (p. 132). Vietnamese culture that we shall see nowadays, therefore, cannot be, and should not be deemed as "thuần tuý Việt Nam" (*purely Vietnamese*). We are not against the way Trần Ngọc Thêm identified cultures along the time axis, but disagree that he did not highlight the interspersion of multiple cultural layers within one culture.

Lastly, the search for "true nature" or "purity" is itself a frivolous and futile effort. Phan Ngọc claimed, "Rõ ràng không có văn hoá không pha trộn, cô lập. Ở thế giới này mọi thứ đều đan xen vào nhau." (*Obviously there is no unmixed, isolated culture. Everything is intertwined in this world.*) (1996, p. 166). Or Spencer-Oatey also highlighted, "Should the ethnographer return several years after completing a cultural study, he or she would not find exactly the same situation, for there are no cultures that remained completely static year after year […] Although small-scale, technologically simple, preliterate societies tend to be more conservative (and, thus, change less rapidly than modern, industrialized, highly complex societies), it is now generally accepted that, to some degree, change is a constant feature of all cultures." (2012, p. 12).

### *5.2. Teaching and learning do not encourage dynamic reflection of preconceived ideas through teachers' and students' insights*

#### *5.2.1. From teachers' insights*

We fortunately had chance to talk with 2 Vietnamese culture teachers at ULIS, whose names are Minh An and Minh Anh (pseudo-names), about their teaching experiences. The non-structured interview was conducted in an informal setting among colleagues under no institutional pressure. The talk reveals itself with some significant points as below:

Firstly, they praised Trần Ngọc Thêm and Trần Quốc Vượng for showing "plentiful" and "interesting" knowledge of Vietnamese culture. Minh An even got excited when introducing us the "lately-published" book called *Searching for True Nature of Vietnamese Culture* of Trần Ngọc Thêm. She encouraged us to read the book as she thought it was "much better" than the previous one. We were wondering how "lately-published" the book is, because this book was published in 1996, just a year after the previous book called *Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture* (1st Ed.) (1995). However, this concern is just peripheral. The two informants' point of view is to advocate for the books.

Secondly, though they favored the two books, they did not think that it can help learners in developing the intercultural competence. As they explained, the main in-class content is to "introduce the cultural components to learners" without any comparison to the foreign cultures. Students' in-class presentation mainly reports the course books and adds on some pictures that they found on the internet. Recently, this subject has been transformed to online learning. Students need merely 15 minutes per week to finish the multiple choice exercises on the online learning system. Both teachers agreed that this way of learning, though it can boost students' learning autonomy, is "of no help to their cultural acquisition".

Finally, they believe that their students cannot see any linkage between this course and their major in foreign language learning, thereby lacking incentives in learning this subject. Minh Anh blamed that on the limitations of the course objectives.

From the sharing of Minh An and Minh Anh, the researchers found the following:

Firstly, they were aware of the poor connection between the course Fundamentals to Vietnamese culture and the intercultural competence. In explaining for that poor connection, they blamed the in-class activities, like the presentation, and the course conduct (online learning), but not the materials. They did not recognize the problematicity - the non-dynamic view directing the two books. It is understandable, as the two books have been dominating the academic market since their first publication in mid-1990s. They are so popular that most higher education institutions in Vietnam use the books for their freshmen. When every place of the nation uses the same books, it is hard for one to realize the problematicity.

Secondly, they think that comparing the native culture to foreign cultures is a manifestation of building intercultural competence. According to Baker (2011), a popular misconception of cultural awareness is that it has often been conceived in relation to intercultural communication between defined cultural groupings, typically at the national level. And thus, cultural awareness is often associated with the comparisons between the local culture and the target cultures. However, what meanings could the comparisons bring to the learners? What happens if such comparisons result in the stereotypes and prejudices? Comparison is needed to inform learners upon the cultural diversity, but it is just the first step.

Thirdly, we see the lack of reflectional activities in classroom. Liddicoat (2005) states that intercultural competence involves 7 qualities as follows:

- Accepting that one's own and others' behavior is culturally determined.
- Accepting that there is no one right way to do things.
- Valuing one's own culture and other cultures.
- Using language to explore culture.
- Finding personal solutions in intercultural interaction.
- Using L1 culture as a resource to learn about L2 culture.
- Finding an intercultural style and identity

Of the 7 qualities above, qualities 1 and 2 are indeed achievable in classroom of Vietnamese culture. Teachers could guide students with some questions like "How do you feel when your friends/relatives react this way?" or "Is this the only way to respond to a specific situation?", so that students themselves can see their own points of view as well as compare their answers with classmates. This is the time when they realize how their behaviors are pre-determined by cultures and how many diverse ways there are to deal with a problem.

*5.2.2. From students' insights*

Students' insights were taken from a 10-question survey and a follow-up interview which were central on the awareness of students towards culture and their experiences with the course *Fundamentals to Vietnamese culture*. 263 participants were randomly chosen among second-year students who had just finished the Vietnamese culture course in the previous semester. The two researchers intended to choose second-year students as we wanted to investigate how the course influenced the way learners look at culture. Below are the findings we get from the survey:

In terms of cultural awareness, 77% participants viewed Vietnamese culture as a fixed set of cultural values, handed down from generation to generation; 17% participants viewed it as an integration between many different cultures, constantly moving and changing; and merely 6% thought that there is actually no cultural identity because every cultural practice depends on the network of meanings (i.e. historical context, social context.) that constitute it.

Besides the two main course books, only 13% of them spent time reading other books of culture. These supplementary books are: *Việt Nam Phong tục – Vietnamese customs* (Phan Kế Bính), *Thần, người và đất Việt – Gods, people and land of Vietnam* (Tạ Chí Đại Trường), *Khảo chứng tiền sử Việt Nam – Researching Proto-Vietnam History* (Trương Thái Du), *Món ngon Hà Nội – Hanoi delicacies* (Vũ Bằng), *Hà Nội băm sáu phố phường – 36 Streets of Hanoi* (Thạch Lam), and some folklores.

About their impressions of the course, nearly 73% of participants reported that they found it of some help to their second language learning. They wrote that this course would be very useful for those who aimed at being a translator or interpreter. The rest 27% saw no relationship between the course and their second language learning. A student named Minh Khanh (pseudo-name) said, "Why do we have to study this course? I gained nothing after studying it. It kinda wasted my time."

In regards to classroom activities, the learning procedure is, most of the time, conducted through teachers' lecturing the content of the course books. Students' presentations are occasional, yet the presented knowledge is basically deprived from the legitimate materials without any implications to foreign culture. Self-reflectional cultural activities are totally absent.

From the report of students, we can see the static awareness towards culture and the teacher-centered philosophy of teaching:

The majority of students look at culture as a fixed set of values, which means that culture to them is "virtually synonymous with "tradition", or "customary ways of behaving" (Avruch, 1998, p. 16). This perception may not only result from the two books Fundamentals of Vietnamese culture as discussed above, but also from the reference books that students read. Some books such as *Việt Nam Phong tục – Vietnamese customs* (Phan Kế Bính), *Món ngon Hà Nội – Hanoi delicacies* (Vũ Bằng), and *Hà Nội băm sáu phố phường – 36 Streets of Hanoi* (Thạch Lam) are all about "true" customs and traditions of Vietnamese people. The two books *Thần, người và đất Việt – Gods, people and land of Vietnam* (Tạ Chí Đại Trường) and *Khảo chứng tiền sử Việt Nam – Researching Proto-Vietnam History* (Trương Thái Du) somehow delve into the historical cultural Vietnam through the social construction viewpoint; however, the effort to read such books is marginal. The static way of seeing culture implies the conception that there is no sense of struggle, and even when there are struggles, they cannot change or distort any tradition and custom. Culture is, therefore, timeless and has "a changeless quality" (Avruch, 1998, p. 16).

Within teacher-centered philosophy, the report from students seems to match with the teachers'. The design of subject as an online course does not provide the chance for both teachers and learners to discuss back and forth and build up deeper understanding on any subject matter. Besides, students lack motivation in learning this course, more than a quarter of participants saw no support of this subject to their language learning and the rest only find a little usefulness. This should be seriously taken into consideration, as Ford and Roby pointed out, "When a task is not important to a student or it is not an integral element of the student's life, amotivation typically results" (2013, p. 104). "Amotivation results from not valuing an activity (Ryan, 1995), not feeling competent to do it (Bandura, 1986), or not expecting it to yield a desired outcome (Seligman, 1975)." (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Cultural competence is the core competence in foreign language acquisition, if learners are not aware of its importance, it will be hard for them to become a successful communicator.

## 6. Conclusion

The use of English as the global lingua franca truly highlights the need for an understanding of cultural contexts and a critical mindset to successfully communicate across diverse cultures. If culture continued to be looked at from the culture-ology perspective as fixed sets of values, we are afraid that a culture learner would hold an essentialistic thinking and become vulnerable in a multicultural environment. The two books *Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture* were composed in early 1990s, when Vietnam was in Đổi Mới stage– a post-war recovery and toward-modernity stage, and carried the mission of "*build an advanced culture imbued with national identity*". However, backed up by the arguments in Section 5.1, we believe that the "advanced culture" or the "strong national identity" would impede the learners' integration process, rather than give them the courage to expose to foreign cultures.

In this paper, we suggest two dynamic ways of teaching culture. Firstly, teachers should encourage the use of supplementary materials written by worldwide authors in order to acknowledge students on the theory of multiple truths. Each writer shares their own point of view, thereby adding one more truth to look at an event. Students, instead of presenting what is written in textbooks only, now need to discuss other truths from multiple perspectives. Secondly, teachers and students need to work on some questions like: What historical contexts was a book composed in? For what purposes? What patterns of thoughts that the author stands for? Those questions would provide critical lenses for students and gradually makes them understand that any cultural practices are intermingled in a very complex network of meanings.

Though we do not agree with Cao Xuân Huy (1995) on the comparison of culture with water at the illustration, "dẫu có điên đảo ngả nghiêng đến đâu nó vẫn nhanh chóng trở về cái quân thế tuyệt diệu của nó" *(No matter how intensely [the water] rolls, [the water] will quickly return to its wonderful stance)* (p. 365), we think that water can, to some extent, symbolize the dynamic, non-linear-ness, intertwined-ness of culture, and the constant-changing nature of it. The poem "New Age" of Bertolt Brencht says it all:

> "A new age does not begin all of a sudden.
> My grandfather was already living in the new age
> My grandson will probably still be living in the old one.
> The new meat is eaten with the old forks.
>
> It was not the first cars
> Nor the tanks
> It was not the airplanes over the roofs
> Nor the bombers.
>
> From the new transmitters came the old stupidities.
> Wisdom was passed on from mouth to mouth."

In this era of globalization, culture is best thought of not as a bounded unit but as a set of overlapping performative language games that flow with no clear limits or determinations within the global whole of human life (Baker, 2004, p. 45). The critical cultural awareness thereby serves to mitigate the inferiority complex among learners, help them avoid being influenced by the daily media praises of a dream European-American culture; and most importantly, pass judgements in order to become a global citizen.

## References

### Vietnamese

Cao Xuân Huy (1995). *Tư tưởng phương Đông gợi những điểm hình tham chiếu.* Hà Nội: NXB Văn học

Phan Ngọc (1996). *Văn hoá Việt Nam và cách tiếp cận mới*. Hà Nội: NXB Văn hoá thông tin.

Trần Ngọc Thêm (1996). *Tìm về bản sắc văn hoá Việt Nam*. TPHCM: NXBTP Hồ Chí Minh.

Trần Ngọc Thêm (1997, tái bản lần 2). *Cơ sở văn hoá Việt Nam.* Hà Nội: NXB Giáo dục.

Trần Quốc Vượng (1998). *Cơ sở văn hoá Việt Nam*. Hà Nội: NXB Giáo dục.

### English

Al-Marky, N. (1979). *Reviewing the book 'Orientalism' by Said Edward (1978).* USA: Vintage Books.

Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT. *ELT Journal*, *56*(1), pp.57-64.

Avruch, K. (1998). *Culture and conflict resolution*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Baker, C. (2004). *The SAGE dictionary of cultural studies*. CA: SAGE Publications.

Baker, W. (2011). From cultural awareness to intercultural awareness: Culture in ELT. *ELT Journal*, *66*(1), pp.62-70.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M. (2008). *From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship: Essays and Refections*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Cheboksarov, N. N. & Cheboksarova, I. A. (1971). *Peoples, Races, and Cultures*. Moscow, Russia: Science.

Crozet, C. (1996). Teaching verbal interaction and culture in the language classroom. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics, 19*(2), pp.37-58.

Ford, V. B. & Roby, D. E. (2013). Why do high school students lack motivation in the classroom?. *Global Education Journal, 2013*(2).

Houghton, S. A., Furumura, Y., & Lebedko, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Critical cultural awareness: Managing stereotypes through intercultural (language) education* (pp. 204-220). Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Goscha, C. (2016). *Vietnam: A new history*. New York: Basic Books.

Harari, Y. N. (2014). *Sapiens: A brief history of humankind*. Canada: McClelland & Stewart.

Le, M. K.(2016). *Racism in Vietnamese Scholarship* (Part 1). Retrieved August 30th, 2019 from https://leminhkhai.wordpress.com/2016/03/02/racism-in-vietnamese-scholarship-part-1/

Liddicoat, A. J. (2005). *Teaching languages for intercultural communication*. Doctoral dissertation. Australia: Griffith University, School of Languages and Linguistics.

Newton, J. (2016). Cultivating intercultural competence in tertiary EFL programs. *Crossing Borders in Language Teaching and Business Communication: Proceedings of the 11th ELT conference at AE CYUT.* (pp. 1-22). Chaoyang University of Technology, Chaoyang, Taiwan, 27 May 2016.

Nugent, K., & Catalano, T. (2015). Critical cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom. *Faculty Publications: Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education, 194.*

Ryan, R. M. & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*, pp.68-78.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.

Sercu, L. (2004). Assessing intercultural competence: A framework for systematic test development in foreign language education and beyond. *Intercultural Education*, *15*(1), pp.73-89.

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). What is culture? A compilation of quotations. GlobalPAD Core Concepts. Available at GlobalPAD Open House http://go.warwick.ac.ul/globalpadintercultural

Truong. M.H. & Phung. H. T. (2018). 'Fresh off the boat' and the model minority stereotype: A Foucauldian discourse analysis. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, 34*(5), pp.85-102.

Wittgenstein, L., 2001. *Philosophical investigations*. London: Blackwell.

Yulita, L. (2013). *Critical pedagogy: Stereotyping as oppression*. In: Critical Cultural Awareness. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, pp.204-220.

# NHẬN THỨC VĂN HOÁ CÓ PHÊ PHÁN: VĂN HOÁ VIỆT NAM CÓ NÊN ĐƯỢC TIẾP CẬN THEO MỘT HƯỚNG KHÁC?

Đỗ Như Quỳnh, Đào Thị Diệu Linh

*Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội*
*Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Nhận thức văn hoá có phê phán– một thành tố chủ chốt trong khung năng lực giao tiếp liên văn hóa của Byram (1997) – đã nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng của việc đào tạo kỹ năng tư duy phê phán cho người học ngoại ngữ. Nhiều nghiên cứu về cách phát triển nhận thức văn hóa có phê phán đã được thực hiện trong các lớp học ngôn ngữ; tuy nhiên, chưa có nghiên cứu nào mà chúng tôi tìm được lấy lớp học văn hóa bản địa là bối cảnh để nâng cao nhận thức này. Trong bài viết này, nhóm tác giả muốn nhấn mạnh tính cần thiết của việc thúc đẩy nhận thức văn hoá có phê phán trong lớp học văn hóa bản địa. Chúng tôi nhận ra một số rào cản khiến việc giảng dạy văn hóa Việt Nam tại trường đại học (trong giới hạn một ví dụ tại trường ĐH Ngoại ngữ - ĐHQGHN) hiện nay chưa thể giúp nhận thức văn hoá có phê phán cho người học. Những rào cản nói trên nằm ở tài liệu học tập, cụ thể là hai cuốn giáo trình về văn hóa Việt Nam và các hoạt động học tập trên lớp. Cuối cùng, chúng tôi đề xuất một số ý tưởng để làm cho việc dạy và học có tính phê phán hơn.

*Từ khoá:* nhận thức văn hoá có phê phán, văn hoá Việt Nam, thuyết bản chất luận, tính động

VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, Vol.36, No.1 (2020) 81-102

# FACE VALIDITY OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ENGLISH BASED ON THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM

Nong Thi Hien Huong*

*Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry*
*Tan Thinh, Thai Nguyen, Vietnam*

Received 17 September 2019
Revised 23 December 2019; Accepted 14 February 2020

**Abstract:** In language testing and assessment, face validity of a test is used by learners and is probably considered as the most commonly discussed type of test validity because it is primarily dealt with the question of whether a test measures what it is said to measure. Therefore, this study investigates students' and English lecturers' perceptions toward the Institutional English Test based on the Common European Framework of Reference administered in a public university in Vietnam. A survey of 103 students and 20 English lecturers from the Institutional Program was conducted. A questionnaire with 7 main concerns – weightage, time allocation, language skills, topics, question items, instructions and mark allocations was used to collect data. All responses were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The results showed that the Institutional English Test based on the Common European Framework of Reference had satisfactory face validity from both the students' and lecturers' opinions; consequently, the Institutional English Test is perceived as a good test to measure students' English abilities.

*Key words:* language testing, test validity, face validity, test validation

## 1. Introduction

In our globalized world, being able to speak one or more foreign languages is a prerequisite, as employers on a national as well as on an international scale pay attention to the foreign language skills of their future employees (Kluitmann, 2008), focusing mostly on English.

Therefore, English nowadays has been gaining an important position in many countries all over the world. English is not only a means but also an important key to gain access to the latest scientific and technological achievements for developing countries such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. Furthermore, it is estimated that the number of native English speakers is approximately 400 million to 500 million; more than one billion people are believed to speak some forms of English.

Campbell (1996) claimed that although the numbers vary, it is widely accepted that, hundreds of millions of people around the world speak English, whether as a native, second or foreign language. English, in some forms, has become the native or unofficial language of a majority of the countries around the world today including India, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam.

In Vietnam, the Vietnamese government has identified the urgent socio-political,

* Tel.: 84-984 888 345
Email: nongthihienhuong@tuaf.edu.vn

commercial and educational need for Vietnamese people to be able to better communicate in English. In line with this aspiration, all Vietnamese tertiary institutions have accepted English as a compulsory subject as well as medium of instruction for academic purposes. This development has given rise to the need to teach and measure students' command of English at institutional level. However, the issue that is often raised in relation to in-house language test is validation because the locally designed language tests are disrupted by the fact that they do not indicate the features of language skills tested and hardly tap the students' language abilities (Torrance, Thomas, & Robison, 2000).

According to Weir (2005), test validation is the "process of generating evidence to support the well-foundedness of inferences concerning trait from test scores, i.e., essentially, testing should be concerned with evidence-based validity. Test developers need to provide a clear argument for a test's validity in measuring a particular trait with credible evidence to support the plausibility of this interpretative argument" (p. 2). Therefore, test validation has been considered as the most important role in test development and use and should be always examined (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Face validity is one of the components in test validation and is probably the most commonly discussed type of validity because it was primarily dealt with the question of whether a test looked as if it measured what it was said to measure (Hughes, 1989).

Bearing this in mind, this study aims to investigate the face validity of the Institutional English Test (IET) based on the Common European Framework of Reference at a public university in Vietnam. Most of the previous studies in accordance with language test validation have been derived from the views of educators or researchers; however, in this study the perceptions of both students and English language lecturers as important groups of stakeholders were collected (Jaturapitakkul, 2013; Kuntasal, 2001; Samad, Rahman, & Yahya, 2008). The results might shed some lights on English language testing and could primarily inform ways to improve current in-house English language test.

## 2. Literature review

### *2.1. The importance of language testing*

Language testing and assessment is a field under the broad concepts of applied linguistics. This field has been rooted in applied linguistics because it is related to English language learners, test takers, test developers, teachers, administrators, researchers who have great influences on teaching and learning English in the world (Bachman, 1990). He explains in detail that testing is considered as a teacher's effective tool contributing to the success of teaching English in the classroom as well as helps him or her produce the exact and fair evaluation of students' ability and the performance of the language (Bachman, 1990).

Sharing the same view, McNamara (2000) defines language testing as an aspect of learning that helps learners to grasp the knowledge that they have missed previously and the teacher to understand what can be done in subsequent lessons to improve teaching. To (2000) presents language testing as a useful measurement tool which test validation can assist in creating positive wash back for learning through providing the students with the feeling of competition as well as a sense that the teachers' assessment coincides with what has been taught to them.

In the same token, Davies (1978) emphasizes that "qualified English language tests can help students learn the language by asking them to study hard, emphasizing course objectives, and showing them where they need to improve" (p.5). Similarly, McNamara (2000) highlights some important roles of language testing which have been applied popularly in educational system and in other related fields to assist in pinpointing the strength and weakness in academic development, to reflect the students' true abilities as well as to place the student in a suitable course.

Additionally, language testing helps to determine a student's knowledge and skills in the language and to discriminate that student's language proficiency from other students (Fulcher, 1997). In the same vein, Hughes (1989) also states that language testing plays a very crucial role in the teaching and learning process because it is the final step in educational progress. Thus, to use tests to measure the educational qualities, the administrators should build important and qualified testing strategies which assist evaluating learners' performance, teaching methods, materials and other conditions in order to set up educational training objectives (McNamara, 2000).

In short, language testing has assumed a prominent measurement in recent effort to improve the quality of education because testing sets meaningful standards to schooling systems, teachers, students, administrators and researchers with different purposes. Furthermore, language testing has enriched the learning and teaching process by pinpointing strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, program appropriations, students' promotion as well as teachers' evaluation.

*2.2. Face validity*

Messick (1996, p.13) defines test validity as "an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationale support the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores and other modes of assessment". In other words, test validity or test validation means evaluating theoretically and empirically the use of a test in a specific setting such as university admission, course placement and class or group classification.

Bachman (1990) also emphasizes that overtime, the validity evidence of the test will continue gathering, either improving or contradicting previous findings. Henning (1987) adds that when investigating the test validity, it is crucial to validate the results of the test in the environment where they are used. In order to use the same test for different academic purposes, each usage should be validated independently.

Crocker and Algina (1986) highlight three kinds of test validity: Construct validity, Face validity and Criterion validity. In the early days of language testing, face validity was widely used by testers and was probably considered as the most commonly discussed type of test validity because it was primarily dealt with the question of whether a test measures what it is said to measure (Hughes, 1989). In a common definition, face validity is defined as "the test's surface credibility or public acceptability" (Henning, 1987, p.89). In other words, face validation refers to the surface of a test such as behaviors, attitudes, skills, perceptions it is supposed to measure. For example, if a test intends to measure students' speaking skills, it should measure all aspects of speaking such as vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, word and sentence stresses, but if it does not check students' pronunciation, it can be thought that this test lacks face validity.

Heaton (1988) states that the value of face validity has been in controversy for a long time and has considered as a kind of scientific conceptual research because this validation mainly collects data from non-experts such as students, parents and stakeholders who give comments on the value of the test. In the same view, several experts who have emphasized the importance of face validity, state that this validity seems to be a reasonable way to gain more necessary information from a large population of people (Brown, 2000; Henning, 1987; Messick, 1994). More specifically, these researchers highlight that using face validity in the study encourages a large number of people  to take part in a survey, so it can be easy to get valuable results quickly. Therefore, Messick (1994) concludes that face validity must be among the various validity aspects in language testing and test validation.

To sum up, face validity examines the appearance of test validity and is viewed as a quite important characteristic of a test in language testing and assessment because this evidence helps the researchers gain more necessary information from a large population as well as get quicker perceptions about the value of the test.

*2.3. Theoretical framework*

As far as concerned, validity has long been acknowledged as the most critical aspect of language testing. Test stakeholders (test takers, educators) and other test score users (university administrators, policy makers) always expect to be provided with the evidence of how test writers can determine and control criteria distinctions between proficiency tests applied with different levels. Therefore, there is a growing awareness among these stakeholders of the value of having not only a clear socio-cognitive theoretical model to support for the test but also a means of generating explicit evidence on how that model is used and taken in practice. The socio-cognitive framework for developing and validating English language tests of Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking in Weir's (2005) model of conceptualizing test validity seem to meet all the demands of the validity in the test that test stakeholders want to use in the public domain. Sharing the same view, O'Sullivian (2009) emphasizes that the most significant contribution to the practical application of validity theory in recent years has been Weir's (2005) socio-cognitive frameworks which have had influenced on test development and validation. Similarly, Abidin (2006) points out that Weir's (2005) framework combines all the important elements expected of a test that measures a particular construct in valid terms. Table 1 presents an outline of the socio–cognitive framework for validating language tests.

Weir (2005) proposed four frameworks to validate four English language skills: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. In each framework, Weir (2005) put emphasis on validating test takers' characteristics, theory-based validity (or cognitive validity) and other types of validation. At the first stage of design and development of the test, test-taker characteristics, which represent for candidates in the test event, always focus on the individual language user and their mental processing abilities since the candidate directly impacts on the way he/she processes the test task. In other words, in this stage, the important characteristics which are related to the test-takers may have potential effect on test, thus the test-developers must consider the test-takers as the central to the validation process first. The view of test taker characteristics under the headings: Physical/ Physiological, Psychological, and Experiential was presented in details by Weir (2005) in Table 1.

Table 1. Test-taker characteristics framework suggested by Weir (2005)

| Physical/ Physiological | Psychological | Experiential |
|---|---|---|
| - Short-term ailments: Toothache, cold... | Personality | - Education |
| -Long term illnesses: hearing age, sex, vision… | Memory | - Examination experience |
| | Cognitive style | - Communication experience |
| | Concentration | - Target language country residence |
| | Motivation | |
| | Emotional state | |

Another important test validation component which is highly recommended by the researcher is theory-based validity or Cognitive validity (Khalifa & Weir, 2009). It focuses on the processes that test-takers use in responding to test items and tasks. It should be emphasized that face validity is a part of cognitive validity in test validation. This validity requires test -takers to find out if the internal mental processes that a test elicits from a candidate resemble the processes that he or she would employ in non-test conditions. Furthermore, cognitive includes executive resources and executive process. Executive resources consist of linguistic knowledge and content knowledge of the test-taker. The test-taker can use grammatical, discoursal, functional and sociolinguistic knowledge of the language in the test. These resources are also equivalent to Bachman's (1990) views of language components. Weir (2005) defines language ability as comprising of two components: language knowledge and strategic competence that will provide language users with the ability to complete the tasks in the test. He also emphasizes that there are two main methods to explore the cognitive validity. Firstly, cognitive validity can be checked through investigating test-takers' behaviors by using various types of verbal reporting (e.g., introspective, immediate retrospective, and delayed retrospective) in order to stimulate their comments on what they often do in Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking tests (Huang, 2013; Shaw & Weir, 2007). Secondly, a test's cognitive validity can be examined through learners' perceptions on Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking tasks in their real life situation (Field, 2011). It can be noted that the two methods in cognitive processing will be selected individually, but it is suggested from test developers' perceptions that whether they want to select the first or the second method, the process of performance of the test should be more like the process in the real life. Therefore, it can be said that investigating face validity is as important as evaluating the content or predictive validity of an in-house language test. However, there have been still some limitations in previous studies in terms of content and methodology. For illustrations, several studies (Advi, 2003; Ayers, 1977; Dooey & Oliver, 2002; Huong, 2000; Mojtaba, 2009; Pishghadam & Khosropanah, 2011) paid much attention to investigate the content validity and predictive validity of an in-house test more than face validity. To be more specific, the researchers tended to measure test scores rather than other perceptions about knowledge, skills or other attributes of students. Messick (1995) emphasized that the meaning and values of test validation apply not just to interpretive and action inferences derived from test scores, but also inferences based on other means of observing. This means that investigation of face validity will create much more validity for the tests. For these reasons above, this study attempts to fill the limitations stated above by employing the qualitative method to investigate the face validity of the IET at a public university in Vietnam in order to improve the quality of education; pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and test administrations.

*2.4. Previous studies on face validity*

Some previous studies in language testing have already been conducted in an attempt to analyze the different aspects of test validation. McNamara (2000) points out that insights from such analysis provide invaluable contribution to defining the validity of language tests. Exploring how other researchers have investigated the face validity of a language test can shed light on the process followed in this research.

To begin with, Kucuk (2007) examined the face validity of a test administered at Zonguldak Karaelmas University Preparatory School, in Turkey. 52 students and 29 English instructors participated in this study. The researchers used two questionnaires and students' test scores. The instructors and students were given questionnaires to ask for the representative of the course contents on the achievement tests. All data were analyzed through Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression. The results showed that even though it appeared that Listening was not represented on the test, both English instructors and students still agreed that the tests still possessed a high degree of face validity. The results showed that the tests administered at Zonguldak Karaelmas University Preparatory School, in Turkey were considered valid and the test scores could be employed to predict students' future achievement in their department English courses.

Another research on face validity goes for Lee and Greene (2007) who explored the face validity of an English Second Language Placement Test (ESLPT) by using both qualitative and quantitative data. The study was conducted with the total of 100 students and 55 faculty members at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, in the United States. A self-assessment questionnaire was administered to elicit students' own assessments of their academic progress and performance at mid-semester. Furthermore, the faculty evaluation questionnaire was given to 55 staff members to get the opinions about students' English proficiency, academic performance in the course, and the extent to which students' level of proficiency caught up with their performance in the academic course. Interviews with 20 students and 10 faculty members during their office hours were conducted individually. The results showed the ESLPT did not correlate considerably with faculty members' ratings of performance in content courses (r=.14). The findings indicated that international graduate students' English difficulties had less effect on students' academic performance than was expected, because of such other factors as sufficient background knowledge and lecture type courses during their first-semester studies.

A study was conducted by Şeyma (2013) investigating how well various assessment practices (placement test, midterms, quizzes, and readers) of the preparatory year English program in the Department of Foreign Languages predict the success of students for TOEFL ITPat TOBB University of Economic and Technology (TOBB ETU). The researcher used a questionnaire to investigate both the instructors' and students' opinion on the effectiveness of these assessment practices on TOEFL ITP and the scores of 337 students to find out the relationship between in-house assessment practices and TOEFL ITP. All data was analyzed through Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression.

The result revealed that students believed that mid-term exams were the most effective and beneficial assessment practice which helps students get higher scores from TOEFL ITP. Whereas, lecturers believed that quizzes were more effective for students' success in TOEFL ITP test.

## 3. Research questions

The study aims to investigate the face validity of the IET based on the Common European Framework of Reference at a public university in Vietnam through both students' and English language lecturers. The study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What are students' opinions about the face validity of the IET?

2. What are English language lecturers' opinions about the face validity of the IET?

## 4. Significance of the study

With the continuous use of a language test for its locally designed purposes, it is importantly noted that validity becomes a property of the test (Bachman, 1990; McNarama, 2000; Davies, 1989). Therefore, the results of the study can be hoped to contribute the following:

- This study is one of the few, which will shed light on the review of literature on language testing practices and provide educators with more information related to test validation.

- This present study may be valuable for other institutions in their endeavor to validate in-house tests, to justify the correctness of their interpretations. They may take this study as a guideline to examine the quality of their locally-designed assessment tools. Most importantly, it will contribute useful insights to English language teaching and learning, especially in-house English test validation and prevent the mismatch between learners' true performance and their test scores.

- It helps test designers and educational decision makers to check to what extent the course content can be adequately represented in the test content by observing the distribution of the frequencies among the content areas for future exam construction.

- For Vietnam context, this study is undertaken with the hope of providing the test validation guideline for local university English language tests as well as improving undergraduate students intakes at local universities.

- For universities, this study may provide the validity evidence for the in-house language tests. If the IET is found to be valid, this could be the potential for other universities to venture into the test validation, encourage students to improve their English skills and competencies which are required to succeed in the respective program.

## 5. Methodology

### *5.1. General direction of methodology*

The research question is checking the face validity of the IET through the students' and English lecturers' perceptions. This stage needs to take place after the students have just completed their IET and the lecturers have just finished teaching their third -semester English course. During the first stage, both students and English lecturers would be required to assess the IET components: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking, assess IET format and weighting and then respond to the data collection instruments.

In fulfilling the requirements for carrying out this study, the research figured out the general direction of Methodology that the study would undertake in Figure 1 below:

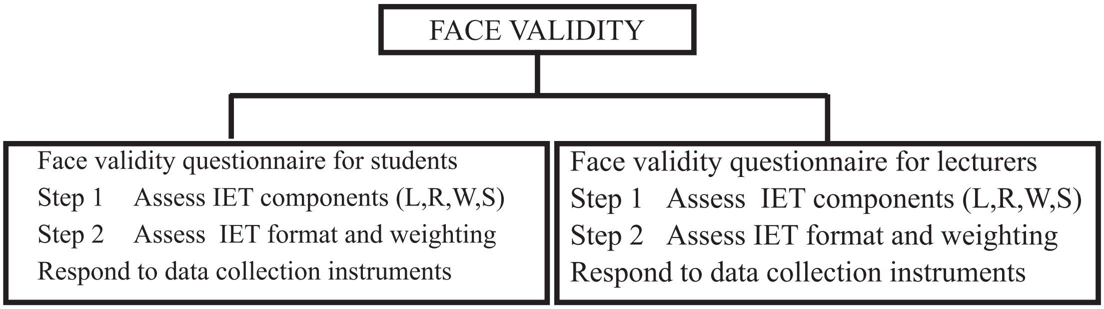


Figure 1. General direction of methodology

*5.2. Participants*

The participants of the main study consisted of 103 students who had completed their English course. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 22 years. Furthermore, 20 English lecturers participated in the survey for face validity investigation. These English lecturers were teaching English at a public university in Vietnam and their ages ranged from 30 to 50 years. More importantly, they all have had experiences in teaching, designing the English tests as well as assessing the students' language ability.

*5.3. The IET face validity questionnaire*

Questionnaires have been the most frequently used data collection method in educational evaluation research because they help to gather information on knowledge, attitudes, opinions, behaviors and other information from a large number of people in a short period of time as well as at a relatively low cost (McLeod, 2014). Bearing this in mind, the questionnaire is used to collect the students' and lecturers' opinions about the IET in order to investigate the face validity of the IET as well as to answer the research questions. Some face validity questionnaires (FVQ) from previous studies (To, 2001; Jaturapitakkul, 2013; Kucuk, 2007; Kuntasal, 2001; Kuroki, 1994; Wang, 2006) were collected. The focus on test weightage, time allocation, the representation of language skills, the representation of topics, the clarity of questions, the clarity of instruction and mark allocations in these previous FVQ was listed in order to gather necessary items which are useful for examining the opinions about the validity of a language test. Next, the first draft of the questionnaire for face validity of the IET was produced from these previous studies and then refined to make sure that the adaption of the instrument would meet the requirements of investigating the lecturers' and students' opinions about the validity of the IET.

The face validity questionnaire of the IET is drafted for two groups of the participants in this study: Students and English lecturers. It consists of two main parts: Cover letter and Content of the questionnaire.

*Cover letter*

The construction of the consent cover letter aimed to gain permission to conduct the data from the students and the lecturers. The students' FVQ is the same as in the lecturers' FVQ.

The consent cover letter is the first part of the instrument construction. It begins with a brief introductory statement about the study and the researcher. Furthermore, the promise of confidentiality is compiled in this letter to help the participants understand that their responses will not be in any case that affects their academic study or their academic career. Finally, contact and return information that is helpful to deal with queries during the data collection procedure is also included in the letter

*Questionnaire content*

Questionnaire content is the main part of the instrument construction. It consists of two sub-sections: Background information and Test components.

Section A is the first section which aims to ask for the students' and lecturers' background information. For the students, 9 questions were designed to ask for their full names, matrix number, gender, age, email, cell phone number, years of learning English and English speaking countries residence. For the lecturers, 7 questions related to background information were created to explore their full name, gender, age, email, cell phone number, educational qualifications and years of teaching English at a public university in Vietnam.

Section B is the most important section which aims to gather information on the IET components which are comprised of Listening Test, Reading Test, Writing Test and Speaking Test. This section contains 28 questions. Each component contains 7 questions which ask for the opinions on the weightage, time allocation, the representation of skills, the representation of topics, the clarity of questions, the clarity of instructions and the mark allocation. The responses to the questions are ranked from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree.

The framework of the adapted instrument for face validity of the IET is presented in Figure 2 below:

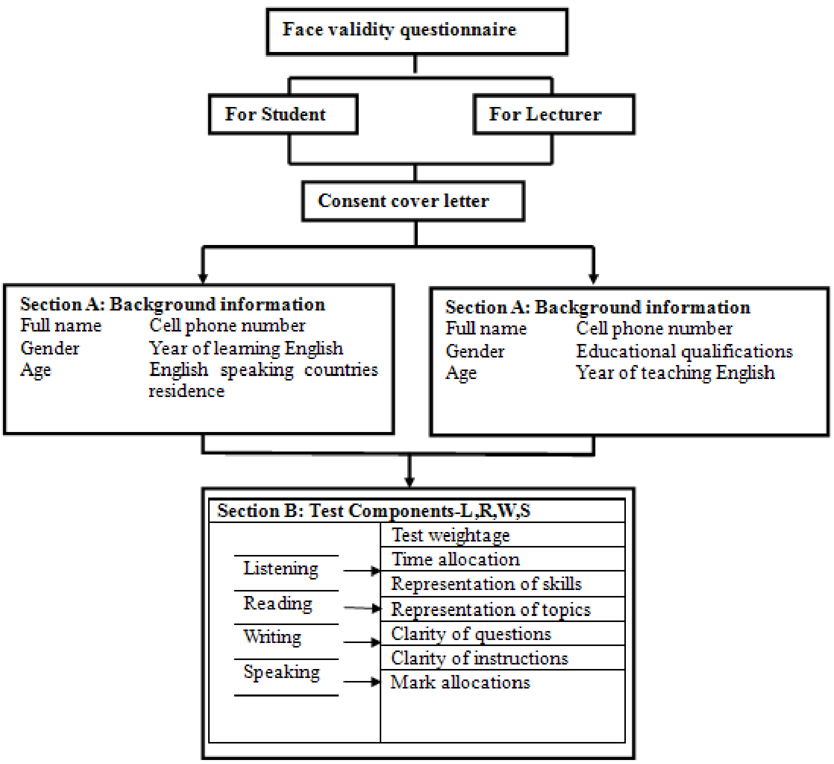



Figure 2. The adapted instrument framework

*5.4. The Institutional English Test*

The Institutional English language test consists of four English test components: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking.

*Reading and Writing tests*

Reading and Writing tests are taken together within 60 minutes. The Reading paper test consists of five parts with 55 questions while the Writing paper test has only two writing tasks.

1. Reading part 1: understanding messages
2. Reading part 2: three texts with questions
3. Reading part 3: long text with multiple choice questions
4. Reading part 4: text with multiple choice gaps
5. Reading part 5: text with gaps
6. Writing part 1: write a message
7. Writing part 2: write a story based on pictures

The Reading and Writing tests take 50% of the total score of the exams.

*Listening Test*

Students are required to complete 5 parts with 25 questions in the Listening paper test within 30 minutes. Each recording will be played twice

1. Listening part 1: pictures with multiple choice questions
2. Listening part 2: fill in a form
3. Listening part 3: multiple choice
4. Listening part 4: fill in a form
5. Listening part 5: longer conversation and matching

Each of the 25 listening questions scores 1 point. The Listening section is worth 25% of the total score of the exam.

*Speaking Test*

The IEST which is designed based on the common European Framework of Reference ( level A2), has two parts which take 8-10 minutes**.** Generally, when students take the speaking part of the IEST, they will do the examination with another candidate. The two of students will meet two examiners. One will do the talking while the other will take notes and assess their speaking.

Speaking part 1**:** A short Personal Information questions and answers exchange between candidate and the examiner.

Speaking part 2: The candidates will be given some cards with images/ideas or information on them and a card with some ideas for questions. After that one candidate will have to talk with the other candidate and ask or answer questions.

The speaking section is worth approximately 25% of the total score.

*5.5.Data collection and analysis procedures*

The set of data was collected through FVQ items given by 103 students and 20 English lecturers. This survey questionnaire was written in English, designed and adapted from several researchers (Cesur & Korsal , 2012; Dogru, 2013; Gonscar, 2008; Huong, 2001; Jaturapitakkul, 2013; Kucuk & Walters, 2009; Kuntasal, 2001; Moore, 2006 ; Pan, 1982 ; Wang, 2006) to get the opinions about the IET. During the survey, the instruction sheets were read out. After the participants finished filling out their background information questionnaire, they were asked to fill out the IET questionnaire. The results obtained from each question were administered, analyzed quantitatively and reported independently through the mean scores analyses in the SPSS program in order to investigate the perceptions of the validity of IET from both lecturers and students.

In order to establish the face validity of the IET, descriptive statistics analysis was made by computing the mean scores for each item in four components: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking in the students' and lecturers' questionnaire. Table 2 presents the interpretation of the mean scores:

Table 2. The interpretation of the mean scores

| Mean | Option | Degree |
|---|---|---|
| 4.5 - 5.0 | Strong Agreement | Very high |
| 3.5 - 4.4 | Agreement | High |
| 2.5 - 3.4 | Neutral | Moderate |
| 1.5 - 2.4 | Disagreement | Low |
| 1.0 - 1.4 | Strong Disagreement | Very Low |

Note: *VH =Very High, H=High, M=Moderate, L = Low, VL = Very Low

(Kucuk, 2007, p.65)

Table 2 shows the criteria of the mean scores adopted from Kucuk (2007). Five Likert-scale criteria were used to assess the degree in which the respondents agree to the face validity of the listening component. More precisely, the strongest agreement ranges from 4.5 to 5.0, followed closely by the agreement from 3.5 to 4.4 whereas undecided option covers 2.5 to 3.4. Last but not least, the disagreement starts from 1.5 to 2.4 and the strangles disagreement from 1.0 to 1.4.

In brief, the mean scores in Likert-scale criteria are used to measure the participant's attitude by measuring the extent to which they agree or disagree with a particular question or statement

## 6. Findings and discussion

*6.1. Participants*

- 103 students participated in the survey, 63% of whom were females and 40% of them were males, aged between 18 and 22.

- 20 lecturers, 4 (20%) males and 16 (80%) females, who were teaching English. Their age ranges from 25 to 55.

*6.2. Students' perceptions*

*6.2.1. Students' opinions on the IET*

During the analysis procedure, descriptive statistics analysis was made by computing the mean scores for each item in for four components: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking in the students' questionnaire in order to investigate the face validity of the IET. Table 3 shows mean scores for IET Components: Students' perceptions:

Table 3. Mean scores for IET Components: Students' perceptions (N=103)

| Item | **Listening Component** | | | **Reading Component** | | | **Writing Component** | | | **Speaking Component** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | D | Mean | SD | D | Mean | SD | D | Mean | SD | D |
| Weightage | 3.60 | .664 | H | 3.74 | .696 | H | 3.80 | .667 | H | 3.76 | .716 | H |
| Time allocation | 3.50 | .765 | H | 3.69 | .639 | H | 3.63 | .656 | H | 3.77 | .670 | H |
| Skills | 3.67 | .687 | H | 3.64 | .739 | H | 3.75 | .706 | H | 3.76 | .644 | H |
| Topics | 3.64 | .904 | H | 3.61 | .782 | H | 3.69 | .764 | H | 3.71 | .745 | H |
| Questions | 3.76 | .846 | H | 3.73 | .753 | H | 3.78 | .824 | H | 3.83 | .543 | H |
| Instructions | 3.84 | .730 | H | 3.85 | .567 | H | 3.81 | .788 | H | 3.74 | .750 | H |
| Mark allocations | 3.82 | .788 | H | 3.71 | .718 | H | 3.82 | .686 | H | 3.78 | .836 | H |

Note: *VH =Very High, H=High, M=Moderate, L = Low, VL = Very Low.

From Table 3, it can be noted that the mean scores for all items of four components are above 3.5, ranging from 3.5 to 3.8. In other words, four components of the IET generally seem to get much more satisfactory face validity from the students' opinions.

For Listening Component, the most positive comments are on the clarity of instructions with the highest mean score (M = 3.84, SD = .730). Meanwhile, the least positive comment is on time allocation (M=3.5, SD = .765).

For Reading Component, the clarity of instructions ranks first with the highest mean score (M= 3.85, SD =.567) while the lowest mean score (M= 3.61, SD= .782) is accounted for the representation of topics.

For Writing Component, the most positive comments are on the mark allocations (M= 3.82, SD= .686) while the lowest mean score is for the time allocation (M= 3.63, SD = .656).

For Speaking Component, the most positive comments are on the clarity of questions with the highest mean scores (M= 3.83, SD =.543) whereas the lowest mean score (M=3.71, SD =.745) is on the representation of topics.

In short, the findings from face validity analysis in the students' questionnaire provide the evidence that each component in the IET gains satisfactory face validity from the students' opinions in terms of weightage, the time allocation, language skills, topics, questions, instructions and mark allocations. The IET, in other words, is perceived as a good test by students.

*6.2.2. Student's mean scores of four IET components*

The summary for face validity results on the IET: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking from the students' perceptions was made based on the analysis of the mean scores of four components. Table 4 shows the mean of 4 components: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking in the IET.

Table 4. Overall mean scores for IET's face validity results

| Item (n=7) | Mean | SD | Degree | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening | 3.60 | .764 | H | 4 |
| Reading | 3.71 | .699 | H | 3 |
| Writing | 3.75 | .728 | H | 2 |
| Speaking | 3.76 | .701 | H | 1 |

Note: *VH =Very High, H=High, M=Moderate, L = Low, VL = Very Low

The mean scores show that the students' perceptions of four components in the IET are, on the whole, highly positive, ranging from 3.60 to 3.76. In particular, Speaking component ranks first with the highest mean score of 3.76 while Listening component ranks the lowest with 3.6. Therefore, with these highly positive comments, it can be claimed that the weightage and time allocation are appropriate to the students; therefore, they can distribute their answers and time well according to the weight value of each component. Furthermore, the coverage of English skills and the representation of topics that students were taught during their English course were sufficiently represented in the IET components. Moreover, the students found no difficulties in understanding question items, instructions as well as identifying mark allocations for each part in each component; consequently, they can perform the IET better.

To sum up, the mean scores in the students' questionnaire show that each component in the IET gains satisfactory face validity from the students' perceptions in term of weightage, the time allocation, language skills, topics, questions, instructions and mark allocations. This means the IET is considered as a good in-house English language test by students.

*6.3. Lecturers' perceptions*

*6.3.1. English language lecturers' opinions on the IET*

Like students' questionnaire analysis for face validity of the IET, the descriptive statistics analysis was made by computing the mean scores for each item in for four components: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking in the lecturers' questionnaire. The interpretation of the mean scores is explained similarly to face validity results of the students' questionnaire analysis in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Mean scores for IET components Teachers' perceptions (N=20)

| Item | **Listening Component** | | | **Reading Component** | | | **Writing Component** | | | **Speaking Component** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | D | Mean | SD | D | Mean | SD | D | Mean | SD | D |
| Weightage | 3.35 | .745 | M | 3.55 | .604 | H | 3.65 | .670 | H | 3.95 | .510 | H |
| Time allocation | 3.65 | .670 | H | 3.85 | .489 | H | 3.60 | .680 | H | 3.90 | .552 | H |
| Skills | 3.60 | .680 | H | 3.64 | .489 | H | 3.70 | .571 | H | 4.10 | .447 | H |
| Topics | 3.55 | .686 | H | 3.65 | .587 | H | 3.65 | .587 | H | 4.10 | .552 | H |
| Questions | 4.05 | .686 | H | 4.05 | .604 | H | 4.25 | .444 | H | 4.15 | .587 | H |
| Instructions | 4.10 | .552 | H | 4.20 | .410 | H | 4.30 | .471 | H | 4.30 | .470 | H |
| Mark allocations | 3.60 | .753 | H | 3.55 | .825 | H | 3.05 | .887 | M | 3.10 | .967 | M |

Note: *VH =Very High, H=High, M=Moderate, L = Low, VL = Very Low

Table 5 shows that for Listening Component, mean scores for all items are above 3.0, the mean degrees range from moderate to high face validity. The most positive comments are on the clarity of instructions with the highest mean scores (M= 4.10, SD = .552), meanwhile the least positive comment is for weightage (M=3.35, SD= .745).

For Reading Component, mean scores for all items are quite high, ranging from 3.5 to 4.2. Particularly, clarity of instructions ranks first with the highest mean score (M= 4.20, SD = 4.10) while the lowest mean score (M= 3.55, SD= .6.04) is accounted for the weightage. In other words, on the whole, the lecturers gave highly positive comments on the face validity of the reading component.

For Writing Component, mean scores for all items in the writing component are from moderate to high, ranging from 3.05 to 4.30. In specific, the most positive comment is for clarity of instructions with the highest mean score (M= 4.30, SD= .4.71) whereas the lowest mean score (M=3.05, SD= .887) is for mark allocations.

For Speaking Component, mean scores for all items of the speaking component is similar to the writing component, ranging from moderate (M= 3.10) to high (M= 4.30). More precisely, the most positive comment is for clarity of questions with the highest mean scores (M= 4.30, SD= .470) whereas the lowest mean score (M=3.10, SD =.967) is for mark locations.

To sum up, lecturers' perceptions on four IET components are highly positive, ranging from 3.72 to 3.94. Among four components, Speaking ranks first with the highest mean score of 3.94 while Listening Component ranks lowest with the mean of 3.72. This provides the evidence that each IET component gains satisfactory face validity from the lecturers' opinions in term of weightage, time allocation, skills, topics, questions, instructions and mark allocations. The IET, in other words, is also perceived as a good test from the lecturers' opinions.

*6.3.2. Lecturers' mean scores of four IET components*

The summary for face validity results on the IET: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking from the English lecturers' perceptions is made based on the analysis of the mean scores of four components in the IET. Table 6 shows the mean of four components: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking.

Table 6. Overall mean scores for Lecturers' IET face validity results

| Item (n=7) | Mean | SD | Degree | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening | 3.72 | .681 | H | 4 |
| Reading | 3.77 | .572 | H | 2 |
| Writing | 3.74 | .617 | H | 3 |
| Speaking | 3.94 | .583 | H | 1 |

Note: *VH =Very High, H=High, M=Moderate, L = Low, VL = Very Low

Table 6 shows that the lecturers' perceptions on four IET components are highly positive, ranging from 3.72 to 3.94. Among four components, Speaking ranks first with the highest mean score of 3.94 while Listening Component ranks lowest with the mean of 3.72. This provides the evidence that each IET component gains satisfactory face validity from the lecturers' opinions in terms of weightage, time allocation, skills, topics, questions, instructions and mark allocations. The IET, in other words, is also perceived as a good test from the lecturers' opinions.

*6.4. Comparison of students' and lecturers' perceptions about the IET*

Due to the fact that all the questions in the second part of the students' questionnaire were parallel to the questions in the second part of the lecturers' questionnaire, and all of these questions were concerned with the face validity of the IET in term of weightage, time allocation, representation of skills, representation of topics, clarity of questions, clarity of instructions and mark allocations. Therefore, both students' and lecturers' perceptions of face validity of the IET are compared through the averaged mean scores of four components: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Students' and lecturers' perceptions on the face validity of the IET

| Component | Group | Mean | SD | Degree | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening | Students | 3.60 | .764 | H | 103 |
| | Lecturers | 3.72 | .681 | H | 20 |
| Reading | Students | 3.71 | .699 | H | 103 |
| | Lecturers | 3.77 | .572 | H | 20 |
| Writing | Students | 3.75 | .728 | H | 103 |
| | Lecturers | 3.74 | .617 | H | 20 |
| Speaking | Students | 3.76 | .701 | H | 103 |
| | Lecturers | 3.94 | .583 | H | 20 |

Note: *VH =Very High, H=High, M=Moderate, L = Low, VL = Very Low

Table 7 shows that all mean scores between two groups possess high face validity. More specifically, the lecturers have more positive comments on Speaking and Reading components while students gain more satisfactory face validity on Speaking and Writing. Among these components, Speaking component achieves the most satisfactory face validity from both students and lecturers' opinions than the others. Fang and Faure (2010) showed that students tend to be more interested in developing communication skills than listening, reading and writing skills because they were increased the self-confidence of being of part in the classroom including answering the question, sharing the idea, and also presentation. Henning (1984) also emphasized that speaking lessons with different activities always help students and lecturers feel relaxed, more active in the learning and teaching process and at the same time make their learning and teaching more meaningful; thus, it could be explained that in this research students and lecturers feel much more comfortable during the speaking test than the others. Furthermore, speaking topics always relate to real-life situations which help students and lecturers feel freely when talking and sharing new ideas in the test.

In the light of descriptive statistical analysis above, it can be nutshell concluded that the IET is perceived as a good test from both students' and lecturers' perceptions.

## 7. Concluding remarks

Based on the evidence from the questionnaire surveys, it was found that the weightage and time allocation of the IET are appropriate to the students; therefore, they can distribute their answers and their time well according to the weight value of each component. Furthermore, the coverage of English skills and the representation of topics that students were taught during their English course are sufficiently represented in the IET components. Moreover, the students find no difficulties in understanding question items, instructions as well as identifying mark allocations for each part in each component; consequently, they can perform the IET better. On the whole, the descriptive statistics on the face validity of the IET showed that both students and English lecturers possess satisfactory face validity of the IET. In other words, the IET, which is designed based on the Common European Framework of Reference, is perceived as a good English language test from the students and English lecturers.

The results are in line with similar earlier studies on face validity of in-house language tests such as Bachman (1990), Jaturapitakkul (2013), Kucuk (2007), Kuntasal (2001), Liauh (2011), and Nakamura (2006) that if the face validity of a language test is high, then it can be assumed that "the test itself will be successful, and the test- takers themselves may well perform as well as they might make test validity an important consideration in test use" (Bachman, 1990, p. 289). Therefore, it suggests that the perceptions of what the test measures from both students and educators, needs to be taken seriously as a potential factor which helps the students prepare themselves for the test; helps the lecturers improve the content of teaching and testing. Several researchers share the same view that face validity should be one of the intentions of test developers and should be integrated for test development with the crucial aim of promoting a better English education and learning at institutional level (Jaturapitakkul, 2013; Kucuk, 2007; Kuntasal, 2001; Liauh, 2011; Nakamura, 2006; Sato & Ikeda, 2015).

From the findings of this study, this could bring some implications and recommendations for both pedagogical and testing aspects. For example, lecturers should be concerned with course objectives from the beginning. Additionally, they should teach and test in relation to course objectives or what is supposed to be measured. Likewise, by finding out that students need to know the question format before the test, lecturers should practice different question formats with students by revising previous tests or practicing some test-taking strategies. Also, providing quiet and comfortable environment helps students focus and improve their academic performance.

In a nutshell, it is hoped that the findings from the study have shed light on important factors which relate to the effect of the process of test preparation and test construction. Most importantly, it is further hoped that this study will be a contribution to the ongoing efforts to provide more validity evidence for in house English language tests.

## References


Alderson, C., Clapham, C., & Wall, D. (1995). *Language test construction and evaluation.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bachman, L. F. (1981). Languages for specific purposes: Program design and evaluation. *Formative evaluation in ESP program development*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. (1996). The construct validation of self-ratings of communicative language ability. *Language Testing*, *6 (2)*, 13–20.

Bachman., L. F., Davidson, F., & Milanovic, M. (1996). The use of test methods in the content analysis and design of EFL proficiency tests. *Language Testing, 13*(2), 125-150.

Bernstein, J., Van Moere, A., & Cheng, J. (2010). Validating automated speaking tests. *Language Testing*, *27*(3), 355–377.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching.* New York, US: Addison Wesley Longman.

Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. White Plains, New York: Pearson Education.

Campbell, D.T., & Stanley, J.C. (1966). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research.* Skokie, Illinois: Rand McNally.

Campbell, K. (1996). *The world rushes to speak and write 'American' English*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Carroll, J. B. (1968). *The psychology of language testing*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences (2nd ed.)*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Criper, C., & Davies, A. (1988). *The ELTS Validation Project Report*. London, UK: British Council and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.

Crocker, L., & Algina, J. (1986). *Introduction to Classical and Modern Test Theory*. Philadelphia, US: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrical, 16*(3), 297-334.

Crystal, D. (2000). *English as global language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cumming, A., Grant, L., Mulcahy-Ernt, P., & Powers, D. E. (2004). A teacher-verification study of speaking and writing prototype tasks for a new TOEFL. *Language Testing*, *21* (2), 107–145.

Cumming, A., & Alister. H., Berwick, R. (1988). *Validating in language testing*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Davies, A. (1965). *Proficiency in English as a second language*. Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham.

Davies, A. (1978). Language testing: survey articles 1 and 2. *Language Teaching and Linguistic Abstracts*, *11*, 145–59 and 215–31.

Davies, A. (1984). Validating three tests of English language proficiency. *Language Testing*, *1*(1), 50–69.

Ebel, R. L., & Frisile, D. (1991). *Essentials of Educational Measurement (5th ed.)*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Elder, C. (1993). Language proficiency as a predictor of performance in teacher education. *Melbourne Papers in Language Testing*, *2*, 68-85.

Fang, T., & Faure, G. O. (2010). Chinese communication characteristics: A Yin Yang perspective. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 35*(3), 320–333. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.06.005.

Ferguson, G., & White, E. (1998).A small scale study in predictive validity. *Melbourne Papers in Language Testing*, *7*, 15 -63.

Fernandes, H. J. X. (1984). *Testing and Measurement*. Jakarta, Indonesia: National Education Planning.

Fives, H., & Didonato-Barnes, N. (2013). Using a table of specification to improve teacher-constructed traditional tests: an experimental design. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice, 21*(1), 90-108.

Fulcher, G. (1997). An English language placement test: issues in reliability and validity. *Language Testing*, *14*(2), 113–139.

Glass, G. V., & Hopkins, K. D. (1984). *Test Bank for Statistical Methods in Education & Psychology, Second Edition.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Graham, J. G. (1987). English language proficiency and prediction of academic success. *TESOL Quarterly*, *21*(3), 505-521.

Grissom, R. J., & Kim, J.J. (2012). *Effect sizes for research: Univariate and multivariate applications (2nd ed.)*. New York, U.S: Routledge.

Harrison, A. (1983). *Communicative testing: Jam tomorrow?* London, UK: Academic Press.

Heaton, J. (1988). *Writing English language tests*. London, UK: Longman.

Henning, G. (1984). Current Developments in Language Testing. *Language Testing in Asia*, *1*, 237–241.

Henning, G. (1987). *A guide to language testing: Development, evaluation, research*. Cambridge, UK: Newbury House.

Herbert, C. (2004). Integrating Testing with Teaching. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, *1*(6), 3-8.

Hill, K., Storch, N., & Lynch, B. (1999). A comparison of IELTS and TOEFL as predictors of academic success. *International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Research Report*, *2*, 62-73.

Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for Language Teachers Second Edition*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

Khalifa, H., & Weir, C. (2009). Examining reading: Research and practice in assessing second language reading. *Studies in Language Testing*, *29*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Kindeya, N.T. (2002). *The content validity of the Ethiopian general secondary education certificate English examination* (Unpublished master's thesis). Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

Kinyua, K., & Okunya, L.O. (2014). Validity and reliability of teacher-made tests: Case study of year 11 physics in Nyahururu District of Kenya. *African Educational Research Journal, 2*(2), 61-7.

Kluitmann, S. (2008). *Testing English as a foreign language: Two EFL-Tests Used in Germany* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Albert-Ludwig, Germany.

Kucuk, P. (2007). *The relationship among face validity, reliability and predictive validity of University English Foreign Language preparatory school achievement tests* (Unpublished master thesis). Bilkent University, Turkey.

Kuntasal, I. (2001). *Perceptions of teachers and testers of achievement tests prepared by testers in the Department of Basic English at Middle East Technical University* (Unpublished master's thesis). Bilkent University, Turkey.

Kuroki, K. (1996). *Achievement testing: A final achievement test model for Japanese junior high school students* (Unpublished master thesis). Bilkent University, Turkey.

Le, V.C., & Barnard, R.(2009). Curricular innovation behind closed classroom doors. *Prospect*, *24*(2), 20–33.

Lee, Y. J., & Greene, J. (2007). The predictive validity of an ESL placement test: A mixed methods approach. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *1*(4), 366–389.

Liao, Y. (2002). Issues of validity and reliability in Second Language Performance Assessment. *Language Testing*, *4*(2), 2–5.

Samad, A.A., Rahman, S. Z. S., &Yahya, S.N. (2008). Refining English language tests for university admission: A Malaysian example. *Asian Journal University of Education*, *4*(1), 57–68.

To, T.T.H. (2000). *Investigating the predictive validity of IELTS among Vietnamese students* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). La Trobe University, Australia.

Torrance, M., Thomas, G. V., & Robinson, E. J. (1994). The writing strategies of graduate research students in the social sciences, *Higher Education, 27*, 379–392.

Weir, C. ( 1993). *Understanding and developing language tests*. New York, US: Prentice Hall.

Weir, C. (2005). *Language testing and validation*: *An evidence-based approach*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Weir, C. J., Chan, S. H. C., & Nakatsuhara, F. (2013). Examining the criterion-related validity of the GEPT advanced reading and writing tests: comparing GEPT with IELTS and real-life academic performance'. *LTTC-GEPT Research Report*, *1*, 1-43.

# GIÁ TRỊ BỀ NGOÀI CỦA BÀI KIỂM TRA TIẾNG ANH NỘI BỘ THEO KHUNG CHƯƠNG TRÌNH CHÂU ÂU TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC CÔNG LẬP Ở VIỆT NAM

Nông Thị Hiền Hương

*Trường Đại học Nông lâm Thái Nguyên*
*Tân Thịnh, Thái Nguyên, Việt Nam*

***Tóm tắt:*** Trong kiểm tra đánh giá ngôn ngữ, giá trị bề ngoài của một bài kiểm tra được sử dụng bởi những người học và có thể được coi là loại hiệu lực kiểm tra được thảo luận phổ biến nhất vì nó chủ yếu được xử lý với câu hỏi liệu một bài kiểm tra có đo được những gì người học dạy trong khoá học. Do đó, nghiên cứu này điều tra nhận thức của các giảng viên tiếng Anh và sinh viên về các bài kiểm tra tiếng Anh nội bộ theo khung chương trình Châu Âu được tổ chức tại một trường đại học công lập ở Việt Nam. Một cuộc khảo sát với 103 sinh viên và 20 giảng viên tiếng Anh từ chương trình giáo dục đại học công lập đã được thực hiện. Một bảng câu hỏi với 7 mối quan tâm chính - trọng số, phân bổ thời gian, kỹ năng ngôn ngữ, chủ đề, mục câu hỏi, hướng dẫn và phân bổ nhãn hiệu đã được sử dụng để thu thập dữ liệu. Tất cả các câu trả lời được phân tích thông qua thống kê mô tả. Kết quả cho thấy theo ý kiến của cả sinh viên và giảng viên, bài kiểm tra tiếng Anh nội bộ theo khung chương trình Châu Âu có giá trị bề ngoài hợp lệ, do đó, bài kiểm tra tiếng Anh nội bộ theo khung chương trình Châu Âu được coi là một bài kiểm tra tốt để đo lường khả năng tiếng Anh của sinh viên.

*Từ khoá:* kiểm tra ngôn ngữ, độ giá trị của bài kiểm tra, kiểm tra độ giá trị, giá trị bề ngoài, xác nhận kiểm tra

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: IET Face Validity Questionnaire (Student)

Date:

Dear Participant,

I would like to invite you to kindly participate in this study by completing the enclosed questionnaire. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. There are no risks associated with participating in this study. All responses in the survey will be recorded anonymously and used for the purpose of this research only.

If you agree to participate in this study, please respond to the items in the questionnaire. Your honest opinions are very crucial for this research.

If you have any questions regarding the survey or the research in general, please feel free to contact Nong Thi Hien Huong at hhuong04052002@yahoo.com

Thank you for your cooperation and time.

Sincerely,

Nong Thi Hien Huong

Email: hhuong04052002@yahoo.com

Cellphone number: +84.984.888.345

This questionnaire aims to gather your opinion about the IET conducted at a public university in Vietnam  Please kindly respond to all the items.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Section A : Background Information** | | | | | |
| For Section A, please fill up the space provided with relevant information. | | | | | |
| 1. | Full Name | | | : | |
| 2. | Matric No | | | : | |
| 3. | Gender | | | : | □ Male □ Female |
| 4. | Age | | | : | |
| 5. | Email | | | : | |
| 6. | Cellphone number | | | : | |
| 7. | How many years have you been learning English | | | : | |
| 8. | Have you lived in English speaking country/countries for more than 3 months during a single stay? | | | : | □ Yes □ No |
| 9. | If yes to Item 8 | | What country/countries? | : | |
| | | | How long in total? | : | |

**Section B: IET Components**
This section aims to gather information on the IET components comprisesof Listening Test, Reading Test, Writing Test and Speaking Test.

Please circle only **ONE** of the options given below.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree - SD | | Neutral - N |
| Disagree - D | | Agree - A |
| | | Strongly agree - SA |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Question 10- 16: Listening Test** | | | | | | |
| 10 | Weightage for the listening test was appropriate | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 11 | Time allocation for the listening test was sufficient | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 12 | Listening skills taught were sufficiently represented in the listening test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 13 | Topics taught were sufficiently represented in the listening test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 14 | Questions in the listening test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 15 | Instructions explaining what to do in each section of the listening test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 16 | Marks allocated for each section of the listening test were stated clearly | SD | D | N | A | SA |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Question 17- 23: Reading Test** | | | | | | |
| 17 | Weightage for the reading test was appropriate | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 18 | Time allocation for the reading test was sufficient | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 19 | Reading skills taught were sufficiently represented in the reading test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 20 | Topics taught were sufficiently represented in the reading test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 21 | Questions in the reading test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 22 | Instructions explaining what to do in each section of the reading test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 23 | Marks allocated for each section of the reading test were stated-clearly | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| **Question 24- 30: Writing Test** | | | | | | |
| 24 | Weightage for the writing test was appropriate | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 25 | Time allocation for the writing test was sufficient | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 26 | Writing skills taught were sufficiently represented in the writing test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 27 | Topics taught were sufficiently represented in the writing test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 28 | Questions in the writing test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 29 | Instructions explaining what to do in each section of the writing test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 30 | Marks allocated for each section of the writing test were stated-clearly | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| **Question 31- 37: Speaking Test** | | | | | | |
| 31 | Weightage for the speaking test was appropriate | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 32 | Time allocation for the speaking test was sufficient | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 33 | Speaking skills taught were sufficiently represented in the speaking test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 34 | Topics taught were sufficiently represented in the speaking test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 35 | Questions in the speaking test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 36 | Instructions explaining what to do in each section of the speaking test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 37 | Marks allocated for each section of the speaking test were stated-clearly | SD | D | N | A | SA |

_Thank you for your co-operation_

## Appendix 2: IET Face Validity Questionnaire (English Lecturer)

This questionnaire aims to gather your opinion about the IET conducted at a public university in Vietnam. Please kindly respond to all the items.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Section A** : **Background Information** | | | |
| For Section A, please fill up the space provided with relevant information. | | | |
| 1. | Full Name | : | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | Gender | : | | | Male | | Female |
| 3. | Age | : | | | | | |
| 4. | Email | : | | | | | |
| 5. | Cellphone number | : | | | | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6. | What is your highest academic qualification? | • B.A |
| | | • M.A |
| | | • Ph.D. |
| 7. | How long have you been teaching English at your university? | • Less than 5 years |
| | | • 5 to 10 years |
| | | • 11 to 15 years |
| | | • More than 15 years |

**Section B**: **IET Components**

This section aims to gather information on the IET components which comprise of Listening Test, Reading Test, Writing Test and Speaking Test.

From questions 1 to 28, please circle only **ONE** of the options given.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree - SD | | Neutral - N |
| Disagree - D | | Agree - A |
| | | Strongly agree - SA |

**Question 1- 7: Listening Test**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Weightage for the listening test was appropriate | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 2 | Time allocation for the listening test was sufficient | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 3 | Listening skills taught were sufficiently represented in the listening test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 4 | Topics taught were sufficiently represented in the listening test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 5 | Questions in the listening test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 6 | Instructions explaining what to do in each section of the listening test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 7 | Marks allocated for each section of the listening test were stated clearly | SD | D | N | A | SA |

**Question 8- 14: Reading Test**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Weightage for the reading test was appropriate | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 9 | Time allocation for the reading test was sufficient | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 10 | Reading skills taught were sufficiently represented in the reading test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 11 | Topics taught were sufficiently represented in the reading test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 12 | Questions in the reading test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Instructions explaining what to do in each section of the reading test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 14 | Marks allocated for each section of the reading test were statedclearly | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| **Question 15- 21: Writing Test** | | | | | | |
| 15 | Weightage for the writing test was appropriate | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 16 | Time allocation for the writing test was sufficient | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 17 | Writing skills taught were sufficiently represented in the writing test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 18 | Topics taught were sufficiently represented in the writing test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 19 | Questions in the writing test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 20 | Instructions explaining what to do in each section of the writing test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 21 | Marks allocated for each section of the writing test were statedclearly | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| **Question 22- 28: Speaking Test** | | | | | | |
| 22 | Weightage for the speaking test was appropriate | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 23 | Time allocation for the speaking test was sufficient | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 24 | Speaking skills taught were sufficiently represented in the speaking test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 25 | Topics taught were sufficiently represented in the speaking test | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 26 | Questions in the speaking test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 27 | Instructions explaining what to do in each section of the speaking test were clear | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 28 | Marks allocated for each section of the speaking test were statedclearly | SD | D | N | A | SA |

_Thank you for your co-operation_

VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, Vol.36, No.1 (2020) 103-116

# MOBILE-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT IN VIETNAM: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES

Pham Thu Tra*

*Faculty of English, Hanoi National University of Education,*
*Xuan Thuy, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 23 September 2019
Revised 6 December 2019; Accepted 16 February 2019

**Abstract:** The study concerns the attitudes towards Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) of the participants in a university. Using the mixed-method research design with survey questionnaire as the main data collection tool, the research gained some significant findings and successfully met the aims of the study. The findings from both qualitative and quantitative data reveal that the participants basically held positive attitudes towards the use of MALL inside classroom and towards MALL in general. It is suggested that MALL be adopted as a new approach in English language teaching and learning. Moreover, some measures should be taken to develop the digital literacy of both instructors and learners.

*Keywords*: mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), Mobile – learning (M-learning)

## 1. Introduction

Under the immense domain of technology-based language learning, Mobile Learning (M-learning) is a growing field of interest within the scholar communities. Cheon, Lee, Crooks, & Song (2012, p. 124) indicated that compared to classroom-based computer learning, mobile learning has the possibility to extend the interaction beyond the classroom; thus, enhances individualized, contextualized, and informal learning. In addition, with the boom of online resources and abundant education applications, mobile technology provides novel opportunities for self-directed learning outside the class (Godwin-Jones, 2011). At the same time, until recently, smartphone and tablet users have been surprisingly ubiquitous among Vietnam population.

M-learning can be used in virtually almost every aspect of education, including language learning. Concerning the benefits of using mobile in language learning, Nguyen (2016) claims that the ownership of mobile and wireless devices offers learners more active participation in learning resources, and allows them to choose the activities that meet their personal needs. The positive of using mobile technologies in language learning rapidly attracts new users, which potentially offers new contexts for learning (Pachler, Bachmair & Cook, 2010). Therefore, it is urgent that the use of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) be studied carefully to enhance the process of teaching and learning language.

However, most research into this field has primarily focused on learners' vocabulary acquisition, & language acquisition in general, listening and speaking skills in specific. (Wong & Looi, 2010; O, 2015; Wang & Shih, 2015; Hadi & Emzir, 2016; Sila Ahmad, Armarego & Sudweeks, 2017). Little attention has been paid to learning strategies despite their pivotal importance. To strengthen the process of MALL implementation, understanding and

* Tel.: 84-359832132
Email:trathupham.hnue@gmail.com

measuring learners' attitudes is vital because a favorable attitude shows greater probabilities that learners will accept this new trend. Besides, there is a lack of research on MALL in Vietnamese language teaching and learning context.

The attitude towards MALL framework is adapted from the works of Egly and Chaiken (1998), Van den Berg, Manstead, Van der Pligt, & Wigboldus (2006), and Davis (1989; 1993), which are most commonly cited as the Affective-Behaviour-Cognitive model of attitudes. This study focuses on investigating the students' attitudes towards MALL when employing mobile devices to learn since MALL is a growing field which needs carefully studying to better aid the learning and teaching in Vietnam.

The study is expected to provide further understanding about the attitudes towards MALL of the students in B university when employing mobile devices to learn English. Therefore, some teaching and learning implications can be drawn out to better the process of language teaching and learning using mobile devices. Also, the study aims at enriching the literature regarding M-learning in general, and MALL in particular.

This research focuses on answering the following research question: **What are the students' attitudes towards the use of mobile devices to learn English inside classroom?**

## 2. Literature Review

*Attitudes*

A number of definitions of attitudes can be found in the literature, and these definitions are given based on the perspectives which the research look at attitudes. The works of Wise (1985) and Auzmedi (1991; 1992) measured attitudes from an affective and cognitive point of views. Later, Egly and Chaiken (1998) and Van den Berg et al. (2006) introduced "attitudes" with three basic components: cognitive; affective; and behavioral. This is one of the most cited models of attitudes and referred to as the ABC model of attitude.

The cognitive component refers to an individual's belief about the attitudinal object. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) claim that the information which a person has about an object is called 'belief'. In his influential paper, Vishal (2014) concludes that 'the cognitive component is the storage section where an individual organizes the information' (p. 07). The affective component of attitudes refers to the emotional responses (liking/disliking) towards an attitude object. According to Vishal (2014), a person's attitude cannot be simply determined by their beliefs since the emotion and cognitive processes work spontaneously. According to Wicker (1969), the behavioral component which consists of actions or observable responses is a verbal or nonverbal behavioral tendency of an individual. It involves an individual's favorable or unfavorable behaviour to do something regarding attitude object. The cognitive component refers to the mental process of perception, conception and beliefs about the object. The affective component covers all the emotions and feelings such as: trust and distrust, like and dislike, etc. Lastly, the behavioral component is concerned with behavioral intention or action, behavior that demonstrates the future tendency to act in a specific way.

Accordingly, the main framework for attitude towards MALL still contains three main components: Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural. The first component - Cognitive not only deals with students' perceptions about the usefulness and ease of use when employing mobile devices to learn English, but also their perceptions about the difficulty they face when using mobile devices to learn English. The second component - Affective focuses on students' feelings when using mobile devices to learn: enjoyment, excitement, and anxiety. The last component - Behavioural provides information about the students' future decision over whether they want to keep using mobile devices to learn; whether they need guidance; etc. This framework is adapted from Technology Acceptance Model by Davis (1989) which described that attitude is the degree to which using technology is free of effort measures the perception of ease of use; the degree to which the technology can help to improve the task performance. However, this model does not fully fit the scope of this study – students' attitudes towards MALL since it mainly focuses on the perception of usefulness of the attitudinal subjects, but neglects the perceptions of difficulty. As a result, negative feelings such as anxiety are also not considered, which might not fully demonstrate the attitude of the participants. Therefore, the author has adapted this model combined with the ABC model to best fit the scope of her study: attitudes towards MALL and perception of its usefulness influences the intention to use a mobile device:

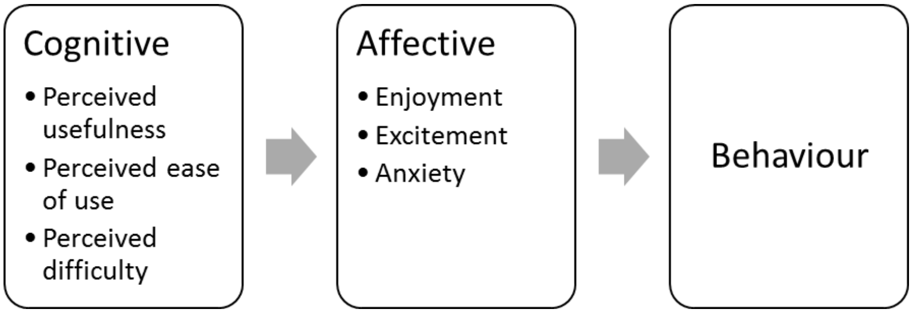



Figure 1. Theoretical framework for attitude towards MALL (Adapted from Technology Acceptance Model by Davis (1989))

*Attitudes towards MALL*

Studies by Fujimoto (2012), Hadi & Emzir (2016), O (2015), Sila Ahmad, Armarego, & Sudweeks (2017), Wang & Shih (2015), White & Mills (2011), Wong & Looi (2010) share the same results that learners generally have positive attitudes towards the use of mobile devices to learn a language.

However, negative opinions are also presented in some studies. Participants in Motiwalla's (2017) study showed considerable disappointment with smartphones due to their small size screen, typing difficulty and unsatisfying quality of the visuals. Also, the results in Stockwell's (2010) study reveals that students would rather use laptops to learn vocabulary than smartphones, and 60% of the students in his study did not use smartphones to learn vocabulary.

*M-learning in higher education*

M-learning has the possibility to support all forms of education ranging from primary to higher education; however, higher education is particularly more appropriate to adopt student-centered mobile learning (Cheon et al., 2012). The figures from Cheung's (2012) study prove the popularity of mobile devices among university students (83% of students have the ownership of smartphones; 63% for notebook devices; only 2% of the students do not own any mobile devices). To gain more credibility to their research involving the suitability of mobile learning in higher education, Cheon et al. (2012) list a number of studies that have been done in university environment and harness supportive evidence. In spite of the need and the appropriateness of mobile learning in higher education, Cheon et al. (2012) also reveal that employing mobile learning in higher education is a complicated task facing complex technical problems and cultural challenges, which can be overcome by developing plans, such as design guidelines, development phases and considering the level of students' readiness and the teachers' readiness as well.

*MALL in Vietnam*

Concerning the level of student's readiness in Vietnam's language teaching context, Nguyen (2016) held a survey within the pool of participants from a university. The results reveal that most of the participants had the ownership of mobile phones, and 67% of them used these devices to learn a language. The survey results also show a positive perception from students about MALL. 35% of the participants believed that the courses were very efficient, and 45% believed that the courses were efficient with the support of mobile learning. Nguyen (2016) concluded from his survey results that mobile learning can be appropriately applied within Vietnam teaching and learning language. However, when dealing with the attitudes of students towards MALL, Nguyen (2016) did not use any particular frameworks, which can somehow arouse doubts over the sufficiency of the study's results.

Most of the aforementioned studies show the usefulness of mobile technology for language acquisition. The participants in those studies are mostly students in university, and the main instruments are pre- and post-tests and interview and survey. Most reviewed papers examine vocabulary acquisition, listening and speaking skills, and language acquisition in general. Viberg and Gronlund (2012) concluded, 'very little attention is devoted to individuals' language learning strategies and learning styles when employing mobile devices for their language learning' (p.7). Besides, there has been a lack of research papers examining the application of MALL in classroom in Vietnamese contexts; only one has been done so far but did not employ any particular frameworks.

## 3. Methodology

A mixed methods research design is defined as a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study to understand a research problem (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 535). Therefore, this study can be categorized under the principle of a mixed methods research design since the findings are cultivated from both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data yielding specific numbers which can be statistically analyzed can provide results to access the magnitude of trends and frequency. However, qualitative data from open-ended questions offer actual words of the people in the study, which offers better understanding over the research problem.

*Setting of the study*

The study was conducted in Faculty of English, B University in Hanoi, Vietnam. The faculty teaches various courses in English, but mostly focuses on educating teachers of English. It is notable that mobile has been used as a learning tool in many classes in this learning environment. Therefore, the students can use their mobiles for learning purposes inside classroom. However, there is no Wi-Fi free system in this learning context; the students have to use their own 3G/4G connections to get access to the Internet.

This study was conducted in the first semester of 2018 academic year.

*Participants*

95 freshmen in B University, Faculty of English aged between 18 and 20 are the main participants of the study. Their assumed English level is A2 in CEFR, and their target level after the first year is B1 in CEFR. The participants belong to generation Z, technology generation. These individuals were born in a decade following the widespread emergence of the World Wide Web; thus, the Z generation are more technologically advanced than previous generations, and also have had early access to technology.

All the participants are learners in the classes where mobile has been used as a learning tool.

*Data collection tools*

The survey questionnaire consists of four sections: Basic information, Attitudes towards MALL inside classroom, Attitudes towards MALL in general. The survey questions were constructed based on Attitude Framework. Moreover, the survey questions were also built based on ABC model of attitude, and with reference to these of Alzubi and Singh's (2017) and Ghrieb's (2015) studies.

In the Basic information section, the participants were asked to provide information about their age, gender, and whether they own a mobile devices or not; types of mobile devices used.

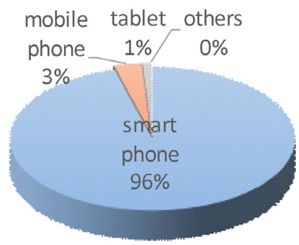
Each of the next two sections contains 10 items; each item was assessed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly agree" and 5 = "strongly disagree). There were two more open-ended questions which allowed participants to express their opinions more thoroughly.

The questionnaire was then designed on Microsoft form, and was posted on the faculty's Facebook group. A call for students' participation was made on the official faculty's Facebook group. There were 95 respondents answering the survey questions.

## 4. Findings

*4.1. Participants' information about mobile ownership and types of mobile devices*

As can be seen from the chart above, 96% of the informants have ownership of a smartphone; 3% and 1% of them use a mobile phone and tablet respectively. Compared to smartphones, mobile phones are not administered by any operating systems and are only restricted to certain basic functions such as calling and texting, etc. Reasonably, mobile phone has lost its popularity. 1% of the informants have ownership of a tablet. In terms of size, a tablet is smaller than a laptop, yet larger than a smartphone and mobile phone; a tablet is built with wireless and a variety of software applications. It can be concluded from this finding that smartphones are by far the most popular devices among the participants. This is understandable, for this device offers an enormous diversity of prices and types which can meet the demands of most individuals.




Graph 1. Types of mobile devices used

*4.2. Attitudes towards the use of MALL inside classroom*

*4.2.1. Cognitive*

***Participants' perceived usefulness and ease of use about MALL inside classroom***

There are three items in the survey questionnaire concerning the participants' perception about the usefulness and ease of use when using MALL as a learning tool inside classroom. Item S201 and Item S202 focus on the usefulness of MALL. Item S201 measures whether the informants agree that mobile devices can be used for learning purposes inside classroom. Item S202 provides information about whether mobile devices help enhance the collaboration inside classroom. Item S203 answers the question of whether the participants believe in the comfort of using MALL to learn inside classroom – ease of use. The results for these items are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Participants' perceived usefulness and ease of use about the use of MALL inside classroom

| Item | | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|
| S201 | I believe that mobile devices can be used for learning purposes inside classroom. | 1.78 | 2 |
| S202 | I believe that mobile devices can enhance collaboration inside classroom. | 2.3 | 2 |
| S203 | I believe that it's comfortable to use mobile devices for learning purposes inside classroom. | 23 | 2 |

As can be seen from the table above, all three items have "2" as mode, which means that "agree" is mostly repeated in the answers of 95 participants. In Table 1, we see that the average score is 1.78 for the first item and 2.3 for the second item. These two statements concern the usefulness of mobile devices. The first item is evaluated as 1.78 which is between 1 (strongly agree) and 2 (agree). The second item's average score is 2.3 which is between 2 (agree) and 3 (neutral). From these results, it can be indicated that the participants generally believe in the usefulness facilitated by mobile devices inside classroom. The third item concerns the ease of use of mobile devices. The average score for this item is 2.3 which is between 2 (agree) and 3 (neutral), indicating the subjects basically take a positive attitude towards this view.

In conclusion, these findings indicate that the participants basically agree that MALL inside classroom is useful and comfortable to use.

***Participants' perceived difficulty towards MALL inside classroom***

Besides the perceived usefulness and ease of use, the participants were also asked to give their opinions about the difficulty of MALL inside classroom. There are two items, S204 and S205 in this part. The results for these items are presented below:

Table 2. Perceived difficulty towards MALL inside classroom.

| Item | | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|
| S204 | I believe that mobile devices are tool for distraction inside classroom. | 2.58 | 3 |
| S205 | I believe that it is difficult to use mobile devices to carry out learning activities inside classroom. | 3.37 | 4 |

The average score for the first item is 2.58 which is between 2 (agree) and 3 (neutral), indicating that the students generally believe that their learning in classroom might be distracted by the use of mobile devices. Besides, the mode for this item is 3, which means that the majority of participants chose "neutral" for this item. Moreover, participants were asked about whether it is difficult to use mobile in classroom or not, and the average score was 3.32 which is between 3 (neutral) and 4 (disagree) and also the majority of the participants answered "Disagree", which shows that the students basically are not in favor of this opinion.

In short, the participants generally have positive Cognitive towards the use of mobile devices as learning tools inside classroom. However, these Cognitive can be further reinforced if the participants' concern over the distraction of mobile devices can be mitigated.

*4.2.2. Affective*

There are three items in the survey questionnaire concerning the participants' feelings over the use of MALL inside classroom. The two first items, S206, and S207, focus on the positive feelings, namely, enjoyment; and excitement. The last item, S208, concerns the negative one: anxiety. The following table shows the results for these three items:

Table 3. Participants' affective towards the use of MALL inside classroom

| Item | | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|
| S206 | I enjoy using mobile devices to carry out learning activities inside classroom. | 2.18 | 2 |
| S207 | I feel more excited when my teacher assigns works/tasks to do on mobile devices. | 2.11 | 2 |
| S208 | I feel anxious when I have to use my mobile devices to do works/tasks assigned by my teacher inside classroom. | 3.33 | 4 |

As can been seen above, the average scores are 2.18 and 2.11 for S206 and S207 respectively. Both items are evaluated as between 2 (agree) and 3 (neutral); the mode of both items is 2, which means that the number of participants choosing "Agree" outnumbers other options. These reveal that generally the informants had enjoyment and excitement when using mobile devices to learn. When asking whether the participants feel anxious when using mobile devices to learn inside classroom, most participants answer "Disagree" – mode is 4 (Disagree). The average score for S208 is 3.33 which is between 3 (Neutral) and 4 (Disagree). This means that the statement in S208 was basically not approved of.

These findings indicate that the participants generally hold positive feelings towards the use of MALL inside classroom. The results from Table 3 show that most participants did not express negative feelings such as anxiety in the utilization of these devices to learn.

*4.2.3. Behavior*

The two last items S209 and S210 concern the participants' future behavioral tendency. S209 gives information about whether the participants will participate more in class if they can use mobile devices to learn. The last item S210 asks for the participants' opinion on whether they need certain guidance or recommendation from their instructors in using mobile devices to facilitate language learning. The following table displays the results for these items:

Table 4. Participants' future behaviors

| Item | | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|
| S209 | I will participate more if I can use mobile devices inside classroom. | 1.84 | 2 |
| S210 | I will need guidance from my instructors to better use mobile devices inside classroom. | 1.67 | 2 |

It is clear that both items' mode is 2, which reveals that for both items the majority of participants chose "Agree". Both items are evaluated as between 1 (Strongly agree) and 2 (Agree). This indicates that the subjects basically take a positive outlook in these views.

From these findings, it can be concluded that the utilization of MALL inside classroom encourages increased participation among participants. Besides, the instructors should give certain guidance in using mobile devices to facilitate language learning.

In the questionnaire, the students were asked: **"What do you think of using mobile devices for learning purposes inside classroom?"**

This question was addressed to students in an open-ended format. The aim of this question was to cultivate more qualitative data since other questions in the questionnaires were in form of close-ended items. There were 79 respondents who answered this question in total; 16 left blank space. After reviewing and analyzing participants' answers, it was found that the participants were mostly in favor of the use of MALL inside classroom. The 79 answers are classified in the table follow:

Table 5. Qualitative Findings: Participants' attitudes towards the use of mobile devices for learning purposes inside classroom.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cognitive:<br>I think using mobile devices inside classroom is…. | **Positive:** | useful; advantageous; necessary; convenient; creating stress-free learning environment; making learning easier and more effective; connecting students together; making learning more flexible; making the lessons more appealing. |
| | **Negative:** | making students distracted; hard |
| Affective:<br>I feel … when using mobile devices inside classroom to learn | **Positive:** | excited; comfortable; motivating |
| | **Negative:** | scared |
| Behavior:<br>I will… | **Positive:** | learn how to use mobile devices wisely inside classroom; need guidance from my teacher. |
| | **Negative:** | |

As can be seen from the table above, the participants generally had more positive outlook towards the utilization of MALL for learnings purposes inside classroom than negative one. However, there was still a small number of respondents holding certain doubts towards these usages: feeling scare; being afraid of distraction; and finding it hard to use. Moreover, the participants also gave certain suggestions to better the use of MALL inside classroom:

- "Mobile devices shouldn't be used for tests".
- "The teacher should have some methods to control the class."
- "Mobile devices are suitable for group work."

**"Are there any factors hindering the use of MALL for learning purposes inside classroom?"**

This question was addressed to the informants to identify factors obstructing the use of MALL for learning purposes inside classroom. There were 70 participants responding to this question. Among these 70 respondents, 09 students answered "No"; 01 expressed their confusion by answering "I haven't thought about that"; the rest answered "Yes" for this question. In other words, about 85% (60 out of 70) of the respondents believed that the use of MALL for learning purposes inside classroom was hindered by certain factors.

The participants were also asked to clarify their answers by addressing these factors which were summarized below:

- **Distraction**: The participants listed down certain things they could do on the phone such as: using social media; playing games; etc., which caused their distraction.
- **Lack of Internet connection**: it is notable that there was no Wi-Fi connection within campus.
- **Unstable Internet connection**: The participants explained that they had to use their own 3G/4G connection which was normally unstable to use for a long time.
- **Unclear teacher's instructions**: Some participants revealed that since they had to use their phones to finish certain learning tasks in class, which was fairly new to some of them. However, the way teachers gave instructions was sometimes not really clear, and sometimes confused the students.

*4.3. Participants' overall feeling towards the use of MALL inside classroom*

From the findings, it can be concluded

that the participants generally hold positive cognitive, positive affective, and positive behaviors towards the utilization of MALL for learning purposes inside classroom. This can be seen as PPP triode in Vishal's (2004) attitude triode.

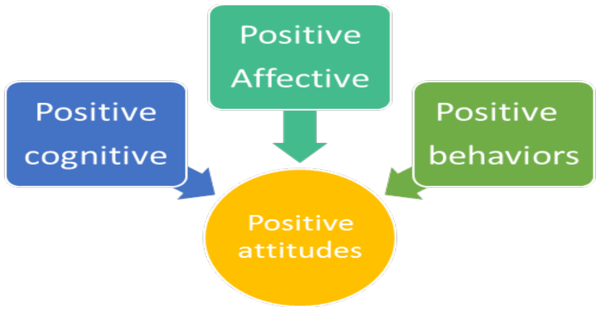



Figure 2. PPP attitude triode

This was the situation in which the participants not only had positive beliefs over the use of MALL, but also had positive feelings; therefore, their final responses were culminated as favorable. Accordingly, the participants' attitudes towards the use of MALL as learning tools inside classroom were positive. To better understand the students' attitudes towards MALL and to further clarify the reliability of the findings, some interviews with participants were made. The students' cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes could be shown in the following excerpts.

**Cognitive**:

**Participant 1**: "I think that when the teacher assigns tasks using mobile phone, the students are more motivated to learn"

**Participant 2**: "To me, using mobile phone makes the learning process quicker and more convenient"

**Participant 3**: "I think that the amount of knowledge that mobile phone can bring is really huge. Instead of buying so many books, having a mobile phone would be very time and money saving."

**Affective**:

**Participant 3**: "I feel so excited when I can play Kahoot! game that the teacher designed on my phone"

**Participant 4**: "My friends and I are really excited when we can use our mobile to do teachers' assignment in class"

**Behaviour**:

**Participant 2**: "I hope that I can use my phone more to study in my class"

However, some concerns over students' low digital literacy, and distractions were also revealed through the interviews as follows:

**Participant 3**: "When I was in schools, I had never got access to this new teaching method, and I was even prohibited to bring my phone to school no matter what purposes. As a result, when I first used mobile to learn in class in university, I was quite confused and lost."

**Participant 4**: "Sometimes, I find it quite hard to use some of the exercises on my mobile phones due to the fact that I have never done that before."

**Participant 1**: "When I was doing tasks on my phone, I got a message from Facebook. It was really annoying and distracting."

## 5. Discussion

An analysis of the survey data has been clearly illustrated above. Yet, some of the findings require further discussion.

*The potentials of employing MALL inside classroom*

It is worth mentioning that in Vietnamese teaching and learning context, using mobile inside classroom for learning purposes is considered relatively new. In fact, there exist some school regulations that the students are forbidden to use mobile phone inside classroom. Therefore, the majority of the students have little experience with it when reaching tertiary education. However, one potential of using MALL inside classroom is the popularity of these devices among the students. The findings show that 96% of the informants have the ownership of mobile devices. Compared to CALL, MALL is more affordable and convenient. Thus, if applied meticulously, these devices could become helpful learning tools.

Besides, the benefits of using M-learning in general, and MALL in particular have been discussed by many scholars. For instance, in order to fully understand the benefits of M-learning, Crompton (2013) comprehensively compared traditional learning and M-learning based upon a number of criteria. It can be concluded from Crompton's (2013) conclusion that compared to traditional learning, M-learning offers a decrease of limitations, a greater sense of flexibility, and an augmentation of learner-centered orientation. Mobile devices' popularity, together with their benefits in learning has shown great potentials of these devices in education.

Another factor contributing to mobile devices' potentials is the characteristics of the students. It is notable that the students belong to Generation Z - people who were born from 1995 onwards. One outstanding feature of Generation Z that differs from other generations is that Generation Z-ers are technology advanced, and they have access to mobile devices at early ages (Dolot, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to provide Generation Z-ers with a more technologically-focused learning. Thus, the use of mobile devices to learn is inevitable.

Also, M-learning has the potential to support all forms of education ranging from primary to higher education; however, higher education institutions are particularly more appropriate to adopt student-centered mobile learning (Cheon et al., 2012). The suitability of mobile learning in higher education can be given credibility from the fact that the students in this learning level seem to have more self-discipline and be more responsible for their own learning process.

In short, mobile devices are highly popular among students at tertiary levels who are also most suitable to use mobile to learn. Besides, these students also belong to Generation Z, so they are used to using mobile devices from early ages. Additionally, M-learning and MALL have been proven to be advantageous by many scholars. As a result, mobile devices have potentials to become helpful learning tools.

*Worries over MALL*

From the findings above, it can be concluded that students generally have positive attitudes towards the use of mobile devices for learning purposes. However, the attitudes can be further reinforced if the students' worries can be mitigated.

The students have shown great worries over the fact that mobile devices can make them distracted from the lesson. Again, another characteristic of Generation Z-ers is short attention span (Dolot, 2018). Besides, there are a number of distractions such as social media, texting, games, etc. available on the mobile phone. Therefore, it is understandable why this worry exists. There should be some schemes or teaching methods in order to deal with this problem.

Besides the problems of distractions, the students also showed concern over the way teacher gave instructions. It is understandable that one challenge that teachers have to confront with mobile devices is the way to change their pedagogy to implement MALL. MALL is not only new for students, but also for the teachers. This struggle can be seen when they give instructions to guide students to perform certain tasks on mobile phone. Therefore, there should be some teacher's training over how to give instructions to provide students with better learning time. Maybe, due to the challenges in implementing

MALL, the teachers in Liu and Cain's (2016) study preferred not to use mobile devices in their teachings. Therefore, in order to fully cultivate the benefits of MALL, teacher's pedagogical training is of great importance.

## 6. Conclusion

The development of technology has significantly changed virtually every aspect of life including education. Under the big domain of technology-based teaching and learning, MALL is a growing field which has been proved to be substantially advantageous. Moreover, mobile devices, especially smart phones have gained wide popularity. Understanding the pivotal importance of these devices in learning language, the author decided to carry out this study to examine the participants' attitudes towards MALL.

A survey questionnaire with 02 sections was made to meet the aims of the study. 95 participants participated in the survey. Using the mixed-method research design, the author has found certain significant findings.

Generally, the participants held positive attitudes towards the use of mobile devices insides classroom. Most of them perceived positive beliefs about the usefulness and ease of use of MALL. Besides, they also experienced the positive feelings of excitement when using mobile devices to learn language inside classroom. Therefore, it is understandable that their future behaviors of MALL are positive.

## 7. Suggestions

It is evident that the study could be more extendable if there were more participants in several contexts. This can help obtain more generalizable results.

Additionally, this study can be further elaborated by adding the analysis of teachers' attitudes towards MALL, which can then be compared with these of the student. Thus, the attitudes towards MALL can be more extendable and comprehensible.

Moreover, the participants' attitudes can be further reinforced if their worries disappear. This can be done if the teachers or instructors can develop certain teaching methods or scheme to solve the problems of distraction. Besides, the use of MALL can be better if there were a more stable Internet connection inside classroom. More surprisingly, there should be some teacher's training over how to give instructions. Teacher's clearer and more concise instructions can lead to better learning time. Another thing teachers can do is organizing a workshop at the beginning of the course to give students proper guidance or some rules to better prepare them for the use of MALL inside classroom.

## 8. Teaching implications

The results of the study suggest Mobile Assisted Language Learning be adopted as a new approach in English language teaching and learning. The language learning process will be positively and beneficially affected if MALL is used and implemented in academic context properly. Language learners can be provided with opportunities to make the best use of their portable devices in language learning thanks to mobile devices and applications available on these devices. Moreover, it is necessary to carry out learning tasks using mobile devices regarding their popularity and students' characteristics (Generation Z). Therefore, it is suggested that certain measures should be taken by the lecturers to implement MALL successfully.

The application of ICT in teaching in general, or MALL in specific has certainly caused changes in teaching pedagogy and learners' autonomy. However, there might be teachers and students who fail to adapt to such quick changes. During the survey, most students claimed that they needed the guidance from their teachers or instructors. The fact that they did not have access to these new technologies further confirmed their need of instruction. Therefore, a workshop at the beginning of the course familiarizing students with the new technology should be conducted.

## 9. Learning implications

It is suggested that the students study more about the uses of mobile devices for learning purposes to raise their mobile literacy. Therefore, better use of mobile devices can be achieved.

Besides, learners should equip themselves with knowledge about the new technology by familiarizing with some interactive websites such as Padlet.com; kahoot.it; etc. Research regarding learning strategies to improve reading and writing skills using mobile devices should be conducted by the students. Therefore, the enhancement of the four skills in English can be accomplished.

Last but not least, the learners should be able to deal with the problem of distraction when using mobile devices to learn English themselves. Learners' autonomy should be further reinforced so that the potentials of using mobile devices can be absorbed.

## References


Alzubi, A. A. F., & Singh, M. K. M. (2017). The Use of Language Learning Strategies through Smartphones in Improving Learner Autonomy in EFL Reading among Undergraduates in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *7*(6), 59. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v7n6p59

Assad, C. A. R. (2017). Mobile Learning Conceptual Framework For Higher Education in Developing Countries. *International Journal of Education and Information Technologies*, *11*, 12–18.

Auzmendi, E. (1991). *Evaluacio´ndelasActitudesha cialaEstad´ıstica en Estudiantes Universitarios y Factores que las determinan*. Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao.

Auzmendi, E. (1992). *Las actitudes hacia la matema´tica-estad´ıstica en las ense˜nanzas medias y universitarias*. Bilbao, Mensajero.

Brown, J. D. (2001). *Using surveys in language progams*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, T. (2003). The role of m-learning in the future of e-learning in Africa? Paper presented at the 21st. *ICDE World Conference*.

Cheon, J., Lee, S., Crooks, S. M., & Song, J. (2012). An investigation of mobile learning readiness in higher education based on the theory of planned behavior. *Computers & Education*, *59*(3), 1054–1064. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.04.015

Clayton, J. B. (2003). *One classroom, many worlds: Teaching and learning in the cross-cultural classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Crompton, H. (2013). Mobile Learning: New Approach, New Theory. *Handbook of Mobile Learning*, 47–57.

Darrel, M. W. (2011). *Using Technology to Personalize Learning and Assess Students in Real-Time*. Brookings - Center for Technology Innovation.

Davis, F. (1993). User acceptance of information technology: system characteristics, user perceptions and behavioral impacts. *International Journal of Man-Machine Studies*, *38*, 475–487.

Diallo, A. (2014). *The Use of Technology to EnhanceThe Learning Experience of ESL Students* (Master Thesis). Concordia University, Portland.

Dolot, A. (2018). *The characteristics of Generation Z*. https://doi.org/10.15219/em74.1351

Dörnyei, Z., & Taguchi, T. (2010). *Questionnaires in second language research : construction, administration, and processing (2nd ed.)*. New York: Routledge.

Fujimoto, C. (2012). Perceptions of mobile language learning in Australia: How ready are learners to srudy on the move? *The JALT CALL Journal*, *8*(3), 165–195.

Georgiev, T., Georgieva, E., & Smrikarov, A. (2004). M-Learning - a New Stage of E-Learning. *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Computer Systems and Technologies*, 1–5.

Ghrieb, E. B. (2015). *Teachers and Students Attitudes Towards the Use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning: A case Study of Master One EFL Students and EFL Teachers at University of Mohamed Kheider of Biskra* (Master Thesis). University of Biskra, Biskra.

Godwin-Jones, R. (2006). Mobile Apps for Language Learning. *Language Learning & Technology*, *15*, 2–11.

Godwin-Jones, R. (2011). Emerging Technologies Autonomous Language Learning. *Language Learning & Technology*, *15*(3), 4–11.

Hadi, M. S., & Emzir, E. (2016a). Improving English Speaking Ability through Mobile Assisted Language Learning (Mall) Learning Model. *IJLECR - International Journal of Language Education and Culture Review*, *2*, 71–74. https://doi.org/10.21009/ijlecr.022.09

Hadi, M. S., & Emzir, E. (2016b). Improving English Speaking Ability through Mobile Assisted Language Learning (Mall) Learning Model. *IJLECR - International Journal of Language Education and Culture Review*, *2*(2), 71–74. https://doi.org/10.21009/IJLECR.022.09

Harper, B. (2018). Technology and Teacher–Student Interactions: A Review of Empirical Research. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, *50*(3), 214–225. https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2018.1450690

Huang, Y.-M., Huang, T.-C., & Hsieh, M.-Y. (2008). Using Annotation Services in a Ubiquitous Jigsaw Cooperative Learning. *Educational Technology & Society*, *11*(2), 3–15.

Kadirire, J. (2009). Mobile Learning DeMystified. *The Evolution of Mobile Teaching and Learning*, 15–55.

Kato, F. (1996). *Results of an Australian study of strategy use in learning Japanese Kanji characters*. University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia.

Keser, H., Uzunboylu, H., & Ozdamli, F. (2012). The trends in technology supported collaborative learning studies in 21st century. *World Journal On Educational Technology*, *3*(2), 103–119.

Kevin, C. C. (2014). *The Positive Effects of Technology on Teaching and Student Learning*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED554557.pdf

Ku, P. N. (1995). *Strategies Associated with Proficiency and Predictors of Strategy Choice: A Study of Language Learning Strategies of EFL Students at Three Educational Levels in Taiwan*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation,Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, USA.

Kukulska-Hulme, A. (2005). *Mobile Learning A Handbook for Educators and Trainers*. London: Routledge.

Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Shield, L. (2008). An overview of mobile assisted language learning: From content delivery to supported collaboration and interaction. *ReCALL*, *20*(3), 271–289.

Laouris, Y., & Eteokleous, N. (2005). We Need an Educational Relevent Difinition of mobile Learning. *Paper Presented at the 4th World Conference on MLearning*.

Le, H. (2018). Improve Students Engagement and Collaboration with Kahoot. *TESOLconference2018*.

Lickona, T. (1992). *Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Liu, H., & Cain, william (Eds.). (2016). Investigating mobile assisted english foreign language learning and teaching in China: Issues, attitudes and perceptions. In wenhao Tao (Series Ed.), *Investigating mobile assisted english foreign language learning and teaching in China: Issues, attitudes and perceptions*. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-0177-0

Low, L., & O'Connell, M. (2006). Learner-centric design of digital mobile learning. *Proceedings of the OLT Conference*, 71–82.

Motiwalla, L. F. (2007). Mobile learning: A framework and evaluation. *Computers & Education*, *49*(3), 581–596.

Nguyen, H. T., & Tran, N. M. (2015). Factors affecting students' speaking performance at Le Thanh Hien high school. *Asian Journal of Educational Research*, *3*(2).

Nguyen, N. V. (2016). Mobile Learning in Language Teaching Context of Vietnam: An Evaluation of Students' Readiness. *Ho Chi Minh National University of Education Science Journal*, *7*(85), 16–27.

O, K. M. (2015). The effectiveness of mobile assisted language learning on L2 listening comprehension. *Multimedia-Assisted Language Learning, 18*(2), 135–158.

O'Malley, C., Vavoula, G., Glew, J., Taylor, J., Sharples, M., Lefrere, P., Waycott, J. (2005). Guidlines for Learning/Teaching/Tutoring in a Mobile Environment. *Public Deliverable from the MOBILearn Project*.

Oxford, R. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Oxford, R. (1999). Relationships between learning strategy use and language proficiency in the context of learner autonomy and self-regulation. *Learner Autonomy as a Central Concept of Foreign Language Learning*, *38*, 109–126.

Oxford, R. (2003). Language learning styles and strategies: an overview. *Gala, 1-25*.

Oxford, R. (2011). *Teaching & Researching: Language Learning Strategies* (1st ed.). Pearson Education.

Pachler, N., Bachmair, B., & Cook, J. (2010). *Mobile Learning. Structures, Agency, Practices*. London: Springer.

Paul, R., & Therese, L. (2007). Technology in Support of Collaborative Learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, *19*, 65–83.

Quinn, C. (2000). mLearning: mobile, wireless, In-Your-Pocket Learning. *Linezine.*

Scarcella, R., & Oxford, R. (1992). *The Tapestry of Language Learning: The Individual in the Communicative Classroom*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Sila Ahmad, K., Armarego, J., & Sudweeks, F. (2017). The Impact of Utilising Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) on Vocabulary Acquisition among Migrant Women English Learners. *Interdisciplinary Journal of E-Skills and Lifelong Learning*, *13*, 037–057. https://doi.org/10.28945/3703

Stockwell, G. (n.d.). Using mobile phones for vocabulary activities: examining the effect of the platfor. *Language Learning & Technology*, *14*(2), 95–110.

Stockwell, G., & Hubbard, P. (2013). *Some emerging principles for mobile-assisted language learning*. CA: The International Research Foundation for English Language Education.

Suwantarathip, O., & Wichadee, S. (2014). The effects of collaborative writing activity using Google Docs on Students' writing abilities. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, *13*(2).

Taher, B., & Tam, S. S. (2012). Informal Language Learning Setting: Technology or Social Interaction? *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, *11*(2), 142–149.

Tasdemir, M. (2010). The effects of the REAP reading comprehension technique on students' success. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, *38*, 553–560.

Turner, N (2012). What is mlearning? Retrieved on 20 July 2019 from https://aurionlearning.wordpress.com/2012/03/21/what-is-mlearning/

Van den Berg, H., Manstead, A., Van der Pligt, J., & Wigboldus, D. (2006). The impact of affective and cognitive focus on attitude formation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *42*, 373–379.

Viberg, O., & Grönlund, Å. (2012). Mobile assisted language learning: A literature review. *In 11th World Conference on Mobile and Contextual Learning*.

Vishal, J. (2014). 3D Model of Attitude. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, *3*(3).

Wang, Y. H., & Shih, S. K. H. (2015). Mobile-assisted language learning: Effects on EFL vocabulary learning. *International Journal of Mobile Communications*, *13*(4), 358. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMC.2015.070060

Wardlow, L. (2016). *How technology can boost student engagement*. Retrieved from https://www.pearsoned.com/technology-can-boost-student-engagement/

White, J., & Mills, D. J. (2011). Get Smart!: Smartphones in the Japanese classroom. *JALT Conference Proceedings-JALT2011*, *36*, 328–337.

Winters, N. (2006). What is mobile learning? *Big Issues in Mobile Learning: Report of a Workshop by the Kaleidoscope Network of Excellence Mobile Learning Initiative*. University of Birmingham.

Wise, S. L. (1985). The development and validation of a scale measuring attitudes toward statistics. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *45*(2), 401–405.

Wong, L.-H., & Looi, C.-K. (2010). Vocabulary learning by mobile-assisted authentic content creation and social meaning-making: Two case studies. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *26*, 421–433. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2010.00357.x

Yang, S. (2012). Exploring college students 'attitudes and self-efficacy of mobile learning. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, *11*(4), 148–154.

Zarzycka-Piskorz, E. (2016). Kahoot it or not? Can games be motivating in grammar? *The Journal of Teaching Language with Technology*, *3*, 17–36.

Zhang, Y. (2016). The Impact of Mobile Learning on ESL Listening Comprehension. *International Conference on Advanced Education and Management*, *3*.

# HỌC NGOẠI NGỮ VỚI SỰ HỖ TRỢ CỦA THIẾT BỊ DI ĐỘNG TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC VIỆT NAM: THÁI ĐỘ CỦA SINH VIÊN

Phạm Thu Trà

*Khoa Tiếng Anh, Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội,*
*Xuân Thủy, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Bài báo bàn luận đến thái độ của sinh viên tại một trường đại học về việc học ngoại ngữ với sự hỗ trợ của thiết bị di động. Bài báo sử dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu hỗn hợp, với bảng hỏi khảo sát là công cụ nghiên cứu chính. Kết quả từ dữ liệu định tính và định lượng cho thấy đa số sinh viên có thái độ tích cực với việc sử dụng thiết bị di động để học ngoại ngữ nói chung hay trong lớp học nói riêng. Từ đó, tác giả đưa ra khuyến nghị rằng việc học ngoại ngữ với sự hỗ trợ của thiết bị di động nên được chấp nhận như một đường hướng mới trong việc giảng dạy và học tiếng Anh. Bên cạnh đó, một số biện pháp cần được đưa ra để nâng cao trình độ kỹ thuật số của cả giáo viên và sinh viên.

*Từ khóa:* học ngoại ngữ với sự hỗ trợ của thiết bị di động (MALL), học tập di động (M-learning)

VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, Vol.36, No.1 (2020) 117-128

# AN INSIGHT INTO BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION GRADUATES' ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES FROM WORKPLACE PERSPECTIVES

Nguyen Thi Minh Tram*

*Honors Program, Faculty of English Language Teacher Education,*
*VNU University of Languages and International Studies,*
*Pham Van Dong, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 13 November 2019
Revised 15 December 2019; Accepted 11 February 2020.

**Abstract:** The issue of discrepancies between university English business administration curriculum and English oral communication competence requirements in the workplace has been increasingly alarming since Vietnam accessed into more and more international business organizations, especially ASEAN Economic Community. In the present study, qualitative data were collected in semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in real workplace, consisting of 15 employers at executive and managerial level and 8 business administration graduates from four universities to explore this mismatch. The results showed that most of the employers and graduates were slightly dissatisfied or dissatisfied with business administration graduates' English oral communication competencies in workplace right after their graduation. Specifically, most of the business administration graduates lacked good pronunciation, skills and appropriate attitudes rather than knowledge in dealing with English oral communication tasks. Importantly, much of the dissatisfaction of both employers and graduates came from the discrepancies between the university preparation and workplace requirements. Thus, creating long-term collaborative partnerships among and between academic institutes and potential employers and designing a competency-based course are essential in preparing business administration undergraduates efficiently for the increasingly demanding workplace regarding English oral communication competencies.

*Keywords:* oral communication in English, business administration, competency

## 1. introduction

In the overall strategy for international integration through 2020, vision to 2030 approved by the Vietnamese Prime Minister in 2016 (Decision No. 40 dated January 7), the importance of foreign languages and especially English for the labor force was emphasized to meet the demands of the integration process. Therefore, Vietnamese learners who major in business administration (BA) require effective English oral communication (EOC) competencies in this area if they want to be successful in the increasingly dynamic and demanding job market.

On the one hand, although adequate English competencies are usually among the first requirements for job applicants in business, Hoang's (2008) research reveals that 50% of non-English major student participants (N=60) could not communicate in English in simple situations. Do (2012) has also found that 90% of Vietnamese third year non- English major students (N=9900) fell well below employers' requirements related to the Test of English for International Communication. On the other hand, many recent studies in Asia

* Tel.: 84-91537 1945
Email: tramntm@vnu.edu.vn /minhtramsv@yahoo.com

(e.g., Dayal, 2005; Vasavakul & Chinokul, 2006; Chien, Lee & Kao, 2008; Tsou, 2009; Pattanapichet & Chinokul, 2009; Dibakanaka & Hiranburana, 2012) show the necessity and effectiveness of ESP courses offered in universities which have a focus that is relevant and supplemental to professions related to the students' program major to develop their competencies. However, there is not much information about the workplace investigation of EOC competencies for BA major.

These practical reasons have stressed the necessity of an investigation into the workplace perspectives so that BA undergraduates' EOC competencies can be developed to receive more opportunities in job employment and meet the language requirements of the demanding workplace right after graduation. Hence, the research question that the present study sought to answer is as follows: *How satisfactory are BA graduates' EOC competencies in their workplace?*

## 2. Competency

Hymes (1972) has originally formulated the concept of communicative competence that involves judgments about what is systemically possible (what the grammar will allow), psychologically feasible (what the mind will allow), and socioculturally appropriate (what society will allow), and about the probability of occurrence of a linguistic event and what is entailed in the actual accomplishment of it. Richard and Rodgers (2001) assert that competencies as "a description of the essential skills, knowledge and attitude required for effective performance of particular tasks and activities" (p.159). Council of Europe (2001) also shares this idea when defining competencies as "sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform action" (p.9). Thus, the structure of competency is formed by experience that includes knowledge, skills and attitudes, which determine an individual's readiness for activity.

Regarding competency-based education, it emerged in the 1970s in the US and referred to an educational movement that advocated defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable description of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours students should acquire at the end of a course of study (Guskey, 2005). The application of competency-based education principles to language teaching is called competency-based language teaching – an approach that has been widely used as the basis for the design of work-related and survival-oriented language teaching programs for adults (Richards, 2006).

## 3. Business English oral communication

With regard to the core areas of oral communication, Savignon (1983) gives specific categories of oral communication abilities which include (1) linguistic competence with five components namely appropriateness, grammatical accuracy, intelligibility, fluency, and the adequacy of vocabulary for purpose, (2) discourse competence consisting of cohesion markers and proper length of pause less than three seconds, (3) strategic competence that demonstrates how the speaker react to others' silence and how they fix their own silence, and (4) nonverbal features of communicative competence that include the ability to display eye contact, smile, and keeping appropriate conversational distance between 60 to 90 centimeters in face-to-face communication. On the other hand, Ellis and Johnson (1994) have provided a more general description that oral communication includes the abilities such as interacting successfully with other speakers, responding appropriately and using the appropriate vocabulary and phrases for the situation they are in and the person they are talking to, for example the appropriate language in a job interview or taking a telephone message. Therefore, appropriateness is considered the key in all the aspects of communication, from verbal to non-verbal language.

The communicative language competences by Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) (Council of Europe, 2001) cover all the components mentioned by the above authors with linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. Specifically, regarding Business English oral communication (BEOC), Crosling and Ward (2002) have said that it covers a wide area, ranging from oral presentations to participation in teams and meetings and, for university courses to be focused appropriately, more detailed information on the spoken interactions. However, Dudley-Evans and John (1996, p.26) provide a more comprehensive summary of BEOC with core performance areas in published materials. They (1996) have noted that the BEOC is defined primarily in relation to five core performance areas including taking part in meetings, giving presentations, telephoning, socializing and negotiating.

**4. Research methodology**

The present study adopts a qualitative design. The qualitative data from semi-structured interviews can be a rich source to explore and specify the participants' perspectives.

*Participants and sampling*

To serve the purpose of the study, two groups of participants were recruited, namely BA graduates and their employers to provide an insightful report of the BA graduates' EOC competencies in their workplace. According to Long (2005), comparing data from different sources can help validate the data and ultimately increase credibility of the interpretation of the data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in a NA in which the participants were selected based on purposive sampling and they were required to satisfy a number of criteria. As a result of the sampling process, 23 participants consisting of 8 BA graduates from four universities (A, B, C and D) that trained BA undergraduates in Hanoi, and 15 employers were selectively chosen to ensure cross-data validity.

Specifically, BA graduates who experienced both learning needs and communication needs could give in-depth report on the possible discrepancies between the academic preparation and real workplace. They included those who have graduated from the universities and were required to have minimum of one year working in business sectors and speak English on regular basis in their workplace. As a result of the sampling process, eight graduates who used EOC on regular basis were selected: four were sales personnel; two were manager assistants and two were sales administrators in the field of commerce, travel, and manufacturing where they had frequent chances of using EOC (See Appendix 1).

Selected employers who could provide rich information about the requirements of target workplace needed to be at executive and managerial level with over 10 years of working experience, and have some experience recruiting and employing BA entry-level personnel who had to use EOC in business situations for their job on regular basis. As a result of the sampling process, 15 chosen employers worked in different kinds of organizations where their employees had frequent chances of using EOC and in the same fields with the selected BA graduates. Importantly, all of them had BA graduates as employees for one year and above. Those employers' organizations were located in the major provinces and cities with large industrial zones, groups, and companies in Northern Vietnam (See Appendix 2).

*Data collection instrument*

Semi-structured interview based on the document analysis to collect qualitative data from graduates and employers was conducted. As Dowsett (1986) outlines the strengths of this instrument, “the interactions are incredibly rich and the data indicate that you can produce extraordinary evidence about life that you do not get in structured interviews or questionnaire methodology” (p. 53).

Regarding the development process of the interview, prior to the administration of the interviews, the questions were consulted by two experts in research and piloted on two practitioner instructors so as to see whether the interview questions were understandable, clear and easy to answer. Then some adaptations related to the wording of the questions were done.

Concerning its design, semi-structured interview forms including a set of open-ended questions were designed in Vietnamese for graduates and employers. The common question contents were mainly about the common positions of new BA graduates, the satisfaction towards BA graduates’ EOC competencies, their difficulties in using EOC in the workplace and suggestions for important EOC performance areas for new BA graduates.

*Data collection procedure*

Time, place and mode of each interview were negotiated with each interviewee. The interviews were either face-to-face or through telephone calls (See Appendix 1 & 2). Contacting through telephone resulted from the fact those participants had busy working schedules. Furthermore, they resided in different provinces so phone calls were favorable options in some of the interviews. In spite of different ways of contacting, the language used was spoken Vietnamese, and the time was chosen upon the participants’ convenience and agreed by the researcher, which was in an attempt to ensure the quality of interviews through phone calls as good as face-to-face ones.

The time for each interview employers and graduates varied between approximately 13 and 27 minutes, all added up to around 6 hour 47 minutes (See Appendix 1 & 2). Before each interview, the participants were sent the guiding interview questions so that they could have more time to think and then possibly give valid answers later in the interviews. All the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese so that interviewees can express themselves freely without language boundaries because not all employers can speak English fluently. The interviews were also audio-taped with the participants’ permission for later analysis. During each interview, the researcher also took a note of the main ideas of the answers.

*Data analysis procedure*

Qualitative data analysis approach termed “interactive synthesis” (Huberman & Miles, 1994) was used in the study. This approach combined both case-oriented and variable oriented strategies. Starting with a variable-oriented strategy of “finding themes that cut across cases” (Huberman & Miles, 1994) to compose a “general condensation” (Fischer & Wertz, 1975) of the data, the study then returned to individual cases for configuration within each case, and performed comparative analysis to arrive at findings for the interview themes. The metamatrix for the interactive synthesis by To (2010) was adapted in the present study for the qualitative data analysis of semi-structured interviews as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The metamatrix for qualitative data analysis of interviews with BA graduates and employers

| Themes / Cases | Common positions of new BA graduate(s) | Satisfaction with new BA graduates' EOC performance | New BA graduates' EOC difficulties | Key EOC performance areas for new BA graduates |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graduate 1 | | | | |
| Graduate 2 | | | | |
| Graduate … | | | | |
| Graduate 8 | | | | |
| Employer 1 | | | | |
| Employer 2 | | | | |
| Employer … | | | | |
| Employer 15 | | | | |

The interview recordings were transcribed. All the answers of the interviewees were analyzed by categorizing the points that came out from the statements for each question. The metamatrix was used as a starting frame of reference for data analysis in the study. Key words and phrases extracted from the interviews were then inserted in the corresponding cells for comparative analysis and eventually, the generation of findings of the above themes with quotes. The quotes were translated into English for the purpose of report and revised by another English teacher who was also a professional translator of six-year experience. The major themes of the interview data including the satisfaction towards BA graduates' EOC competencies, their difficulties in using EOC in the workplace and suggestions from workplace perspectives were analyzed as listed in Table 1.

## 5. Findings

All the results of the interviews were summarized in the metamatrix that was designed based on interactive synthesis. Common positions of new BA graduates, satisfaction towards current BA graduates' EOC competencies, and suggestions for necessary EOC competencies at workplace will be reported in this part.

*Common positions of new BA graduates*

At first, the participants were asked about the common positions of BA graduates after being employed and the key EOC performance areas for them to work effectively at the workplace.

Table 2. New BA graduates' common positions

| No. | Graduates' position after graduation | Yes (%) | No (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Sales personnel | 69.57 | 30.43 |
| 2. | Manager assistant | 39.13 | 60.87 |
| 3. | Import-export personnel | 34.78 | 65.22 |
| 4. | Officer | 30.43 | 69.57 |
| 5. | Human resource personnel | 21.74 | 78.26 |
| 6. | Sales administrator | 13.04 | 86.96 |
| 7. | Market researcher | 13.04 | 86.96 |
| 8. | Manager | 4.35 | 95.65 |

Results from the interview data about new BA graduates' common positions with 23 employers and BA graduates from workplace were summarized in Table 2. As can be seen from Table 2, the majority of employers and BA graduates reported that BA graduates often worked as sales personnel (69.57% for Yes) after being employed.

*Current BA graduates' EOC competencies: Satisfaction level and difficulties*

All the examined employers and BA graduates were interviewed in NA about their satisfaction with BA graduates' EOC competencies that included knowledge, skills and attitude/behavior in implementing EOC duties. The qualitative results showed that most of employers and BA graduates (73.91%) were slightly dissatisfied or dissatisfied with BA graduates' EOC competencies in workplace right after their graduation. BA graduates' weakness in EOC competencies were reported to be various such as their lack of "language structures", "correct pronunciation", "abilities of listening to different accents such as English by Singaporean, Malaysian, Indian, Japanese and French", "tactfulness and strategies in socializing situation", "flexibility" in handling BE situations, and understanding of "communication culture" at work. Specifically, they commented:

> "I have the feeling that they [i.e. BA graduates] were just prepared in terms of theory and lacked practice. Many of them were not quick at interaction in English especially at the beginning." (E4)

> "I have failed many graduates of BA or any other business majors despite of their degree of high-distinction or even degree from abroad because they had weak communication skills." (E5)

> "For sales positions, for example, sometimes customers both foreigners or Vietnamese are willing to work with our employees just because of small things, like their attitude in communicating. But when my employees just acted as if they were higher than the customers, the customers rejected cooperating or required a replacement of sales personnel". (E10)

BA graduates also revealed they were not ready due to lack of EOC competencies when entering the market:

> "When I started working for my current company, I was so scared of facing my foreign boss. I could barely understand what she said or asked for. She spoke so fast in strong Indian accent. So I tried to avoid her or even took a day off when she came to Vietnam." (Grad 1)

> "I was not prepared for communicating orally with foreign customers. I had to make a lot of effort because my pronunciation was not good enough. There were many errors. I did not have much knowledge about cultures." (Grad 5)

> "I was not confident with my EOC abilities after graduation at all. I was almost like a deaf person at first. It took me almost half a year to improve my abilities in listening and speaking English to foreign customers." (Grad 6)

Many of BA graduates (62.5%) explained that the low level of their self-assessment of satisfaction resulted from the fact that they did not have chance of practice making conversation in English or an EOC course specifically for BA majors. They reported:

> "The GE courses were very general with everyday topics like sports, hobbies, and food without focus on speaking. But the ESP course only focused on reading and grammar. So in fact, we did not have an EOC course." (Grad 2)

> "We studied speaking skills, but only in making a presentation. We did not have chances of making conversations in English with others. I did not have much time to speak or interact in English with peers. I had very few chances of getting correction or feedback from teachers. So after graduation, I was still weak at interaction." (Grad 3)

Besides the BA graduates' weakness in EOC, two employers gave positive comments on their employees as BA graduates in undertaking EOC responsibilities. However, they also explained their situations that:

> "However, at first, they (i.e. BA graduates) could not perform as well as required due to their lack of confidence and EOC jargons. Then after some weeks of observing and learning from senior

colleagues, they started getting better." (E1)

"Those were the best ones that my company selected from series of interviews. In fact, many of other BA candidates failed to meet the company requirements. Most of those who did not pass the interviews had bad pronunciation or very slow response in English." (E3)

In short, the results revealed that most of the BA graduates lacked good pronunciation, skills and appropriate attitudes rather than knowledge in dealing with EOC tasks and much of the dissatisfaction of both employers and BA graduates came from the discrepancies between the university preparation and workplace requirements. It seemed that their weak points in EOC prevented them from working effectively after graduation in EOC situations and resulted from the lack of practice at university in this area of English.

*Suggestions for necessary EOC competencies at workplace*

Giving detailed description of the importance of socializing in English for BA graduates, 5 out of 23 workplace participants (21.74%) claimed that socializing competencies are necessary for those "from new graduates to those with years of working experience". Here are typical emphases by employers:

"Socializing is a very important speaking duty. All employees including BA personnel in our company have to socialize well with foreign clients." (E1)

"I think their main duty is socializing in English. They have to welcome and to build up relationship with foreign clients when they come to visit our company. So when interviewing BA graduates for the job, we only select those with good socializing skills." (E7)

"In terms of speaking, socializing is very important for any positions. From new to experienced graduates or from staff to managerial level, it is a must for them to socialize well in English with foreign business partners." (E12)

Answering about the importance of telephoning performance area, 6 BA graduates and employers (26.09%) gave the same reason that many of their foreign clients were working abroad so making a phone call is "the most convenient oral communication way". Employer 13 explained the importance of telephoning as below.

"Making a call is the fastest way to communicate when we cannot have face-to-face conversation with our business partners or colleagues."

Besides, 5 participants (21.74%) claimed that telephoning was the most frequently used speaking task in travel agencies where they have a great number of tourists from abroad. Graduate 8 working for a travel agency emphasized that:

"Telephoning is definitely the most common English duty that I have done so far. I think it is very important for all of other BA graduates who also work in a travel agency like me."

In terms of the most significant EOC performance areas for new BA graduates, almost all of the participants (91.43% and 74.29%) affirmed that the competencies in socializing and telephoning should be included in the proposed course respectively. The participants gave comments on socializing:

"Socializing competencies are necessary for them (i.e. BA undergraduates) no matter what position or company they are going to work for in business sector." (E7)

"These competencies (i.e. socializing) are what BA graduates need to use right in interviews for job application so definitely they should be included in the course." (Grad 8)

Graduate 5 reported about taking part in meeting in English that:

"We rarely have formal meetings in English. We mostly have conversations of exchanging information."

Employer 3 gave comment about presenting duties:

> "Giving presentation is not a common duty in our company, only twice or three times per year. And normally, a team leader, manager or deputy manager will be in charge of this."

Graduate 4 explained for not selecting negotiating:

> "Compared to other competencies, only a few BA undergraduates may use negotiating in English for their job. Only those who have experiences and higher positions like managers will use it."

In short, two EOC performance areas considered the most important with high percentage of participants (> 50%) for BA undergraduates were socializing and telephoning competencies.

**6. Discussion**

It can be illustrated from the findings of the semi-structured interviews that employers were those who could probably know well the strengths and weakness of their employees who graduated from universities in meeting the requirements of real workplace. Besides, graduates who experienced both learning needs and communication needs could give insightful report on the possible discrepancies between the academic preparation and real workplace. Nevertheless, ESP teachers are likely to be the only ones to be in charge of designing and implementing ESP courses as reported by Huhta et al. (2013). They stated that much of the development of Language for Specific Purposes and study skills courses had been largely based on the teachers' intuition, rather than any rigorous investigation of what actually happened. Consequently, if teachers just follow a book, it will probably cause enormous discrepancies because every book or material has its own weakness and strengths. Besides, a book that was published in a different context or a foreign country such as London and New York could hardly take into consideration all of Vietnamese learners' common mistakes or needs; or the specified socio-cultural requirements of Vietnamese workplace. The shortage of a needs analysis of the workplace could hardly make a course context-based because it was not designed from the findings of needs by all the relevant stakeholders in the studied context. This issue eventually can lead to the considerable discrepancies between university preparation and workplace requirements.

Besides, based on the qualitative results, transferable skills such as "tactfulness and strategies in socializing situation", "flexibility" in handling BE situations besides language competencies and also understanding of "communication culture" at work are several BA graduates' weaknesses in EOC, which resulted in their employers' dissatisfaction with their EOC performance in workplace. Therefore, in order to help BA undergraduates to get ready to meet all the workplace requirements, a competency-based course can be a feasible solution with comprehensive focus on development of knowledge, skills and attitudes as a thorough preparation for workplace. Norton (1987, as cited in Sullivan, 1995) states that learners' confidence is enhanced in competency-based education because they can achieve competencies required in the performance in real life. However, the necessity of effective teachers in a competency-based classroom, which requires teachers' adequate qualification and training in competency-based language teaching can be an issue. Sullivan (1995) claims that unless training and follow up assistance is provided for the teachers, there is a tendency to slip back into the role of the traditional teacher. Therefore, teachers must be active in classroom with the commonality of completing the same training, which means preparing them ready for teaching the proposed course is essential.

## 7. Conclusion

This article has reported the investigation with workplace representatives including BA graduates and their employers. The findings reveal that most of employers were slightly dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the new graduates' EOC competencies. This emphasizes the importance of an investigation of real workplace requirements and reflection. Therefore, one implication is creating long-term collaborative partnerships among and between potential employers, teacher educators, and teachers and in designing an effective EOC course for BA undergraduates to get them ready for the workplace. Besides, the competency-based approach as the basis for the design of work-related and survival-oriented language teaching programs for adults (Richards, 2006) can be applied in response to the growing concerns that students were not being taught what they required after they left school. Regarding room for further research, the scope of study can be widened with more BA graduates from more universities that have ESP course(s) for BA undergraduates would better guarantee the validity of the research.


## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Phuong Nga and Dr. To Thi Thu Huong for their extensive expertise and professional advice. They have been such a great source of inspiration and support for me to conduct this research.

I would like to acknowledge a particular debt to employers and business administration graduates who have taken part in this study and spent time answering my interview questions. The information collected was a precious source of data to make the research fruitful. Importantly, their enthusiastic participation and support with professionalism have been great encouragement for me to complete the research.


## References


Chien, C., Lee, W., & Kao L. (2008). Collaborative teaching in an ESP program. *Asian EFL Journal, 10*(4), 114-133.

Council of Europe, (2001). *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, Cambridge University Press, 23-193.

Crosling, G., & Ward, I. (2002). Oral Communication: The Workplace Needs and Uses of Business Graduate Employees, *English for Specific Purposes, 21*(1), 41-57.

Dayal, S. (2005) English Language Learning in the ESPContext: an Indian Experiment, *Language in India,6*(4). Retrieved 15 April 2019 from http://www.languageinindia.com/aug2005/shebaesp1.html

Dibakanaka, A., & Hiranburana, K. (2012). Developing an e-Learning Competency Based English Course Module for Chief Flight Attendants. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 2*(8).

Do, T. P. T. (2012). *Vietnamese students' levels of English proficiency: Far from the standard level.* Paper presented at the Conference on the Quality of the Teaching and Learning of English in Higher Education in Vietnam, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Dowsett, G. (1986). *Interaction in the semi-structured interview*. In M. Emery (ed) Qualitative Research. Canberra: Australian Association of Adult Education.

Dudley-Evans, T., & St. John (1996). *Report on Business English: A Review of Research and Published teaching material.* Princeton: Chauncey Group International.

Ellis, M., & Johnson, C. (1994). *Teaching Business English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fischer, C., & Wertz, F. (1975). Empirical phenomenological analyses of being criminally victimized. In A. Giorgi (Ed.), *Phenomenology and psychological research*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 135-158.

Guskey, T.R. (2005). Mapping the road to proficiency. *Educational Leadership, 63*(3), 32-38.

Hoang, V. V. (2008). Factors influencing the quality ofthe teaching and learning in a non-English major program in the Vietnamese national university, Hanoi. *The Journal of Social Science, 8*, 22-37.

Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1994). Data management and analysis methods. In Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications. 428-444.

Huhta, M., Vogt, K., Johnson, E., & Tulkki, H. (2013). *Needs Analysis for Language Course Design. A holistic Approach to ESP*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competency. ed. J B. Pride and Holmes, H. *Sociolinguistics*. N.Y: Penguin.

Long, M. (2005). *Methodological issues in learner needs analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Pattanapichet, F., & Chinokul, S. (2009). Development of a Competency-based English Oral Communication Course for Undergraduate Public Relations Students. *ESP World, 4*(25), 1-46.

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communicative competency: Theory and Classroom Practice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Sullivan, R. S. (1995). The competency-based approach to training. *JHPIEGO Strategy Papers*, *1*, 1-8.

To, T.T.H. (2010). Insights from Vietnam. In R. Johnstone (Ed.), *Learning through English: Policies, Challenges and prospects. Insights from East Asia.* Malaysia: British Council.

Tsou, W. (2009). ESP makes college EFL learning effective. Paper accepted for presentation at TESOL 2009 Annual Conference, Denver, CO, 26-28 March.

Vasavakul, A., & Chinokul, S. (2006). *Business English oral communication (BEOC) for customer-services staff at international banks: Translating needs analysis to a course development.* (Doctoral Dissertation). Faculty of English as an International Language, Chulalongkorn University.

# GÓC NHÌN TỪ NƠI LÀM VIỆC THỰC TẾ VỀ NĂNG LỰC GIAO TIẾP NÓI TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN TỐT NGHIỆP QUẢN TRỊ KINH DOANH

Nguyễn Thị Minh Trâm

*Bộ môn Chất lượng cao, Khoa Sư phạm tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, ĐHQGHN, Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Sự chênh lệch giữa chương trình tiếng Anh cho sinh viên quản trị kinh doanh (QTKD) và các yêu cầu về năng lực giao tiếp tiếng Anh tại nơi làm việc trở nên đáng báo động kể từ khi Việt Nam gia nhập các tổ chức thương mại quốc tế, đặc biệt là Cộng đồng kinh tế ASEAN. Trong bài nghiên cứu này, dữ liệu định tính được thu thập từ các cuộc phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc với các bên liên quan tại nơi làm việc thực tế, bao gồm 15 nhà tuyển dụng ở cấp điều hành và quản lý và 8 sinh viên tốt nghiệp QTKD từ bốn trường đại học để tìm hiểu sự chênh lệch này. Kết quả cho thấy hầu hết các đối tượng nghiên cứu đều không hài lòng với khả năng nói tiếng Anh tại nơi làm việc của các sinh viên mới tốt nghiệp ngành QTKD. Như vậy, việc tạo ra mối quan hệ hợp tác lâu dài giữa các cơ sở đào tạo và nhà tuyển dụng, và thiết kế khóa học theo đường hướng năng lực là cần thiết nhằm nâng cao năng lực này cho sinh viên QTKD để sẵn sàng thích ứng với yêu cầu thị trường ngày càng khắt khe.

*Từ khóa:* giao tiếp nói trong tiếng Anh, Quản trị kinh doanh, năng lực

## APPENDIX 1: BA GRADUATES' BRIEF PROFILE

| **Graduate** | **University** | **Working experience** | **Position** | **Type of company** | **Specialized field** | **Location** | **Mode of interview** | **Duration of interview** (min) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A | 1 year | Sales personnel | Foreign capital | Travel | Hai Duong | Face to face | 14.37 |
| 2 | A | 1 year | Manager assistant | Limited | Manufacturing | Bac Ninh | Telephoning | 17.08 |
| 3 | B | 2 years | Sales personnel | Foreign capital | Commerce | Hanoi | Face to face | 15.46 |
| 4 | B | 2 years | Sales administrator | Joint-stock | Manufacturing & commerce | Hai Phong | Telephoning | 18.34 |
| 5 | C | 2 years | Sales personnel | Limited | Commerce | Hanoi | Face to face | 19.53 |
| 6 | C | 3 years | Sales administrator | State-owned | Manufacturing & commerce | Hanoi | Face to face | 22.39 |
| 7 | D | 3 years | Sales personnel | Limited | Travel | Quang Ninh | Telephoning | 14.07 |
| 8 | D | 1 year | Manager assistant | Foreign capital | Travel | Hanoi | Face to face | 19.25 |

## APPENDIX 2: EMPLOYERS' BRIEF PROFILE

| Employer | Position | Type of company | Specialized field | Location | Mode of interview | Duration of interview (min) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Manager | Limited | Commerce | Hanoi | Face to face | 21.17 |
| 2 | Deputy manager | Foreign capital | Travel | Hanoi | Face to face | 13.16 |
| 3 | Deputy manager | Foreign capital | Travel | Hanoi | Face to face | 14.02 |
| 4 | Vice-Head of HR department | Limited | Commerce | Hanoi | Face to face | 13.49 |
| 5 | Manager | Foreign capital | Manufacturing | Hanoi | Face to face | 19.06 |
| 6 | Vice head of purchasing department | Joint-stock | Commerce | Bac Ninh | Telephoning | 15.53 |
| 7 | Deputy manager | Joint-stock | Manufacturing & commerce | Bac Ninh | Telephoning | 16.13 |
| 8 | Vice-Head of HR department | Joint-stock | Commerce | Hai Duong | Face to face | 18.25 |
| 9 | Manager | Joint-stock | Manufacturing & commerce | Hai Duong | Telephoning | 14.03 |
| 10 | Deputy manager | State-owned | Commerce | Hai Duong | Face to face | 19.37 |
| 11 | Deputy manager | Limited | Manufacturing & commerce | Hai Phong | Telephoning | 13.06 |
| 12 | Head of sales department | Limited | Manufacturing & commerce | Hai Phong | Telephoning | 14.52 |
| 13 | Deputy manager | Foreign capital | Travel | Quang Ninh | Telephoning | 17.48 |
| 14 | Head of HR department | Joint-stock | Manufacturing & commerce | Quang Ninh | Telephoning | 23.17 |
| 15 | Manager | Joint-stock | Travel | Quang Ninh | Telephoning | 15.44 |

VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, Vol.36, No.1 (2020) 129-141

# SHADOWING AND INTERPRETING PERFORMANCES OF ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS

Nguyen Thi Huyen[1*], Nguyen Thi Minh Thao[2], Tran Thi Dung[3], Nguyen Tam Trang[4]

*1. 2 and 3. Hanoi University of Industry*
*Bac Tu Liem, Hanoi, Vietnam*
*4. Hanoi National University of Education*
*Xuan Thuy, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 4 December 2019
Revised 13 January 2020; Accepted 15 February 2020

**Abstract:** Shadowing has widely been utilized in English language teaching classes, especially in interpretation training courses for decades and has become a topic of avid interest to various researchers such as Lambert (1992), Murphey (1995, 2001), Shiota (2012), and Hamada (2014). However, there has been no research conducted on the effect of implementing shadowing on fluency improvement in English interpretation in Vietnam. In response to this gap in the literature, this study aims to investigate (1) the possible connection between shadowing practices and the interpreting performances of the third-year English-majored students in the educational context at Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI) and (2) the students' perceptions of the application of shadowing in interpreting classes and its impacts on interpreting fluency. 54 third-year students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages (FFL), HaUI took part in a two-month experimental research, divided randomly into two groups including experimental and control groups. Data were gathered from (1) the pre- and post-tests with these two student cohorts, (2) interviews conducted with five students from the experimental group and (3) observations with this group. The research findings showed (1) a minimal influence of shadowing techniques on fluency improvement of the experimental group and (2) positive students' beliefs and attitudes towards the application of shadowing in interpreting classes and its impacts on interpreting fluency. Based on these findings, a series of recommendations on the pedagogical procedure for applying shadowing to enhance English major students' interpreting performances and further research on the application were offered. The paper, hopefully, provides useful information for teachers and researchers in the domain of interpretation, in general, and interpreting teaching activities at tertiary education, in particular.

*Keywords:* shadowing, interpretation, interpreting activities, fluency

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1. Rationale*

Since communication within only one speech community is hardly self-sustained, and no individual in the world can know all the languages in use, there is a demand for more qualified interpreters and translators, especially in the context of increased trade globalization. To meet the increasing need in the interpreting market, there have been an ever-growing number of tertiary education institutions becoming involved in the training of interpreting and translation professionals. Faculty of Foreign Languages (FFL), Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI) is no exception.

* Corresponding Author: Tel.: 84-974 064 058
Email: nguyenthihuyen@haui.edu.vn

In order to train interpreters and translators with marketable skills, there are two multi-media classrooms equipped with Smartclass software, a computer-assisted language learning system. This system enables students to practice consecutive and simultaneous interpreting in the allowed time. Thus, both teachers and students are supported to experience more practical and effective interpreting simulations. Although students' interpreting performances have been improved gradually, particularly their memorizing and note-taking skills, some shortcomings in interpreting delivery remain due to limited fluency. It seems that they do not know how to acquire this subject to make good achievements. As a result, interpreting lecturers from the university have been continuously seeking new techniques to enhance the students' interpreting performances.

A number of pedagogical experts have been conducting research on shadowing and its effectiveness for the second language (L2) learning in general and interpreter training in particular. Briefly, according to Lambert (1992), shadowing is a language learning technique that requires the practitioner to make instant sounds to the sound stimulus signal. The method employs audio or video in a foreign language. While listening, learners attempt to repeat – to "shadow" – what they hear as fast as possible. Shadowing has been used as a helpful exercise to enhance interpreters' timing, listening and short-term memory skills simultaneously even before they start their interpreting practice (Kurz, 1992). Both Tanaka (2002) and Hamada (2012) regard shadowing as one of the techniques used for training interpreters and confirm that shadowing is effective in developing a 'good ear' for language acquisition, particularly in accent and intonation. Being aware of problems with the students' learning methods and being motivated by previous findings on shadowing, the authors conducted the investigation into a possible link between shadowing practices and FFL students' fluency in interpreting performances. This paper is hoped to be of great significance for interpretation teachers and researchers.

*1.2. Aims of the research*

This study is to evaluate the effectiveness of shadowing in interpreting performances, especially in fluency improvement, of the third-year English-majored students at FFL, HaUI and explore the students' perceptions of the application of shadowing in interpreting classes and its impacts on interpreting fluency. Then pedagogical procedures for applying shadowing are suggested.

To reach this goal, the study addressed the following questions:

1. To what extent can third-year English majored students at HaUI improve their fluency in interpreting performances by shadowing?

2. What are the students' perceptions of the application of shadowing in interpreting classes and its impacts on interpreting fluency?

*1.3. Scope*

Due to a limitation of time, the study could not delve into the effect of applying shadowing on all aspects of interpreting performances such as accuracy and language transference. The study focuses on the possible relationship between shadowing practices and fluency improvement in Vietnamese-English interpreting and the students' beliefs and attitudes towards the application of shadowing in interpreting classes and its impacts on interpreting fluency.

## 2. Literature review

### *2.1. Shadowing*

#### *2.1.1. Definition of shadowing*

Defined by Lambert (1992), shadowing entails a paced tracking of the heard speech in parrot-style, the word-for-word repetition of a piece of information in one language, through the headphones. Originally, shadowing is a technique used by cognitive psychologists and neuropsychologists, and utilized as a method to improve simultaneous interpretation skills. However, Hamada (2011) argues that Lambert's (1992) definition does not encompass cognitive processes, a significant concept of shadowing. He claims that shadowing should be deemed as "an active and highly cognitive activity" (p. 140) rather than the auditory repetition.

According to Tamai (2005), "shadowing is an act or task of listening in which the learner tracks the heard speech and repeats it as exactly as possible while listening attentively to the incoming information" (p.181). This definition highlights the importance of active attention to in-coming sound during the linguistic process in the human brain. Therefore, it is more suitable to apply shadowing practice in language classes.

Shadowing can be actualized in various forms, including complete, selective and interactive shadowing (Murphey, 2001). In the complete form, students repeat all the sentences stated by teachers in the audio messages. In selective shadowing, they only choose to repeat important and message-carrying parts. And finally, regarding the interactive type, learners add comments or other words while still repeating some parts of the messages. Referring to the context of Faculty of Foreign Languages, HaUI, in interpreting lessons, teachers provide certain activities for third-year English-majored students to practice important skills for interpreting such as deciphering and memorizing skills. This is because deciphering is an indispensable step in the interpreting process while memorizing skill is one of the most important skills for interpreters. To train these skills for students, teachers ask students to listen to news in English or Vietnamese, keep in mind the idea and reproduce that message or idea in their own words. This teaching technique is quite similar to selective and interactive shadowing. Therefore, in this paper, the authors used the shadowing technique as a combination of selective and interactive forms proposed by Murphey (2001).

#### *2.1.2. Procedure of shadowing*

Ever since the creation of shadowing, numerous researchers and English teachers have attempted to develop this method with the aim of improving language teaching and learning. Initially, shadowing was the main technique used by interpreters in the hope of attaining fluent and accurate performance. Later on, several studies (e.g., Hamada, 2012; Kato, 2009; Oki, 2012) have investigated shadowing and demonstrated its usage in enhancing listening comprehension, speaking competence and memorizing skills. One of the typical shadowing procedures with six shadowing steps was given by Kadota and Tamai (2004) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Shadowing Procedure of Katoda and Tamai (2004)

| No. | Steps | Tasks | Focuses |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Listening | Listening to the audio without script | Content and speech style |
| 2 | Mumbling | Shadowing without the script | Heard sound rather than pronunciation |
| 3 | Synchronized reading (content understanding) | Shadowing with the script | Message meaning |
| 4 | Prosody shadowing | Shadowing with the script | Prosodic features (stress, rhythm, intonation, speed, and pause) |
| 5 | Synchronized reading (difficult points) | Shadowing with the script | Parts difficult to listeners |
| 6 | Content shadowing | Shadowing without the script | Content |

*2.2. Interpreting definitions and modes*

Interpreting takes a key role in bridging the gap between two different languages and cultures, helping people of different languages to understand what is being said. There are various definitions of interpreting. Roderick Jones, a European Union senior conference interpreter, states that interpreting is "immediate oral translation", instead of offering a "standard" definition (2002, p. 3). Interpreting, just like translation, is fundamentally "the art of re-expressing" (Hanh, 2006, p. 8). The interpreter listens to a speaker in one language, grasps the content of what is being said and then verbally re-expresses his or her understanding of the meaning in the target language. More specifically, according to Mahmoodzadeh (1992, p. 231), interpreting "consists of presenting in the target language, the exact meaning of what is uttered in the source language either simultaneously or consecutively, preserving the tone of the speaker". In general, in this study, interpreting is rendering information and ideas from one language into another language by means of speaking.

Based on working mode, interpreting is classified into two main models: simultaneous and consecutive interpreting (Bui & Dang, 1999). In simultaneous interpreting, an interpreter has to interpret nearly at the same time as the speaker, so the task of interpreting is very demanding and challenging. Due to the high level of difficulty, simultaneous interpreting is briefly introduced for students' information rather than being part of the training course for the third-year students at FFL, HaUI. Unlike simultaneous interpreting, consecutive interpretation is defined as "the process of interpreting after the speaker or signer has completed one or more ideas in the source language and pauses while the interpreter transmits that information" (Russell, 2005, p.136). However, this study proposes that whether interpreting consecutively or simultaneously, the interpreter has to attentively listen to the speaker, exactly understand, logically analyze the meaning of the message, then accurately and naturally convey the message in the target language. Hence, some helpful skills including note-taking skills, short-term memory, reproduction, and listening comprehension are required for a good interpreter.

*2.3. Criteria of interpreting assessment*

This study contends that interpreting requires language users to master a wide range of aspects such as background knowledge, cultures and language competence. However, it is difficult to decide whether an interpreting version is acceptable or not. Therefore, the assessment of interpreting versions has been a controversial topic which draws considerable concerns to linguistic researchers. According to the study by Zwischenberger (2010), there are three main criteria to evaluate interpreting assignments (see Table 2).

Table 2. Criteria for Interpreting Assessment

| **Content-related criteria** | **Form-related criteria** | **Delivery-related criteria** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sense consistency with the original | Correct terminology | Fluency of delivery |
| Logical cohesion | Correct grammar | Lively intonation |
| Completeness | Appropriate style | Pleasant voice |
| | | Synchronicity |

It is remarkable that fluency is regarded as the most important delivery-related criterion by 99.3% of Zwischenberger's (2010) online survey participants. However, Richards (1990) states that fluency is a fuzzy concept with a variety of definitions. Lennon (1990) argues that there are two senses of fluency: a broad and a narrow sense. In a broad sense, fluency refers to general oral proficiency. This view includes *smoothness* as only one component of overall fluency. In a narrower sense, fluency can be considered as a component of oral proficiency which consists of other variables such as correctness, appropriateness, pronunciation, and lexical range. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that someone can speak a given language fluently, but his or her grammar is not accurate. In a later study, Lennon (2000) summarized earlier definitions and suggests that "fluency might be the rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints of on-line processing" (p. 26). Fluency has been so far measured by calculating the number of words per minute (Skehan & Foster, 1999). The authors in this research also use these criteria to assess the students' interpreting performances during interpreting lessons. Students' interpreting versions are recorded and saved on Smart class system, and their fluency was evaluated based on the number of words per minute/second.

### *2.4. A possible connection between shadowing practices and the interpreting performance*

As mentioned earlier, shadowing was initially the main technique used by interpreters to promote fluent and accurate performance in interpreting practices. Up to now, many researchers have placed much emphasis on the role of shadowing in improving the quality of interpreting assignments. Converging with other researchers (e.g., Hamada, 2012; Kanatani et al., 2010), Tanaka (2002) affirms that shadowing is one of the effective techniques for interpreter training. Kurz (1992) also states that shadowing is an exercise to enhance simultaneous interpreters' timing, listening and short-term memory skills. Kadota (2007) argues that shadowing process engages diversified areas of the listener's brain, encompassing those of language and memory. Among three kinds of memory, namely sensory memory, short-term or working memory, and long-term memory, shadowing contributes to increasing the quantity and the storing period of the phonological information in the working memory (Kadota, 2007).

## 3. Methodology

### *3.1. Research site and participant selection*

As mentioned earlier, the research was conducted at Faculty of Foreign Languages

(FFL), Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI), where English major students are trained to become future professional interpreters or translators. At the FFL, HaUI, the third-year English-majored students started taking the Interpreting Course in the second semester of the academic year. Since the students had not learnt this subject before, their interpreting performances, especially their fluency in Vietnamese-English interpreting, were limited. Indeed, this is a common situation that the authors have observed for many years of teaching interpreting. Thus, the third-year students at FFL, HaUI were selected to be the participants of this study. However, there are two labs with 54 computers assisted with Smart class system in total, so 54 third-year English majors of the FFL, at HaUI, including 6 males and 48 females, were randomly chosen from classes and equally separated into two groups, the experimental and the control. The students studied interpreting for 15 weeks, four class hours per week.

*3.2. Data collection tools and procedures*

In order to answer the two research questions, the authors took a mixed approach of experimental research. The authors first collect quantitative data through the pre- and post-tests to address whether shadowing practices had an impact on the interpreting fluency of the third-year students at FFL, HaUI. After the intervention concluded, the authors collected qualitative data from interview and observation to have a potential understanding of the students' beliefs and attitudes towards the application of shadowing practices in interpreting courses and its impacts on their interpreting fluency.

First, the experimental research was conducted in 8 weeks during the semester including one week for a pre-test (see Appendix A), six weeks for shadowing practices applied for the experimental group and one week for a post-test (refer to Appendix B). Both the control group and the experimental group took the same pre- and post-test on the 3rd and 10th week of the semester, respectively. The pre-test and post-test were carefully selected from the test bank of interpreting and edited in terms of topic relevance, lexical and grammatical difficulties. There were three topics covered in the experiment, namely Tourism, Environment, and Economy. News pieces of 55-70 words in length with a recorded speed of 120-130 words per minute (wpm) were chosen to suit the students' expected B2 level of English proficiency. The lexical and grammatical difficulties in the news were at B1, based on Aptis General Technical Manual, British Council, 2015 with Flesch-Kincaid grade level at 6-9 or Flesch Reading ease at 80-60 and K1-K3 of 90-95%. The teachers of the two groups were trained to use a rubric (see Appendix C) to assess the students in terms of given criteria for interpreting assessment. The overall results of interpreting performances and of fluency were taken into consideration in this study. During the whole semester, both groups followed the usual procedure of an interpreting lesson in which they got involved in the activities to practice important interpreting skills such as memorizing and deciphering skills. Only the experimental group engaged in shadowing practices. The teacher of the experimental group trained the students to practice shadowing in interpreting at week 6 of the semester. The experimental group applied shadowing practices from week 4 to week 9.

Second, observation during the six-week shadowing practices at the lab where the experimental group studied was also conducted focusing on certain prepared elements as specified in the section discussing interpreting assessment criteria. In particular, the observation focused on the following aspects:

• Students' participation and attitudes towards interpreting activities using shadowing practices;

• Ability to memorize the idea and reproduce that message meaning in the source language in front of the class within five-ten seconds;

• Ability to promptly deliver the message meaning into the target language.

Third, semi-structured one-on-one interviews composed of six questions designed by the authors (see Appendix D) were carried out. The authors chose randomly 5 out of 27 students from the experimental group to interview to elicit more detailed feedback on the effectiveness of applying shadowing technique in the interpreting lessons. Observations and interviews were undertaken with the experimental group only.

### *3.3. Data analysis and interpretations*

The results of the tests were analyzed with the help of Excel Data Analysis and displayed in the form of statistics. The data collected from the interviews and observations were analyzed in a theme-based approach.

## 4. Findings and discussion

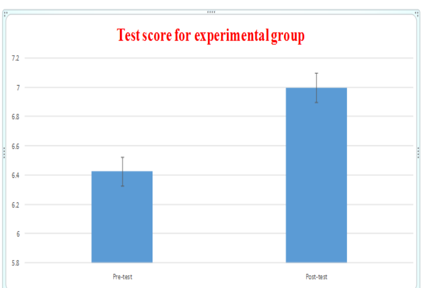
The major results of the study are summarized as follows:

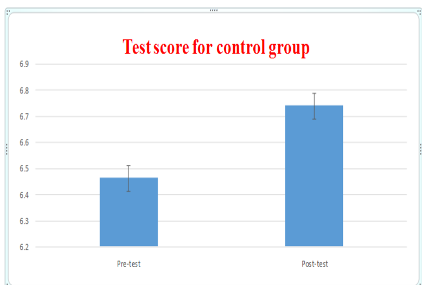
*Question 1: To what extent can third-year English major students at HaUI improve their fluency in interpreting performances by shadowing?*

The descriptive statistics of the fluency results of two tests for both groups (see Table 3) show that the students' interpreting fluency improved, albeit insignificantly, after the experiment. The data reveal that the fluency of the experimental group experienced a minimal improvement from 6.42 to 7.0. Also, it was only marginally better than that of the control group, 7.0 as opposed to 6.74.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test of the Experimental Group and Control Group

| Groups | **Tests** | **Means** | **SD** | **Min** | **Max** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Experimental group** | Pre-test | 6.42 | 0.84 | 5.0 | 8.0 |
| | Post-test | 7.0 | 0.73 | 5.5 | 9.0 |
| **Control group** | Pre-test | 6.46 | 0.89 | 5.0 | 8.0 |
| | Post-test | 6.74 | 0.86 | 5.5 | 8.5 |




Graph 1. Test Score for Experimental Group and Control Group

It can be seen from Graph 1 that although both groups did show the sign of improvement in both tests, the experimental group increased their scores faster than those of the control group after undergoing shadowing within 6 weeks. Therefore, the effect of shadowing was obviously true for the students in this study. It is also noticeable that the mean and maximum scores of the control group were even higher than those of its counterpart, confirming the reliability resulting from random selection of participants.

However, the minority of the students in the experimental group did not enhance their interpreting performance, especially in their fluency in terms of Vietnamese-English interpreting when they finished the six-week shadowing training (see Table 4 and Table 5 for the average speed in wpm). The data show that the pre- and post-test scores of these students remained the same.

Table 4. Fluency in English-Vietnamese Interpreting

| | **Pre-test** | **Post-test** |
|---|---|---|
| Experimental group | 119 | 131 |
| Control group | 120 | 126 |

Table 5. Fluency in Vietnamese-English Interpreting

| | **Pre-test** | **Post-test** |
|---|---|---|
| Experimental group | 103 | 124 |
| Control group | 106 | 115 |

Either the marginal development or the insignificant difference in the students' interpreting fluency recorded after the intervention, despite the students strictly following the procedure suggested by the teachers, might happen because the students did not practise shadowing long enough at class. Another possible reason may be because the students were not required to self-practice this technique more at home. Also, the teachers did not use on-going assessments such as a mid-term test or several mock tests or mini-tests as well as self- and peer-assessments from students to work out the strengths and weaknesses of the students in their interpreting performances. As a result, both the teachers and the peers could not suggest what the students should do to further enhance their interpreting performances.

*Question 2: What are the students' perceptions of the application of shadowing in interpreting classes and its impacts on interpreting fluency?*

Through observations during shadowing practices in the lab room at FFL, HaUI, the authors found that the students were more engaged and interested in interpreting lessons when following shadowing strategy. 100 percent of the students paid special attention to listen to the audios to shadow as much as possible. More interestingly, they could shadow most of the content of Vietnamese news in the first time of listening. Observing the students shadowing English news, the researchers also saw that the students demonstrated their excitement when comparing their shadowing versions without scripts to those with given scripts. The researchers overheard some of the students say "Oh, no. It's totally different from what I heard" or "Wow. I got 80% of the communicated message" or "Shadowing looks like a good way to memorize and decipher the message before interpreting".

Besides, the results from the interviews with the students showed that all interviewees remembered and perceived to follow the procedure suggested by the authors. Also, four out of five said that the procedure was useful for them. 95 per cent of the students in the interviews said that their fluency, especially in terms of English-Vietnamese interpreting had been greatly improved. More surprisingly, three out of five students believed that shadowing practices can help enhance their memory skill, concentration, and the ability to listening comprehension and reproduction in the source language. These students also expected that their teachers would apply shadowing practices in interpreting lessons next semester. This suggests that the students had positive perceptions on the application of shadowing in interpreting and its impacts on improving their interpreting performances. This might create more motivations for the students which is significant in their further practice with shadowing at class and at home under the teachers supervision and guidance.

## 5. Conclusion and implications

As an improvement of interpreting skills is nearly impossible if the process of learning is implemented without any techniques, third-year English majors are supposed to fiercely stick to their own suitable methods. Therefore, shadowing was presented to them as the subject of the study in hope of suggesting a new learning tactic to ultimately strengthen their Vietnamese-English interpreting performances in general and their fluency in particular.

In order to reach this goal, two tests were conducted on with 54 third-year students studying at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Hanoi University of Industry. Participants were divided into two groups, the experimental group and control group, with the first group being thoroughly trained with shadowing and practicing this technique at class within six weeks under the strict supervision of the researchers. The results of the experiment displayed the level of impact of shadowing on Vietnamese-English interpreting performances, especially in their fluency.

The test results indicate that the interpreting performance, especially fluency, of the experimental group slightly outpaced to that of the control group although both of them ended up with a minimal increase in their scores. The data collected from interviews and observations demonstrate that the students had positive beliefs and attitudes towards the application of shadowing practices in interpreting and its influence on their interpreting fluency.

Though the authors have made efforts towards conducting this study, due to the limitations of knowledge, research skills and time as well, errors and shortcomings are unavoidable. First and foremost, the experiment was conducted within a short period of six weeks. In addition, observations and interviews were implemented with only the experimental group, instead of both groups. The observations were conducted without a protocol which might be useful for the researchers to record the students' perceptions. The fact that the interviewees exclude the teachers and that the student interviewees were selected randomly may not yield the richest data from different perspectives. Besides, the other aspects of interpreting were not measured and reported, including accuracy and language transference. Also, the minimal development or indifferences in interpreting performances, especially fluency, of some students in the experimental group raise a concern on why shadowing did not exert much influence on them. Finally, a detailed syllabus with specific activities for shadowing practices and on-going assessments by teachers and students was not utilized. These limitations should be addressed in further studies.

Due to the distinct features of the interpreting training session, the researchers suggest a procedure of shadowing practices in interpreting lessons which is adapted from the Kadota and Tamai's procedure (see Appendix E). The procedure of shadowing in interpreting lessons consists of five steps namely listening, mumbling, synchronized reading (content understanding), content interpreting and completing interpreting. This is because interpreters must initially have excellent hearing ability and receive the message without interference. Lack of understanding can lead to a breakdown of communication (Bui & Dang, 1999). Sometimes, speakers express their ideas redundantly or vaguely, and even use cultural terms in their speech; therefore, students can shadow with edited information as long as the main ideas of the message remain. Furthermore, during interpreting process, interpreters have to transfer the message into the target language exactly, completely and naturally as much as possible, and refer to culture of source language and target language as well as the context when necessary, so the fluency, accuracy, language transference of the target language are focused in the fifth step of interpreting. In order to achieve more significant impacts on students' interpreting performances, teachers can instruct students how to practice shadowing and apply this technique repeatedly for a long time both at class and at home throughout a 15-week course. Teachers may also utilize on-going assessments with a combination of assessment from teachers as well as self- and peer-assessments from students to figure out students' strengths and weaknesses. After that, both teachers and peers might give suggestions on how to improve students' interpreting performances.

## References

Bui, B. T., & Dang, D. X. (1999). *Translation and interpreting theory*. Hanoi: Hanoi University of Foreign Studies.

Hamada, Y. (2011). Improvement of listening comprehension skills through shadowing with difficult materials. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 8,* 139-162.

Hamada, Y. (2012). An effective way to improve listening skills through shadowing. *The Language Teacher, 26*, 3-10.

Hamada, Y. (2014). The effectiveness of pre- and post-shadowing in improving listening comprehension skills. *The Language Teacher*, *38*(1), 3-10.

Jones, R. (2002). *Conference interpreting explained*. St. Jerome Publishing.

Katoda, S., & Tamai, K. (2004). *English shadowing*. Tokyo: Cosmopier.

Kadota, S. (2007). *Shadowing to ondoku no kagaku [Science of shadowing and oral reading]*. Tokyo: CosmoPier.

Kato, S. (2009). Listening activities for the acquisition of Aviation English proficiency test. *Bulletin of Chiba University Language and Culture, 3*, 47 – 59.

Kanatani, K., et al. (2010). *Taishukan's TEFL handbook for junior high school teachers.* Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten.

Kurz, I. (1992). 'Shadowing' exercises in interpreter training. In C. Dollerup & A. Loddegaard (Eds.), *Teaching translation and interpreting: Training, talent, and experience* (pp. 245-250). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Lambert, S. (1991). Aptitude testing for simultaneous interpretation at the University of Ottawa. *Mcta: Translators' Journal, 36*, 586-594.

Lambert, S. (1992). Shadowing. *Méta, 37*(2), 263-273.

Lennon, P. (1990). Investigating fluency in EFL: A quantitative approach. *Language Learning, 40* (3), 387-417.

Lennon, P. (2000). The lexical element on spoken second language fluency. In H. Riggenback (Ed.), *Perspectives on fluency* (pp. 26). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Mahmoodzadeh, K. (1992). Consecutive interpreting: Its principles and techniques. In C. Dollerup & A. Loddegaard (Eds.), *Teaching translation and interpreting: Training, talent, and experience* (pp. 231-236). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Murphey, T. (1995). Conversational shadowing for rapport and interactional language acquisition. In *Proceedings of The 6th Conference on Second Language Research in Japan*, 42-65.

Murphey, T. (2001). Exploring conversational shadowing. *Language Teaching Research, 5*(2), 128-155.

Oki, T. (2012). Word repetition in EFL shadowing: The roles of phrasal knowledge, context, and proficiency. *Annual Review of English Language Education in Japan, 23*, 45-60.

Pham, H. H. (2006). *Note taking in consecutive interpreting*. Hanoi: Hanoi University of Foreign Studies.

Richards, J. (1990). *The language teaching matrix*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Russell, D. (2005). Consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. In: T. Janzen (Ed.) *Topics in signed language interpreting* (pp. 135-164). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Shiota, K. (2012). The effectiveness of shadowing on students' psychology in language learning. *Journal of Accents Asia*, *5*(1), 71-83.

Skehan, P., & Foster, P. (1999). The influence of task structure and processing conditions on narrative retellings. *Language Learning, 49*(1), 93-120.

Tamai. K. (2005). *Listening shidouhotoshite no shadowing no koukani kansuru kenkyu [Research on the effectiveness of shadowing as a listening teaching method)*. Tokyo: Kazama Shobo.

Tanaka, M. (2002). Modern interpreting: Where English education and interpreter training intersect. *Tsuyaku-Honyaku Journal*, *1*. Retrieved from http://wwwsoc.nii.ac.jp/jais/html/tu_hon_journal/html/09_tanaka.html

Zwischenberger, C. (2010). Quality criteria in simultaneous interpreting: An international vs. a national view. *The Interpreters' Newsletter*, *15*, 127-142.

# PHƯƠNG PHÁP SHADOWING VÀ KHẢ NĂNG PHIÊN DỊCH THỰC TẾ CỦA SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGÀNH NGÔN NGỮ ANH

Nguyễn Thị Huyền[1], Trần Thị Dung[2], Nguyễn Thị Minh Thảo[3], Nguyễn Tâm Trang[4]

*1,2 và 3. Trường Đại học Công nghiệp Hà Nội*
*Bắc Từ Liêm, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*
*4. Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội*
*Xuân Thủy, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Phương pháp Shadowing từ lâu đã được ứng dụng rộng rãi trong các lớp học tiếng Anh, đặc biệt trong các khóa đào tạo phiên dịch và là mảng đề tài nhiều học giả quan tâm nghiên cứu như Lambert (1992), Murphey (1995, 2001), Shiota (2012), Hamada (2014). Tuy nhiên, cho tới nay, chưa có nghiên cứu nào ở Việt Nam tìm hiểu về tác dụng của phương pháp Shadowing trong việc nâng cao khả năng phiên dịch lưu loát tiếng Anh. Để khắc phục khoảng trống nghiên cứu đó, nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm tìm ra (1) mối liên hệ giữa việc thực hành phương pháp Shadowing với khả năng phiên dịch trên thực tế của sinh viên năm thứ ba chuyên ngành ngôn ngữ Anh trường Đại học Công nghiệp Hà Nội (ĐHCNHN) và (2) quan điểm của sinh viên về việc ứng dụng kỹ thuật Shadowing trong các lớp học dịch và ảnh hưởng của việc ứng dụng này đối với khả năng dịch lưu loát. Có 54 sinh viên tham gia nghiên cứu thực nghiệm trong hai tháng, được chia ngẫu nhiên vào nhóm thực nghiệm và nhóm đối chứng. Dữ liệu nghiên cứu được thu thập từ bài kiểm tra trước và sau khi tiến hành thực nghiệm với hai nhóm sinh viên này, (2) phỏng vấn năm sinh viên ở nhóm thực nghiệm và (3) dự giờ quan sát với nhóm này. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy (1) luyện tập Shadowing đóng vai trò tương đối trong việc cải thiện khả năng dịch lưu loát của sinh viên nhóm thực nghiệm và (2) sinh viên có thái độ và quan điểm tích cực đối với việc ứng dụng kỹ thuật Shadowing trong các lớp học dịch và ảnh hưởng của việc ứng dụng này đối với khả năng dịch lưu loát. Dựa trên những kết quả nghiên cứu này, nhóm tác giả đề xuất một quy trình áp dụng phương pháp shadowing nhằm nâng cao khả năng dịch lưu loát cho sinh viên chuyên tiếng Anh tại trường ĐHCNHN và gợi ý những hướng nghiên cứu tiếp theo cho việc áp dụng này. Bài viết hi vọng sẽ là nguồn thông tin hữu ích cho giảng viên và các nhà nghiên cứu về dịch thuật nói chung cũng như gợi ý các hoạt động giảng dạy phiên dịch tại các trường đại học nói riêng.

*Từ khóa:* Shadowing, phiên dịch, các hoạt động phiên dịch, dịch lưu loát

## Appendix A: Pre-test

**Vietnamese news**

Bộ Tài nguyên và Môi trường cho biết, năm nay Ngày môi trường thế giới (5/6) đã được tổ chức tại TP HCM với chủ đề "Hãy hành động để ngăn nước biển dâng" nhằm nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng của bảo vệ môi trường, ứng phó với biến đổi khí hậu đối với các khu vực dễ bị ảnh hưởng như hải đảo và các khu vực ven biển.

**English news**

Tenerife, the largest of the Canary Islands, is situated in the Atlantic Ocean. The island enjoys spring weather all year round. It has the average temperatures of 20 degrees in winter and 25 in the summer. Tenerife is the ideal place to enjoy the seaside. Tourists also practice all sorts of out-door activities, both in the sea and on land.

## Appendix B: Post-Test

**Vietnamese news**

Dự đoán là hòn đảo sẽ "gây sốt" năm 2017, đảo Điệp Sơn là địa danh nhất định mang đến cho bạn nhiều trải nghiệm bất ngờ, lý thú.Thời điểm đẹp nhất để du lịch đảo Điệp Sơn là từ tháng 12 đến tháng 6 vì biển khá êm và trong xanh, nên những bạn bị say sóng sẽ giảm được nhiều khó chịu khi di chuyển bằng tàu.

**English news**

The first Earth Day celebrations took place in more than twelve thousand schools and hundreds of communities across the United States. It now is popular in 192 countries. According to the first Earth Day 1970 organizer Denis Hayes, "it is the largest holiday in the world. It is celebrated by more than a billion people every year".

## Appendix C: Interpreting Assessment Criteria

Date: Student's name: Student's ID:

Recorder number: File number: Teacher's name:

| Assessing criteria | Rating scale | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Content-related criteria** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Sense consistency with the original | | | | | | | | | | |
| Logical cohesion | | | | | | | | | | |
| Completeness | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Form-related criteria** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Correct terminology/ Word choice | | | | | | | | | | |
| Correct grammar | | | | | | | | | | |
| Appropriate style | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Delivery-related criteria** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Fluency of delivery | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lively intonation | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pleasant voice | | | | | | | | | | |
| Synchronicity | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total:……../100 = ……..…/10** | | | | | | | | | | |

Notes:

## Appendix D: Interview

1. Before taking part in this research, have you ever practiced shadowing by yourself to improve your English in general and interpreting in particular?
2. How often do you practice shadowing in this research?
3. Besides the given lessons in the textbook of interpreting 1, do you practice shadowing on other sources? If yes, clarify your answer.
4. Do you think the procedure for shadowing practice given by the researchers is useful for you? If no, what suggestions would you like to give?
5. Do you think your interpreting performance is getting better by shadowing practices? If yes, which aspect(s) do you improve the most? (fluency, accuracy, language transference, memorizing skill, concentration, reproduction, note-taking, listening comprehension…)
6. Would you like your teachers to apply shadowing practices in interpreting lessons next semester? Give reasons for your answer?

## Appendix E: A Suggested Procedure of Shadowing in Interpreting Lessons

| No. | Steps | Tasks | Focuses | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Listening | Listening to the audio without script | Content and speech style | |
| 2 | Mumbling | Shadowing without the script | Heard sound rather than pronunciation | |
| 3 | Synchronized reading (content understanding) | Shadowing with the given script | Message meaning | Students can shadow with their edited information, as long as the main ideas of the message remain / are retained. |
| 4 | Content interpreting | Interpreting briefly some segments of the messages with a script | The target language of listeners (stress, rhythm, intonation, speed, pause) | |
| 5 | Completing interpreting | Interpreting the whole message | The fluency, accuracy, language transference of the target language | |

# MATCHES AND MISMATCHES BETWEEN EFL TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PREFERENCES FOR CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN ENGLISH SPEAKING CLASSES AT A VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY

Luu Thi Huong*

*Faculty of Foreign Languages, Hanoi Pedagogical University No. 2*
*Xuan Hoa, Phuc Yen, Vinh Phuc, Vietnam*

Received 10 December 2019
Revised 15 January 2020; Accepted 14 February 2020

**Abstract:** This study aimed at examining matches or mismatches between teachers' and students' preferences regarding different types of corrective feedback in EFL (English as a foreign language) speaking classrooms at a Vietnamese university. Observation and two parallel questionnaires adapted from Katayama (2007) and Smith (2010) were used to gather data from five EFL teachers and 138 English-majored students. Multiple findings pertaining to each research question were revealed. Overall, the results indicated that while there were some areas of agreement between teachers and students, important mismatches in their opinions did occur.

*Keywords:* oral corrective feedback, matches, mismatches, EFL students and teachers

## 1. Introduction

In learning and teaching foreign languages context, making errors is an indispensable part of the learning process. Corder (1967) argues that errors truly reveal the learner's underlying knowledge of the language and at a certain stage they reflect the transitional competence of learners. Undoubtedly, finely appropriate corrective feedback assists teachers to hamper their learners' errors from getting fossilized and help them get progress along their interlanguage continuum. The correction of errors, hence, has also been a crucial part of language acquisition.

A number of empirical studies have been carried out to stress the effectiveness of giving feedback to students. Poulos and Mathony (2008) indicated that the role of effective feedback includes not only enhancing learning and teaching but also facilitating the transition between school and university. The feedback that students receive within their coursework is one of the most powerful influences on their learning process and it is central to the development of effective learning (Sadler, 2010). Feedback has been defined as making a judgment about student accomplishment and learning, which when conveyed to the student informs them of how well they have performed (Talib, Naim, & Supie, 2015). Thus, teachers should be sensitive to students' attitudes to language, particularly to error correction although it might be argued that learners' preference may not be what is actually best for acquisition (Truscott, 1996).

However, in reality, for most language teachers, there is a controversy with respect to the best ways to deal with students' errors. There are language teachers who attempt to correct all of their students' errors while

* Tel.: 84-989817356
Email: luuthihuong@hpu2.edu.vn

others only focus on correcting errors that are directly related to the topic being addressed in a particular lesson or errors that inhibit communication (Gumbaridze, 2013). From the researcher's experiences and observations as a teacher of English, it can be seen that teachers seem not to pay attention to what students actually think and want about error correction in the teaching and learning process. Besides, the teacher-centered approach seems to be dominated in which teaching techniques seem to follow the one size fits all patterns (Mpho, 2018). As a result, students' learning progress has been affected, especially in the speaking domain. Thus, the author is motivated to carry out a study on teachers' and students' preferences for oral corrective feedback at a Vietnamese university.

This study was conducted in an attempt to find answers for the following questions:

1. *What oral corrective feedback do teachers actually give on students' speaking in EFL speaking classrooms?*

*2. What types of corrective feedback do students and teachers in EFL speaking classrooms prefer?*

*3. To what extent does the teachers' oral corrective feedback match the students' preferences?*

## 2. Literature review

### *2.1. Oral corrective feedback*

Regarding oral corrective feedback, several propositions from linguistics have been developed.

Mackey, Gass and McDonough (2000) and Nishita (2004) cited by Yoshida (2008) have classified errors for corrective feedback such as morphosyntactic (word order, tense, conjugation, and articles are used incorrectly), phonological errors (mispronounced words), lexical errors (inappropriate use of vocabularies), semantic and pragmatic errors (misunderstanding a learner's utterance). Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) (as cited in Méndez & Cruz, 2012) state that oral corrective feedback "takes the form of responses to learner utterances that contain error(s). The responses can consist of (a) an indication that an error has been committed, (b) provision of the correct target language form, or (c) metalinguistic information about the nature of the error, or any combination of there" (p. 64). This is in agreement with Lyster, Saito and Sato (2013, p.1) as they described oral corrective feedback as the teachers' responses to learners' erroneous utterances.

While a variety of classifications of the oral corrective feedback have been suggested, classification suggested by Lyster and Ranta (1977) who classified it into six kinds, namely repetition, elicitation, clarification request, recast, metalinguistic feedback, and explicit correction can be seen as preeminent. Yao (2000) in Méndez and Cruz (2012) also added another kind of corrective feedback – paralinguistic signal (body language) as teacher uses his/her facial expression (e.g.: rising eyebrows) or body movement (e.g.: move her/his head) to tell that the student has made error and is expected to self-correct.

In this study, Lyster and Ranta's model (1997) and Yao's in Méndez and Cruz (2012) were combined for collecting data on types of corrective feedback that students and teachers would prefer. Moreover, since the previous findings were done in different settings of research, there was a chance that this research revealed other types of error correction besides those seven types.

### *2.2. The studies on teachers' practices and students' preferences for oral corrective feedback*

Extensive research reported by the studies comparing students' and teachers' corrective feedback preferences shows that considerable discrepancies and mismatches between the views of the two groups were found.

Interesting discrepancies between student and teacher preferences were shown when Han and Jung (2007) explored patterns of corrective feedback and repair according to students'

English proficiency level. Yoshida (2008) used audio recordings of the classes and a stimulated recall interview with each participant to explore teachers' choice and learners' preference for corrective feedback types in Japanese in a foreign language classroom. The findings indicated that teachers chose recast because of the time limitation of classes and their awareness of learners' cognitive styles. They also chose corrective feedback types such as elicitation and metalinguistic feedback when they realized that the learners who made erroneous utterances had the ability to work out correct forms on their own. Another study investigated the patterns of corrective feedback and learner repair present in advanced-level adult EFL classrooms and examined both teacher and student preferences regarding that feedback (Lee, 2013). The results revealed that the most frequent type of corrective feedback was recast, which generated 92.09% learner repair. These findings corroborate Saeb's (2017) findings. He explored Iranian EFL teachers' and students' perceptions and preferences for different amounts and types of oral corrective feedback. Two parallel questionnaires were used to gather quantitative and qualitative data from 28 teachers and 68 of their students. The results revealed significant differences between teachers' and students' perceptions about the amounts and types of corrective feedback and also about different types of errors to be corrected.

It can be noted that the research to date has tended to focus on teachers' opinions and preferences. However, few writers have been able to draw on any structured research into the opinions and preferences of students. Another gap is that most studies in the field of oral corrective feedback have been based on classroom observations, and no significant differences between what teachers do in the classroom to handle errors and what they believe they prefer have been clearly highlighted. Given the limited knowledge regarding errors and error correction, there is a likelihood that teachers themselves are unaware of how they deal with students' errors or about the most effective and appropriate techniques to address students' errors. Moreover, there certainly seems to be a gap between what students and teachers believe to constitute effective and useful types of corrective feedback. Such conflict of ideas may cause problems for the process of language learning and teaching. Another important research gap regarding corrective feedback is that the majority of research on feedback on second language classrooms has been conducted in the context of English as a Second Language classrooms (Lyster & Panova, 2002). Unfortunately, few studies have been conducted about how tertiary EFL learners respond to different kinds of teachers' corrective feedback. The situation is similar in Vietnam where this research branch seems to be unattractive to researchers. It has been difficult to identify documented studies on the relationship between teachers' and learners' preferences for corrective feedback which are conducted on Vietnamese university EFL English-majored students.

Such aforementioned gaps have motivated the researcher to bridge with her current paper. She desires to explore and compare Vietnamese students' and teachers' preferences for oral corrective feedback in EFL speaking classroom context in the present study.

## 3. Methodology

### *3.1. Research design*

This research was quantitative in nature, which employed survey design. The observation was used to collect data about teachers' practices and information about the teachers' and students' preferences for feedback was gathered using questionnaires. The result of the survey became a reference to determine what types of feedback the teachers believed to employ in response to students' performances and what types of feedback that the students preferred. The quantitative approach was chosen because clear documentation can be provided regarding the content and application of the survey instruments so that other researchers can assess the validity of the findings. Moreover, study findings can be generalized to the population about which information is required. However, it is true that quantitative study is expensive and time-consuming, and even the preliminary results are usually not available for a long period of time.

*3.2. Research participants*

Five English teachers were invited to participate in this study. They are all Vietnamese with certain years of teaching speaking skills in the same faculty. All of them are teaching speaking skills for first-year students in the second term of the academic year. They are active female teachers and always willing to adopt new changes; therefore, they are willing to be a part of this research. Only 138 students agreed to participate in this study among which 15% of them were male and 85% were female with over 10 years of English learning experience. All of the participants were all selected by using convenience sampling technique. This technique was utilized because it was quite difficult to collect data from all population in a relatively short period of time. So, only those who voluntarily participated in the survey were selected as the sample.

*3.3. Research instruments*

*3.3.1. Class observation*

The study focuses on teachers' oral corrective feedback to students' errors (teacher-student interaction), classroom observation seems to be one of the most effective methods of collecting data. Observation, as the name reveals, is a way of collecting data through observing. The observation data collection method is classified as a participatory study because the researcher has to immerse herself in the setting where her respondents are while taking notes, recording or both. The observation sheet composes of two parts: general information and tally sheet. The general information is adapted from the Ullmann and Geva's (1985) Target Language Observation Scheme. It contains general information about the observer, instructor of the class, date of observation, students' year level, class, number of boys, number of girls, start time, finish time, and lesson topic. The second part was adapted from Nunan's (1989) Classroom Observation Tally Sheet. The tally sheet is like a checklist, provides eight categories of feedback strategies expected in the classroom with clear explanation for each (See Appendix A). After being given the permission to conduct the research in five classes, 10 lectures of five teachers were audio-recorded and transcribed. Each lesson lasted for 50 minutes. In the class, the lessons were structured as usual with maximum interaction between learners and the teacher. Learners did not know the reasons for the visit of the author so they acted normally. While observing the lessons, the author took notes of learners' errors and the feedback provided by the teachers.

*3.3.2. Questionnaires for teachers and students*

A parallel questionnaire combined from Katayama (2007) and Smith (2010) and observation results were administered to students and teachers after the observation part was finished for one week. It consists of questions on students' and teachers' personal information in section A. Section B is preferences toward types of oral error corrective feedback which should be given by the teacher and students. The other questions seek to understand their opinions about the oral corrective feedback, responses to which were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (See Appendix B).

*3.4. Data analysis*

To scrutinize the frequency of corrective feedback types used in the classroom (Research Question 1), the audio-recorded classes in accordance with corrective feedback categories aforementioned in the Literature review part were analyzed.

To examine the students' and teachers' corrective feedback preferences (Research Question 2), all eight of the declarative statements in Section 2 of the students' and teachers' surveys were used. The quantitative data obtained in the form of responses to the questionnaire were analyzed using the SPSS 20.0 software package.

To answer Research question 3, a one-sample t-test was used to identify the matches or mismatches between the students' and the teachers' preferences for corrective feedback. Unfortunately, an independent t-test could not be exploited because of a big difference between the number of students and teachers (138 vs. 5). Hence, the mean value of the teachers' preferences for that corrective feedback type is used as the test value in the one-sample t-test.

## 4. Findings and discussion

### *4.1. Findings*

#### *4.1.1. Oral corrective feedback strategies used by teachers in actual classrooms*

Data from observation showed that the common oral corrective feedback employed by the teachers mainly fell into seven different types of feedback strategies named repetition, explicit feedback, elicitation, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, recast, and paralinguistic signal (body language), among which the use of clarification request and recast was dominant. This is demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency of oral corrective feedback in actual class hours

| **Feedback strategies** | **T1** | **T2** | **T3** | **T4** | **T5** | **Frequency** | **Rate (%)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Repetition | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 16.39% |
| Explicit feedback | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 8.20% |
| Elicitation | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 9.84% |
| Clarification request | 5 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 16 | 26.23% |
| Meta-linguistic feedback | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 13.11% |
| Recast | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 15 | 24.59% |
| Paralinguistic signal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1.64% |
| Total | 18 | 9 | 13 | 7 | 14 | 61 | 100% |

It can be seen from Table 1 that the frequency of oral corrective feedback given by five teachers during 10 lessons varied strongly. Interestingly, there were several times when teachers did not even give any feedback on students' oral errors, with 19 times of no error correction feedback of total 80 times students' error occurred during 10 lessons observed. The seven types of corrective feedback were used by the teachers 61 times. Among the five teachers, T1 was the one who corrected the students most frequently with 18 times in total. T3 and T5 also utilized feedback many times, 13 and 14 respectively, whereas T4 hardly used corrective feedback in her class, just only 7 times in the same length of time. Moreover, the practices of giving error correction types applied by five teachers were strikingly similar. Although the frequency of error correction feedback used varied, clarification and recast seemed to be the most preferred types of all five at a rate of 26.23% and 24.59% correspondingly. Meanwhile, explicit feedback, metalinguistic feedback, and paralinguistic signal were hardly employed in the class hours. The explicit feedback was used 8.2% when correcting students' mistakes, while metalinguistic feedback was utilized at the rate of 13.11%. Especially, paralinguistic signal was hardly applied when errors occurred, as four out of five teachers (T1, T2, T3, T4) never used paralinguistic signal to give feedback on students' oral performances.

Overall, these observations demonstrate the prevalence of clarification request and recast in these classrooms.

*4.1.2. Students' and teachers' preferred types of corrective feedback in EFL speaking classrooms*

When it comes to teachers' preferences concerning feedback, Table 2 presents the most important results of this part of the study.

Table 2. Teacher's preferences for types of oral corrective feedback

| Feedback strategies | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| No corrective feedback | 1.6 | .894 |
| Repetition | 3.2 | .837 |
| Explicit feedback | 4.4 | .548 |
| Elicitation | 2.6 | 1.517 |
| Clarification request | 4.0 | 1.225 |
| Meta-linguistic feedback | 5.0 | .000 |
| Recast | 4.6 | .548 |
| Paralinguistic signal | 1.4 | .548 |

These statistical results reaffirm the frequency measurement from the observations except one type – explicit feedback. All of them (M=5.0) most preferred metalinguistic feedback but only eight times of it were done in actual class hours. Repetition was conducted ten times by teachers and the result from the questionnaire confirmed it as the preferred type (M=3.2). Explicit feedback, recast, clarification request were also their choices (M=4.4, 4.6, and 4.0 respectively.) However, it is interesting to note that though the teachers preferred explicit feedback type (M=4.0), they did not often use it in their classrooms. There was a clearly big gap between what was perceived and what was conducted in their real teaching. Paralinguistic signal was not the preferred way according to the observations and questionnaire. This was in line with their practice as they just did paralinguistic signal once.

The combination of these results from questionnaire responses and observations revealed a big difference between teacher practice and their answers on the questionnaire in terms of corrective feedback type. In their actual class hours, they did not use explicit correction frequently; however, as the questionnaire results revealed, most of them chose it as their favourite one. Hence, it can be said that there is a gap between what teachers actually do and what they think they prefer. They also indicated recast and clarification request as their least preferred type, in contrast, they did often use them in class.

Regarding students' preferences concerning feedback, Table 3 reveals the results of this part of the study.

Table 3. Students' preferences for types of oral corrective feedback (SPSS result)

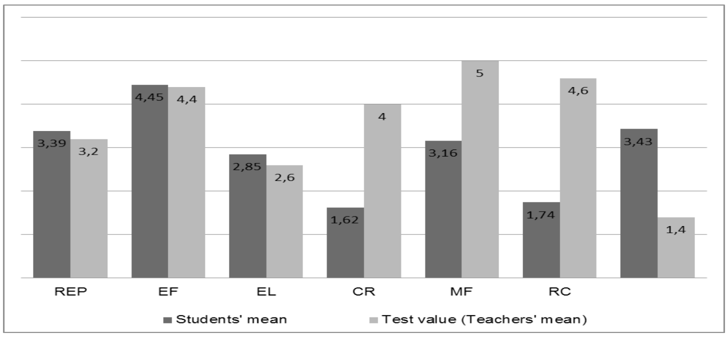
| | | NCF | REP | EF | EL | CR | MF | RC | PS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 128 | 137 | 134 | 137 | 135 | 136 | 137 | 136 |
| | Missing | 10 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Mean | | 3.69 | 3.39 | 4.45 | 2.85 | 1.62 | 3.16 | 1.74 | 3.43 |
| Std. Deviation | | .945 | 1.177 | .721 | 1.292 | .976 | 1.249 | .825 | 1.093 |

Table 3 reveals the details of each type of oral corrective feedback. Based on students' responses on questionnaires, they most preferred to have explicit correction followed by no corrective feedback and paralinguistic signal. An unexpected finding is that most of the students had a neutral view on no corrective feedback. This might suggest a tendency to not receiving feedback from teachers. The other categories are repetition, meta-linguistic feedback and recast. Surprisingly, they did not prefer to have clarification request and elicitation. It was consistent with Amador's (2008) and Rinda et al.'s (2016) findings that revealed explicit correction as the error correction techniques students preferred to have.

In addition to this statistical analysis, the frequency measurement reaffirmed the results of the students' most and least preferred types of corrective feedback. 73/138 students chose explicit correction as their most preferred type of corrective feedback, and 82/138 students selected clarification request as their least preferred type of corrective feedback.

*4.1.3. Matches and mismatches between teachers' and students' preferences for oral corrective feedback*

Assessing the matches and mismatches between teachers' and students' oral corrective feedback strategies preferences, a one-sample test was used. As Graph 1 shows, there is a significant difference between the two groups.




Graph 1. Students' and teachers' preferences for oral corrective feedback

The results, as shown in Graph 1, indicate that the difference between the students' and teachers' responses reached the level of significance in all corrective feedback types except explicit feedback, repetition, and elicitation. The most striking result emerging from the data is that the greatest difference between the students' and teachers' responses was seen in recast. While students demonstrated a negative opinion about this feedback type, teachers were positively disposed toward it. For paralinguistic signal, students' mean response was positive (M=3.43), whereas that of teachers indicated a negative position (M=1.4). Also, about clarification request, students demonstrated an overall negative opinion (M= 1.62) while their teachers' view was again positive (M=4.0). Students had a neutral view about repetition while teachers resisted a positive side (M=3.39 and M=4.4 accordingly).

Despite several disagreements found, some agreements did occur. In terms of explicit feedback, there was no statistically significant difference between the students' and teachers' responses (explicit feedback, df = 133, p = 0.445 > 0.05). Similarly, with respect to repetition, no significant differences were found between teachers and students (repetition, df = 136, p = 0.65 > 0.05). The teachers and students had an overall neutral position toward this type of error correction. Regarding elicitation, both teachers and students did not agree that it is an effective way to correct students' errors.

In summary, the statistical analyses and the frequency measurement for research question 3 showed discrepancies between students' and teachers' preferred corrective feedback types in EFL classrooms. While the students most preferred to get explicit through teacher-student interactions, the teachers most preferred to give the students the clarification request as the teachers in this study most frequently used clarification request (26.22%). Whereas teachers often used recast and clarification request, they were the students' least preferred type of corrective feedback.

*4.2. Discussion*

This study produced results that corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field. Research question 1 asked about the types of oral corrective feedback which teachers actually utilize in their classrooms. It was found, based on the results, that most teachers valued giving clarification request and recast for all of their students' errors. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Nhac (2011) who found recast the most commonly used feedback type. This also accords with earlier observations in Dinh's (2013) study, which showed that the participants tended to use recast, repetition and metalinguistic feedback in their actual classrooms. However, these results differ from Nguyen's (2014) study as she claimed a dominant use of explicit feedback. It is noteworthy, however, that some students also recognized the explicit correction as the most effective way. They did not consider clarification request and recast the ways. This need of the students for receiving corrective feedback in spite of their teachers' reluctance to provide it was also found in Lee's (2013) and Han and Jung's (2007) studies.

The second research question asked what types of oral corrective feedback students and teachers prefer. This was the second area in which the students' and teachers' preferences conflicted. Results from Section 2 in the questionnaire indicated that students were more in favour of explicit types of corrective feedback and considered recast and clarification request to be least effective. Their most favourite corrective feedback type turned out to be explicit correction. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Lee's (2013) and Ölmezer-Öztürk and Öztürk's (2016) studies as students thought recast and clarification request were ambiguous. However, these results oppose to Ananda et al.'s (2017) study as they stated students consider repetition their most wanted kind of oral error corrective feedback. Teachers, however, chose more implicit types of feedback which require thought and monitoring on the part of the learners themselves. This finding corroborates the ideas of Ahangri and Amirzadeh's (2011), Motlagh's (2015), Méndez and Cruz's (2012) and Amin's (2017) studies who indicated that recast and clarification request were the most frequently used type of corrective feedback by the teachers. However, the findings of the current study do not support the previous research. These results differ from some published studies of Aranguiz and Espinoza (2016) and Shirkhani and Tajeddin (2016) which found out that teachers prefer to use explicit correction as the most frequent strategy. It seems that students' tendency toward teacher-generated explicit types of corrective feedback and teachers' preferences for implicit feedback fostering self-correction is a recurring theme in the corrective feedback literature as it has been arrived at by some previous studies (Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Brown, 2009; Han & Jung, 2007; Lee, 2013).

The third research question investigates the students' and teachers' matches and mismatches towards different types of oral corrective feedback. The teachers and students both had a similar view of elicitation and repetition. The overwhelming majority of the students emphasized the importance of explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback while teachers sided with recast and clarification request. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in which the differences between the students' and teachers' preferences did occur (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Han & Jung, 2007; Lee, 2013; Saeb, 2017).

## 5. Conclusion

The study was carried out in order to find out the teachers' and students' preferences for oral corrective feedback in EFL classroom setting. Several matches between students' and teachers' preferences for oral corrective feedback were found as they both preferred repetition and disregard elicitation. However, the mismatches of students' and teachers' perspectives on different types of oral corrective feedback found in this study seem not to be promising situation for language pedagogy and practice. As Brown (1980) cautioned, they might be indicative of important discrepancies between the students and teachers in how they interpret and understand the nature and process of language learning. Students in this study were found to be seeking large amounts of explicit corrective feedback provided by the teacher though teachers actually did not use it in their classroom. Moreover, teachers most preferred clarification request and recast, which were ranked lowest on students' preferences. An interesting finding is that teachers preferred to use implicit feedback rather than explicit ones. However, the students proposed an opposite view. Another amazing result is that though teachers indicated that they preferred to use explicit feedback on students' errors, their practice seemed to contradict with this as they hardly used this kind of feedback in their actual classes. Apart from the findings discussed above, some other unpredicted findings can be revealed. As the author stated in Literature review, she desired to reveal other types of error correction besides selected types. However, the results from observations fail to identify any other types of corrective feedback used by teachers. In addition, since the teachers are non-native speakers, there are chances for them to commit errors. In previous studies, students often made one error and teachers used to treat one error with one type of corrective feedback. However, in this study, it was found that students made more than one error in an utterance and teachers used more than one type of corrective feedback to treat all students' errors. In fact, teachers sometimes did not pay attention to students' errors. Additionally, most of the time, teachers interrupted students at the time when they made wrong utterances. This might be a distraction of learning process. Students can be embarrassed and lose the trail of thought. Especially, the teachers corrected some students more frequently than others as some students had a higher level of proficiency which to a certain extent prevented correction. In fact, this was beyond the scope of this study.

The study has gone some ways towards enhancing our understanding of oral corrective feedback and different views towards teachers and students' preferred types. The gaps that have been identified therefore assists in our understanding of the role of learners' preferences in enhancing errors in teaching and learning practice. Taken together, these findings suggest a role for error correction in promoting foreign language acquisition. Later researchers who have the same interest in the research field can somehow benefit from the current study with recommendations for future research. It is suggested to carry out continued studies on the influences of explicit corrective feedback in second language classroom settings in order to understand its role and measure its effects better. This research also opens a number of other research possibilities: teachers' attitude towards feedback, learners' uptake, and effectiveness of certain corrective techniques as well as the correlation between other individual differences such as learning styles, motivation, and attitude towards feedback.

## References


Ahangari, S., & Amirzadeh, S. (2011). Exploring of the teachers' use of spoken corrective feedback in teaching Iranian EFL learners at different levels of proficiency. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *29*, 1859-1868. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.435.

Amin, K. (2017). Educational context and ELT teachers' corrective feedback preference: Public and private school teachers in focus. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, *2*(2), https://www.civilica.com/Paper-JR_IJREE-JR_IJREE-2-2_002.html.

Amrhein H.R., & Nassaji H. (2010). Written corrective feedback: What do students and teachers prefer and why? *Canadian Journal of Applied linguistics, 13*, 95-127.

Ananda et al. (2017). Students' preferences toward oral corrective feedback in speaking class at English Department of Lambung Mangkurat University Academic Year 2015/2016. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *7*, 176. doi:10.17507/tpls.0703.03

Aranguiz, M. F., & Espinoza, A. Q. (2016). Oral corrective feedback strategies in EFL: A pilot study in Chilean classrooms. *Elia*, *16*, 103-132. https://doi.org/10.12795/elia.2016.i16.05

Brown, H.D. (1980). *Principles of language and teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Corder, S.P. (1967). The significance of learners' errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, *4*, 161-170.

Dinh, T.H. (2013). *An investigation into teachers' attitudes towards and practices of corrective feedback on students' oral mistakes at Hanoi National University of Education*. Unpublished thesis. Hanoi: Vietnam National University.

Fungula, B.N. (2013). Oral corrective feedback in the Chinese EFL classroom: Methods employed by teachers to give feedback to their students. Retrieved from http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:693017/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Gumbaridze, J. (2013). Error correction in EFL speaking classrooms. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *70*, 1660–1663

Han, J., & Jung, J-K. (2007). Patterns and preferences of corrective feedback and learner repair. Jo*urnal of Applied Linguistics*, *23*(1), 243–260.

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, *77*(1), 81–112.

Hausman, D.M. (2005). Sympathy, commitment, and preference. *Economics & Philosophy*, *21*, 33–50.

Katayama, A. (2007). Japanese EFL students' preferences toward correction of classroom oral errors. *Asian EFL journal*, *9*(4), 284-299. Conference Proceedings.

Lee, E.J. (2013). Corrective feedback preferences and learner repair among advanced ESL students. *System*, *41*(2), 217–230. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.01.022_

Lyster, R., & Panova, I. (2002). Patterns of corrective feedback and uptake in an adult ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36, 573-595.

Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19, 37-66.

Lyster, R.; Saito, K. & Sato, M. (2013). Oral corrective feedback in second language classrooms. *Language Teaching*, *46*(1), 1-40.

Méndez, E.H., & Cruz, M.R. (2012). *Teachers' perceptions about oral corrective feedback and their practice in EFL classrooms*. Retrieved from http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1657-07902012000200005

Motlagh, L. (2015). Irinan EFL teachers' preferences for corrective feedback types, implicit vs explicit. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Science, 192*, 364–370.

Mpho, O. (2018). Teacher centered dominated approaches: Their implications for today's inclusive classrooms. International *Journal of Psychology and Counselling*, *10*(2), 11-21.

Nguyen, T.T. (2014). *Teacher's corrective feedback on the pronunciation of English fricatives and affricates by non-English major freshmen at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam*. Unpublished thesis. Hanoi: Vietnam National University.

Nhac, T.H. (2011). *Corrective feedback and uptake patterns in English university speaking lesson*. Unpublished thesis. Hanoi: Vietnam National University.

Ölmezer-Öztürk, E., & Öztürk, G. (2016). Types and timing of oral corrective feedback in EFL classrooms: Voices from students. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language), 10*(2), 113–133.

Poulos, A & Mahony, M.J. (2008). Effectiveness of feedback: the students' perspective. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 33*(2), 143–154. New York: Routledge.

Sadler, D. R. (2010). Beyond feedback: developing student capability in complex appraisal. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 35*(5), 535–550. http://doi.org/10.1080/02602930903541015

Saeb, F. (2017). Students' and teachers' perceptions and preferences for oral corrective feedback: Do they match?. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, *6*(4), 32–44. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.6n.4p.32

Shirkhani, S., & Tajeddin, Z. (2016). L2 Teachers' Explicit and Implicit Corrective Feedback and Its Linguistic Focus. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *19*, 181-206.

Talib, R., Naim, H., & Supie, H. (2015). UTM postgraduate students' perspective on feedback practices in higher education. *International Education Studies*, *8*(13), 17-21.

Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing class. *Language Learning*, *46*, 327–369.

Yoshida, R. (2008). Teachers' choice and learners' preference of corrective feedback types. *Language Awareness*, *17*(1), 78–93. http://dx.doi.org/10.2167/la429.

# TƯƠNG ĐỒNG VÀ KHÁC BIỆT VỀ QUAN ĐIỂM CỦA GIÁO VIÊN VÀ SINH VIÊN TIẾNG ANH ĐỐI VỚI PHẢN HỒI SỬA LỖI TRONG KỸ NĂNG NÓI Ở MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC VIỆT NAM

Lưu Thị Hương

*Khoa Ngoại ngữ, Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội 2*
*Xuân Hòa, Phúc Yên, Vĩnh Phúc, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu những sự tương đồng và khác biệt giữa những sở thích đối với phản hồi sửa lỗi của giáo viên và sinh viên tiếng Anh như là một ngoại ngữ trong lớp học nói tiếng Anh ở một trường đại học Việt Nam. Công cụ sử dụng để thu thập dữ liệu cho nghiên cứu là quan sát lớp học và bảng câu hỏi khảo sát cho giáo viên và sinh viên. Đối tượng nghiên cứu là 05 giáo viên và 138 sinh viên ngành tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu chỉ ra nhiều kết quả cho từng câu hỏi nghiên cứu. Kết quả cho thấy dù có sự tương đồng giữa những sở thích của sinh viên và giáo viên, một số sự khác biệt cũng được phát hiện trong nghiên cứu này.

*Từ khoá:* phản lỗi chữa lỗi bằng lời nói, sự tương đồng, sự khác biệt, giáo viên và sinh viên ngành tiếng Anh

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET ON TEACHERS' ORAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

| General information | |
|---|---|
| Observer: | Instructor: |
| Date of observation: | |
| Year level: | Class: |
| Number of boys: | Number of girls: |
| Start time: | Finish time: |
| Lesson topic: | |

**CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TALLY SHEET**

| | Feedback strategies | Tallies | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Teacher says nothing. | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Repetition: The teacher emphasizes the student's grammatical error by changing his/her tone of voice. | | |
| 3 | Explicit feedback: The teacher gives the correct form to the student with a grammatical explanation. | | |
| 4 | Elicitation: The teacher asks the student to correct and complete the sentence. | | |
| 5 | Clarification request: The teacher does not give corrective feedback on the student's errors. | | |
| 6 | Metalinguistic feedback: The teacher gives a hint or a clue without specifically pointing out the mistake. | | |
| 7 | Recast: The teacher repeats the student's utterance in the correct form without pointing out the student's error. | | |
| 8 | Paralinguistic signal: Teacher rises eyebrows to tell that the student has made error and is expected to self-correct. | | |

Details

**Coding scheme:**

T: Teacher

S: Student

| No. | **Example of students' errors** | **Teacher's response** | **Types of oral corrective feedback** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |

## APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PREFERENCES TOWARDS TYPES OF ORAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN SPEAKING CLASSROOMS

### B.1. STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the preferences of teachers and students at Faculty of Foreign Languages at Hanoi Pedagogical University 2 about error correction. The information gathered will be used for research on corrective feedback in language classrooms with a view to finding out the matches and mismatches to adjust it during learning and teaching process. There are no risks or benefits to you from participating in this research.

Thank you very much.

**A: DEMOGRAPHY**

1. Gender: Tick ✓ your gender.

| | |
|---|---|
| | Male |
| | Female |

2. Age: …………………………………………………………………………...

3. Email: ……………………………………………………………………….

4. Hometown: …………………………………………………………………….

5. How long have you been learning English? Put a tick ✓.

Less than 10 years

More than 10 years

6. Major: Tick ✓ your major.

| | |
|---|---|
| | English Linguistics |
| | English Language Teaching |

7. Year: Tick ✓ your course.

| | |
|---|---|
| | K41 |
| | K42 |
| | K43 |
| | K44 |

**Please tick ✓ the information that applies to you. Make sure to mark only one.**

**B: How do you rate each type of spoken error correction below?**

1 = Very ineffective    4 = Effective
2 = Ineffective    5 = Very Effective
3 = Neutral

Teacher: What is he talking about?

Student: He talks about his garden.

| No. | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Teacher says nothing. | | | | | |
| 9 | He talks? (Repetition: The teacher emphasizes the student's grammatical error by changing his/her tone of voice.) | | | | | |
| 10 | Talks is the simple present tense. In this case you need to use the continuous present tense. (Explicit feedback: The teacher gives the correct form to the student with a grammatical explanation.) | | | | | |
| 11 | At the moment, he … (Elicitation: The teacher asks the student to correct and complete the sentence.) | | | | | |
| 12 | Excuse me? (Clarification request: The teacher does not give corrective feedback on the student's errors.) | | | | | |
| 13 | When we are speaking about something that happens right now which tense do we use? (Metalinguistic feedback: The teacher gives a hint or a clue without specifically pointing out the mistake.) | | | | | |
| 14 | He is talking about his garden. (Recast: The teacher repeats the student's utterance in the correct form without pointing out the student's error.) | | | | | |
| 15 | Teacher rises eyebrows to tell that the student has made error and is expected to self-correct. (Paralinguistic signal) | | | | | |

**B.2. TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the preferences of teachers and students at Faculty of Foreign Languages at Hanoi Pedagogical University 2 about error correction. The information gathered will be used for research on corrective feedback in language classrooms with a view to finding out the matches and mismatches to adjust it during learning and teaching process. There are no risks or benefits to you from participating in this research.

Thank you very much.

**A: DEMOGRAPHY**

1. Gender: Tick ✓ your gender.

| | |
|---|---|
| | Male |
| | Female |

2. Age: …………………………………………………………………………
3. Email: ……………………………………………………………………….
4. Hometown: …………………………………………………………………….
5. How long have you been teaching English? Put a tick ✓.

| | |
|---|---|
| | less than 5 years |
| | 5-10 years |
| | more than 10 years |

6. Tick ✓ to the box that indicates the course you are teaching.

| | |
|---|---|
| | K41 |
| | K42 |
| | K43 |
| | K44 |

**Please tick ✓ the information that applies to you. Make sure to mark only one.**

**B: How do you rate each type of spoken error correction below?**

1 = Very Ineffective 4 = Effective
2 = Ineffective 5 = Very Effective
3 = Neutral

Teacher: What is he talking about?

Student: He talks about his garden.

| **STT** | | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Teacher says nothing. | | | | | |
| 8 | He talks? (Repetition: The teacher emphasizes the student's grammatical error by changing his/her tone of voice.) | | | | | |
| 9 | Talks is the simple present tense. In this case you need to use the continuous present tense. (Explicit feedback: The teacher gives the correct form to the student with a grammatical explanation.) | | | | | |
| 10 | At the moment, he … (Elicitation: The teacher asks the student to correct and complete the sentence.) | | | | | |
| 11 | Excuse me? (Clarification request: The teacher does not give corrective feedback on the student's errors.) | | | | | |
| 12 | When we are speaking about something that happens right now which tense do we use? (Metalinguistic feedback: The teacher gives a hint or a clue without specifically pointing out the mistake.) | | | | | |
| 13 | He is talking about his garden. (Recast: The teacher repeats the student's utterance in the correct form without pointing out the student's error.) | | | | | |
| 14 | Teacher rises eyebrows to tell that the student has made error and is expected to self-correct. (Paralinguistic signal) | | | | | |

# STRATEGIES USED BY UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

Le Van Tuyen*, Huynh Thi An, Tran Kim Hong

*Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH)*

*475A-Dien Bien Phu Street, Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City-Vietnam*

Received 16 December 2019
Revised 28 January 2020; Accepted 14 February 2020

**Abstract:** Communication strategies (CSs) play a significant role in enabling EFL students to achieve a higher level of English proficiency and good ability in oral communication. Helping both EFL teachers and students gain awareness of CSs is essential in the Vietnamese context. This study, therefore, aimed to explore the most commonly used strategies in English oral communication among English-majored students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), Vietnam. Two instruments were employed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, namely (1) the questionnaire and (2) the focus group with the participation of 213 English-majored sophomores, juniors and seniors. The findings of the study revealed that the most commonly-used speaking strategies are 'fluency-oriented', 'message reduction and alteration', and 'negotiation for meaning while speaking', and that the students used achievement strategies more often than reduction ones; and the most commonly-used listening strategies are 'negotiation for meaning while listening', 'non-verbal' and 'scanning'. The findings also revealed that there are no significant differences in the use of CSs among the three academic levels of students. It is expected that the findings of the study would partly contribute to the enhancement of communicative competence (CoC) and the use of CSs among students at HUTECH in particular and at the Vietnamese tertiary level in general.

*Keywords:* communicative competence, communication strategies, English-majored students, academic levels, Vietnamese context

## 1. Introduction

The process of integration into the region and the world requires Vietnam to train high quality manpower. It is the duty of universities to provide most of the skilled manpower resources to society. Regional and global competition and the era of industry 4.0 entail students' integration of their language skills and their specialized knowledge to compete on the demanding job market and keep up with the world. For students, it is not easy to accomplish this task. After many years of learning English both at secondary school and at university, a majority of Vietnamese students, after graduation, can neither speak English fluently nor confidently (Tran, 2013). Their real level of English cannot be significantly improved and is still very far from the requirements of their future jobs (Le, 2013). "Who or what is to blame for this deficiency, teachers, non-native speaking context, or students themselves?" Or "Should other reasons be discovered?"

Second or foreign language acquisition and the development of CoC require language students to participate in real-life interaction, which demands ample efforts and abilities to deal with unexpected situations and problems when interacting with both native and non-native English speakers (Peloghities, 2006).

* Corresponding Author: Tel.: 84-982362727
Email: lv.tuyen@hutech.edu.vn

Thus, CSs play an integral part for students to cope with speaking and listening problems in the process of language acquisition. Nevertheless, most of the EFL students in Vietnam are not aware of the importance of using CSs; and their use of strategies in English oral communication is still limited (Le, 2018). Therefore, raising students' awareness of the use of CSs is a must.

According to Stern (1983), to have in-depth understanding of the use of CSs, studies should be conducted in different contexts, under different language learning conditions, and at different levels of language proficiency. So far CSs seem to have been a major area of investigation and exploration in the field of second or foreign language acquisition. That is because these strategies do not only help overcome problems but they can also significantly contribute to improving and building up strategic competence (SC) for English users (Ounis, 2016); especially, different learning contexts may have different impact on students' use of CSs and their communicative performance (Kitajima, 1997). Nonetheless, a review of the relevant literature revealed that studies with respect to the use of CSs by Vietnamese tertiary students are quite few. To fill this gap, this study aims to investigate the use of strategies in oral communication by English-majored students at tertiary level of Vietnam. More specifically, it attempts (1) to explore the common strategies used to deal with speaking and listening skills among English-majored students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH); and (2) to examine whether there are significant differences in the use of CSs among three academic levels, namely sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

Based on the objectives, the current study attempted to answer the two following questions:

1. What are the most common strategies used in oral communication by English-majored students at HUTECH?

2. What are the differences in the use of strategies in oral communication among three academic levels of English-majored students at HUTECH?

## 2. Literature review

### *2.1. Strategic competence*

Strategic competence is one of the components of CoC which was proposed explicitly by Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990) or implicitly by Hymes (1967), CEFR (2001) and Littlewood (2011). Accordingly, all the components of CoC mention both knowledge of the contents and ability to use it. For example, sociolinguistic competence refers to knowledge and ability to use the language appropriately in different social contexts. SC refers to the ability to use verbal and non-verbal strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to insufficient grammatical and sociolinguistic competence, or to enhance the effectiveness of communication (Canale & Swain, 1980). It is an important part of all communicative language use. SC is regarded as a capacity that puts language competence into real communication contexts. It may include strategies which are not linguistic (Bachman, 1990). It consists of such strategies as paraphrasing grammatical forms, using repetition, structures, themes, reluctance, avoiding words, guessing, changing register and style, modifying messages, and using gestures and facial expressions, fillers and comprehension checks, etc. (Canale & Swain, 1980).

It is undoubted that SC not only emphasizes the use of CSs which can help to overcome deficiency of language knowledge in a particular area but the use of all types of CSs in different communication contexts (CEFR, 2001). SC is considered to be important for EFL language students at all levels, especially for students of low English proficiency. It may be used as solutions for them to deal with problems or challenges in communication.

*2.2. Communication strategies*

*2.2.1. Defining communication strategies*

When the concept "communicative competence" was introduced, components related to it were also developed by scholars and researchers. One of its components is SC which mentions CSs. CSs are seen as tools for negotiating the meaning between two interlocutors based on communication desire and as facilitators in the process of communicating orally in L2 (Tarone, 1981). A variety of definitions of CSs were also proposed. From interactional perspective, according to Tarone (1980), Canale (1983) and Nakatani (2006), CSs refer to the agreement with a meaning through mutual attempts of two interlocutors in communication situations. From psycholinguistic perspective, Corder (1983) defined a CS as a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express the meaning when he or she is faced with some difficulty or problems. Similarly, according to Færch and Kasper (1984), CSs are related to individual language users' experience of communicative problems and solutions they pursue, and to an individual's attempt to find a way to fill the gap between their communication effort and immediate available linguistic resources (Maleki, 2007). According to Ellis (1994), CSs refer to the approach that is used by language students to deal with the deficiency of their interlingual resources.

Based on the above definitions and the two perspectives: the interactional view reflecting meaning-negotiating activities and psycholinguistic one reflecting problem-solving ones, it can be inferred that CSs are both verbal or non-verbal means or tools employed by two or more interlocutors to negotiate meaning or overcome difficulties which they experience in terms of both speaking and listening skills so that they can agree on a communicative purpose.

*2.2.2. Taxonomies of communication strategies*

As mentioned above, scholars and researchers have conducted studies on CSs from two major perspectives: the interactional view and psycholinguistic view. Some scholars support the former (e.g., Tarone, 1980); meanwhile, others support the latter (e.g., Faerch & Kasper, 1983). That is why taxonomies of CSs also vary significantly (Rababah, 2002). Researchers have confirmed several major taxonomies of CSs as follows: (a) Tarone's taxonomy (1983) consists of five main categories: (1) Paraphrase including approximation, word coinage and circumlocution; (2) Transfer including literal translation and language switch; (3) Appeal for assistance which means that the learner asks for the correct term or structure; (4) Mime refers to the learner's use of non-verbal strategies to replace the meaning structure; and (5) Avoidance consisting of two subcategories: topic avoidance and message abandonment; (b) Bialystok's Taxonomy (1983) contains three main categories: (1) L1-based strategies, (2) L2-based strategies and (3) paralinguistic strategies; (c) Faerch and Kasper (1983) proposed two categories of strategies in general for solving a communication problem: (1) avoidance strategies and (2) achievement strategies. Avoidance strategies include formal reduction strategies and functional reduction strategies. Achievement strategies comprise compensatory strategies and retrieval strategies; (d) Corder's (1983) taxonomy includes two categories: (1) message adjustment strategies and (2) resource expansion strategies; (e) Dornyei and Scott's taxonomy (1995) seems to be a summary of all the taxonomies available in CS research (Rababah, 2002). Their taxonomy includes three main categories: (1) direct strategies including resource deficit-related strategies, own-performance problem-related strategies, and other-performance-related strategies; (2) interactional strategies including resource deficit-related strategies, own-performance problem-related strategies, and other-performance-related strategies; and (3) Indirect strategies including processing time pressure-related strategies, own-performance problem-related strategies, and other-performance-related strategies; (f) Rababah's taxonomy (2002) includes (1) L1-based strategies including literal translation and language switch; (2) L2-based strategies including avoidance strategies, word-coinage, circumlocution, self-correction, approximation, mumbling, L2 appeal for help, self-repetition, use of similar-sounding words, use of all-purpose words, and ignorance acknowledgement.

It can be concluded that all CSs seem to share three main features as stated by Bialystok (1990): (a) Problematicity – this refers to strategies adopted by speakers when perceived problems may interrupt communication; (b) Consciousness – this refers to speakers' awareness of employing the strategy for a particular purpose which may lead to an intended effect; and (c) Intentionality – this refers to speakers' control over those strategies so that particular ones may be selected from a range of options and deliberately applied to achieve certain effects. Moreover, CSs have been developed in different stages with different types. They may be positive or compensatory strategies and negative or reduction strategies (Willems, 1987). They may be L1- or L2-based, implicit or explicit, verbal or non-verbal, and linguistic or non-linguistic strategies which are employed to support speakers in dealing with problems in oral communication which contains both speaking and listening skills. Nonetheless, it seems that no researchers identified which strategies are for coping with speaking problems and which ones are for coping with listening problems except for Nakatani's (2006) strategies which were investigated and developed from interactional perspective.

## 3. Research methodology

### *3.1. Participants*

This study was conducted at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH) in Vietnam. The participants of the study consisted of three cohorts of English-majored students who were in their second, third and fourth academic years. The total number of participants was 213 students including cohort 1: 75 sophomores (second-year students), cohort 2: 69 juniors (third-year students) and cohort 3: 69 seniors (fourth-year students); 108 of them are female (50.7%); and 105 of them are male (49.3%). Their ages range from 19-20 (34.7%), 21-23 (62.0%), and 24-over (3.3%). Because they major in English, their English proficiency may range from intermediate to advanced levels. They study English in class 4 hours a day in average with both non-native and native English speaking teachers. Especially, they have various opportunities to communicate with foreigners outside the classroom.

### *3.2. Instruments*

The current study collected both quantitative and qualitative data, so two instruments were employed: (a) the close-ended questionnaire was used for collecting quantitative data. The questionnaire could help obtain information from a large number of students' knowledge, perceptions and beliefs with respect to the use of CSs (Burns, 1999; Bulmer, 2004). The questionnaire was adopted from Nakatani (2006). It consisted of three parts. The first part included 3 items used to explore demographic information of the students. The second part included 8 categories with 32 items used to explore the students' perceptions of the use of OCSs in speaking and the last part consisted of 7 categories with 26 items used to explore the students' perceptions of the use of OCSs in listening (Refer to Appendix A). The questionnaire used five-point Likert scale ranging from never, rarely, sometimes, often to always; and (b) to obtain triangulation of data for the study, the focus group was used for collecting qualitative data. The focus group with 16 questions (Refer to Appendix B) was used after the survey questionnaire to help interpret and obtain more insights (Krueger & Casey, 2000) from the students' perceptions of strategy use and explore their personal experiences in oral communication.

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested through Cronbach's Alpha with the coefficient of .840 for 32 speaking strategies and .823 for 26 listening ones, which proved a highly acceptable internal consistency. For convenience reasons, the questionnaire items were translated into Vietnamese and the interview questions were designed in Vietnamese and later translated into English.

*3.3. Nakatani's (2006) oral communication strategy inventory (OCSI)*

One of the latest inventories which were developed by researchers for investigating CSs is Nakatani's (2006). This inventory has been highly estimated and widely used by many researchers because of its details, reliability and validity. The OCSI is divided into 2 parts. The first part consists of 8 categories with 32 strategies (variables) for coping with speaking problems, and the second part consists of 7 categories with 26 strategies (variables) for coping with listening problems (pp.163-164). Strategies for coping with speaking problems include (a) social affective strategies, (b) fluency orientation, (c) meaning negotiation, (d) accuracy orientation, (e) message reduction and alteration, (f) non-verbal strategies, (g) message abandonment, and (h) attempt-to-think-in-English. Strategies for coping with listening problems include (a) meaning negotiation (b) fluency maintenance, (c) scanning, (d) getting-the-gist strategies, (e) non-verbal strategies, (f) less-active-listener strategies, and (g) word-oriented strategies (Refer to Table 1).

Table 1. Nakatani's (2006) oral communication strategy inventory

| No | Categories of speaking strategies | Categories of listening strategies |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Social affective | Negotiation for meaning |
| 2 | Fluency-oriented | Fluency-maintaining |
| 3 | Negotiation for meaning | Scanning |
| 4 | Accuracy-oriented | Getting-the-gist |
| 5 | Message reduction and alteration | Non-verbal |
| 6 | Non- verbal | Less-active-listener |
| 7 | Message abandonment | Word-oriented |
| 8 | Attempt-to-think-in-English | |

Source: Nakatani (2006, p.161)

Literature shows that previous studies which employed Nakatani's (2006) OCSI were conducted in different EFL contexts like in Taiwan (Chen, 2009), in Iran (Mirzaei & Heidari, 2012; Rastegar & Goha, 2016), in Turkey (Sevki & Oya, 2013), in Malaysia (Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014), in Tunisia (Ounis, 2016), and in Thailand (Chairat, 2017). The findings of these previous studies confirmed that Nakatani's OCSI is a reliable tool. This inventory has a clear and detailed factor structure (Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014). As calculated by Nakatani's study, the Alpha coefficient for 32 speaking strategies was .86 (p.154) and for 26 listening ones was .85 (p.156), which indicates a highly acceptable internal consistency. The OCSI was developed for the Japanese students who learn EFL like Vietnamese ones. The two contexts may be considered to be similar because both Japan and Vietnam are in the Expanding Circle. Nonetheless, one particular concern is that the constructs of the questionnaire developed by Nakatani (2006) need to be further clarified and statistically validated to convince the end-users of their reliability and validity (Mei & Nathalang, 2010). More studies need to be conducted using this inventory so that more insightful findings from different EFL contexts could enrich our understanding of the use of English OCSs and contribute more to EFL teaching and learning; and strategies should be investigated in accordance with the culture they are used in (Yaman & Özcan, 2015). Vietnam has witnessed its tremendous growth in the number of students who learn EFL; and certainly an investigation into students' strategy use in oral communication is of vital importance and necessity. From the interactional perspective, the current study employed Nakatani's OCSI as the tool for investigating the use of strategies in oral communication of Vietnamese tertiary students.

*3.4. Data collection and analysis procedures*

Regarding data collection procedure, firstly, to collect quantitative data from the participants, one of the researchers came to each class to introduce the purpose and significance of the study. The instruction of how to complete the questionnaire was clarified and explained carefully to them. Questionnaire copies were administered to 225 English-majored students. They were randomly selected from 15 classes with the ratio of 15 students per class. The students were asked to complete the questionnaire and return them within three days. After three days, 220 students returned the questionnaire copies, accounting for 97.7%. However, 7 copies were not completed as required; therefore, the final number of questionnaire copies was 213. Later, 24 (8 from each group) among 213 students were invited to participate in the focus group. Three focus groups for three academic levels were conducted. Each interview lasted about 60 minutes. During the interviews, an interview sheet was used for one group. Two researchers took part in the interviews. One asked questions, guided, facilitated and gave suggestions; and the other took notes of responses.

Regarding data analysis procedure, to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire, SPSS 22.0 was employed so that descriptive statistics including mean (M), and standard deviation (St. D) of each item and category were processed. Based on calculated interval coefficient for four intervals in five points (5-1=4), intervals with the range of 0.80 (4/5) were arranged. The following criteria in the Likert type scale were used to interpret the data: never (1.00 - 1.80); rarely (1.81 - 2.60); sometimes (2.61 - 3.40); often (3.41 - 4.20); always (4.21 - 5.00). In addition, one-way ANOVA tests were carried out to find out if differences in the use of strategies existed among the three academic levels; whereas content analysis was employed to deal with qualitative data; and the students were coded as SO-1 to SO-8 for sophomores, JU-1 to JU-8 for juniors, and SE-1 to SE-8 for seniors.

## 4. Results and discussion

*4.1. Strategies used in oral communication*

Research question 1 attempted to explore the most common strategies used by English majored students in dealing with oral communication. The results of research question 1 presented and interpreted below were based on categories of strategies used in speaking and listening.

*4.1.1. Strategies used in speaking*

Both quantitative and qualitative data collected revealed that the first three categories of strategies used with the highest frequency were 'fluency-oriented', 'message reduction and alteration' and 'negotiation of meaning'.

The data displayed in Table 2 reveal that the fluency-oriented strategies are the top ranking strategies with M= 3.72 and St. D = .641, which means that the students often paid attention to these strategies when they communicate with someone. Particularly, they paid most attention to rhythm, intonation and pronunciation (M=4.01). The data collected from the three focus groups also revealed that among 24 students participating in the interviews, 20 of them (83%) expressed that when communicating with others they often paid attention to pronunciation. More interestingly, all the 8 juniors said that they were often conscious of the importance of pronunciation. For example, SO-5 said, "I pay attention to intonation and pronunciation which is very important for us to understand the message. If we pronounce words wrongly, the listener can't understand."

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and rank of fluency-oriented strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Fluency-oriented strategies** | 1 | 3.72 | .641 |
| **7** | I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation. | | 3.90 | 1.050 |
| **8** | I pay attention to my pronunciation. | | 4.01 | .992 |
| **9** | I pay attention to the conversational flow. | | 3.64 | .918 |
| **10** | I change my way of saying things according to the context. | | 3.53 | 1.025 |
| **11** | I take my time to express what I want to say. | | 3.32 | .954 |
| **12** | I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard. | | 3.89 | 1.041 |

The findings of the study revealed that most of the students might recognize the importance of correct pronunciation of L2 words in communication as stated by Derwing and Munro (2015) that the inability to produce intelligible pronunciation of words and utterances can lead to both misunderstanding and frustration on the part of listeners. That is also the reason why they tried to produce accurate pronunciation of the target language or spoke clearly and loudly to make themselves heard. In addition, they might want the conversation to go smoothly and the listener to understand them clearly. Undoubtedly, it is essential for foreign language students to adopt fluency-oriented strategies in conversations (Dornyei & Scott, 1995). This finding is consistent with that of Zulkurnain and Kaur (2014) showing that the category of fluency-oriented strategies was among the three most commonly-used categories among EFL tertiary students.

Regarding 'message reduction and alteration' and 'negotiation for meaning' strategies, the data displayed in Tables 3 & 4 show that the former rank second and the later rank third with M= 3.65 and 3.60, and St. D = .727 and .703 respectively; and most strategies of the two categories were often used by the students with mean scores from 3.43 to 4.10, except item 24 with M=3.38. Remarkably, it can be seen that the strategy "I use words which are familiar to me." (Item 23) obtained the highest mean score (M=4.10). The finding also revealed that most of the students often paid attention to the listener's reaction to their speech (item 15) with M=3.94. The findings of the questionnaire are consistent with the data collected from the three interviews revealing that among 24 students participating in the interviews, 22 out of 24 (92%) respondents expressed that they often used simple expressions or words which were familiar to them while speaking. However, two of them expressed that it depended on situations. For example, "I try to use as many simple words as possible because I don't want other speakers to ask me to repeat my ideas. I often use familiar words but sometimes I use difficult words to make my speech more interesting (SO-1); or "It depends on contexts. I use simple, common phrases or words for informal speaking situations. I use new, academic words for in-class presentation and discussion to make my arguments more persuasive and gain higher scores (JU-3)."

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and rank of 'message reduction and alteration' strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **'Message reduction and alteration' strategies** | 2 | 3.65 | .727 |
| **22** | I reduce the message and use simple expressions. | | 3.48 | 1.044 |
| **23** | I use words which are familiar to me. | | 4.10 | .989 |
| **24** | I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent. | | 3.38 | 1.046 |

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and rank of 'negotiation for meaning while speaking' strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **'Negotiation for meaning while speaking' strategies** | 3 | 3.60 | .703 |
| **13** | I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say. | | 3.43 | 1.060 |
| **14** | I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands. | | 3.47 | 1.002 |
| **15** | While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech. | | 3.94 | .937 |
| **16** | I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I'm saying. | | 3.56 | 1.124 |

The findings of the study are consistent with those of Ounis's (2016) that revealed that the students might consider those strategies the most practical and effective ones that could be used to deal with speaking problems. More specifically, most of the students tried to use simple expressions or familiar words in communication. They wanted the listener to understand what they said. The use of the 'negotiation of meaning' strategies is the attempt of students to overcome comprehension difficulties so that incomprehensible or partly comprehensible input becomes comprehensible (Foster & Ohta, 2005). They needed to understand and be understood with clarity; obviously, they might recognize that these strategies have a positive effect on L2 learning (Nakatani, 2010); and to maintain their interaction and avoid a communication breakdown, they might often know how to conduct modified interaction and check listeners' understanding of their intentions (Nakatani, 2006). It can be concluded that the students often encounter problems due to their lack of linguistic resources; therefore, they usually use their existing knowledge consciously with the intention of conveying a comprehensible message and achieving their communicative goal (Faerch & Kasper, 1983).

The next 3 categories of strategies which obtained medium frequency were 'non-verbal', 'social affective' and 'attempt to think in English' strategies. In terms of the use of 'non-verbal' category, this category of strategies ranked 4$^{th}$ as shown in Table 5 with M= 3.57 and St. D = .887. It means that the students often made eye contact and used body language in oral communication with M= 3.57 and 3.58 respectively. More interestingly, according to the data collected from the focus group interviews, 24 respondents (100%) said that they used body language in communication. For instance, SE-1 said, "When talking to someone, I often make eye contact with him or her to show that I'm interested in the talk. If I don't know how to express my ideas, or if I realize that the listener doesn't understand me, I often use gestures and facial expressions."

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and rank of non-verbal strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Non-verbal strategies while speaking** | 4 | 3.57 | .887 |
| **25** | I try to make eye contact when I am talking. | | 3.57 | 1.145 |
| **26** | I use gestures and facial expressions if I can't express myself. | | 3.58 | 1.041 |

Ranking 5$^{th}$ is the category of 'social affective' strategies with M= 3.50 and St. D = .659. As it can be seen in Table 6, the students often tried to encourage themselves and give good impression to the listener with M=3.85 and 3.77. Although they felt anxious when speaking to someone, they often tried to relax to maintain the conversation. However, not many students reported that they enjoyed conversations and took risks in speaking English (item 2 & 5) with M= 3.07 & 3.33 respectively. Regarding qualitative data, 24 students (100%) expressed that they faced difficulties in speaking and listening; and they always tried to overcome those difficulties. For example, SO-6 reported, "I feel shy, lack confidence and lack understanding of other speakers' messages. However, I still try to relax although it is not easy."

Table 6. Descriptive statistics and rank of social affective strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Social affective strategies** | 5 | 3.50 | .659 |
| **1** | I try to relax when I feel anxious. | | 3.56 | 1.158 |
| **2** | I try to enjoy the conversation. | | 3.07 | 1.117 |
| **3** | I try to give a good impression to the listener. | | 3.77 | .979 |
| **4** | I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say. | | 3.85 | .974 |
| **5** | I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes. | | 3.33 | 1.238 |
| **6** | I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say. | | 3.41 | 1.232 |

With respect to 'attempt to think in English' category, it ranks 6th with M= 3.41 and St. D = .908. The data displayed in Table 7 show that more students think of what they want to say in L1 and then construct the English sentence (item 32); and fewer of them think first of a sentence they already know in English (item 31) with M= 3.45 & 3.38 and St. D = 1.229 & 1.113 respectively. The data collected from the focus groups revealed that among 24 respondents, 16 of them (66%) expressed that they thought of what they wanted to say in L1 first. For example, SO-6 reported, "I try to think in Vietnamese first then translate the sentence into English, especially with complicated messages."

Table 7. Descriptive statistics and rank of 'attempt to think in English' strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **'Attempt to think in English' strategies** | 6 | 3.41 | .908 |
| **31** | I think first of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation. | | 3.38 | 1.113 |
| **32** | I think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence. | | 3.45 | 1.229 |

Oral communication is accomplished via the use of verbal strategies or in combination with non-verbal strategies. Successful communication involves the integration of both strategies. The findings of the study are in line with those of Sevki and Oya (2013) showing that English-majored students understand more about the role of non-verbal strategies. They used body language to deal with overall problems in L2 they encounter while speaking. They made eye contact when they were talking or used gestures and facial expressions to maintain the conversation. That is because verbal communication is not sufficient for successful communication in the foreign language (Stam & McCafferty, 2008). Many ways can be employed in communication between two or more people. Using vocabulary is one of these ways. Gestures and body language are often even more important than words (Leaver, Ehrman & Shekhtman, 2005) and can be used to convey the meaning to deal with problems so that interlocutors can maintain a conversation. The findings of the study also revealed that not many students took risks speaking English. That is because they might be afraid of making mistakes; they might have a weak or moderate language ego. However, according to Brown (2002), successful EFL students must be risk takers. Risk-taking is considered one of the most important and successful strategies EFL students should use. Disappointingly, many students reported that they often thought first of a sentence in L1 and then translated into L2. By doing so, the students may gradually lose the habit of thinking in L2. It can be considered 'dangerous' in learning a foreign language. Those students might be less able or low proficient ones. Their habit of thinking in L1 might be formed when they first started learning English.

The most surprising findings of the study are displayed in Tables 8 and 9 below. That is because the frequency of 'accuracy-oriented' and 'message abandonment' are the least frequently reported categories of strategies with M= 3.20 & 2.74 and St. D = .685 & .779 respectively. The students did not pay much attention to linguistics-related strategies. They did not often follow the rules that they had learned, or emphasize the subject and the verb of a sentence with M= 2.90 & 3.02 respectively. More interestingly, not many of the students reported that they often abandoned messages. This is a positive sign that must be recognized in the context because the students could realize that linguistics is not the only factor that helps make communication in L2 effective. They neither often left a message unfinished due to language difficulty, nor gave up when they could not make themselves understood and know what to say with M= 2.45 & 2.59. The data collected from the focus group interviews also revealed that 19 out of 24 respondents (79%) often maintained the conversation in spite of problems related to linguistics. For instance, some students expressed, "I often try to find simple phrases or words to continue the conversation. If the speaker still doesn't understand, I'll change the topic (JU-4); "I rarely quit the conversation. If I don't understand, I ask the speaker some questions to clarify the message, or use simple expressions to convey the information (SE-1)."

Table 8. Descriptive statistics and rank of accuracy-oriented strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Accuracy-oriented strategies** | 7 | 3.20 | .685 |
| **17** | I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation. | | 3.03 | 1.031 |
| **18** | I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned. | | 2.90 | 1.087 |
| **19** | I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake. | | 3.55 | 1.078 |
| **20** | I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence. | | 3.02 | 1.027 |
| **21** | I try to talk like a native speaker. | | 3.47 | 1.155 |

Table 9. Descriptive statistics and rank of 'message abandonment' strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **'Message abandonment' strategies** | 8 | 2.74 | .779 |
| **27** | I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty. | | 2.79 | .976 |
| **28** | I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well. | | 3.15 | 1.211 |
| **29** | I give up when I can't make myself understood. | | 2.45 | 1.271 |
| **30** | I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I don't know what to say. | | 2.59 | 1.200 |

The findings of the study are in line with those of Chen (2009) and Yaman and Özcan (2015) revealing message abandonment strategies are the least frequently used. It can be seen that many students did not want to reduce the communication task. They attempted to use achievement strategies so that they could solve problems in communication. The findings of the study are in line with the viewpoint of Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) showing that the EFL students' ability to maintain a conversation is a very valuable skill because they can benefit from receiving additional modified input. Such maintenance skill is one of the major objectives for EFL students who regularly employ strategies in oral communication.

In conclusion, there is always a mismatch and a gap between communicative goals and linguistic resources among non-native English speakers. They cannot avoid problems related to linguistic competence during the process of communication. It is undoubted that the students in the context, though, did not use all strategies, they tried to deal with communication problems due to their deficient resources in L2 through the use of various strategies. It can be concluded that the three most commonly-used speaking strategies are ‘fluency-oriented’, ‘message reduction and alteration’, and ‘negotiation for meaning while speaking’; and that the students used achievement strategies more frequently than reduction ones. They attempted to bridge the gap that exists between the non-native speakers’ linguistic competence in L2 and their communicative needs (Rababah, 2004). It can be said that the students wanted to develop communicative proficiency by trying to employ strategies in oral communication to compensate for inadequacies in their knowledge of L2.

*4.1.2. Strategies used in listening*

Listening in English is considered an active, receptive skill requiring students to employ a variety of strategies. The data displayed in the tables below show that English-majored students at HUTECH employed different strategies to deal with listening skills.

The data in Table 10 show that category of ‘negotiation for meaning while listening’ strategies ranks first. Among the 7 categories of listening strategies investigated in the study, this category was the most frequently used by the students in the context with M= 3.76 and St. D = .748. More specifically, the strategy that obtained the highest frequency is asking for repetition when they could not understand what the speaker said (item 1) with M= 3.80. The other three strategies of this category were also obtained a high frequency (item 2, 3, 4) with M= 3.78, 376, and 3.78 respectively. The data collected from the focus groups also revealed that all of the 24 respondents used ‘negotiation for meaning’ strategies to deal with listening problems. For example, ‘I ask the speaker some questions to clarify messages, or sometimes I ask the speaker to speak slowly…(JU-5); “…when I can’t understand, I ask the speaker to use simpler and more common words; or ask him or her to repeat the message (SE-7).

Table 10. Descriptive statistics and rank of ‘negotiation for meaning while listening’ strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **‘Negotiation for meaning while listening’ strategies** | 1 | 3.76 | .748 |
| **1** | I ask for repetition when I can’t understand what the speaker has said. | | 3.80 | 1.076 |
| **2** | I make a clarification request when I am not sure what the speaker has said. | | 3.78 | .961 |
| **3** | I ask the speaker to use easy words when I have difficulties in comprehension. | | 3.76 | 1.028 |
| **4** | I ask the speaker to slow down when I can’t understand what the speaker has said. | | 3.78 | 1.077 |

This finding of the current study is consistent with that of the study conducted by Zulkurnain and Kaur (2014) showing that the category of ‘negotiation for meaning while listening’ strategies has the highest mean score. It can be determined that the students might take risk in communication. They might not fear of being called a ‘fool’. They might not avoid requesting clarification of meaning or repetition of message (Foster & Ohta, 2005), which may help negotiate meaning, resulting in facilitating second or foreign language acquisition. Negotiating meaning with interlocutors helps students to get unknown language items and use them later in other situations (Rababah &

Bulut, 2007); and through employing such strategies for negotiation, students can receive comprehensible input and have opportunities for modifying their output (Nakatani, 2010).

Regarding the use of non-verbal strategies while listening, the data displayed in Table 11 reveal that this category ranks second with M= 3.67 and St. D = .912. Like speaking strategies, many students often used gestures and paid attention to the speaker's eye contact, facial expressions and gestures when they had difficulties in listening (item 19 & 20) with M= 3.56 & 3.78 respectively. The data collected from the focus groups also revealed that 24 respondents (100%) used gestures when having difficulties in listening. For example, SE-4 reported, "When I don't understand the speaker, I use body languages, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact."

Table 11. Descriptive statistics and rank of non-verbal strategies while listening

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Non-verbal strategies while listening** | 2 | 3.67 | .912 |
| **19** | I use gestures when I have difficulties in understanding. | | 3.56 | 1.133 |
| **20** | I pay attention to the speaker's eye-contact, facial expression and gestures. | | 3.78 | 1.049 |

The finding of the study is in line with that of Ounis (2016) and Chairat (2017) exploring that non-verbal and negotiation of meaning strategies are most frequently used in coping with listening problems. Obviously, the students had difficulties understanding the speaker's messages. Their knowledge of English language might be limited, which hindered their ability to understand what their interlocutors said. It can be said that these findings of the study consolidate the viewpoint of Canale and Swaine (1980), and Nakatani (2010) that show that non-verbal and negotiation for meaning strategies have the effectiveness and usefulness in oral communication.

Ranking third is the category of scanning strategies. The data in Table 12 show that the students often used these strategies to cope with listening problems with M=3.59 and St. D= .683. Among the four strategies, trying to catch the speaker's main point obtained the highest mean score (item 14) with M=3.82. The data collected from the focus groups revealed that students paid attention to the speaker's intonation, intention, main ideas, key words, types of sentences, verbs and subjects of sentences. For instance, some students expressed, "….I pay attention to pronunciation and intonation, subjects, verbs, types of sentence (SO-3); "….. I just pay attention to speakers' intonation and main ideas of the message (JU-4); "….I pay attention to pronunciation, intonation, main ideas, verbs, subjects and types of sentences (SE04)."

Table 12. Descriptive statistics and rank of scanning strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Scanning strategies** | 3 | 3.59 | .683 |
| **11** | I pay attention to the subject and verb of the sentence when I listen. | | 3.48 | 1.075 |
| **12** | I especially pay attention to the interrogative when I listen to WH-questions. | | 3.48 | 1.114 |
| **13** | I pay attention to the first part of the sentence and guess the speaker's intention. | | 3.60 | .923 |
| **14** | I try to catch the speaker's main point. | | 3.82 | 1.047 |

Understanding everything spoken in English is impossible for EFL students, especially when they listen to a native speaker; it might be too difficult for them to understand every single word and sentence that the interlocutors spoke. That is why they might employ 'scanning' strategies in order to successfully predict the speaker's intention. This finding is consistent with that of Chairat (2017) confirming that most of the students used these strategies in dealing with listening problems.

Regarding 'fluency-maintaining' strategies, these strategies allow students to focus on the speaker's intonation and pronunciation and sometimes ask questions or ask for examples to overcome difficulties and assist understanding. The data in Table 13 show that these strategies were used by about half of the students. This category of strategies rank 4th among the 7 categories with M= 3.54 and St. D = .606. Qualitative data also revealed that among 24 respondents, 16 of them reported that they often tried to avoid communication gaps or overcome difficulties by paying attention to the speaker's rhythm and intonation or asking the speaker to give examples when they did not understand. For example, SO-5 said, "I sometimes don't understand what the speaker says, but I asks him or her to explain, or repeat or give example so that I may understand the message."

Table 13. Descriptive statistics and rank of 'fluency-maintaining' strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Fluency-maintaining strategies** | 4 | 3.54 | .606 |
| **6** | I pay attention to the speaker's rhythm and intonation. | | 3.55 | 1.006 |
| **7** | I send continuation signals to show my understanding in order to avoid communication gaps. | | 3.56 | .976 |
| **8** | I use circumlocution to react to the speaker's utterance when I don't understand his/her intention well. | | 3.43 | 1.069 |
| **9** | I ask the speaker to give an example when I am not sure what he/she has said. | | 3.55 | .967 |

Concerning 'fluency-maintaining' strategies, the findings may imply that about a half of the students employed these strategies in oral communication. It also implied that those students faced difficulties in listening to the speaker. They might lack vocabulary, idioms and grammatical structures, so when the interlocutor used unfamiliar words, they could not understand.

Similarly, the next category of 'word-oriented' strategies obtained not very high mean score with M=3.53 and St. D = 0.677 (refer to Table 14). It ranks 5th among the 7 listening categories of strategies. The strategies which obtained the higher mean scores are 'paying attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes.' and 'guessing the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words.' with M=3.65 and 3.61 respectively. Particularly, not many of the students tried to catch every word that the speaker used (item 25) with M= 3.40. Qualitative data also revealed that among 24 respondents, 20 of them (8 of them are juniors) reported that they often tried to pay attention to familiar words in order to guess the speaker's intention or to types of questions that the interlocutor used. For example, SE-04 said, 'I often pay attention to familiar, common phrases, or expressions and types of questions when I listen to people speaking English, especially he or she is a native speaker.'

Table 14. Descriptive statistics and rank of 'word-oriented' strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Word-oriented strategies** | 5 | 3.53 | .677 |
| **23** | I pay attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes. | | 3.65 | .971 |
| **24** | I guess the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words. | | 3.61 | .967 |
| **25** | I try to catch every word that the speaker uses. | | 3.40 | 1.075 |
| **26** | I pay attention to the first word to judge whether it is an interrogative sentence or not. | | 3.47 | 1.167 |

This finding of the study is consistent with that of Ounis (2016) discovering that the category of ‘word-oriented’ strategies also ranked 5$^{th}$. This finding implied that not many of the students used these strategies. That is because they might not be trained how to use these strategies; or these strategies might not be helpful to them. The findings showed that these strategies were used most by sophomores rather than juniors or seniors.

Regarding the category of “getting-the-gist’ strategies, the data displayed in Table 15 confirm that this category obtained an average mean score with M= 3.42 and St. D = .639. However, over half of the students reported that they tried to respond to the speaker even when they did not understand him/her perfectly with M=3.69 and St. D = .667. Obtaining the lowest mean score (M = 2.93). The finding implied that many students paid attention to whether they understood every word or not. Surprisingly, the qualitative data showed that no respondents reported that they paid attention to every single word.

Table 15. Descriptive statistics and rank of ‘getting the gist’ strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **‘Getting-the-gist’ strategies** | 6 | 3.42 | .639 |
| **15** | I don’t mind if I can’t understand every single detail. | | 2.93 | 1.230 |
| **16** | I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on the context. | | 3.63 | .984 |
| **17** | I guess the speaker’s intention based on what he/she has said so far. | | 3.43 | .927 |
| **18** | I try to respond to the speaker even when I don’t understand him/her perfectly. | | 3.69 | .667 |

The finding of the study revealed that about 50% of the students might use these strategies. They might think that it is beneficial for them to develop ‘getting-the-gist’ strategies to optimize their understanding of the words from the context. This finding is consistent with Zulkurnain and Kaur (2014) showing that not many students employed ‘getting-the-gist’ strategies when listening to people speaking English. The most interesting thing is that without understanding the speaker perfectly, more than half of the students still responded to the speaker. It might be because they wanted to maintain the conversation and tried not to let communication break.

Regarding ‘less-active-listener’ strategies, the data displayed in Table 16 show that this category of listening strategies obtained the lowest ranking among the 7 categories with M= 3.03. The students rarely translated into L1 little by little to understand what the speaker had said or rarely only focused on familiar expressions (item 21 &22) with M=3.03 & 3.02 and St. D = 1.117 & 1.157 respectively. The data collected from the focus groups also revealed that not many students employed these strategies when dealing with listening problems. Among 24 students, 21 of them reported that they rarely translated the passage into L1 and 3 of them said that they never translated the passage into L1 when listening to a speaker.

Table 16. Descriptive statistics and rank of ‘less-active-listener’ strategies

| No | Items | Rank | Mean | St. D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **‘Less-active-listener’ strategies** | 7 | 3.03 | .948 |
| **21** | I try to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said. | | 3.03 | 1.173 |
| **22** | I only focus on familiar expressions. | | 3.02 | 1.157 |

The two ‘less-active-listener’ strategies in Table 16 are reduction strategies which might be often used by low proficiency students. This finding of the study is in line with that of Şevki and Oya (2013), Zulkurnain, and Kaur (2014), Ounis (2016) and Chairat (2017) discovering that these strategies were employed by only the minority of the students, especially who are less able ones when encountering difficulties in oral communication. It could be concluded that more proficient students do not think these strategies are useful for them to achieve success in dealing with listening problems. Undoubtedly, according to these students, the use of these strategies might not enhance their opportunities to learn English. That is why they have negative attitudes to these strategies.

*4.2. Differences in the use of strategies in oral communication*

Research question 2 attempted to discover whether there are statistically significant differences in the use of strategies among three academic levels.

*4.2.1. Differences in the use of speaking strategies*

To discover if differences existed among academic levels, namely sophomores, juniors, and seniors in the use of the 8 categories of speaking strategies, one-way ANOVA tests were carried out. The data displayed in Table 17 show that the mean scores of three academic levels (sophomore, junior, and senior) for each category of strategies are nearly the same. Nevertheless, based on the mean scores, some interesting findings were discovered. For example, regarding 'social affective strategies', as can be seen in Table 17, juniors sometimes used this category (M=3.38); meanwhile sophomores and seniors often used this category with M= 3.60 and 3.50 respectively. With respect to 'accuracy-oriented' strategies, it was found that the three academic levels did not use these strategies very often with M= 3.18, 3.19 & 3.22 respectively; and especially, obtaining the lowest mean score is "'message abandonment' category of strategies and the mean scores are almost the same, i.e. M= 2.74, 2.74 & 2.75 respectively. Given that the mean scores of the three academic levels in terms of 8 categories of speaking strategies are nearly the same and that the p-value calculated from the one-way ANOVA tests of all 8 categories of strategies is more than the significance level of 0.05. It can be seen in Table 18 that the significance values of the 8 categories are .140, .191, .983, .943, .639, .726, .637, .751 respectively (i.e., $p$ = 140, .191, .983, .943, .639, .726, .637, .751). It can be concluded that there were no statistically significant differences among the three academic levels in term of speaking strategies.

Table 17. Descriptive statistics of the use of speaking strategies among the three academic levels

N= 213 (n of 2nd year level = 75; n of 3rd year level =69; n of 4th year level = 69)

| **Categories** | **Academic level** | **M** | **St. D** | **Std. Error** | **95% confidence interval for mean** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| Social affective strategies | 2nd year | 3.60 | .566 | .065 | 3.47 | 3.73 |
| | 3rd year | 3.38 | .677 | .081 | 3.22 | 3.54 |
| | 4th year | 3.50 | .724 | .087 | 3.33 | 3.68 |
| Fluency-oriented | 2nd year | 3.76 | .521 | .060 | 3.64 | 3.88 |
| | 3rd year | 3.60 | .704 | .084 | 3.43 | 3.77 |
| | 4th year | 3.78 | .684 | .082 | 3.62 | 3.95 |
| Negotiation for meaning | 2nd year | 3.61 | .627 | .072 | 3.46 | 3.75 |
| | 3rd year | 3.61 | .771 | .092 | 3.43 | 3.80 |
| | 4th year | 3.59 | .721 | .086 | 3.42 | 3.76 |
| Accuracy-oriented | 2nd year | 3.18 | .647 | .074 | 3.03 | 3.33 |
| | 3rd year | 3.19 | .802 | .096 | 2.99 | 3.38 |
| | 4th year | 3.22 | .602 | .072 | 3.07 | 3.36 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Message reduction and alteration | 2nd year | 3.60 | .747 | .086 | 3.42 | 3.77 |
| | 3rd year | 3.66 | .765 | .092 | 3.47 | 3.84 |
| | 4th year | 3.71 | .669 | .080 | 3.55 | 3.87 |
| Non-verbal | 2nd year | 3.52 | .936 | .108 | 3.31 | 3.74 |
| | 3rd year | 3.57 | .920 | .110 | 3.35 | 3.79 |
| | 4th year | 3.64 | .804 | .096 | 3.45 | 3.83 |
| Message abandonment | 2nd year | 2.74 | .794 | .091 | 2.56 | 2.92 |
| | 3rd year | 2.74 | .807 | .097 | 2.55 | 2.94 |
| | 4th year | 2.75 | .746 | .089 | 2.57 | 2.92 |
| Attempt to think in English | 2nd year | 3.48 | .836 | .096 | 3.28 | 3.67 |
| | 3rd year | 3.39 | .945 | .113 | 3.17 | 3.62 |
| | 4th year | 3.36 | .953 | .114 | 3.14 | 3.59 |

Table 18. Results of one-way ANOVA tests of the differences in the use of speaking strategies among the three academic levels

N= 213 (n of 2nd year level = 75; n of 3rd year level =69; n of 4th year level = 69)

| Categories | Sum of square | df | Mean square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social affective strategies | 1.712 | 2 | .856 | 1.983 | .140 |
| Fluency-oriented | 1.363 | 2 | .681 | 1.668 | .191 |
| Negotiation for meaning | .017 | 2 | .009 | .017 | .983 |
| Accuracy oriented | .056 | 2 | .028 | .059 | .943 |
| Message reduction and alteration | .477 | 2 | .239 | .448 | .639 |
| Non-verbal | .508 | 2 | .254 | .320 | .726 |
| Message abandonment | .439 | 2 | .234 | .441 | .637 |
| Attempt to think in English | .476 | 2 | .238 | .287 | .751 |

It can be concluded that many English-majored students at HUETCH have enriched their communicative resources. After the first academic year they could employ different strategies to deal with speaking problems. There was evidence that all the three academic levels obtained the similar frequency of the use of strategies in oral communication with mean scores ranging from 3.18 to 3.78 (see Table 18), and that at this stage they might feel more confident so they rarely used "message abandonment" strategies in oral communication with mean scores ranging from 2.74-2.75 (see Table 18).

*4.2.2. Differences in the use of listening strategies*

As regards the use of listening strategies when the three academic levels were compared, the data displayed in Table 19 show that the mean scores of three academic levels (sophomore, junior, and senior) for each category of strategies are nearly the same. It implies that the frequency of the use of listening strategies among the three academic levels were similar with the mean score ranging from 3.46 to 3.80, which means the three levels often used those strategies except for 'less-activity-listener' strategies which obtained the lowest frequency with M= 3.04, 3.07 & 2.97 respectively. Given that the mean scores of the three academic levels in terms of 7 categories of listening strategies are similar and that the p-value calculated from the one-way ANOVA tests of all 7 categories of strategies is more than the significance level of 0.05. It can be seen in Table 20 that the significance values of the 7 categories are .814, .382, .369, .216, .254, .820, .592 respectively (i.e., *p* = .814, .382, .369, .216, .254, .820, .592). It can be concluded that there were no statistically significant differences among the three academic levels in term of listening strategies.

Table 19. Descriptive statistics of the use of listening strategies among the three academic levels

N= 213 (n of 2nd year level = 75; n of 3rd year level =69; n of 4th year level = 69)

| **Categories** | **Academic level** | **M** | **St. D** | **Std. Error** | **95% confidence interval for mean** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| Negotiation for meaning | 2nd year | 3.72 | .748 | .086 | 3.55 | 3.89 |
| | 3rd year | 3.76 | .784 | .094 | 3.57 | 3.95 |
| | 4th year | 3.80 | .719 | .086 | 3.63 | 3.97 |
| Fluency-maintaining | 2nd year | 3.46 | .580 | .066 | 3.33 | 3.60 |
| | 3rd year | 3.59 | .637 | .076 | 3.44 | 3.74 |
| | 4th year | 3.57 | .602 | .072 | 3.43 | 3.72 |
| Scanning | 2nd year | 3.52 | .667 | .077 | 3.36 | 3.67 |
| | 3rd year | 3.60 | .725 | .087 | 3.43 | 3.77 |
| | 4th year | 3.68 | .655 | .078 | 3.52 | 3.83 |
| Getting-the-gist | 2nd year | 3.32 | .617 | .071 | 3.17 | 3.46 |
| | 3rd year | 3.47 | .677 | .081 | 3.30 | 3.63 |
| | 4th year | 3.48 | .618 | .074 | 3.34 | 3.63 |
| Non-verbal | 2nd year | 3.54 | .912 | .105 | 3.33 | 3.75 |
| | 3rd year | 3.79 | .944 | .113 | 3.57 | 4.02 |
| | 4th year | 3.69 | .875 | .105 | 3.48 | 3.90 |
| Less-active-listener | 2nd year | 3.04 | 1.012 | .116 | 2.80 | 3.27 |
| | 3rd year | 3.07 | .929 | .111 | 2.85 | 3.30 |
| | 4th year | 2.97 | .905 | .108 | 2.76 | 3.19 |
| Word-oriented | 2nd year | 3.47 | .667 | .077 | 3.31 | 3.62 |
| | 3rd year | 3.57 | .728 | .087 | 3.40 | 3.75 |
| | 4th year | 3.56 | .638 | .076 | 3.41 | 3.71 |

Table 20. Results of one-way ANOVA tests of the differences in the use of listening strategies among the three academic levels

N= 213 (n of 2$^{nd}$ year level = 75; n of 3$^{rd}$ year level =69; n of 4$^{th}$ year level = 69)

| **Categories** | **Sum of squares** | **df** | **Mean square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Negotiation for meaning | .232 | 2 | .116 | .206 | .814 |
| Fluency-maintaining | .710 | 2 | .355 | .967 | .382 |
| Scanning | .936 | 2 | .468 | 1.003 | .369 |
| Getting the gist | 1.256 | 2 | .628 | 1.544 | .216 |
| Non-verbal | 2.293 | 2 | 1.147 | 1.381 | .254 |
| Less active listener | .361 | 2 | .180 | .199 | .820 |
| Word-oriented | .485 | 2 | .242 | .526 | .592 |

The findings of the study revealed no significant differences in the use of listening strategies among the three academic levels as stated above. One more time it may be determined that when entering the second, third or fourth academic years, students have learned different strategies for communication. They not only face difficulties in learning listening comprehension in class but in talking to native speakers in society as well.

According to Nakatani (2006), highly proficient students try to get intended meaning of the speaker through the use of such strategies as 'scanning', 'getting-the-gist', 'negotiation' and ' non-verbal'. They know how to focus on specific parts of utterance such as verbs, subject, and question types to guess the meaning to support their understanding. Especially, they know how to employ what they have already learned into the process of listening comprehension. It can be said that they are active listeners. Through the use of non-verbal strategies, students of the three levels also know how to compensate their deficient L2 knowledge (Canale & Swain, 1980; Færch & Kasper, 1983) in listening.

In conclusion, the aim of research question 2 is to discover whether there are statistically significant differences in the use of both speaking and listening strategies among the three academic levels. Based on the mean scores and the results of the one-way ANOVA tests, it can be reported that there are no statistically significant differences. All the English-majored sophomores, juniors and seniors who participated in the study have similar understanding about communication strategies and how to use those strategies in communication. This finding of the study may reflect similar ways that Vietnamese students use in communication in L1 and in L2, and similar preferences for oral communication strategies in the same culture regardless of individual differences.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The current study aims to explore the most commonly used strategies in oral communication among English majored students, namely sophomores, juniors and seniors, and discover differences in their use of CSs. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that all 8 categories of speaking strategies and 7 categories of listening ones were applied by the students in dealing with English oral communication. Especially, the most commonly used speaking strategies are "achievement strategies" such as 'fluency-oriented', 'message reduction and alteration', and 'negotiation for meaning while speaking' strategies; and the least commonly used strategies are 'accuracy-oriented' and 'message abandonment'. Meanwhile, regarding listening strategies, the most commonly used strategies are 'negotiation for meaning while listening', 'non-verbal' and 'scanning'; whereas, the least commonly used strategies are 'getting-the-gist' and 'less-active-listener' strategies. These findings may help determine that the participants of the study have reached a higher proficiency levels compared with the freshmen. These findings are in line with those of Nakatani's (2006). They are more confident in communication; and their knowledge of language has also increased, which helps them communicate rather well in English. More interestingly, the highest mean score of the 8 speaking and 7 listening strategies are 3.72 and 3.76 respectively, which means about 75% of the students often use these strategies. Regarding the differences in the use of CSs among the three academic students, the findings of the study revealed that there are no significant differences in the use of OCSs among the participants. Nonetheless, the findings of the study imply that English-majored students face problems in communication; and imperfect competence in L2 is unavoidable. That is why they employ strategies not only in learning but also in the use of L2. The most interesting finding of the study is that most of the English-majored students chose the way not to avoid problems but to find out solutions so that breakdowns in communication cannot take place.

English is taught and learned in Vietnam as a foreign language. It is recommended that students should achieve language competence, especially SC so that they will become effective L2 users. Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended that, firstly for EFL teachers, they should be aware of different types of OCSs that can be used in L2 communication. In addition, many students may not know about these OCSs, so it is suggested that EFL teachers should explicitly or implicitly introduce, train and encourage them to use OCSs consciously to enhance their ability to encounter difficulties in oral communication. They should create more opportunities in class for students to practice communicating with each other in L2 using OCSs; especially, EFL teachers should know who are less or more able students in their class so that they can show them what strategies should be used and how to use them. With respect to students, as EFL students, they should also be aware of different types of OCSs that can be used in L2 communication. They should practice using OCSs in class so that when communicating with native speakers or foreigners they may easily cope with problems. More importantly, they may be more able to fill the gaps of knowledge, psychology and skills in communication in L2.

As the current study was conducted in only one specific site with the focus on three academic levels of English-majored students, its findings may not be generalizable to other sites. Other studies are recommended to replicate through the use of Nakatani's OCSI (2006) in other universities in Vietnam or in other contexts with English-majored or non-English majored students.

## References


Bachman, L.F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bialystok, E. (1983). Some factors in the selection and implementation of communication strategies. In C. Faerch, C., & Kasper, G. (Eds). *Strategies in interlanguage communication* (pp.100-118). London: Longman.

Bialystok, E. (1990). *Communication strategies: A psychological analysis of second language use*. USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Brown, D. H. (2002). *Strategies for success: A practical guide to learning English.* New York: Longman.

Bulmer, M. (2004). *Questionnaires*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language learning & testing. *Linguistics, 1*, 1-47.

Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. *Language and Communication*. London: Longman, 2-27.

Chairat, P. (2017). *Oral communication strategies used by English major undergraduates during the internship program*. Proceeding of the International Conference on Literature, History, Humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies (LHHISS-17) Bangkok (Thailand) July 11-12.

Chen, H. W. (2009). *Oral communication strategies used by English major college students in Taiwan*. (Unpublished MA thesis), Chaoyang University of Technology, Taichung, Taiwan.

Corder, S. P. (1983). *Error analysis and interlanguage.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching and assessment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2015). *Pronunciation fundamentals: evidence-based perspectives for L2 teaching and research*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Dornyei, Z., & Scott, M. L. (1995). *Communication strategies: An empirical analysis with retrospection.* Twenty-first annual symposium of the discrete language and linguistics society (pp. 155-168). Provo: Bringham Young University.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Faerch, C., & Kasper, G. (1983). On identifying communication strategies in interlanguage production. In C. Faerch and G. Kasper (Eds.). *Strategies in interlanguage communication* (pp.210–238). London: Longman.

Færch, C., & Kasper, G. (1984). Two ways of defining communication strategies. *Language Learning, 34*(1), 45–63.

Foster, P., & Ohta, A. S. (2005). Negotiation for meaning and peer assistance in second language classrooms. *Applied Linguistics, 26* (3), 402–430.

Hymes, H. D. (1967). Models of the interaction of language and social setting. *Journal of Social Issues, 23*(2), 8-28.

Kitajima, R. (1997): Influence of learning context on learners' use of communication strategies. *JALT Journal, 19*(1), 7–23.

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Long, M. (1991). *An introduction to second language acquisition research.* London: Longman.

Leaver, B. L., Ehrman, M., & Shekhtman, B. ( 2005). *Achieving success in second language acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Le, H. H. (2018). Students' English communicative skills at the People's Police University in the era of integration. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, *34*(3), 58-74.

Le, H. T. (2013). ELT in Vietnam general and tertiary education from second language education perspectives. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, *29*(1), 65-71.

Littlewood, W. (2011). Communicative language teaching: An expanding concept for a changing world. In E. Hinkel (Ed). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*: Volume II. (pp. 541-557). London: Routledge.

Maleki, A., (2007). Teachability of communication strategies: An Iranian experience. *System 35*, 583–594.

Mei, A., & Nathalang, S. S. (2010). Use of communication strategies by Chinese EFL learners. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics, 33*(3), 110-125.

Mirzaei, A., & Heidari, N. (2012). Exploring the use of oral communication strategies by (non) fluent L2 speakers. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 9*(3),131-156.

Nakatani, Y. (2006). Developing an oral communication strategy inventory. *The Modern Language Journal, 90*(2), 151-168.

Nakatani, Y. (2010). Identifying strategies that facilitate EFL learners' oral communication: A classroom study using multiple data collection procedures. *Modern Language Journal, 94* (1), 116–136.

Ounis, T. (2016). Exploring the use of oral communication strategies by high and low proficiency learners of English: Tunisian EFL students as a case study. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 2* (1), 1077-1098.

Peloghitis, J. (2006). Enhancing communication through the use of foreigner interviews. *Journal of NELTA, 11*(1-2), 47-51.

Rababah, G. (2002). *Second language communication strategies: Definitions, taxonomies, data elicitation methodology and teachability issues*. Washington: US Educational Resources Information Center.

Rababah, G. (2004). Strategic competence in an ELT syllabus. ITL. *Review of Applied Linguistics*. 145–165.

Rababah, G., & Bulut, D. (2007), Compensatory strategies in Arabic as a second language. *Poznan Studies in Contemporary Linguistics, 43*(2), 83-106.

Rastegar, M., & Goha, S. S. M. (2016). Communication strategies, attitude, and oral output of EFL learners: A study of relations. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics, 6*, 401-419.

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt. R.W. *Language and communication*. London: Longman.

Sevki, K., & Oya, B. (2013). A comparative evaluation of pre-service English teachers' coping strategies in oral communication. *Training and Practice, 11*(1-4), 107-124.

Stam, G., & McCafferty, S.G. (2008). Gesture studies and second language acquisition: A review. In S.G. McCafferty & G. Stam (Eds). *Gesture, second language acquisition and classroom research* (pp. 3–24). New York: Routledge.

Stern, H. H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tarone, E. (1980). Communication strategies, a foreigner talk and repair in interlanguage. *Language Learning 30*, 417–431.

Tarone, E. (1981). Some thoughts on the notion of communication strategy. *TESOL Quarterly, 15*(3), 285–295.

Tran, T. T. (2013). Factors affecting teaching and learning English in Vietnamese universities. *The Internet Journal Language, Culture and Society*, *38*, 138-145.

Willems, G. M. (1987). Communication strategies and their significance in foreign language teaching. *System, 15*(3), 351-364.

Yaman, S., & Özcan, M. (2015). Oral communication strategies used by Turkish students learning English as a foreign language. In M. Pawlak & E. Waniek-Klimczak (Eds*.). Issues in teaching, learning and testing speaking in a second language* (pp.143-158). New York: Springer.

Zulkurnain, N., & Kaur, S. (2014). Oral English communication difficulties and coping strategies of diploma of hotel management students at UiTM. 3L: *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies, 20*(3), 93–112.

# CHIẾN LƯỢC GIAO TIẾP CỦA SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH

Lê Văn Tuyên, Huỳnh Thị An, Trần Kim Hồng

*Trường Đại học Công nghệ TP. Hồ Chí Minh (HUTECH)*

*475A Điện Biên Phủ, Phường 25 Quận Bình Thạnh-TP. Hồ Chí Minh*

**Tóm tắt:** Chiến lược giao tiếp đóng vai trò quan trọng trong quá trình hỗ trợ sinh viên học tiếng Anh nâng cao trình độ và khả năng giao tiếp, giúp giáo viên và sinh viên tiếng Anh nhận thức đầy đủ về những thủ thuật giao tiếp rất cần thiết trong môi trường giáo dục ngoại ngữ ở Việt Nam. Chính vì thế, mục đích của bài nghiên cứu này là khám phá những chiến lược được sử dụng phổ biến nhất trong giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh của sinh viên trường Đại học Công nghệ Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh-Việt Nam. Nghiên cứu sử dụng cả hai phương pháp định tính và định lượng để thu thập dữ liệu, đó là (1) bảng câu hỏi khảo sát và (2) phỏng vấn theo nhóm. Tổng số 213 sinh viên năm 2, năm 3 và năm 4 chuyên Anh tham gia vào nghiên cứu. Kết quả của nghiên cứu cho thấy các chiến lược giao tiếp như 'hướng đến sự lưu loát', 'giản lược và thay đổi' và 'thỏa hiệp về nghĩa khi nói' được sinh viên dùng nhiều nhất khi nói tiếng Anh. Đối với kỹ năng nghe, sinh viên sử dụng nhiều nhất ba chiến lược, bao gồm: 'thỏa hiệp về nghĩa khi nghe', 'lướt ý' và 'phi ngôn ngữ'. Ngoài ra, kết quả của nghiên cứu cũng cho thấy không có sự khác biệt trong cách sử dụng chiến lược giao tiếp bằng lời nói giữa sinh viên năm thứ 2, thứ 3 và thứ 4. Bài nghiên cứu hy vọng đóng góp phần nào đó vào quá trình cải thiện năng lưc giao tiếp và khả năng sử dụng những chiến lược giao tiếp để nâng cao kỹ năng tiếng Anh cho sinh viên Đại học HUTECH nói riêng và sinh viên đại học ở Việt Nam nói chung.

*Từ khóa:* năng lực giao tiếp, chiến lược giao tiếp, sinh viên chuyên Anh, cấp lớp, bối cảnh Việt Nam

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: Student questionnaire

Dear students,

We are conducting a study on oral communication strategies used by English-majored students at HUTECH. Could you please complete the three parts of the questionnaire? Your information provided for us will only be used for the purpose of research so please do not leave any item unanswered.

Thank you very much.

**Part 1: Personal information**

1. Your age:…………………………………………

2. Your gender:……………………………………..

3. Your academic year:……………………………..

**Part 2: Use of speaking strategies**

In the table below there are 32 English oral communication strategies. How often do you use these strategies in learning? Please read them carefully and circle the responses **1-Never (N), 2-Rarely (R), 3-Sometimes (S), 4-Often (O), or 5-Always (A).**

| ***No*** | ***Items*** | ***N*** | ***R*** | ***S*** | ***O*** | ***A*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Social affective strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *1* | *I try to relax when I feel anxious.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *2* | *I try to enjoy the conversation.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *3* | *I try to give a good impression to the listener.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *4* | *I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *5* | *I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *6* | *I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***Fluency-oriented strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *7* | *I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *8* | *I pay attention to my pronunciation.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *9* | *I pay attention to the conversational flow.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *10* | *I change my way of saying things according to the context.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *11* | *I take my time to express what I want to say.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *12* | *I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***'Negotiation for meaning while speaking' strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *13* | *I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *14* | *I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *15* | *While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *16* | *I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I'm saying.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***Accuracy-oriented strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *17* | *I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *18* | *I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *19* | *I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *20* | *I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *21* | *I try to talk like a native speaker.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***'Message reduction and alteration' strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *22* | *I reduce the message and use simple expressions.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *23* | *I use words which are familiar to me.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *24* | *I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***Non-verbal strategies while speaking*** | | | | | | |
| *25* | *I try to make eye contact when I am talking.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *26* | *I use gestures and facial expressions if I can't express myself.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***'Message abandonment' strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *27* | *I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *28* | *I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *29* | *I give up when I can't make myself understood.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *30* | *I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I don't know what to say.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***'Attempt to think in English' strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *31* | *I think first of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *32* | *I think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |

**Part 3: Use of listening strategies**

In the table below there are 26 strategies used to cope with difficulties in listening. How often do you use these strategies? Please read them carefully and circle the responses **1-Never (N), 2-Rarely (R), 3-Sometimes (S), 4-Often (O), or 5-Always (A).**

| ***No*** | ***Items*** | ***N*** | ***R*** | ***S*** | ***O*** | ***A*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***'Negotiation for meaning while listening' strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *1* | *I ask for repetition when I can't understand what the speaker has said.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *2* | *I make a clarification request when I am not sure what the speaker has said.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *3* | *I ask the speaker to use easy words when I have difficulties in comprehension.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *4* | *I ask the speaker to slow down when I can't understand what the speaker has said.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *5* | *I make clear to the speaker what I haven't been able to understand.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***Fluency-maintaining strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *6* | *I pay attention to the speaker's rhythm and intonation.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *7* | *I send continuation signals to show my understanding in order to avoid communication gaps.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *8* | *I use circumlocution to react to the speaker's utterance when I don't understand his/her intention well.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *9* | *I ask the speaker to give an example when I am not sure what he/she has said.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *10* | *I pay attention to the speaker's pronunciation.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***Scanning strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *11* | *I pay attention to the subject and verb of the sentence when I listen.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *12* | *I especially pay attention to the interrogative when I listen to WH-questions.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *13* | *I pay attention to the first part of the sentence and guess the speaker's intention.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *14* | *I try to catch the speaker's main point.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***'Getting-the-gist' strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *15* | *I don't mind if I can't understand every single detail.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *16* | *I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on the context.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *17* | *I guess the speaker's intention based on what he/she has said so far.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *18* | *I try to respond to the speaker even when I don't understand him/her perfectly.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***Non-verbal strategies while listening*** | | | | | | |
| *19* | *I use gestures when I have difficulties in understanding.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *20* | *I pay attention to the speaker's eye-contact, facial expression and gestures.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***'Less-active-listener' strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *21* | *I try to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *22* | *I only focus on familiar expressions.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| ***Word-oriented strategies*** | | | | | | |
| *23* | *I pay attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *24* | *I guess the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *25* | *I try to catch every word that the speaker uses.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
| *26* | *I pay attention to the first word to judge whether it is an interrogative sentence or not.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |

**APPENDIX B: Questions for focus group interviews**

1. What problems do you often cope with when you speak English to someone inside or outside the classroom?
2. How do you feel whenever you start to speak English to someone?
3. What do you often pay attention to when you speak English to someone (e.g. pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar)?
4. How do you often speak English? For example, do you speak slowly, quickly, softly or loudly? Do you try to speak as a native speaker?
5. What kinds of expressions do you use when you speak to someone? For example, do you use complex or simple expressions, familiar words or difficult words to express ideas?
6. What do you do if you speak to someone but he/she seems not to understand what you say?
7. What do you often do if you don't know how to express your ideas? For example, do you use gestures and facial expressions, get eye contact or look away?
8. What will you do if you can't make yourself understood? For example, do you just say some simple words and stop talking, or always try to keep the conversation?
9. Do you often think of what you want to say in Vietnamese first and then make up the English sentence?
10. What problems do you often cope with when you listen to someone speaking English?
11. What do you ask the speaker to do when you don't understand what he/she says? For example, do you ask him or her to clarify the meaning, use easy words, speak slowly or repeat words?
12. What factors of the speaker do you often pay attention to when you listen to her/him? For example, do you pay attention to rhythm, intonation, pronunciation, gestures, intention, main points…? Do you pay attention to the verb, subject, or types of questions?
13. Do you try to guess what the speaker is saying based on the context or his/her attention?
14. What do you often do when you understand a little about what the speaker says? For example, do you stop talking?
15. What do you do to show that you don't understand what the speaker says? For example, do you use gestures, facial expressions, eye-contact, or translate what you hear into Vietnamese little by little?
16. What do you often pay attention when listening to someone speaking English? For example, do you concentrate on familiar words, sentences, types of questions which the speaker emphasizes or do you try to catch every word?

# INFORMATION

## NAVIGATING THE INTERCULTURAL CLASSROOM

**Lindholm, T., & Mednick Myles, J.**

**Alexandria, Virginia: TESOL International Association, 2019**

Hoang Thi Hanh*

*Faculty of Linguistics and Cultures of English Speaking Countries*
*University of Languages and International Studies, VNU*
*Pham Van Dong, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 13 June 2019
Revised 31 December 2019; Accepted 14 February 2020

Intercultural communication is usually a compulsory component of a TESOL training course. However, it is usually about intercultural communication generally in various contexts. The book *Navigating the intercultural classroom* bridges intercultural communication especially intercultural competence into language classes by reviewing theoretical background and suggesting specific, concrete practices to enhance both students' and teachers' inner growth and awareness of language together with intercultural competence. It was written by two experienced ESOL teachers (teaching English to speakers of other languages) and curriculum developers, Tuula Lindholm and Johanne Mednick Myles, teaching English in multicultural communities. The book was inspired and derived from their experience of teaching international students, from real-life contexts for intercultural communication.

Foreworded by Deardorff, an expert in intercultural competence, the book consists of six chapters. Each chapter starts with an overview and a list of questions guiding the readers on thinking about the topic before leading the readers to the theory part. The theoretical foundation parts in each chapter bring together a synthesis of current perspectives on intercultural competence in an easily understandable but comprehensive way, which is accessible and friendly to ESOL teachers who do not need to be specialists in intercultural communication and training. Those who specialize in intercultural communication teaching and training can also find this part a nice synthesis of different approaches including social scientific, interpretative and critical (Oetzel, Pant & Rao, 2016), and how such approaches can be extracted to apply in language teaching.

The practical examples of intercultural activities suggested in each chapter are urgently needed for ESOL instructors in teaching students of various cultural backgrounds. They are needed because they are devised based on the inter-relation of multiple intercultural communication approaches, taking students' language levels and cultural and psychological contexts into consideration. In other words, the activities are not just listed as inventory list of items, but they go deeply with their *hows* and *whys*. Specifically, in designing

* Tel.: 84-905598994
Email: hanhhtulis@gmail.com

the intercultural communication activities in language classroom, Lindholm and Mednick Myles (2019) have adapted *The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners* developed by TESOL International Association (2018) into five principles including:

- respect, affirm, and promote students' home languages, cultural knowledge, and experiences;
- learn about students' cultural and geographic backgrounds and seek to understand how their backgrounds have influenced their cultural beliefs and behaviors;
- be mindful of situations that require an intercultural perspective to fully understand the message;
- celebrate multilingualism, multiculturalism, and diversity; and
- guide students to be "interculturalists" and global citizens. (p. viii)

For this reason, the activities suggested are not only useful for ESOL classrooms but also applicable for intercultural communication courses for those studying TESOL program. Though the authors tentatively claim only their experience in and the application of the practices North American contexts with international students and immigrants, readers may find their suggestions applicable in other English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts as well.

In chapter 1, Intercultural communication and teaching culturally diverse learners, the authors review the major concepts in intercultural communication including culture, identity, language, behaviors, cultural dimensions, stereotypes, ICC, cultural adaptation and the relationship among these elements in intercultural communication and ICC development. Even though the concepts cited and reviewed mostly come from social scientific approach, the authors address the topic tentatively and critically to avoid making essentialist assumptions of cultural similarities and differences. The part on dealing with stereotypes appeals more to critical perspective. Based on such critical review, the authors argue for the *whys* and map the *hows* to include intercultural components in ESOL teaching and learning. The *classroom best practices* part suggests various activities which are especially applicable for the contexts in which multicultural students find themselves in the new environment. They aim to empathize with and accommodate students during their cultural transition and identity development process. At the same time, they can promote teachers' professional development since understanding learners could be and should be the most important component of teachers' competence (Le, 2018). These suggested activities, strongly founded from the authors' teaching and consulting experience, though aim at students living and studying in new cultures, can also be applied for orientation courses preparing students before studying abroad and other students in language and/or intercultural communication course.

Chapter 2 discusses the role of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in language teaching and learning. In the theoretical part, the authors discuss the relationship between language and culture, the relevance of pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics in ESOL curriculum and review some ICC models and the measurement of ICC. The authors analyze how ICC elements can be found in the Canadian Language Benchmarks, the Massachusetts Framework and the Common European Framework. In trying to suggest ways to incorporate ICC into ESOL curriculum, the authors argue that doing needs analysis on the themes and topics for the program is necessary but not yet sufficient. They suggest taking into account the interactional process and the interpretation of interaction through dialogue, discussion and reflection in engaging learners in thinking about and developing their ICC. From such argument, the authors suggest best classroom practices such as creating opportunities for meaningful interaction, cultural learning, storytelling about culture and identity, cultural knowledge comparison and self-reflection about cultural behaviours.

Titled "teachers as intercultural informant and classroom strategist," chapter 3 outlines how teachers can be reflective on their own beliefs and practices to keep learning and to function as intercultural informant and strategically maneuver the classroom to exploit the best of the resources that multicultural students bring to the ESOL learning environment to resolve conflicts and to promote learning. In the theoretical part, the authors review the underlying culture, beliefs and biases behind teachers' identity and what it means to be cultural informants and cultural strategists for both native and non-native English teachers. They then provide practical suggestion on dealing with cultural conflicts between teachers and students and among students and capitalizing on cultural conflicts as learning opportunities for both teachers and students. They also suggest step-by-step guide to reflecting and understanding one's cultural identity, which can be applied not for both teachers and students' cultural learning.

Chapter 4 describes challenges of both students and teachers in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program and the cultural expectations of Western education from international students. The authors argue that improving intercultural awareness is a two-way process, in which the responsibilities of improving one's ICC lie not only in students but also in teachers and supporting staff. The authors also suggest various strategies and activities to accommodate students in dealing with the requirements of critical thinking, assignments and avoiding plagiarism such as using multiple forms of expressing knowledge, scaffolding students' critical thinking, training students in appropriate spoken and written discourse for academic encounters. Besides, they also suggest having staff and faculty trained in intercultural awareness and communication.

Chapter 5 discusses cultural integration in employment preparation programs. The authors argue for the necessity of intercultural communicative competence for ESOL learners to join the workforce as ICC is an important part of soft skills required in employment markets. They further discuss how cultural values and beliefs influence intercultural work experience, communication, networking, mentoring, and how teachers can model emotional intelligence in the classroom. The classroom best practice section suggests activities to prepare learners for job interviews, negotiating, providing constructive critical feedback and holding small talks. The activities suggested aim to develop ICCs and skills for the workplace and to help ESOL learn to establish a workplace cultural/professional identity.

Chapter 6 deals with technology and computer-mediated communication. Based on theoretical perspectives on multiliteracies and their connection to English learning and ICC development, the authors suggest how to use social media, and other online systems to facilitate student online communication, collaboration and develop online communication skills. Practical skills to develop ICC include writing email, chatting, and video conferencing to complete collaborative project. The authors also suggest interpreting and critically analyzing authentic texts to acquire cultural knowledge and develop necessary skills to for effective online communication.

In the conclusion, the authors reemphasize the importance of integrating intercultural competences in ESOL education. They emphasize that besides an understanding of theory, the integration requires a reconceptualization of the nature of ESOL teaching and learning, a change in the teachers' mindset about our role as cultural informants and strategist and a constant reconsideration of communication situations in terms of underlying cultural values and beliefs. These, they believe, help maintain diversity and inclusion practices and support learners in their process of understanding how culture shapes communication.

The book ends with five appendices providing updated additional resources related to intercultural communication for teachers' reference and consultation. In appendix A, understanding cultural preferences, various cultural dimensions are synthesized into a full length list of cultural preferences supposed to influence communication. Appendix B lists several models of intercultural competence including those by Deardorff (2006), Bennett (2004, 2014) and Arasaratnam (2009). Appendix C lists six principles of culture based on Atkinson's (1999). Appendix D suggests ways of observing and analyzing cultural behaviours adapted from the Massachusetts Department of Education, Adult and Community Learning Services (2005) and Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (2009). The last appendix is a figure summarizing workplace communication activities and the language required for them. This figure is taken from a larger research project of one of the authors (Mednick Myles, 2005)

The distinctive feature of this book is its meaningful practical suggestions to apply in ESOL teaching, learning and curriculum design based on sound understanding of relevant theories and research of both ESOL concepts and practices and intercultural communication literature. However, the book also has some minor drawbacks.

One drawback of the book is that sometimes the authors refer to native speakers as a target source of reference for learners. This is understandable since the authors are teaching non-native students who need to adapt to the larger host culture of North American contexts.

Another drawback is that some interpretation of learners' culture might need rechecking. For example, in the last section of chapter 6, their comments and analysis on students' email might need revising. The emails read as:

*Respected mam,*

*Could please recheck my essay. I am kind of thinking of better grade for the last one, if possible please forward me feedback for my essay. Please let me know where I was week. Your's faithfully (p. 167)*

*Dear Ms. Tuula,*

*I am very thankful to you for giving me second chance for the essay assignment. Please find attached herewith essay assignment and obliged. I'm not sure I pass hope so (p. 168)*

The interpretation of the authors which follow the two citations of the email includes:

*This student's writing could also be a loose translation from the first language and comes across rather bossy while it also makes us smile because we can see here the attempt made by the student to try to influence the professor about marking the essay. (p. 168)*

It might be true that the students' email could be a loose translation from the first language. It may also come across rather bossy, but since it may not be the students' intention to be bossy, the authors may add "come across rather bossy **to us**" to specify possible unintended effects of the communication due to different cultural expectation and interpretation. Furthermore, from my own cultural perspective, which might be closer to the students' in cultural position, I do not think that the students attempted to influence the professor about marking the essay in these two emails. The author use "we can see here the attempt" frames it to sound like a fact that visibly exists rather than a possible misinterpretation. An addition of a "smile" might also complicate this misunderstanding and misappreciation. In the following paragraph, still discussing these two emails, the authors write:

*Nevertheless, the email also shows respect for a professor by a student who sees the teacher in a much higher authority/ power position. The content of the message reveals the student's own view of his or her position as someone who is "weak" and in need of feedback and help. The writing here reveals clearly a perception of positions in a* *hierarchy that reflects the cultural values the learner has grown up with in a society that is much more socially stratified. This is not surprising, as this writer is originally from India. (p. 168),*

which sounds valid. However, let's look at the following sentences:

*It is not uncommon in India for families to attempt to use connections with people in positions of authority who can help them affect the outcome of their children's education or get access to coveted university and college positions. Though some of us have grown up with cultural values that condemn bribery and nepotism, we need to recognize that these practices are commonplace in many other cultures and countries in the world.*

In these sentences, the authors might just mean to describe cultural differences. However, though we do not know how widespread or common such practices that they describe are, people in India possibly do not support bribery and nepotism either. Indian people may also condemn bribery and nepotism as much as the authors do. Framing it this way and adding it after the interpretation of the examples of the students' emails might make the authors sound to us like being ethnocentric and using prejudice to judge students while the authors might only intend provide cultural background to promote cultural understanding.

As for presentation, a minor issue with the book is that it does not have a navigation view and the subsections are not numbered. This sometimes makes it hard to go back and forth to look for certain sections that the readers want to find. In addition, while naming one part as theoretical perspective and another equal part as classroom best practices, other parts in between these sections sometimes sound rather confusing because readers may not find it clear whether they belong to theory or practice section.

However, the book is a valuable resource for ESOL practitioners in both English as second language and English as a foreign language contexts, and not just for ESOL teachers but also teachers and trainers of intercultural communication. Teachers who prepare students for intercultural communication can also envision what contexts and situations students may find themselves in when joining intercultural academic and working environments based on suggestions in the book. Language and intercultural communication teacher trainers and curriculum developers of various backgrounds can also find this book a useful reference during their practices and program design.

## References

Le, V.C. (2018). Remapping the teacher knowledge-base of language teacher education: A Vietnamese perspective. *Language Teaching Research*. doi: 10.1177/1362168818777525

Lindholm, T., & Mednick Myles, J. (2019). *Navigating the Intercultural Classroom*. Alexandria, Virginia: TESOL International Association.

Oetzel, J., Pant, S., & Rao, N. (2016). Methods for intercultural communication research. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of communication*. doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.202

# 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 (02 số tiếng Việt/năm và 04 số tiếng Anh/năm từ năm 2019 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.


**Tạp chí *Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài*, Tầng 3, Nhà A1,**

**Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ - Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội, Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam**

**Website: https://js.vnu.edu.vn/FS/index**

**Email: tapchincnn@gmail.com / tapchincnn@vnu.edu.vn**

**ĐT.: (84-24) 62532956**

# INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

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 (2 Vietnamese and 4 English editions p.a. from 2019 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.

2. It is advisable that submitted articles cite AT LEAST one published article from this *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies.*

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.

6. References should be clarified in the main text. References are provided in their original (published) language, with each language arranged in a separate section in alphabetical order, with Vietnamese given first and foremost, e.g. Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian and Thai. References conform to APA standards, namely:

*+ Books:*

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.

*+ Online materials:*

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. Manuscripts should be sent to the editorial board at the email address below and will not be returned to the author(s) in case of rejection.

The author(s) must bear any legal responsibility for the article and references.

**VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, 3rd Floor, Building A1,**
**VNU University of Languages and International Studies, Pham Van Dong, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam**
**Website: https://js.vnu.edu.vn/FS/index**
**Email: tapchincnn@gmail.com / tapchincnn@vnu.edu.vn**
**Tel.: (84-24) 62532956**