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VIETNAMESE NON-ENGLISH MAJORED EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' RECEPTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MOST FREQUENT ENGLISH WORDS

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Abstract: The receptive knowledge of 442 non-English majored university students in a General English program in Vietnam was measured with Webb, Sasao, and Ballance's (2017) New Vocabulary Levels Test. It was found that despite 10 years of formal English language instruction, nearly half of the participants had not mastered the most frequent 1,000 words and more than 90% had not mastered the most frequent 2,000 words. The study calls for more attention to high-frequency words in English language instruction in Vietnamese EFL context.

Keywords: Vietnamese EFL learners; vocabulary knowledge; high frequency words; testing

1. Introduction

Vocabulary knowledge has a significant contribution to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' development of language skills as well as their overall language proficiency (Qian & Lin, 2020). Therefore, it is important for English language teachers to help learners achieve a solid knowledge of English words. Vocabulary researchers (e.g., Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2000) have suggested that EFL learners should learn words that occur frequently in the target language before words at lower frequency levels because words in the former group are smaller in number but may allow EFL learners to understand a much larger amount of text in various kinds of discourse. One question that arises is to what extent Vietnamese EFL learners know the most frequent words of English. Several studies have been conducted to address this question, but they focused on high school students (Nguyen, 2020; Vu & Nguyen, 2019), English majored university students (Nguyen & Nation, 2011; Nguyen & Webb, 2017), and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students (Dang, 2020a). To the best of my knowledge, no studies have measured knowledge of Vietnamese non-English majored university students who learn English for General Purposes although these students make up a large proportion of Vietnamese EFL learners. The present study was conducted to address this gap.

2. Which words should EFL learners know?

One question that many EFL teachers and learners wonder is how many words students need to know. A common assumption is that learners should learn all the words that are new to them. This is not a sensible decision. According to Oxford English Dictionary, there are about 600,000 words in English if each distinct sense is counted. Research also found that an average, educated, adult native speakers may know from 17,000-20,000 word families (Webb & Nation, 2017). A word family includes a base form (e.g., *inject*), its

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inflections (*injects, injected*, *injecting*), and derivations (*injector, injection*). Learning all the words existing in English or all the words known by native speakers of that language is a daunting task to most EFL learners given that they only learn about 400 word families per year (Webb & Chang, 2012). Therefore, vocabulary researchers (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2000) have suggested that a more useful and practical approach towards setting vocabulary learning goal is to target the words that learners need to know to complete certain tasks such as engaging in general conversations, watching television programs and movies, reading newspapers and academic texts, or listening to songs, academic lectures, and seminars. Corpus-based vocabulary studies analyzing vocabulary in corpora of different discourse types have indicated that EFL learners need to know from 3,000-9,000 word families to deal with these types of discourse (e.g., Dang & Webb, 2014; Nation, 2006; Tegg, 2017; Webb & Rodgers, 2009).

Given that learners should target the most frequent 9,000-word families, another question that emerges is which words should be learned first. Although different factors may affect the selection of words for learning, frequency is a key factor (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2000; Webb & Nation, 2017). This suggestion is supported by evidence from corpus-based analyses. Dang and Webb (2020) analyzed the occurrences of words in 18 corpora which represented different kinds of spoken and written discourse and varieties of English. They found that the most frequent 1,000 words (e.g., *great, know*) accounted for 65%-88% of the words in these corpora. In contrast, the most frequent 1,001st to 2,000th words (e.g., *combine, modern*) and the most frequent 2,001st to 3,000th words (e.g., *adolescent, comprehensive*) made up 2%-10% and 1%-8% of the words in these corpora, respectively. Words at lower 1,000-word frequency levels only covered no more than 1%. It means that if learners have time to learn 1,000 words, learning the 1,000 words at a higher frequency level would allow them to know a larger proportion of words than learning the 1,000 words at a lower frequency level. As the proportion of known words in a text is closely related to comprehension (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010; Schmitt, Jiang, & Grabe, 2011; van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013), learning words according to frequency would help learners to improve their comprehension significantly.

Based on frequency, words can be classified into high, mid, and low-frequency words (Nation, 2013; Schmitt & Schmitt, 2014). High-frequency words are those from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd 1,000-word levels. Mid-frequency words are those from the 4th to the 9th 1,000-word levels. Low-frequency words are those outside the most frequent 9,000 words. As high-frequency words accounted for most of the words in the texts, learning high-frequency words before mid and low-frequency words means that learners would need to learn a smaller number of words but may be able to know a larger proportion of words in a text, which can enhance their comprehension significantly. This would then create a firm foundation for further vocabulary development. For these reasons, high-frequency words have been widely accepted as the starting point for vocabulary learning.

Although teachers can rely on their intuition to select high-frequency words, human intuition varies (Alderson, 2007). Fortunately, by counting the occurrences of words in a range of texts which represent natural language use, corpus linguistics offers a reliable way to create lists of high-frequency words (Dang, 2020b). As a result, a number of high-frequency word lists have been created with the aim to represent high-frequency vocabulary: West's (1953) General Service List, Nation's (2006) list of the most frequent 2,000 words in the British National Corpus (BNC2000), Brezina and Gablasova's (2015) New General Service List, and Nation's (2012) most frequent 2,000 words in the British Nation corpus and the Corpus

of Contemporary American English (BNC/COCA2000). Given the number of available high-frequency word lists, subsequent studies (Dang & Webb, 2016a; Dang, Webb, & Coxhead, 2020) have been conducted using information from corpora, teachers, and learners to determine which list is the most relevant to EFL learners. In terms of the information from corpora, they compared the percentage of words covered by items from the four-word lists in 9 spoken corpora and 9 written corpora which represent various kinds of spoken and written discourse and varieties of English. In terms of the information from teachers, they examined the perceptions of 78 experienced English language teachers about the usefulness of the items in these lists for their learners. This involved the participations of 25 EFL/ESL teachers who were native speakers of English, 26 Vietnamese EFL teachers, and 27 EFL teachers from varying countries. In terms of the information from learners, they measured knowledge of 135 Vietnamese EFL university students. The results consistently suggested that Nation's (2012) BNC/COCA2000 is the most suitable high-frequency word list for EFL learners in general and Vietnamese EFL learners in particular.

3. EFL learners' knowledge of high-frequency words

Knowing a word means knowing its forms (spoken forms, written forms, word parts), meanings (forms and meaning, concept and referents, associations), and uses (grammatical functions, collocations, constraints on use) (Nation, 2013). Among these aspects, the form and meaning relationship is the most basic and important aspect of vocabulary knowledge because it provides the foundation for further learning of other aspects (Webb & Chang, 2012). For this reasons, previous research on EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge usually measured learners' knowledge of form and meaning relationship. Research with EFL learners in Denmark (Henriksen & Danelund, 2015; Stæhr, 2008), Spain (Olmos, 2009), Indonesia (Nurweni & Read, 1999), Taiwan (Webb & Chang, 2012), and China (Sun & Dang, 2020) has consistently shown that the majority of these learners have insufficient knowledge of the most frequent 2,000 words after a long period of formal English instruction.

Within the Vietnamese EFL context, Nguyen and Nation (2011) used the bilingual version of Nation and Belgar's (2007) Vocabulary Size Test to measure the vocabulary knowledge of 62 Vietnamese third year English majored students and found that these participants knew 6,000-7,000 words. While Nguyen and Nation (2011) provided a useful insight into the vocabulary knowledge of Vietnamese EFL learners, they used the Vocabulary Size Test to measure these learners' vocabulary knowledge. This test was originally designed to estimate the total number of words that test takers know and does not provide a precise picture of their knowledge of each 1,000-word frequency level (Nguyen & Webb, 2017). That is, although Nguyen and Nation's (2011) participants knew 6,000-7000 word families, it does not mean that they have mastered the most frequent 6,000-7,000 word families. For this reason, subsequent research on vocabulary knowledge of Vietnamese EFL learners has used tests that were specifically designed to measure vocabulary levels.

Two studies have been conducted to examine the vocabulary knowledge of high school students. Vu and Nguyen (2019) used Schmitt, Schmitt, and Clapham's (2001) Vocabulary Levels Test to measure the vocabulary knowledge of 500 Grade 12 high-school students. They reported a very small percentage of participants who had mastered the test levels: 14% (2,000 word level), 4.4% (3,000 word level), 4.6% (academic vocabulary), 0.8% (5000 word level) and 0.4% (10,000 word level). The Vocabulary Levels Test scores provide us with the information about the participants'

knowledge of important vocabulary levels. However, they do not provide a precise picture of their knowledge of each 1,000-word level. Moreover, West's (1953) General Service List was used to represent high-frequency words in the Vocabulary Levels Test. The General Service List is dated and does not represent current vocabulary as well as Nation's (2012) BNC/COCA2000 (Dang & Webb, 2016a; Dang, Webb, & Coxhead, 2020).

In recognition of the limitation of the Vocabulary Levels Test, Nguyen (2020) used Webb, Sasao, and Ballance's (2017) Updated Vocabulary Levels Test to measure the vocabulary knowledge of 422 high school students. Unlike Schmitt et al.'s (2001) Vocabulary Levels Test, Webb et al.'s (2017) Updated Vocabulary Levels Test has five levels, each of which measures knowledge of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th 1,000 most frequent words of English. Also, items in the Updated Vocabulary Levels Test were selected from Nation's (2012) BNC/COCA lists. Nguyen (2020) found that as a whole, the participants had mastered the 1,000 and 2,000-word levels, but had not mastered the 3,000, 4,000 and 5,000-word levels. Unfortunately, Nguyen did not report the results of individual students. Consequently, it is unclear from his study how many students had mastered each l,000-word level of the Updated Vocabulary Levels Test. That is, although the participants as a whole had demonstrated mastery of the 1,000 and 2,000-word levels, there might be chances that a proportion of participants had not mastered these levels.

Two studies have been conducted to examine the vocabulary levels of university students. Both of them used Webb et al.'s (2017) Updated Vocabulary Levels Test and their findings are in line with Vu and Nguyen's (2019) findings. Nguyen and Webb's (2017) study with 100 first year English majored students showed that as a whole these students had mastered only the most frequent 1,000 words and had yet to master the 2,000 and 3,000 words. Similarly, Dang's (2020a) study with 66 first year EAP students revealed that only less than 20% of these participants had mastered the most frequent 2,000 words. The remaining participants either had mastered the most frequent 1,000 words (nearly 60%) or had yet to master the most frequent 1,000 words (more than 20%). It is important to note that Nguyen and Webb's (2017) participants were English majored students and Dang's (2020a) participants were EAP students. In Vietnamese EFL context, English-majored students and EAP students tend to study English more intensively and have higher language proficiency than non-English majored students. As most Vietnamese EFL university students are non-English majored students who learn English for General Purposes, measuring the vocabulary knowledge of this group of learners would provide further insights into the vocabulary level of Vietnamese EFL learners.

4. The present study and research question

Expanding on previous studies (Dang, 2020a; Nguyen & Webb, 2017), the present study used Webb et al. (2017) Updated Vocabulary Levels Test to measure the vocabulary knowledge of non-English EFL learners in a General English program at a university in the north of Vietnam. Similar to non-English majored students at many universities in Vietnam, these students learned General English as a compulsory course in their first year at university. The research question that the study aims to address is:

To what extent do Vietnamese non-English majored EFL students know words at the 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 5000-word frequency levels?

This study would provide a precise picture of Vietnamese non-English majored EFL students' knowledge of the most frequent 5,000 words of English as well as further insights into the effectiveness of the English language programs in Vietnam on vocabulary development.

5. Methodology

5.1. Participants

The participants were 442 Vietnamese EFL first year non-English majored students at a university in Hanoi, Vietnam. The participants shared features of non-English majored students in many universities in Vietnam. They had studied English for 10 years. Their ages ranged from 17 to 19 years old. At the time of the data collection, they were in the first semester of their first year at university. Based on their scores on the university's placement English tests, the students' general level of proficiency was estimated to be pre-intermediate, which corresponds to the A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

5.2. Instrument

Webb et al.'s (2017) Updated Vocabulary Levels Test was conducted to measure the receptive vocabulary levels of the learners in the present study. The test was in the form of word-definition matching (see Figure 1). It has five levels: 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, and 5,000 word levels. Each test level has 10 sections. Each section has six words together with three definitions. Test-takers have to choose three out of the six words to match with the three definitions. To master a level, test takers need to get 29 out of 30 correct answers.

	average	discipline	knowledge	pocket	trap	vegetable
food grown in gardens						
information which a person has						
middle number						

Figure 1. Examples of the New Vocabulary Levels Test item

5.3. Procedure

The paper-and-pencil version of the NVLT was downloaded from Stuart Webb's and delivered to the participants in the first session of their English language course at university as part of the entry test. The students were informed that the test results would not affect their academic results, but would be used for research purposes to help teachers adjust their instructions to match learners' levels. Students were given as much time as they needed to complete the test.

6. Results

The Updated Vocabulary Levels Test scores of the participants were statistically analyzed with an SPSS for Microsoft Window Release 23.0 package. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics (mean, min, max, and standard deviations) of the participants' scores on the Updated Vocabulary Levels Test. The first row of this table shows that the mean scores of these learners decreased according to the test levels, from 27.73 (1,000 word level) to 19.96 (2,000 word level), 13.11 (3,000 word level), 10.23 (4,000 word level) and then 7.95 (5,000 word level).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the Updated Vocabuary Levels Test (N = 442)

Correct responses	1,000	2,000	3,000	4,000	5,000	Total
Mean	27.73	19.96	13.11	10.23	7.95	78.98
Min	20	0	0	0	0	26
Max	30	30	30	30	30	149
SD	2.62	7.23	8.13	7.92	7.67	29.33
Percentage of correct responses	92.43%	66.53%	43.70%	34.10%	26.50%	52.65%

As normality was confirmed, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare learners' scores at the 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, and 5,000-word levels. It was shown that there was statistically significant differences in the mean scores across five levels of the test, Wilks' Lambda = .007, F (5, 435) = 13142.51, p <.0005, η^2=.99. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that knowledge of words at higher frequency levels is significantly higher than knowledge of words at lower frequency levels. This finding indicates that the receptive vocabulary knowledge of the learners in this study followed the typical lexical profile. That is, they knew more words at higher frequency levels than words at lower frequency levels. To master a level of the Updated Vocabulary Levels Test, learners need to get at least 29 out of 30 correct answers per level (the 1,000, 2,000, and 3,000-word levels) and at least 24 out of 30 correct answer per level (the 4,000 and 5,000-word levels) (Webb et al., 2017). Applying these criteria, as a whole group, the learner participants had not mastered any levels of the Updated Vocabulary Levels Test. When the data of each student were examined, as shown in Figure 2, 90.05% of the participants had not mastered the most frequent 2,000 words. Seriously, nearly half of the participants had not mastered the most frequent 1,000 words.

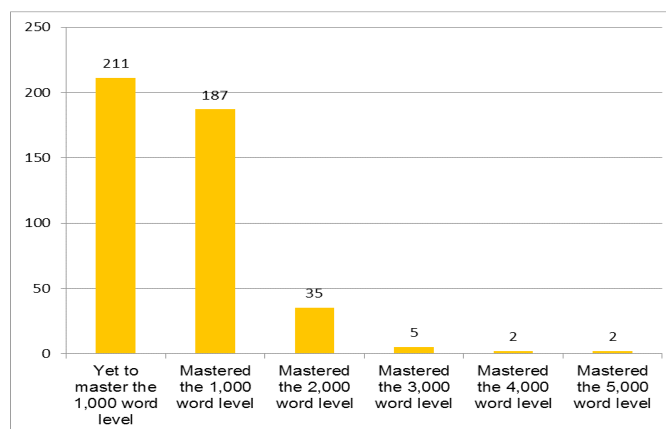

Figure 2. The number of students mastering each level of Webb, Sasao, and Balance's (2017) Updated Vocabulary Levels Test (N=442)

7. Discussion

This study found that nearly half of the participants had not mastered the most frequent 1,000 words and more than 90% of the participants had not mastered the most frequent 2,000 words. It is important to note that this study only measured receptive knowledge of form and meaning relationship, a basic aspect of vocabulary knowledge (Schmitt, 2010; Webb & Chang, 2012). Learning and using a word receptively is much easier than learning and using it productively (Nation, 2013). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that the participants' productive levels were even lower. The finding of this study is in line with previous studies conducted with other groups of Vietnamese EFL learners (Dang, 2020a; Nguyen & Webb, 2017; Vu & Nguyen, 2019). It is slightly different from Nguyen's (2020) findings. This different is probably because Nguyen did not report the scores of individual students, which makes it unclear about the proportion of learners mastering each level

of the test. The finding of the present study is also consistent with the findings of previous studies with EFL learners in Denmark (Henriksen & Danelund, 2015; Stæhr, 2008), Spain (Olmos, 2009), Indonesia (Nurweni & Read, 1999), Taiwan (Webb & Chang, 2012), and China (Matthews & Cheng, 2015; Sun & Dang, 2020).

There are two possible reasons for this alarming picture of the participants' vocabulary knowledge. The first reason may be the lack of input in EFL contexts. For second language vocabulary learning to happen, learners need to have a lot of exposure to the target language (Webb & Nation, 2017). However, in EFL contexts such as in Vietnam, the input is very limited; classrooms appear to be the main environment for learners to get exposure to English. The lack of input would limit the chances of learning the most frequent words incidentally. The second reason may be the lack of a systematic focus on high-frequency words, especially the most frequent 1,000 words in EFL learning programs. Dang, Webb, and Coxhead (under review) found a strong correlation between the words perceived as being useful by Vietnamese EFL teachers and the words learned by Vietnamese EFL learners. This suggests teachers play a significant part in Vietnamese EFL learners' vocabulary development; that is, the words that teachers introduce to students are likely to be learned by learners. Dang and Webb's (2020) survey with experienced Vietnamese EFL teachers revealed that textbooks and tests are among the key factors affecting teachers' selection of words for instructions. Yet O'Loughlin's (2012) study of the vocabulary in the *New English File* textbooks, the course book which happened to be the textbook used by the participants in the present study, revealed that these textbooks contained a substantial number of low-frequency words while having an insufficient number of high-frequency words (1,435 out of the most frequent 2,000 word families). Similarly, in a thorough analysis of the reading texts in the new series of Grade 10, 11 and 12 English textbooks, Nguyen (2020) found that to reach 95% coverage of these texts, Vietnamese EFL learners would need a vocabulary size of 5,000 word families. Moreover, only 11.46% of the novel words presented in the textbooks were important for facilitating students' comprehension of the text content and only about 4.2% of the novel words occurred at least six times in the texts. Drawing on these findings, Nguyen (2020) suggested that high-school students may be overloaded with the large amount of new vocabulary presented in the textbooks and have few chances to consolidate and expand their vocabulary knowledge. Vu (2019) analyzed the lexical profile of high-school graduation exam papers and found that to reach 95% coverage, which indicated reasonable comprehension, knowledge of the most frequent 6,000 word families was needed. Considering the lexical demand of these tests with the vocabulary knowledge of high-school students reported in Vu and Nguyen (2019), Vu suggested that the high school graduation exam papers may be too demanding for students in terms of vocabulary.

Taken together, the findings of the current study echo the argument that institutional language learning programs should pay more attention to high-frequency words so that class time will be effectively used in helping learners master the words that are crucial for their language development (Dang & Webb, 2016a, 2016b; Nation, 2016; Webb & Chang, 2012). Although the most frequent 3,000 words should be the crucial vocabulary learning goals to Vietnamese EFL learners. Achieving this goal at once may be too demanding for many students. As shown in the present study and other studies with Vietnamese EFL learners (Dang, 2020a; Nguyen & Webb, 2017; Vu & Nguyen 2019), there are a considerable number of Vietnamese EFL learners having insufficient knowledge of the most frequent 1,000 words. It would be more sensible to draw beginner learners'

attention to the most frequent words of English first. One possible option is Dang and Webb's (2016b) Essential Word List. This list was designed specifically for EFL beginners. It consisted of 800 strongest items selected from the GSL, BNC2000, BNC/COCA2000, and New-GSL. Learning only 800 items from this list, learners may be able to recognize up to 75% of the words in English language. This would create a solid foundation for further vocabulary learning.

To help learners learn high-frequency words, especially items from the Essential Word List, teachers should create plenty of opportunities for them to repeatedly encounter these words in different contexts both inside and outside classroom by following Nation's (2007) Four Strands principles: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, fluency development, and language-focused learning. Meaning-focused input activities help students to gain vocabulary knowledge by encountering the words repeatedly through listening and reading (e.g., extensive reading, extensive viewing) while meaning-focused output activities (e.g., writing emails, telling stories) are opportunities from them to learn vocabulary through writing and speaking. The importance of combining meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output is evident in Nguyen and Boer's (2018) study which found that the experimental group who watched a video, summarized the content of the video and watched it again picked up more words from the input than the control group who only watched the video twice without producing the output. Fluency development activities (e.g., speed reading, listening to easy stories, 10 minute writing) help students to learn through all four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Unlike meaning-focused input and output activities, fluency development activities do not aim to teach students new vocabulary but enable them to be able to use known items fluently. While meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, and fluency development activities draw learners' attention to the meaning, language-focused learning activities (e.g., learning from word cards, checking dictionaries) draw their attention to the words themselves. Language-focused learning activities are important because the vocabulary gained from incidental learning (meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output activities) is much lower than the vocabulary gained from incidental learning (meaning-focused input and output activities) plus deliberate learning (language focused learning) (Sobul & Schmitt, 2010). Additionally, not all aspects of vocabulary knowledge can be incidentally learned (Webb & Nation, 2017). For example, Hoang and Boer (2016) found that even advanced level learners tend not to pay much attention to the multiword units in the input that they encountered, which highlights the significant role of explicit instruction in vocabulary learning and teaching.

As mentioned, there are a large number of words in English, which makes it impossible to teach all of these words within the limited class time. Therefore, it should be noted that while language-focused learning activities are important, they should not account for more than 25% of the class time (Nation, 2007). Also, these activities should focus on (a) helping learners learn and consolidate their knowledge of high-frequency words and (b) training vocabulary learning strategies so that they can keep expanding their vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2013). Explicit instruction of the most frequent words ensures that learners will master the words that enable them to deal with a range of tasks in their future use of the language. Training vocabulary learning strategies such as dictionary checking and corpus-based analysis helps to develop learners' autonomy and expand their vocabulary knowledge (Bui, Boers, & Coxhead, 2019). This study has several limitations which deserves attention from further research. It only measured the

receptive vocabulary knowledge of Vietnamese non-English majored students in a university in the north of Vietnam. Studies that measure both the depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge of learners in other contexts may provide further insights into Vietnamese EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge.

8. Conclusion

This study is among the very few attempts to measure Vietnamese EFL learners' receptive vocabulary knowledge. It revealed that despite many years of studying English, most of the learners had insufficient knowledge of high-frequency words, especially the most frequent 1,000 words. It then calls for more attention to high-frequency words, especially items from Dang and Webb's (2016b) Essential Word List.

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Biodata

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KIẾN THỨC TIẾP NHẬN TỪ VỰNG THÔNG DỤNG TRONG TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN VIỆT NAM HỆ TIẾNG ANH KHÔNG CHUYÊN

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu sử dụng bài kiểm tra cấp độ từ vựng của Webb, Sasao và Balance (2017) để đo kiến thức tiếp nhận từ vựng của 422 sinh viên đại học hệ Tiếng Anh không chuyên trong một chương trình Tiếng Anh phổ thông ở Việt Nam. Kết quả cho thấy sau 10 năm học tiếng Anh, gần một nửa số sinh viên này vẫn chưa đạt được mức 1000 từ thông dụng trong tiếng Anh, và hơn 90% sinh viên chưa đạt được mức 2000 từ thông dụng. Nghiên cứu đề xuất việc giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở Việt Nam nên chú trọng hơn tới những từ thông dụng trong tiếng Anh.

Từ khóa: sinh viên Việt Nam học tiếng Anh như ngôn ngữ nước ngoài, kiến thức từ vựng, từ thông dụng, kiểm tra

TEACHERS' WRITTEN FEEDBACK: HOW TO MAKE IT WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY IN A LANGUAGE CLASSROOM?

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Abstract: Teachers' response to student writing is a vital, though neglected, aspect of second language composition research. This present study adds to previous research through the development and implementation of an original study which investigates the current feedback-giving practice of the teachers and their students' opinions on feedback as well as their recommendations for improving it. The subjects involved in the study were 200 second-year students and 20 teachers at the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) under Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU) who are currently teaching or have taught writing before. These teachers and students were invited to join the survey, to answer the questionnaires, to participate in the interview, and to provide the source for observation. The research reveals that there exist a lot of problems concerning teachers' responding methods, their feedback focus, their frequent types and forms of feedback as well as what they have actually done to help their students process feedback successfully. Meanwhile, the students report their opinions and preferences for more effective teachers' feedback, which clearly reveals the mismatch between what the teachers often give and what the students would like to get. On this basis, the study recommends several important directions for teachers to utilize in improving their feedback, helping students process feedback more effectively and thus creating a condition in which learners learn to write more easily and successfully.

Keywords: feedback, process-based vs. product-based approach, content, form, revision

1. Rationale

As the process-oriented pedagogy has permeated the writing instructions over the past two decades, teachers have encouraged or required their students to write multiple drafts and explored various ways to provide feedback in order to help students revise their writings. Techniques used to provide feedback to students have included peer reviews, teacher-student conferences, and audiotaped commentary. Still, for many teachers, handwritten commentary on students' drafts is the primary method of response.

Despite the importance of teachers' written feedback, research in this area has been surprisingly scarce. In addition, many studies which have been done so far lack consensus over how teachers should respond to students' writing. Some others have been limited in terms of scale and sample size. Still, some others have examined only a single aspect of teachers' feedback, thus yielding insufficient information concerning the matter area.

In the meantime, in Vietnam, there have been few or no studies into feedback in general and teachers' feedback in particular. At the Faculty of English Language Teacher Education (FELTE), ULIS-VNU, there have

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been no attempts to investigate the issue. It would appear that the teachers' current responding practice is lacking in specific theoretical foundations.

The above reasons have urged the author, who is also the teacher of composition at the Faculty, to explore this important, but by no means neglected issue in an attempt to address the gap in the literature and to offer the teachers in her Faculty, in the second English division in particular, ways on how they should respond to students' writing.

2. Purposes of the study

This research is designed to break new ground in examining teachers' written feedback on the second-year students' writings at FELTE, ULIS-VNU. It wishes to achieve the three primary aims:

(i) to investigate the teachers' feedback-giving practice in the second-year writing classes;

(ii) to investigate the students' reactions towards the feedback they received and their recommendations for improving it;

(iii) to propose some recommendations and suggestions for the teachers to improve their practice.

To achieve the above-mentioned aims, the following research questions were asked:

(i) How do the teachers respond to the students' writing?

(ii) What have the teachers done to help the students process their feedback successfully?

(iii) What problems do the teachers encounter in responding to the students' writing?

(iv) What are the students' opinions on the feedback they received?

(v) What do the students want their teachers to do to help them revise more effectively?

3. Theoretical background

3.1. An overview of the process approach

Central to this approach is the view that writing is a process which contains a number of stages or activities writers have to go through in order to produce a good piece of writing. But this process is not a straightforward, plan-outline-write process that many believe it to be; rather it is a *"complex, recursive, and creative process whereby the writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning"* (Zamel, 1983, p. 165). Guidance through and intervention in the process were seen preferable to control – that is, the early and perhaps premature imposition of organizational patterns or syntactic or lexical constraints. Content, ideas, and the need to communicate would determine form. In essence, *"composing means expressing ideas, conveying meaning. Composing means thinking"* (Raimes, 1992, p. 261)

This focus on content to the exclusion of form, however, has been the target for attack by the academic community, who argued, *"student writing must fall within the range of acceptable writing behaviors dictated by the academic community"* (Silva, 1990, p. 17).

Therefore, it seems a comprehensive theory integrating a focus on product into the process approach is the most satisfactory alternative to the previously described, dogmatic theories in the sense that it can guarantee the quality of both form and content as Reid (1993, p. 30) stated, such an approach enables *"learners to write their way into more precise, interpretive texts, while at the same time fostering greater attention to forms of the writing, to reflection on what is involved in the creation of a text and to adapting writing style to the audience and context of writing"*.

3.2. Stages in the writing process

Process writing as a classroom activity incorporates the five basic writing stages: prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, and editing – and three other stages externally imposed on students by the teachers, namely, responding, evaluating, and post-writing. Among these stages teacher's responding is proved to be an indispensable part of the process. Therefore, the following section will

look specifically at teacher feedback as the main component of this stage.

3.3. Theoretical background to teachers' feedback

3.3.1. Definition of feedback

Feedback is generally defined as "*any input from reader to writer that provides information for revision"* (Keh, 1989, p. 18). Students need this kind of information from different angles apart from their own in order to develop their writing more comprehensively. Teachers' feedback is thus truly an effective means to instruct the students on how to revise their papers.

3.3.2. The importance of teachers' feedback

Feedback, first of all, is considered a pedagogical tool for students' writing improvement. According to Leki (1990), teachers' feedback can even serve as *"the final arbiter of whether a writer will continue to write at all"* (p. 58). In addition, provision of comments helps individualize writing instructions in that the student writers will be able to get individual attention to have their own needs or problems rightfully addressed (Reid, 1993). Especially, when feedback is combined with instruction in the writing process, the dialogue between student and teachers' is strengthened. Giving and receiving feedback also helps students to develop *"reader sensitivity"* and their own writing style. Thus feedback is essential to student writing because it creates a context in which students learn to write better and more easily.

3.3.3. Approaches to giving feedback

a. Single-draft approach

Under this approach teachers' responding to students' writing were fairly straightforward. Students write a paper; teachers' return it with a grade and errors marked in red, and perhaps with a few notes of students' performance; and then they switch to a new lesson, students would write a new paper and repeat the process. This traditional practice of one-shot commenting on students' writing proves to be ineffective to students' revision. Therefore, a new approach – the multiple–draft approach to feedback giving seems to be a better alternative.

b. Multiple-draft approach

This approach requires teachers as part of their instructional role to respond to students' writing as a process, to lead students through several revision cycles before asking them to submit the final piece for evaluation. One advantage of this method is that it gives writers more chance to develop and present their ideas effectively. Another is that it helps avoid turning each paper into a miniature test on which teachers simultaneously comment and evaluate. It thus shows students that writing is the process of improving through revising based on teachers' feedback, rather than a single act of producing one and also the final draft for teachers' evaluation.

3.3.4. Focus of teachers' feedback

As teachers are engaged in the process of responding, they are faced with a very fundamental question of what the focus of their feedback should be. Traditionally, teachers and researchers focused mainly on form and the final product. In recent years, there has been emphasis placed on the writing process. Many "process" teachers have focused their comments on an essay's overall shape and intention to help writers present their ideas effectively. Still, some others maintain a strong interest in correctness in spite of this recent focus (Fathman & Whaley, 1990). Researchers in the field suggested that teachers should pay attention to both content and form of students' writing because any either of them can negatively affect the quality of the written product. Another question to follow is whether these two feedback types should be provided simultaneously or separately. The answer differed among researchers, which suggested that more studies are needed in order to seek more insights into the problem.

3.3.5. Types of teachers' feedback

a. Marginal feedback versus end feedback

Marginal feedback is a kind of feedback that is written in the margin or between sentence lines of students' paper. It refers to the teacher's immediate intervention in discrete parts of the students' draft. By contrast, summary feedback at the end of the paper is normally an overview of more consideration in an essay.

b. Negative feedback versus positive feedback

Research into positive and negative comments suggested that students appear to enjoy and appreciate praises; however, they do expect to receive constructive criticism and are not necessarily offended by this. Therefore, teachers should strive for a balance, providing some praise for students' efforts, but not forgetting their crucial instructional role of helping students to revise and improve on what they have done badly.

c. Text-specific feedback versus general feedback

Text-specific feedback is a kind of comment that directly relates to the text at hand whereas general feedback can be attached to any paper. Teachers' feedback is more helpful if it is text-specific (Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985; Hillocks, 1986; Reid, 1993; Seow, 2002). However, Ferris (1997) urged that there is a role in teachers' commentary for general responses. A general response of encouragement is no doubt better than none. Her view has been well supported by Fathman and Whalley's perspective: *"general comments that do not refer to specifics within the text can be effective ... giving encouragements helped improve the students' rewrites."* (1990, p. 186)

3.3.6. Forms of teachers' written feedback

According to Ferris (1997), teachers' feedback generally operates within these four basic syntactic forms: question, statement, imperative, and exclamation, which present different pragmatic aims such as giving or asking for further information, making requests for revision, giving positive feedback about what the student has done well. Since each form has its own problems, teachers are recommended to be careful in constructing their own feedback forms, in explaining those feedback forms together with their pragmatic intents to students, and most importantly, in helping students process the comments and revise their drafts effectively.

3.3.7. Issues in teachers' written feedback

a. Appropriating students' texts

This is a phenomenon understood as *"teachers' comments (can) take students' attention away from their own purposes in writing a particular text and focus that attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting"* (Sommers, 1982, p. 149); or to put it simply, it is the situation where teachers try to rewrite students' text. Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) thought that it is demotivating to students. To avoid such problem, teachers are advised to *"serve as a sounding board"* to help writers clarify their intentions, to *"see confusions in the text"* and to *"explore alternatives that they may not have considered"* (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982, p. 162). In short, teachers should act as the co-interpreter of students' writing and the facilitator of the revision process.

b. Overlooking students' varying levels of writing ability

Another problem in teachers' written response is that they often treat all students alike when responding to their writing. In other words, their responses lack discriminating capacity to separate students from each other. In fact, previous research has proven that learners are different in terms of their ability, creativity, metacognition, etc. Each learner exhibits distinct characteristics that parallel their respective performance in their learning process. In writing, researchers found individuals' differences may lie in their

respective approaches to revision. Therefore, Ferris et al (1995) recommended that writing teachers should respond somewhat differently to students of varying ability levels. However, the matter of how to do so remains unexplored in the relevant literature.

4. Methodology

4.1. Subjects

The subjects chosen for the study include 200 second-year students and 20 teachers who are currently teaching or have taught writing at the Faculty.

4.2. Instrumentation

In order to obtain adequate data for the study, four main instruments were used.

Instrument one: A questionnaire completed by the students

This questionnaire, which consists of 10 questions, was designed to elicit the information concerning the students' reactions or opinions about teachers' written feedback, factors affecting their comprehension of feedback, and their recommendations for improving it.

Instrument two: A questionnaire completed by the teachers

This questionnaire was intended to investigate the practices of giving feedback by the teachers in the Faculty who are teaching or have taught writing to second-year students before. It also consists of 10 questions, one of which is open-ended.

Instrument three: Tape-recorded interviews

A one-to-one interview was conducted after the administration of student questionnaire in each class. The questions in the interviews were basically based on those in the questionnaire, but were extended to include more open-ended questions to get more thorough understanding of the rationale behind each students' choice. Each conversation lasted for 15 – 20 minutes.

Instrument four: The teachers' written commentary on the students' first and second drafts

The teachers' comments on the students' first and second drafts of the first three assignments were examined in order to obtain the most truthful information concerning the teachers' current practices of giving feedback in the English Division 2. Conclusions would then be made from the practices in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. This information will be triangulated to confirm and support the data collected from other sources, or it may reveal some other issues that the previous methods have not touched upon.

4.3. Data collection

On the first day of the survey, 20 sheets of questionnaire were delivered to the teachers in the Faculty. On the next two days, sets of student questionnaire were delivered to the second-year students. The required permissions needed to gain access to the students had been obtained in advance. Ten students were chosen by chance from the survey population to take part in a one-to-one interview.

After the interviews, the researcher asked for permissions from interviewees to collect their own drafts on which their teachers had commented so far. They were all willing to lend her some after the researcher ensured them that their names would not be identified in the data discussion. The copies of the first and second drafts contained handwritten commentary (marginal notes, between-sentence line notes, and endnotes) provided by the teachers. In all, I gathered 17 papers from the students (3-6 drafts per students). Of these, eleven first drafts and three revised drafts were usable for examination; the others were discarded because of the problem with photocopying. The reason why I could collect only five second drafts from the students was that some of the teachers in these classes did

not require or ask their students to write a second version of the same paper.

4.3. Data analysis

This part of the study is the treatment of all the data collected from the survey questionnaires conducted on 20 teachers and 200 second-year students of English in the Faculty, the direct interviews with ten students and the analysis of the teachers' commentary on the students' sample drafts.

4.3.1. Data analysis of teachers' survey questionnaire

4.3.1.1 Teachers' demographic information

Among the 20 teachers taking part in the study, there were only three male teachers. The teachers' ages ranged from 23 to 45. Their experience in teaching English varied from less than a year to 23 years, during which they have spent from half a year to 10 years teaching writing to second-year students. Of these 20 teachers, about five had to take charge of two writing classes per semester. This means they had six periods of writing to teach per week and correspondingly, they had to mark as many as about 50 papers per week. This amount of marking was quite overwhelming to the researcher's belief.

4.3.1.2. Analysis of teachers' survey questionnaire

a. Teachers' responding practices

What is the purpose of the teachers' feedback?

Table 1. Teachers' purposes of giving feedback

Purposes	Number of teachers	Percentage
a. to help students improve their writing	20	100
b. to justify for the grade	7	35
c. to inform students that teachers are more knowledgeable than them	0	0
d. to enhance the relationship between teachers and students	10	50

According to the information obtained from the survey, teachers might provide feedback to the students' writing for several important reasons, but the most important one was that they wanted to help their students improve the writing. This purpose has been realized by 100% of the teachers in the survey. Besides, nearly half of them used feedback as a base to justify for the grade they gave to their students. 50% of them utilized it as a means to enhance the relationship between them and the students. None of the respondents responded to the students' writing so as to demonstrate that teachers are in fact more knowledgeable than their learners.

How many times do the teachers respond to each of the students' assignments?

In terms of the number of times the teachers commented on each of the students' writing assignments, the majority of the subjects (14) employed one-shot commentary approach to respond to the students' writing, which means they responded and simultaneously evaluated the students' only one and also the final draft. Four other teachers seemed to be aware of the distinction between responding and evaluating, thus they commented on the first draft and then left the evaluation (in the form of grading) until the second, also the final draft. The two remaining teachers appeared to realize the benefit of the process of responding by commenting twice on the first and second draft, and leaving their evaluation to the final version when the student writing had been fully developed.

Which aspects in the students' writing do the teachers focus their feedback on?

The data showed that the teachers concentrated on different features of the writing. Eleven teachers in the survey concerned themselves with the construction

of the paragraph, grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, and organization of ideas, but purposely not with content. They expressed the view that the students benefited most from comments about mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary. In addition, the comments of this nature did not take much time to write.

Three other teachers reported focusing on all six elements, with the emphasis on form – that is, the structure of the paragraph. They believed that form was of paramount importance to paragraph writing and that when marking the student writing, they could not help paying primary attention to this element.

The rest of the teachers (6) stated that they focused on the accuracy of grammar, vocabulary, and the organization of ideas. They felt that the students benefited most from comments on grammar. They occasionally gave comments about content and they deemed mechanics as trivial and not worth being commented on at all.

How often do the teachers use the following kinds of feedback to respond to the students' writing?

Table 2. Types and frequency of teacher feedback

Feedback type	**Frequency(%)**		
	never	**sometimes**	**frequently**
marginal	10	45	45
end	50	25	25
specific	30	40	30
general	20	20	60
positive	45	30	25
negative	0	25	75

Table 2 reveals the sorts of feedback the teachers in FELTE never, sometimes, or frequently gave to their students. Each kind will be discussed in relation with the others.

In terms of the location of feedback, teachers in the Faculty tend to locate their comments in the margin of the students' papers. Surprisingly, about half of the surveyed population responded that they had never written any end comments in the student writing. This was probably due to the fact that these instructors did not have enough time to write long and summative comments, thus resorting to the formative ones as the main source of feedback.

To the question of whether the teachers in the survey provided general or specific feedback, the data showed that general comments were utilized more often by the majority of the teachers than the specific ones. This indicated that the responses the writers often received from their instructors were general, but not very specific. This comment type sometimes bewildered the recipients, thus confusing them, instead of helping them. Again, these teachers might not have enough time to write detailed commentary on every paper.

Also according to Table 2, the majority of the respondents tended to concentrate on the students' weaknesses, pointing out problems, rather than praising them for their strengths. These teachers probably thought that this was what their students actually needed and this was what they really expected their teacher feedback to be. Therefore, it was not surprising to discover that nearly half of the study population (45%) had never provided positive comments on the students' drafts.

How often do they use the following forms to provide feedback to the students' writing?

Table 3. Forms and frequency of teachers' feedback

Forms of feedback	Frequency (%)		
	never	**sometimes**	**frequently**
a. question	20	70	10
b. statement	0	20	80
c. imperative	0	15	85
d. exclamation	25	65	10
e. marking the errors, but not actually correcting them	15	10	75

Among the forms used to provide feedback to the students' writing, imperative was utilized the most often by an overwhelming number of the respondents (17). This revealed that the comments the writers often received from their teachers were mostly orders with which they were supposed to comply. Statement was often used by as many as 16 teachers. Merely identifying the location of errors is also usually employed by 15 teachers. Exclamation and question are in relatively equal use with 10% of the teachers frequently, 65% sometimes, 25% never and 10% frequently, 70% sometimes, 20% never respectively.

b. Helping the students process feedback

Do the teachers often take the students' varying levels of writing ability into consideration when designing feedback?

100% of the teacher subjects admitted that this idea had never occurred to their mind and even one of them put a question like *"What have the students' different levels of writing ability got to do with the way they revise their papers?"*

Do they explain their responding strategies to the students before applying them?

When asked in the next item on the questionnaire whether the teachers explain feedback strategies to the student writers before employing them, all of the subjects chose the option "No". Like the previous item, these teachers said that this idea never came to their mind.

Have the teachers ever asked their students to write a letter to tell them what they really thought about the feedback they received?

Likewise, when being asked whether they have ever intended to get feedback from their students concerning what the students really thought about the feedback they received, 100% of them admitted that they had never done as such. Consequently, these teachers have missed an opportunity to get to know what the students actually do when they revise, how they address the comments and why they disregard some of them; as for the writers, they would never have a chance to express their own feelings or opinions on the feedback they receive. Confusions, misunderstandings, or even ineffective revisions still pervade unless the instructors encourage thoughtful responses from their own students.

c. Teachers' problems in responding to the students' writing

With regards to the problems teachers encountered when giving feedback, most of them complained that written comments were time-consuming. Some of them thought that the students were not interested in their feedback. Some others disclosed that the students often made the same mistakes again. The respondents also specified some other difficulties such as sometimes the students' papers contained a lot of serious mistakes; as a result, they had to give a lot of comments and corrections throughout. Ultimately, they felt that the students' papers were not their own writing, but their teachers'.

What should the teachers do to improve their current feedback to help the students revise their papers more effectively?

At the end of the questionnaire, no recommendations were given. Possibly, these teachers had no idea of how to improve their current feedback or they might not have been aware of the great importance of effective and genuine feedback on the students' revision.

4.3.2. Data analysis of students' survey questionnaire and direct interviews

4.3.2.1. Students' demographic information

Table 4. Respondents by age and gender

Age	Number of students		Total
	Male	Female	
19	3	26	29
20	11	72	83
21	10	72	82
22	0	5	5
23	0	1	1
Total	24	176	200

The total number of the students chosen in the study was 200 of which 24 were male and 176 were female. Most of them were aged between 20 and 21 (165 students, accounting for 82.5% of the subjects). 21 students were 19 years old. The rest of the students belonged to the age groups of 22 and 23.

Table 5. Respondents' learning experience and place of domicile

	Students' learning experience			Place of domicile		
	5-7	8-10	11-13	Countryside	Town	City
Number of students	112	67	21	92	80	28
Percentage	56	33.5	10.5	46	40	14

The majority of the study subjects came from the countryside (92 students) and from towns (80 students) while 28 were from big cities like Hanoi, Hai Phong, or Nam Dinh. Their different places of domicile reflect their different learning backgrounds.

The number of years they had been learning English ranged from 5 to 13 years. More than half of them (112 students) had spent from 5 to 7 years studying English, and 67 of them had learning the language for 8 to 10 years. Only 21 students had experience of 11-13 years in learning English. None of the students had studied English abroad.

The students have been studying writing for at least a year at the University. Their average mark in the first-year final writing test varied from 5 to 9 out of 10. About 43% of them had got marks from 5 to 6, and 52% from 7 to 8. Approximately 5% of the whole survey population got mark 9 in their final test. These different test results reflect the varying ability levels of writing possessed by the second-year student writers in the Faculty.

In short, the subjects in the study came from different parts of the country, had different experience of learning the language, and thus were of varying levels of writing ability, which is believed to affect their respective performance in their revision.

4.3.2.2. Analysis of students' survey questionnaire and direct interviews

a. Students' opinions on the feedback they received

What do the students think about the importance of teachers' feedback to their writing?

The student respondents valued the importance of their teachers' feedback in different ways. 20% of them thought that

teachers' feedback was important, 57% viewed it as very important, and about 16% extremely important. The importance of feedback lay in the fact that the writers needed to be told why they got such a grade and they also wanted to know what they could improve on what they had done badly. However, some students (14) still expressed their unfavorable view towards feedback, saying that it was not important at all.

How many times do the students want their teachers to respond to each of their writing assignments?

In terms of the number of times the students would like their teachers to respond to each of their assignments, about 94% expressed their preference for two or three times. Obviously, most of the writers expected more intervention from their teachers with a view to further perfecting their papers.

However, about 6% of the subjects (12 students) were contented with just one-time commenting. Perhaps, these students were not very keen on revising their drafts several times or they did not have motivation in rewriting their papers.

Which aspects in the writing would the students prefer their teachers' feedback to focus on?

When asked in another item on the questionnaire what their preferences for feedback were, 91 out of 200 students said that they preferred more feedback about content, 54 preferred more on organization, 38 on grammar and mechanics, and 17 on vocabulary use. None of them expected a focus on form – the structure of the paragraph since this element was not their problem. The eight students in the interview reported that their teachers usually gave much attention to mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary on their drafts, some attention to organization, and little to content. One of them said, *"I would have liked it if the teacher had commented on the ideas of my writing and whether she liked them or not"*. This might explain why most of the students would expect their teachers to act in another direction.

Which kind of feedback would the students prefer to receive from the teachers?

Table 6. Students' preferences for teacher feedback type

Options	**Questions**		
	4	5	6
a	4	4	97.5
b	4.5	18	0
c	91.5	78	2.5

Table 6 reveals the students' preferences for each kind of teachers' feedback. As apparent from the table, most of the respondents (91.5%) were in favor of the simultaneous appearance of praise and criticism on their papers. They elaborated that praises should come first, and then some criticism follows to help them improve their writing. Few students like to receive positive comments, and even fewer prefer critical responses alone.

As for the location of teachers' feedback, 78% of the students in the survey said they would benefit from the combination of both (marginal notes and endnotes). The former had the advantage of being immediate and specific while the latter was an overview of their writing problems. Still, if they had to opt for one, 18% of the students would like their teachers to write end commentary while the rest (4%) would prefer marginal responses.

Also according to Table 6, none of the students in the study appreciated general feedback. Below is what they said.

"Teachers' feedback is too general for us to understand."

"General feedback doesn't provide much information for me to revise the paper."

"Sometimes I don't understand what the teacher means or wants me to do in their comments."

This situation implies that the students strongly demand feedback that is clear and specific.

How helpful is the Teachers' feedback in the following forms to the students' revision?

Table 7. The helpfulness of teachers' feedback forms to the students' revision

Forms of feedback	not helpful at all	helpful	very helpful
a. question	4(2%)	108(44%)	88(54%)
b. statement	25(12.5%)	115(57.5%)	60(30%)
c. imperative	32(16%)	144(72%)	24(12%)
d. exclamation	60(30%)	104(52%)	36(18%)
e. marking the errors, but not actually correcting them	93(56.5%)	79(29.5%)	28(14%)

In general, the majority of the students highly valued feedback in the following forms: question, statement, imperative, and exclamation, among which question was the most helpful one. In contrast, marking the problematic areas but not actually correcting them was assessed by 56.5% of the students as not very helpful at all. This could be due to the fact that this feedback form provided no suggestions or instructions as to what the writers should do to correct their mistakes.

b. Factors affecting students' comprehension of teachers' feedback

Do the students find it easy to understand their teachers' feedback? If not, what are the factors? What strategies do they use to overcome this problem?

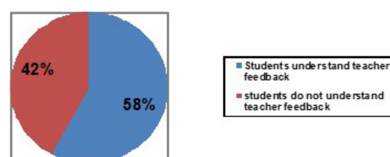

Chart 1. Students' comprehension of teachers' feedback

With the question of whether teachers' feedback was comprehensible to the students or not, nearly a half of them (42%) responded negatively. There was many a cause to this situation, the most common of which was the generality of teacher feedback that made it difficult for the respondents to understand. One student revealed that the comment *"Good!"* in the margin of her paper was confusing to her; although it was encouraging, she did not know what was good – her writing style, ideas, or grammar.

Table 8. Factors affecting students' comprehension of feedback

Reasons	Number of students	Percentage
a. Feedback is too general to understand.	63	75%
b. Teachers use new vocabulary and structure in feedback.	12	14%
c. Teachers' including hedges in feedback is confusing.	15	18%
d. Teachers' responding strategies themselves.	76	90%

New vocabulary or structure in teachers' commentary also presented problems to 12 students. They said sometimes the teachers included new words or used new structures in their commentary, which made it rather difficult for them to understand the intention behind their feedback.

Teachers' inclusion of hedges, such as *"perhaps"* or *"maybe"* might also confuse the apprentice students. About 15 students

said that they did not know whether it was necessary to follow the suggestions. Clearly, these students would prefer their teachers to be more specific and direct in their commentary.

Meanwhile, as many as 76 students complained about the teachers' responding strategies, saying that it could be an obstacle to their comprehension of feedback. They specified that teachers normally did not correct all of their errors, but only some of them, or they just corrected only minor problems on the surface of the writing without commenting on any major problems in the content, or worsely the teachers just underlined or circled the mistake, but gave no explanations or suggestions to help them to correct it. One of the students in one interview stated, *"If the teachers just mark the errors, but don't correct them, this is rather difficult to understand my mistakes*".

What strategies did the students use to resolve the problem?

Table 9. Students' strategies

Students' strategies	Number of students	Percentage
a. ask teacher or peer for help	27	32
b. consult a grammar book or dictionary	18	21
c. consult previous writings	10	12
d. study harder	6	7
e. doing nothing	23	28

When asked what strategies they used to overcome the above problems, some of the students responded that they would ask the teachers or peers for help and consult a grammar book or dictionary. Some others suggested, *"study harder"* or *"consulting the model or previous writing"*. The remaining students said they would do nothing; they just left the problems there unresolved.

c. Students' recommendations for improving the current teachers' feedback

For the question of what the teachers should do to help the students revise their writing more effectively, numerous recommendations were given concentrating on the following matters:

First of all, many students would like their teachers to encourage or require them to write at least two drafts for one assignment to provide them with a chance to further perfect their ideas and make their writing as good as it can be. It was understandable that as the students were engaged in multiple-draft writing, they needed feedback from the teachers to these various drafts. Thus responding should be perceived as a process, rather than a single act in this situation.

Secondly, the majority of the students felt that their writing problems were not adequately dealt with; as a result, they would like their teachers to write more comments as well as make all corrections of their errors on their writing, even the minor ones. Especially, a relatively high percentage of the students (30) wanted their teachers to comment more on the content of the writing and the organization of their ideas.

In addition, many of the respondents requested that teachers' feedback should be clearer and more specific. They particularly demanded the teachers to provide suggestions or corrections besides their marking or identification of problematic areas because this would help them to revise more easily. Besides demanding the teachers to provide more critical commentary to improve the writing, the students in the survey did not forget to remind the teachers that they should also include some positive comments in the feedback to give them some motivation to make better attempts in the next writing.

Finally, it was interesting to find out that several of the students (17) would like their teachers to call their names at the beginning of the end commentary. This would help to

give them the feeling that they had been given personal attention and what is more, they felt that the teachers were talking to them. This desire was legitimate and should not be dismissed.

In short, the analysis of the questionnaires to the teachers and students in the Faculty has provided primary important information concerning what the teachers actually do as they respond and what the students really think of these written responses as well as what they would like their teachers to do to help them revise their papers more successfully. In the following section the author will look at the sample of the teachers' comments on the students' first and second drafts in order to obtain more truthful information of what the instructors have actually done in response to the students' writing.

4.3.3. Observation of the teachers' commentary on the students' first and second drafts

The students' first and second drafts from the first three assignments, which focused on such paragraph types as writing instructions (time-order paragraphs), describing (space-order paragraphs), and stating reasons using examples, were examined. The topics chosen for writing were among those given at the end of each unit in the coursebook "Writing Semester 3". If the students were not interested in any of them, they were allowed to choose one of their own interests. This explained why the topics selected for each writing paper varied from individual to individual.

Through observing the teachers' written comments on the collected drafts, the researcher came up with the good points and bad points of each teacher's responding practice, which further reinforced the reliability and truthfulness of the previous data analysis. This observational information will be incorporated in the following presentation of the findings.

5. Findings

This section presents the answers to the research questions proposed at the beginning of the study.

Research question 1: How do the teachers respond to the student writing?

(i) What is the purpose of teachers' feedback?

The teachers' main purpose of giving feedback to the students' writing was that it helped the students improve the quality of their papers in terms of both content and form. This purpose is relevant to the most important function of teachers' feedback as a pedagogical tool for writing improvement. Besides, many teachers also used feedback as a means either to justify for their grades or to enhance the rapport between them and their students.

(ii) Do they provide single-draft or multiple-draft feedback?

The findings indicated that most of the second-year writing teachers (87%) stuck to the single-draft writing, thus one-shot commenting. One possible result of this practice was that responding was mixed with evaluating, often in the form of a grade. This led to another serious consequence – that is, it encouraged the students to believe that their first drafts were finished drafts and they did not need to further develop their ideas, to communicate their intention adequately, to make further invention in their subsequent writing.

Still, a small number of the teachers seemed to be aware of the importance of multiple-draft writing by encouraging their students to produce at least two versions of the same paper. This enabled the writers to revise their drafts just one or two times before submitting the final version for evaluation. In addition, the observation of the students' drafts indicated that the students sometimes made improvements in the second drafts not as a result of the teachers' feedback. This would suggest that rewriting alone is a worthwhile activity and should be encouraged.

(iii) What aspect(s) of the students' writing do they focus their feedback on?

Feedback on grammatical, lexical, mechanical errors was more frequently seen on the students' drafts than the other, namely, on content and organization. This result suggests that the teachers paid more attention to the form than the content, which might result in the students' submission of papers almost flawless in grammar but lacking in substance.

(iv) What types of feedback do they often give to the student?

It was quite dismal to discover that some less effective feedback types to the students' revision were provided more often than the more effective ones.

Firstly, the results indicated that the teachers seldom combined negative with positive comments. The majority of them only paid attention to the students' mistakes, which might make the students think of them as error hunters, but not helpful readers whose comments would encourage them to write more and better paragraphs in the next attempt. Although some positive comments were made, they were too general because they did not refer to any specific points in the students' texts. Some others, however, have realized the positive effect of combining the two types positive and negative, but they were of a small number.

For the second pair of comments: marginal versus end responses, the findings were also discouraging. Teachers usually wrote marginal and between-sentence comments, which only helped the writers change some discrete items in their writing, but the students would then fail to obtain an overview of their writing strengths as well as their own writing problems.

The result was especially dismal with regard to the final feedback type: general versus specific. Far more general responses, which only served to confuse the students, were provided to the students than the specific ones. We were students once and we knew how important the teachers' feedback was. Can we blame our students today if they become lazy or indifferent to their writing revision?

(v) What forms of feedback do they often use to respond to the students' writing?

In this study, feedback in imperative form appeared to be used the most often. Less frequent were statements or marking the errors, but not actually correcting them, whereas questions that encourage the students' thinking process or ask for further information and exclamations were sometimes applied. The findings indicated that the second-year writing teachers were in favor of making requests for revision and identifying or marking the problems, but giving no suggestions to solve them. On the one hand, the practice helped the writers see the urgency to implement the advice; on the other hand, it was in danger of appropriating the students' ideas. What is more, merely marking the errors, but making no corrections could frustrate the apprentice students because they did not know how to correct the mistakes, especially the difficult ones.

Research question 2: What have the teachers done to help the students process their comments successfully?

(i) Do they take the students' varying levels of writing ability into consideration when designing feedback?

Although researchers have proven that students' different levels of writing ability could affect their performance in their writing revision, 100% of the teachers in the survey had never taken this matter into account. In other words, they responded to the students' writing without considering how low-ability or high-ability writers handled their feedback. Thus it is quite plausible to conclude that teachers' feedback sometimes may not be relevant to the students' levels of proficiency.

(ii) Do they explain their responding strategies to the students before using them?

The research revealed that none of the teachers intended to do as such simply because this idea had never occurred to their mind. This explained why the students reported confusions over their teachers' responding strategies.

(iii) Have they ever asked or required their students to write a letter to tell them what they actually thought about the feedback they received?

The study results indicated that all of the teachers in the survey were new to the idea of getting feedback from their students as to the effects of their feedback on the students' revision. This issue would be taken into consideration when recommendations for improving the effectiveness of teachers' feedback are presented.

Research question 3: What problems do they encounter in responding to the students' writing?

The majority of the teachers complained that written feedback was time-consuming. In spite of the fact, they insisted that they should continue to write comments on the students' papers because comments help the writers improve; because written comments seem more feasible and more thorough than oral responses on every paper; and because for most writing teachers, the job requires them not only to evaluate their students' writing but to be able to justify their evaluation.

Another problem to note is that the students sometimes made the same mistakes again. One possible cause of the situation is the annotations the teachers made on the students' papers have not been internalized into the students' minds. Although they have made the alternation correctly, they had no idea what the principle behind the teacher's directive might have been and therefore were unable to correct the same type of error in another piece of writing.

The final problem that the teachers in the study might encounter in giving feedback to the students was that the students' papers were sometimes full of mistakes; as a result, they could not help catching every error the students made, scribbling over the paper with red marks and corrections. Despite the effort, the errors persist.

Research question 4: What are the students' opinions on the feedback they received?

(i) What do they think about the importance of teachers' feedback to their writing?

The study revealed that most of the students viewed teachers' feedback as important to their writing since it provided useful information to help them rewrite their papers, produce the better version in the next attempt. However, some of the students possessed negative attitudes towards feedback, considering it not important at all. This result suggests two conflicting but coexisting truths that the students pay a great deal of attention to teachers' feedback, which they believe to help them to make effective revisions, and that some others ignore or avoid the suggestions given in teachers' commentary.

(ii) What are their attitudes towards the feedback they received?

- Would they like their teachers to respond to their writing as a process?

It was encouraging to discover that most of the student writers were in favor of process responding rather than one-shot commenting. In other words, these students expected greater intervention from their teachers who, in the process of responding to their writing, would offer them suggestions, options, or other ways of looking at what they have said; on this basis they would make necessary changes to further perfect their papers.

- Which aspect(s) in the writing do they want their teachers' feedback to focus on?

The research results showed that most of the students indicated a preference for more teacher comments on content and

organization, and nearly one-third wanted more comments on grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. None of them said that teachers should focus on the overall structure of a paragraph because they were well informed about this aspect.

- What are their attitudes towards the types of feedback they received?

The results of the study stressed that a single comment type (e. g., positive comment alone – absent of any criticism or identification of errors) was not sufficiently motivating to the majority of these university-level EFL learners to produce improvement; although it should be admitted that certain type could lead to improvement, it was not as effective as when it was combined with another kind, for instance, marginal plus end notes. However, there was one exception with regard to the final pairs of feedback – general versus specific – because most of the students in the survey expressed their strong preferences for clear and specific responses, which provided them adequate information to revise their papers.

- What forms of feedback help them revise the best?

The research results suggested that question was the most effective form in encouraging the writers to revise and edit their own papers. Meanwhile, merely marking the problematic areas, but not actually correcting them was proved to be the least helpful due to the fact that the writers were less clear about what they should do to correct their errors.

(iii) What are the factors affecting the students' comprehension of teachers' feedback? What strategies do they use to resolve these problems?

As many as 84 students in the survey responded that it was not easy to understand their teachers' feedback. The main reason was the overgenerality of the feedback. Even though they had tried to decipher a comment, they had no idea how to handle it. Another cause of the problem lay in the language of the commentary. New words or structures were sometimes reported to prevent the writers from comprehending the response fully. Hedges were also claimed as another factor. Last but not least, the responding strategy itself was also a hindrance in that the students might not understand why their teachers just corrected few mistakes and left others go uncorrected or why teachers merely marked the error, but did not correct it for them.

These confusions continually piled up in their mind, making the act of writing somewhat complex and tiring. Some of the writers managed to have their confusions clarified by consulting a dictionary, grammar book, the model text, or even previous writing pieces. Some others would ask the teacher directly or ask their peers for help. Yet a relatively large number of the students (23) would choose to leave their writings there unresolved.

Research question 5: What do the students want their teachers to do to help them revise more successfully?

A great number of suggestions for improving feedback have been proposed focusing on the following matters. First of all, the students would like their teachers to encourage them to rewrite their drafts and respond to these writings until they become as good as they can be. Secondly, they expected more teachers' comments on each of their papers, especially those on content and organization of their writing. At the same time, they demanded teachers' feedback should be clearer and more specific in order to help them revise their drafts effectively. What is more, teachers should keep a balance between positive and negative comments to motivate them to revise and simultaneously help them to make improvement. Finally, the students would like the teachers to address their name at the beginning of an end comment because this would give them the feeling that they had been personally treated by the teachers.

6. Recommendations

Following are some suggestions to the teachers in the English Division 2, Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

(1) Helping the students process feedback successfully

As already noted, the students may either respond to the teacher commentary or ignore it altogether. This awareness should both encourage the teachers in their work and alert them that some students whether because of laziness or misunderstanding of teachers' feedback may not utilize their feedback for revision. Teachers should, therefore, be careful (a) in their own responding strategies, (b) in explaining those strategies to their learners, (c) in selecting the appropriate language to use in each commentary, and (d) in including hedges in their comments.

Besides, the teachers should also get feedback from the students concerning what the students actually think about their feedback. One technique for encouraging such a thoughtful response is to require a revise-and-resubmit letter, analogous to what writers produce when they submit a revised manuscript to a journal after receiving reviews. In this letter, the students systematically review the feedback they have received, explaining how they have addressed the reader's comments and why they may have disregarded some of them. This technique encourages reflection upon both feedback and revision yet allows the writers some freedom to ignore or disagree with comments they have received as long as they can justify their decisions.

(2) Making comments more effective

** The need for more emphasis on content and organization*

The study has uncovered an apparent mismatch between the choice on the teachers' part not to deal with content and a clear desire on the students' part to have such feedback. Therefore, EFL composition teachers should pay more attention to this aspect of the students' writing. It is not the intention of the author to be prescriptive. However, we feel that this feedback could be greatly beneficial to the EFL writers who always have to struggle to have their intentions communicated successfully to the readers.

Although there remain some other students (maybe low-ability ones) whose expressed emphasis was on grammar, mechanics, or vocabulary; as teachers, we need to bear in mind that learners' expectations and preferences may derive from their previous instructional experiences, experiences that may not necessarily be beneficial for the development of writing. Hence, in this case it may be vital for the teachers not to cater to the students' expectations but to shift those expectations according to what contributes most to the development of writing skills. Grammar does need attention, but we need to give first priority to content and organization. Given this perception, teachers can respond in one of the two following ways:

(i) They can follow the advice of Raimes (1992), Ferris and Hedgcock (1998), and others by responding only to the student writers' ideas and organization on early drafts provided that they carefully explain their strategies and accompanying justifications to the students.

(ii) They can blend content and grammar responses on all drafts, but vary the emphases of the responses. For instance, on first drafts, they can respond primarily to content but make a general end comment about the writer's grammar problems. On later drafts, when the students' ideas are more solidified, the teacher can provide specific word- and sentence-level feedback while still making general comments on the students' ideas.

** The need for text-specific feedback*

Teachers' comments on the students' papers are more helpful if they are text-specific. However, it was harder than it had first appeared to classify comments as either text-specific or general. For instance, if the comment *"Good example"* is written in the margin next to the example being praised, it is most likely clear to the writer which specific point is being commented on. Another example is *"You have a lot of verb tense errors in this draft. I've underlined some for you."* It could be argued that this comment is text-specific because it refers to a particular problem of the text at hand. Perhaps the key criterion needs to be whether the comment is clear and helpful to the student to commit changes in their subsequent drafts, rather than it has to conform to general notion of what is text-specific.

In addition, when summary comments in which the teachers communicate general rules that will be carried across drafts and throughout the writing class are considered, the above criterion proves to be relevant. After all, teacher feedback on the students' papers is an important form of communication and instruction, not merely a fix-it manual for a particular draft. If every comment on a paper is text-specific, it is impossible for the novice writers to internalize the concepts being instructed and thus being unable to transfer these instructions to their subsequent writings beyond the immediate drafts. Therefore, teachers should write on the students' papers an end note that provides a balance of text-specific and summary comments to help the writers be aware of their specific as well as major problems not only in the progressing work but also in the future assignments.

An example to demonstrate the practice is as follows:

> *Cuong,*
>
> *You have a well-organized paragraph with very good topic and concluding sentences. However, you need to supply more examples and evidence to support your arguments.*
>
> *Also, you have some major grammar mistakes. Sentence fragments (incomplete sentences) are the most serious.*

** Location of feedback*

Teachers' written responses to students' papers can take the form of marginal or terminal notes. In this study, it was found that most of the teachers gave only marginal comments; some provided summary comments. We strongly recommend that teachers should judiciously combine both of the types because of their respective advantages. Marginal comments have the advantage of immediacy (the teacher's response can be given at the exact point in the essay where the problem occurs) whereas an endnote gives the writers an overview of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Based on our own experience and adapted from Ferris and Hedgcock's suggestions, we suggest the following procedures for teachers to use for combining marginal and terminal comments effectively in responding to the students' papers:

(i) Read the entire paper through at least once without writing anything on the paper;

(ii) Read the paper through again, paying attention to the most important issues of content and organization that you might address;

(iii) Compose your endnote, which should be comprehensive, but selective. Address the points you want to make clearly, but do not overwhelm the student by attempting to address every single problem in the paper. Focus on the most important issues;

(iv) Go back and add marginal comments that highlight specific examples of the general points you made in the endnote.

In this way, it is hoped that the teachers' attempt at comment on the students' writing does

not end up as a rewrite of the students' paper.

** Balancing positive and negative responses*

Much has been written about the importance of placing comments of praise side by side with constructive criticism. However, as the research results indicated, the teachers were mostly negative in their commentary while the students did expect some encouraging remarks from them. The problem with these "monster responses" is that they terminate the dialogue and the growth of the piece of writing. There is not much the writer can do with or learn from such comments.

This situation leads to a very important suggestion that the teachers should pay attention to both strengths and weaknesses of the students' papers. The comments of the former nature will greatly motivate the writers to revise while those of the latter will constructively show them where they have gone wrong and what action they should take in order to improve their papers.

** Providing additional guidance*

It appears from the study that teachers' employment of marking system without providing any further information caused difficulty to most of the writers in their revising process. All too often, the students would not commit to change or the changes they made tend to be negative or effect-mixed. Therefore, besides indicating the existence of a problem, the teachers should also provide guidance to their students, especially the low-ability ones, either by adding an explicit suggestion as to how the students should do to correct it or by explaining briefly what is wrong with the underlined area so that the students can be aware of the problem and take appropriate measure to eradicate it.

In addition, the teachers are encouraged to utilize feedback in question form wherever possible both to stimulate the students' thinking processes and to avoid appropriating the students' texts. Yet they need to be aware of the fact that questions may sometimes confuse students, thus providing additional guidance is really helpful in helping students to be clearer about how to implement the change successfully.

** Writing personalized comments*

When responding to the students' texts, it is helpful to think of teachers' feedback as the continuation of a dialogue between reader and writer. This means that teachers should address the students by name at the beginning of an endnote, or even they may sign their own names, as at the end of a personal letter. It can also be appropriate to respond personally to the points in the text (e.g., *"I like this idea"*, or *"I'm confused by your argument here"*). In this way, student writers will feel that they have been given a personal treatment, and that their teachers are really helpful; thus they certainly adopt a positive attitude towards these teachers, which contributes greatly to the development of relationship between the students and their instructors.

In conclusion, the author has recommended some suggestions that are hoped to change the current practices, making the teachers' commentary essentially one of the most valuable pedagogical tools for the students' writing improvement. Although the suggestions mainly target at the teachers at FELTE, ULIS – VNU, teachers at other language education institutions can also utilize the ideas in their own context if relevant.

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PHẢN HỒI VIẾT CỦA GIÁO VIÊN: LÀM THẾ NÀO ĐỂ PHẢN HỒI BÀI VIẾT CỦA SINH VIÊN HIỆU QUẢ HƠN?

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Tóm tắt: Phản hồi của giáo viên đối với bài viết của sinh viên vẫn luôn là vấn đề quan trọng nhưng luôn bị sao nhãng trong những nghiên cứu về dạy viết ngôn ngữ thứ 2. Nghiên cứu này nhằm bổ sung vào tổng quan lý luận thông qua việc phát triển và thực hiện một nghiên cứu điều tra cách thức giáo viên phản hồi bài viết của người học trong thực tiễn và ý kiến của người học đối với phản hồi của giáo viên cũng như những khuyến nghị nhằm cải thiện phản hồi viết của giáo viên. Nghiên cứu có sự tham gia của 200 sinh viên năm thứ 2 và 20 giáo viên dạy viết tại Khoa Sư phạm tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ - Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội. Giáo viên và sinh viên được mời trả lời bảng câu hỏi, tham gia phỏng vấn và cung cấp bài viết đã được giáo viên nhận xét để phân tích. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy một số điểm hạn chế trong cách thức, trọng tâm, loại và hình thức phản hồi của giáo viên cũng như những gì giáo viên đã làm nhằm giúp người học xử lý phản hồi hiệu quả. Đồng thời nghiên cứu cũng cho thấy có sự không tương thích giữa những gì sinh viên mong đợi và những gì giáo viên cung cấp trong phản hồi. Dựa trên cơ sở này, nghiên cứu đã đề xuất một số gợi ý nhằm giúp giáo viên cải thiện hoạt động của mình, giúp người học sử dụng phản hồi hiệu quả hơn, nhằm tạo môi trường mà ở đó người học có thể học viết một cách dễ dàng và thành công hơn.

Từ khóa: Phản hồi, đường hướng dạy viết theo quá trình và dạy viết theo sản phẩm, nội dung, hình thức, chỉnh sửa bài viết

INSIDE AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN VIETNAM: STUDENTS' MOTIVATIONS FOR TEACHING AND THEIR INTENTIONS TO TEACH

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Abstract: Recent years have witnessed a decrease in both the number and quality of students enrolling in English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) programs. Those ELTE graduates also tend to pursue careers other than teaching. Given the great demand for English language learning at the moment, such low motivation for teaching is undesirable. This study was thus conducted to investigate motivations for teaching of senior students at a language teacher education institution in Vietnam as well as the correlations between these motivating factors and their intentions to teach. Data was collected from 114 senior students using questionnaires, and analyzed using SPSS (version 20.0). Findings from the study suggested that (a) participants displayed a positive prospect of pursuing teaching career; (b) *prior teaching and learning experience*, *making social contribution*, and *shaping future of children/adolescents* were the most influential factors while *fallback career*, *job transferability*, and *time for family* were the least endorsed ones; (c) although teaching is perceived to be part of a respected profession that requires expert knowledge and emotional devotion, teachers are generally underpaid; (d) significant relations were observed between *intrinsic career value*, *satisfaction with choice*, *social utility values*, *perceived ability*, and *prior teaching and learning experience* and intentions to teach.

Keywords: motivation for teaching, intentions to teach, FIT-Choice scale, Vietnamese settings, prospective teachers

1. Context of the study

Vietnam is usually considered to be part of the Confucian Heritage culture, together with other Asian countries like China, Japan, Korea (Nguyen, Jin, & Gross, 2013). As a result, Vietnamese people tend to show a high respect for learning and believe that education is the path to success (Hays, 2008). Teaching is usually considered a prestigious career, and the position of teachers has always been held high in Vietnamese society. In the old Vietnamese society, the hierarchy of "king, teacher, father" (with teachers being placed above fathers and only below the king; Dinh, 2012) was typically endorsed, which highlighted people's deep respect for the teaching profession. Other historical and folklore references of the Vietnamese also stressed the importance of the teaching career as stated in the following sentences:

> If one wants to cross the water, build a bridge. If one wants his child to be educated, respect the teacher.
>
> Rice father, clothes mother, knowledge teacher[1].
>
> Teaching is the most noble profession among other noble professions.

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[1] Vietnamese original: *Cơm cha áo mẹ chữ thầy*, which basically means *Father gives you rice, mother gives you clothes, and teacher gives you knowledge*, or *You are indebted to your father for rice, your mother for clothes, and your teacher for knowledge*.

(Phan & Phan, 2006, p.5)

In short, Vietnamese culture promotes teaching career as being the noblest profession and teachers' merit in educating people being as important as parental efforts in children's upbringing.

However, students' perceptions of the teaching career have changed drastically in recent years. This change can be observed firstly through the decrease in the number of high school students enrolling in teacher education courses. The statistics provided by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET, 2018) indicated that the number of students applying for teacher training program in 2018 fell 29% compared with that in 2017 (Nguyen, 2018). Additionally, many prospective teachers are showing little interest in entering teaching career after graduation. According to Vietnam's Ministry of Finance (MOF, 2017 as cited in Nguyen, 2017), many graduates of Teacher Education program choose to follow careers other than teaching. Several reasons are believed to hold accountable for this trend, namely the low salary, the poor career prospect as well as the pressure from huge workload and students' parents (Nguyen, 2019).

2. Literature review

Factors affecting teaching choice

Exploring factors that influence individuals' career choices has long been a common topic among vocational and behavioural psychologists. Numerous research studies have been carried out in the search for factors that influence the choice of teaching, the majority of which based their interpretations on the traditional conceptualizations of teaching motivations, namely intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation (Kyriacou & Coulhard, 2000). According to Kyriacou & Coulhard (2000), *intrinsic motivation* concerns the teaching activity itself (e.g., personal interest, intellectual fulfilment), while *extrinsic motivation* deals with the non-latent aspects of teaching job (e.g., salary, lengthy holidays), and *altruistic motivation* is related to the desire to make social contribution. However, there exist a couple of issues with this classification.

- Firstly, these three constructs seemed to have been understood differently in different contexts. For example, "*desire to work with children*" is frequently included in intrinsic motivation; however, it also appeared as a form of altruistic motivation in Yong (1995). *Financial burden* was included in Low, Lim, Ch'ng & Goh (2011) as an extrinsic motivation leading to teaching career choice although this was not previously mentioned in Kyriacou and Coulhard's (2000) work.
- Secondly, factors other than intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation have also been suggested in different contexts. For instance, Thomas, Turner, and Nietfeld (2011) identified six motivational groups: intrinsic values, job benefits, meaningful relationship, altruistic views, ability, and opportunities, which do not exactly coincide with the three categories of motivation previously mentioned.

According to Watt and Richardson (2007), the lack of an agreed analytical and theoretical framework to define the constitution of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivations might have led to the inconsistent definition and overlapping categorizations. The Factor Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) framework was thus developed by Watt and Richardson (2006) to assess the primary motivations of teachers to teach, and was demonstrated to be

psychometrically sound (Watt & Richardson, 2007). The framework thus was selected to guide the study since it proved to minimize the problems observed in previous studies using traditional conceptualizations of teaching motivation. In the part that follows, Watt and Richardson's (2007) framework is described in more details to lay the foundation for the whole study.

Watt and Richardson's FIT-Choice framework

The Factors Influencing Teaching Choice or FIT-Choice framework (Watt & Richardson, 2006) was largely based on the Expectancy-value theory, which is one of the major frameworks for achievement motivation. The Expectancy-value theory was developed to explain the impacts of the nature of expectancy and value constructs on individual's choice and performance (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). This theory highlighted expectancies of success and task values as the determining factors and considered socialization and individuals' perceptions of their past experiences as distal influences. According to this theory, *expectancy of success* was constructed by beliefs of three categories, namely goals, self-concept, and task difficulty (see Figure 1). *Value* could be categorized into *intrinsic value* — the enjoyment one derives from doing a particular task, *utility value* — the usefulness of task to an individual, *attainment value* — the importance of doing well on a task, and *cost* — the sacrifice one makes in doing the task.

In a similar vein, the FIT-Choice framework was guided by self-perceptions of ability, value and task difficulty. The intrinsic motivations, altruistic motivations and extrinsic motivations that have been emphasized in the past relevant literature are also covered in this model. In the FIT-Choice model (see Figure 2), *altruistic motivations* were referred to as personal utility value, which includes the job security, time for family, and job transferability. *Social utility* value consisted of four components: shaping the future of children/adolescents, enhancing social equity, making social contributions, and working with children/adolescents. *Intrinsic value* in this scale measured the interest and desire to follow teaching career. Four motivational factors that were added in FIT-Choice framework are *prior teaching and learning experience, social influences, perceived teaching abilities*, and *'fallback' career* reflecting the fact that teaching is people's last resort rather than the desired career. The measured perceptions include task demand (expert career, high demand) and task return (social status, salary), social dissuasion experiences, and satisfaction with teaching choice.

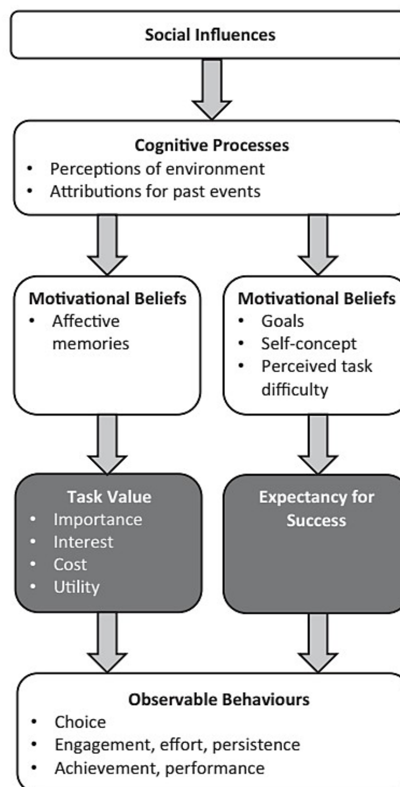

Figure 1. A simplified version of Wigfield and Eccles's expectancy-value theory (Cook & Artino, 2016)

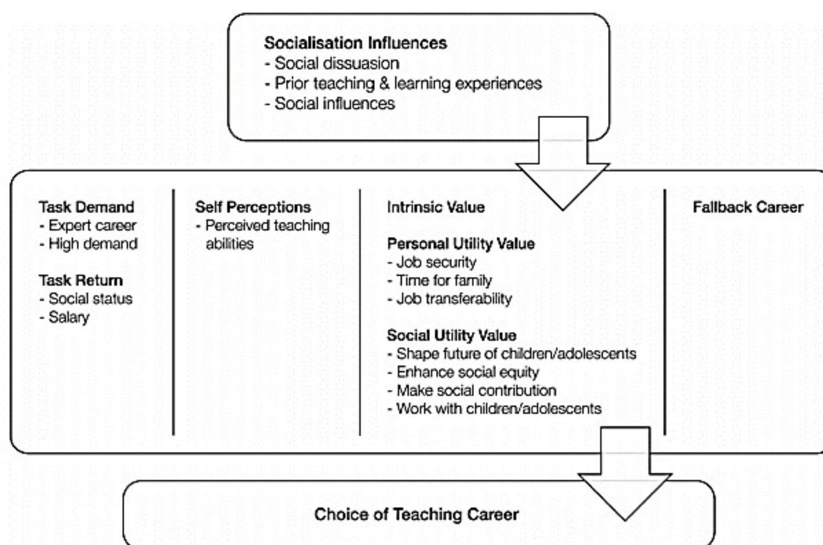

Figure 2. FIT-Choice empirically validated theoretical model (Watt & Richardson, 2012)

The FIT-Choice framework has been carried out globally to investigate motivations for teaching in different countries such as Turkey (Kılınç, Watt & Richardson, 2012), China (Lin, Shi, Wang, Zhang & Hui, 2012), the Netherlands (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012), Croatia (Jugović, Marušic, Ivanec, & Vidovic, 2012), German (König & Rothland, 2012), Sweden (Berger & D'Ascoli, 2012). Across different contexts, research findings appeared to suggest that social utility value such as *shape future of children/ adolescents* and *make social contribution* were especially important to a teaching choice (Watt & Richardson, 2012). Besides, *personal utility* was also highly rated, which was understandable and indicated the basic needs of teachers in modern society.

Besides these similarities, Watt and Richardson (2012) also noted note-worthy differences in teaching motivation across different settings. First of all, *perceived abilities* and *intrinsic value* were considered highly important in the US, Dutch, Croatian, German, Swiss and Australian contexts whereas in China and Turkey, *job security* was prioritized. When it comes to desire to *work with children/ adolescents*, except for the Chinese setting, participants in other countries shared the same belief that this factor was central in one's decision to become a teacher. As for social influences, a study of Dutch pre-service teachers' motivations (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012) was the only case in which the teacher choice was considerably influenced by social factors. Regarding the perceptions, apart from the Chinese context, in which task demand and task return were rated low, results of both factors from other countries indicated high task demand and low task return. From the utilization of FIT-Choice framework in various countries, it could be speculated that different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds might have implications for individual differences in motivations to teach.

3. Rationale for the study

In the context of Vietnam, individuals wishing to join the job market are required

to possess not only professional competence but also foreign language ability, especially English. The Project "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008 – 2020" (Project 2020) was thus launched with the purpose of improving the competitiveness of the Vietnamese workforce in the international labour market (through strengthening their foreign language ability; Le & Nguyen, 2017). It has also been well-recognized that to achieve the stated aims, teacher training should be a central and prioritized task as it provides the qualified English language teachers needed for the project (MOET, 2018; as cited in Nguyen, 2018). In fact, a substantial amount of the project budget has been allocated to the training of English language teachers at different levels, including undergraduate level (MOF, 2018).

However, the state of English language teacher education is no better than that of the general situation of teacher education in Vietnam. Thousands of students enroll in English language teacher education programs every year (probably because it is free; Nguyen, 2017). However, many of the graduates from EFL teacher education programs have expressed lack of interest in teaching and decided to pursue other career paths after graduation. This is a waste of national investment and has led to a shortage of more than 5,600 English language teachers from different educational strands (MOET, 2018; as cited in Nguyen, 2018).

Our review of the existing literature above has suggested that several attempts have been made to discover the motivations to teach in different settings. However, until recently, studies that have been conducted on the motivational factors that influence teaching choice in the Vietnamese context are almost non-existent (Pham, 2012); those that are applicable to the Vietnamese context are also very limited. With the typical features of Vietnamese labour market (a socialist-oriented market economy) and the advantages in terms of language that English-majored students have in the Vietnamese labour market (i.e., better job opportunities), it is speculated that factors that worked in other contexts may not necessarily be applicable to the Vietnamese situation. This study thus aimed to investigate the factors influencing teaching choice of senior students majoring in English language teacher education in the Vietnamese context with the belief that thorough understanding of pre-service teachers' career intention and factors influencing their choices is crucial to better promote their teaching motivations, which consequently would help to increase the number of students following teaching career path.

4. Research questions

This research aims to investigate (1) intentions to pursue teaching career of seniors at an English Language Teacher Education institution in Vietnam, (2) factors that influence their choices of a teaching career, and (3) the correlations between factors influencing teaching choice and intention to teach. Specifically, the research aims to answer the following research questions:

1. *To what extent do participants in the current study wish to pursue teaching career?*
2. *What are the factors that influence their choice of teaching career?*
3. *What are the correlations between influencing factors and students' intention to teach?*

5. Research design

The study was designed as quantitative research with the employment of a questionnaire to gather data.

Participants

Total random sampling technique was adopted to select participants in the current study. In other words, all (196) senior students majoring in English Language Teacher Education at a teacher training institution in Hanoi were invited to participate in the study. This method of collecting information from the total population was expected to give deeper insights into the target population than what partial samples would probably be capable of. It allows researchers to create a much more complete picture of the phenomenon and greatly reduces guessing work. It also eliminates the risk of biased sample selection that is often encountered in would-be random study samples.

Participants in the current study were competent in English. Most of them have obtained VSTEP (Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency) C1 level (equivalent to C1 in CEFR). They had reasonable *knowledge about the subject matters* (English language), *knowledge about teaching* and *teaching experiences* (through the courses at the university as well as the teaching practicum) and were going to join the labour market in the coming few months. Therefore, it was expected that these students would hold a clearer view of their future career path than freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. Their responses to the questionnaire would be more reliable and valid.

Data collection instrument

The researchers adapted the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) survey (Watt & Richardson, 2006) to examine the motivations for teaching among senior students and Jung's (2014) Occupational Intention scale to measure their intentions of becoming teachers. *Watt and Richardson's (2006) FIT-Choice survey* consisted of 58 items that covered 12 *motivation constructs* (ability, intrinsic career value, fallback career, job security, time for family, job transferability, shape future of children/adolescents, enhance social equity, make social contribution, work with children/adolescents, prior teaching and learning experiences, and social influences), six *perception constructs* (expertise, difficulty, social status, salary, and social dissuasion) and one construct about *satisfaction with choice*. The FIT-Choice survey was validated by recognized experts (Watt & Richardson, 2007) and scrutinized in diverse settings (Jugović, Marušic, Ivanec, & Vidovic, 2012; König & Rothland, 2012; Berger & D'Ascoli, 2012). *Jung's (2014) Occupational Intention* was part of a larger scale that was constructed to measure nine constructs that influence an individual's career decision-making process. The scale also underwent a process of development, testing, and refinement over two phases of data collection with the participation of over a thousand students (Jung, 2014).

The two surveys above formed the foundation for the survey used in the current study. The actual survey used in this study consisted of 59 close-ended items and four open-ended items, which were divided into three main parts. In the first part (section A), factual questions in open-ended form were used in order to collect participants' personal information such as name, gender, class, and email address. As for the second part (section B), which concerned senior students' intentions of becoming teachers, five items measuring "Occupational Intention" construct was adapted from Jung's (2014) Occupational Intention scale. Specifically, in this part, participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement to the five items *"It is likely that I will pursue teaching career", "I intend to pursue teaching career", "I plan to apply for teaching career"*, *"I have resolved to follow this occupational path"* and *"I am committed to teaching career"*. Students' motivations for teaching were measured via two subscales namely "Motivations for teaching" — Section C — which consists of 38 items; and "Beliefs

about Teaching and Satisfaction with Choice" — Section D — which consists of 20 items. For three parts (B, C, and D) of the questionnaire, a seven-point Likert-type scale was utilized (see Appendix 1).

Data collection

The researchers were able to collect contact information of all senior students at the targeted institution thanks to the help of the class monitors. Due to the schedule of some participants, the researchers had to conduct online questionnaire using Survey Monkey. For the rest of the participants, paper-based questionnaires were used. Prior to the questionnaire distribution, participants were notified of the research topic and research aims as well as encouraged to contact the researchers via email if any further clarifications on the items and the study were needed. Through this two-week data collection process, 194 questionnaires (both online and printed versions) were distributed and 118 completed ones were returned (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of distributed and returned questionnaires

Version	Distributed	Returned
Online	106	78
Paper-based	63	40
Total	194	118

Overall response rate = 60.8%

Data collected from questionnaires were then imputed, refined and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0). Specifically, there was (a) preliminary analysis of the data, (b) assessment of scale reliability, (c) calculation of factor scores, and (d) estimation of correlations among factors.

Preliminary data analysis

Preliminary analysis of the data is a very important step as it provides researchers with important information about the characteristics of their data. In the current study, data were inspected to check for missing data as well as detect any unusual patterns in the dataset. Specifically, the total percentage of missing values was calculated to be approximately 2.04%; the number of cases with incomplete response (with at least one missing value) was 6 out of 118, which accounted for 5.08%. An inspection of missing data by individual cases revealed that of the 118 returned surveys, 112 participants (94.9%) returned fully completed questionnaires, while 6 questionnaires (5.1%) had at least one missing item.

Closer observation of missing data suggested the exclusion of two cases (ID 45 and ID 116) from the dataset, because more than half of the items in their responses were not completed. Another two cases (ID 25 and ID 62) were also excluded from the dataset because although the percentage of missing values in each response did not exceed 50%, the items missing were deemed indispensable as they all belonged to constructs of *Beliefs about teaching* and *Satisfaction with choice*. In the end, data from 114 respondents were retained for analysis; of these, 85.1% of the participants were female and 14.9% were male. Their ages ranged from 22 to 24 years old (Mean = 22.05; SD= 0.26).

Assessment of scale reliability

According to George and Marley (2003, as cited in Gliem & Gliem, 2003), scale reliability is considered acceptable if the Cronbach's alpha value is higher than .70 and unacceptable if the value falls under .50. As the Cronbach's alpha (α) of 19 subscales comprised this full measurement ranged from .513 for "Fallback career" to .959 for "Occupational Intention" subscale (see Table 2), a conclusion was reached that each factor had a fair to good level of reliability.

Table 2. Subscales Cronbach's alpha reliabilities (α)

Sub-scale	Items	Cronbach's α
Occupational intention	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	.959
Ability	C5, C17, C35	.830
Intrinsic career value	C1, C7, C11	.872
Fallback career	C10, C29, C37	.513
Job security	C13, C 23, C32	.778
Time for family	C2, C4, C14, C16, C24	.810
Job transferability	C8, C19, C36	.727
Shape future of children/adolescents	C9, C20, C25	.840
Enhance social equity	C26, C30, C38	.750
Make social contribution	C6, C18, C28	.811
Work with children/adolescents	C12, C22, C31	.903
Prior teaching and learning experiences	C15, C27, C33	.778
Social influences	C3, C21, C34	.698
Expert career	D9, D13, D14	.788
High demand	D2, D6, D10	.594
Social status	D4, D7, D11	.673
Teacher morale	D5, D8, D12	.591
Salary	D1, D3	.782
Social dissuasion	D16, D18, D20	.601
Satisfaction with choice	D15, D17, D19	.798

6. Research findings

Intentions of becoming teachers

Concerning their intentions of becoming teachers, participants in the current study generally showed a marked tendency towards pursuing a teaching career (see Table 3). Among the five options, the likelihood to *pursue teaching caree*r was the highest rated (M = 5.39, SD = 1.46), followed by participants' planning to *apply for this job* (M = 5.31, SD = 1.63) and their *intending to follow teaching career* (M = 5.24, SD = 1.60). Although the other two items concerning participants' *commitment toward teaching job* (M = 4.59, SD = 1.67) and their *resolution to follow* this career path (M = 4.82, SD = 1.60) received lower ratings, the results were still fairly positive.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Intentions to teach

	Items	M	SD
B1	I plan to apply for teaching career.	5.31	1.63
B2	I intend to pursue teaching career.	5.24	1.60
B3	I am committed to teaching career.	4.59	1.67
B4	It is likely that I will pursue teaching career.	5.39	1.46
B5	I have resolved to follow this occupational path.	4.82	1.60

Motivations for teaching

Figure 3 below illustrates the overall mean ratings of the factors influencing teaching choice. The results revealed that there existed little distinct differences in mean ratings across motivational factors as they ranged from 3.42 to 5.13, with the highest ratings be *prior teaching and learning experience* (M = 5.13, SD = 1.40), *shape future of children/adolescents* (M = 5.10, SD = 1.41), and *make social contribution* (M = 4.89, SD = 1.52), and the lowest ratings belong to *fallback career* (M = 3.42, SD = 1.94), *job transferability* (M = 3.77, SD = 1.61) and *time for family* (M = 3.95, SD = 1.76).

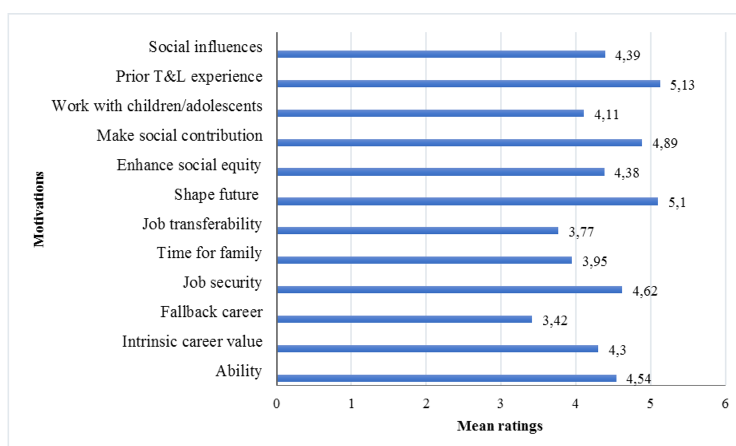

Figure 3. Factors influencing teaching choice of participants

The highest-rated factors. The means (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the highest-rated factors influencing teaching choice across items were presented in Table 4. To be specific, regarding the three items comprising *prior teaching and learning experience* factor, two involved having inspirational and good teachers and the other stressed on the overall positive learning experiences. Of the three items mentioned (items B15, B27, B33), the two first items namely having an inspirational teacher (M = 5.20, SD = 1.32) and having good teachers as role models (M = 5.18, SD = 1.59) show the highest level of agreement among participants. The last item in this construct concerning having positive learning experience (M = 5.03, SD = 1.30) also shows a fairly positive result. When it comes to *shaping future of children/adolescents*, the desire to shape values of children/adolescents was the highest agreed item (M= 5.20, SD= 1.48), followed by participants' wish to influence the next generation (M= 5.11, SD= 1.37) and their ambitions to have an impact on children/adolescents (M = 5.00, SD = 1.39). As for *make social contribution*, the data also indicate that participants in the current study generally believed that teachers were the ones who make worthwhile social contribution (M = 5.19, SD = 1.41), provide service to society (M = 4.83, SD = 1.60) and have chance to give back to society (M = 4.67, SD = 1.54).

Table 4. Means (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of highest-rated factors influencing teaching choice

		Item	M	SD
Prior teaching and learning experience	C15	I have had inspirational teachers.	5.18	1.59
	C27	I have good teachers as role models.	5.20	1.32
	C33	I have had positive learning experience.	5.03	1.30
Shaping future of children/adolescents	C9	Teaching will allow me to shape children and adolescent values.	5.20	1.48
	C20	Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation.	5.11	1.37
	C25	Teaching will allow me to have an impact on children and adolescents.	5.00	1.39
Make social contribution	C6	Teaching will allow me to provide a service to society.	4.83	1.60
	C18	Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution.	5.19	1.41
	C28	Teaching enables me to give back to society.	4.67	1.54

The lowest-rated factors. The lowest-rated motivations were *fallback career*, *job transferability*, and *time for family*. The mean scores for individual items ranged from 2.87 to 4.31 (see Table 5). Specifically, among the three items of *fallback career*, the results showed that failure to be accepted into first-choice career was the least agreed option (M = 2.87, SD = 1.94). The other two items of the same factor demonstrate fairly to considerably higher mean scores of 3.29 for choosing teaching as last-resort career (SD = 1.91) and 4.12 for uncertainty on career path (SD = 1.94). Interestingly, this factor also displayed the highest inconsistency in participants' opinions in comparison with other eleven motivational factors presented. Among the three items of *job transferability*, that teaching job allows desirable living place (M = 3.52, SD = 1.57) and its usefulness as a job for travelling (M = 3.61, SD = 1.62) received slight disagreements from respondents. At the same time, for teaching qualification being widely recognized, participants tended to take the neutral stance as the mean score was 4.19 (SD = 1.63). Concerning the *time for family* factor, the results showed that short workday (M = 3.20, SD = 1.65) was the least preferred reason leading to decision to teach. While respondents displayed a neutral view on choosing teaching career for lengthy holiday (M= 3.97, SD= 1.94) and responsibilities of having a family (M = 4.08, SD = 1.70), they generally agreed to pursue this career path for family reasons (i.e., having more family time [M = 4.31, SD = 1.82]; school holidays fit with family commitments [M = 4.22, SD = 1.65]).

The same patterns were observed across genders. In other words, participants in the current study would be most likely to follow a teaching career if they have experienced positive *prior teaching and learning experience*, had a desire to *shape future of children/adolescents*, and wished to *make social contribution*.

Table 5. Means (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of lowest-rated factors influencing teaching choice

		Item	M	SD
Fallback career	C10	I was unsure of what career I wanted.	4.12	1.94
	C29	I was not accepted into my first-choice career.	2.87	1.96
	C37	I chose teaching as a last-resort career.	3.29	1.91
Job transferability	C8	Teaching will be a useful job for me to have when travelling.	3.61	1.62
	C19	Teaching qualification is recognized everywhere.	4.19	1.63
	C36	A teaching job will allow me to choose where I wish to live.	3.52	1.57
Time for family	C2	Part-time teaching could allow more family time.	4.31	1.82
	C4	As a teacher I will have lengthy holiday.	3.97	1.94
	C14	Teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family.	4.08	1.70
	C16	As a teacher I will have a short workday.	3.20	1.70
	C24	School holidays will fit in with family commitments.	4.22	1.65

Perceptions about the profession and satisfaction with choice

Generally, the participants perceived teaching as a profession that is high in not only task demand but also task return (see Figure 4). Regarding the *expert career*, participants mostly rated teaching as an expert career (M = 5.55, SD = 1.08) — which requires the possession of both specialized and technical knowledge. They also believed that this occupation was rewarding in terms of *social status* (M = 5.36, SD = 1.56) and *teacher morale* (M = 4.97, SD = 1.15). Especially, for the item D12 on the teaching

career's being perceived as a well-respected occupation, more than 85% of the participants showed moderate to strong agreements to this statement. However, at the same time, participants also stated that teaching career offered a *low salary* (M = 3.82, SD = 1.49). Concerning the *social dissuasion*, the result indicated participants' neutral stance on this factor (M = 4.03, SD = 1.63). The results from independent-samples t-Test showed that the differences in opinions regarding perceptions about teaching across genders were insignificant.

As for satisfaction with teaching choice, perceiving teaching career as being high in *task demand* (expert career and high demand) and *social status* but low in *salary*, participants demonstrated a fair level of *satisfaction with their choice* of becoming teachers (see Table 6). Of all the population, more than 73% of the participants believed that they had thought carefully about becoming a teacher, 61.4% of them felt satisfied with their choice and more than 60% of the population stated that they were happy with their decision. The difference regarding *satisfaction with choice* across genders were, again, insignificant.

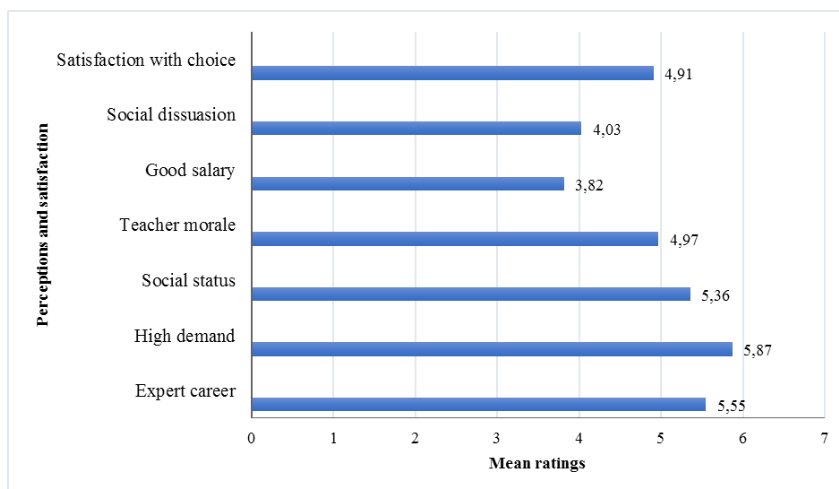

Figure 4. Perceptions about teaching and satisfaction with choice

Table 6. Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of satisfaction with choice

	M	SD
D15-How carefully have you thought about becoming a teacher?	5.31	1.22
D17-How satisfied are you with your choice of becoming a teacher?	4.72	1.36
D19-How happy are you with your decision of becoming a teacher?	4.70	1.34

Correlations between intentions of becoming teacher and motivations to teach

Table 7a and 7b presented the Pearson correlations across the 20 constructs including *intentions to teach*, *motivations*, *perceptions about teaching career*, and *satisfaction with choice*. Factors that had strongest correlations with *intentions* to pursuing teaching career included: *intrinsic career value* (r = .67, p < 0.01), followed by *enhance social equity* (r = .44, p < 0.01), *prior teaching and learning experience* (r = .46, p < 0.01), *ability* (r = .48, p < 0.01), and *make social contribution* (r = .51, p <0.01). *Work with children/adolescents* (r = .25, p < 0.01), *job security* (r = .26, p < 0.01), *time for family* (r = .26, p < 0.01) also demonstrated positive relationships with

participants' *intentions to teach,* although the strength of the relationship was small. Of interest was the negative correlation between *fallback career* and *intentions to teach* (r = -.27, p < 0.01) and the fact that a number of perception constructs (i.e., *expert career*, *high demand*, *social status*, *teacher morale*, *good salary*, *social dissuasion)* were found to have insignificant correlations with an individual's intention to pursue a teaching career. Finally, regarding the last construct of *satisfaction with choice*, its relationship with *intention to teach* (r = .65, p <0.01) was estimated to be statistically strong.

Table 7a. Correlations across Intention of becoming teachers and Motivational factors for teaching

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Intentions to teach	Pearson Correlation	1												
	Sig. (2-tailed)													
2. Ability	Pearson Correlation	.48**	1											
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00												
3. Intrinsic career value	Pearson Correlation	.67**	.67**	1										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00											
4. Fallback career	Pearson Correlation	-.27**	-.17	-.33**	1									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.07	.00										
5. Job security	Pearson Correlation	.25**	.30**	.13	.18*	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.01	.00	.14	.04									
6. Time for family	Pearson Correlation	.26**	.29**	.25**	.34**	.58**	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00								
7. Job transferability	Pearson Correlation	.29**	.44**	.36**	.27**	.58**	.68**	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00							
8. Shape future of children and adolescents	Pearson Correlation	.39**	.48**	.45**	-.14	.25**	.18*	.29**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.12	.00	.04	.00						
9. Enhance social equity	Pearson Correlation	.44**	.46**	.38**	-.00	.36**	.29**	.46**	.52**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.000	.98	.00	.00	.00	.00					
10. Make social contribution	Pearson Correlation	.51**	.58**	.57**	-.27**	.27**	.18*	.35**	.59**	.65**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.04	.00	.00	.00				
11. Work with children/adolescents	Pearson Correlation	.25**	.44**	.49**	-.00	.13	.36**	.35**	.49**	.32**	.34**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.01	.00	.00	.96	.14	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00			
12. Prior teaching and learning experience	Pearson Correlation	.46**	.45**	.54**	-.29**	.26**	.14	.26**	.44**	.44**	.61**	.25**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.13	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00		
13. Social influences	Pearson Correlation	.19*	.43**	.31**	.13	.31**	.42**	.56**	.09	.27**	.25**	.16	.26**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.04	.00	.00	.15	.00	.00	.00	.32	.00	.00	.07	.00	
14. Expert career	Pearson Correlation	.11	.11	.06	-.00	.20*	.06	.09	.21*	.16	.26**	.00	.31**	.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.26	.23	.51	.99	.03	.46	.34	.02	.08	.00	.99	.00	.91
15. High demand	Pearson Correlation	.02	-.03	-.02	-.14	-.03	-.22*	-.20*	-.03	.09	-.01	-.06	.16	-.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.86	.71	.78	.12	.67	.01	.03	.75	.32	.88	.49	.07	.65
16. Social status	Pearson Correlation	.03	.17	.013	-.02	.22*	.07	.11	.18*	.23*	.15	.04	.23*	.20*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.77	.06	.88	.79	.01	.44	.21	.04	.01	.10	.64	.01	.02
17. Teacher morale	Pearson Correlation	.12	.21*	.05	-.05	.21*	.23*	.13	.10	.05	.08	.16	.10	.24**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.12	.02	.54	.53	.02	.01	.14	.28	.56	.38	.08	.27	.00
18. Good salary	Pearson Correlation	.10	.16	.14	.14	.37**	.29**	.31**	-.07	.24**	.15	-.14	.13	.35**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.29	.08	.11	.11	.000	.00	.00	.45	.00	.10	.13	.16	.00
19. Social dissuasion	Pearson Correlation	-.11	.09	.12	.08	.02	.05	.19*	.00	.11	-.03	.10	-.09	.11
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.26	.35	.17	.36	.78	.56	.03	.95	.24	.71	.25	.30	.22
20. Satisfaction with choice	Pearson Correlation	.65**	.61**	.64**	-.38**	.18	.16	.32**	.42**	.39**	.52**	.37**	.51**	.21*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.00	.05	.08	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.02

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7b. Correlations across Intention of becoming teachers and Perceptions about teaching and satisfaction with choice

		14	15	16	17	18	19	20
11. Work with children/adolescents	Pearson Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)							
12. Prior teaching and learning experience	Pearson Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)							
13. Social influences	Pearson Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)							
14. Expert career	Pearson Correlation	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)							
15. High demand	Pearson Correlation	.28**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00						
16. Social status	Pearson Correlation	.41**	.36**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00					
17. Teacher morale	Pearson Correlation	.27**	.02	.60**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.75	.00				
18. Good salary	Pearson Correlation	.21*	-.02	.21*	.22*	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.02	.79	.02	.01			
19. Social dissuasion	Pearson Correlation	-.16	-.13	-.20*	-.23*	-.09	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.08	.14	.03	.01	.33		
20. Satisfaction with choice	Pearson Correlation	.15	-.00	.13	.15	.17	.09	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.10	.96	.16	.09	.06	.34	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The hypothesis that social utility values such as *make social contribution* and *shape future of children/adolescents* as well as *work with children/ adolescents* factors would show strong positive correlation with *intentions to teach* was not totally supported. The results from Pearson correlation analysis revealed that despite the fact that all three factors were statistically related to the *intentions of becoming teachers*, the strength of these relationships only ranged from weak to moderate. As for the prediction that *fallback career*, *job transferability*, and *social influences* would negatively correlate with *teaching choice*, the results indicated that only *fallback career* was negatively related to intentions to teach; the other two factors showed weak yet positive relationships with *teaching intentions*.

7. Discussion

The primary aims of this study were first to investigate participants' intentions to pursue teaching career; second, to examine the factors influencing their choices of teaching career in Vietnamese context; and finally, to explore the relationship between those factors and participants' intentions to teach.

From the data collected, it was observable that although the number of females enrolling in the particular English Language Teacher Education program outweighed that of males, statistics indicated no differences between the two genders in terms of their *intentions* to follow teaching career after graduating. Most of the participants demonstrated positive prospect of following the teaching career. Nevertheless, the considerable proportion of teacher trainees wishing to pursue careers other than teaching was alarming. This could be attributed to numerous factors, namely low salary, lack of job opportunity, lack of desire to change to make social contribution and so on (Pham, 2012). As for those who wish to follow the teaching career path in the future, the influential factors leading to their choice were discussed in the later parts.

Factors influencing intentions to teach

Highest-rated motivations. Results from the data analysis revealed that *prior teaching and learning experiences* as well as *social utility values* such as *shape future of children/ adolescents* and *make social contribution* were the highest-rated motivations influencing participants' teaching choice. These findings were of no great surprise as the application of FIT-Choice scale in numerous contexts have yielded similar results "("i.e., Lin, Shi, Wang, Zhang & Hui (2012); Kılınç, Watt and Richardson (2012)")". Given collectivism in Vietnam, in which people tend to work towards a common goal, participants' choice of becoming teachers to contribute to a better society is quite understandable.

However, in contrast with other Western countries and especially the Australian context, where the scale was originally developed and validated, *perceived ability* and *intrinsic career value* were not among the highest-rated factors in this study. Yet, the results appeared to be consistent with those from Chinese and Turkish contexts, in which *prior teaching and learning experiences* also played an important role in motivating prospective teachers (i.e., M = 5.27 and M = 5.09 in Turkish and Chinese settings respectively). Such comparability might be explained by the shared perceptions about the roles of teachers in Vietnam and China. In fact, both China and Vietnam could be classified as belonging to Confucian heritage culture, which highly appreciates teachers and the teaching career. According to Phan and Phan (2006), besides the roles of a knowledge deliverer, Vietnamese teachers also act as a moral guide. Teaching is regarded a high status and well-respected job, and students generally take their teachers as an exemplary model to follow. Therefore, it is likely that students are influenced by their teachers in many facets of life, including career choice decision. Similarly, the reverence for teacher profession are also observed in Chinese culture as Lin, Shi, Wang, Zhang and Hui (2012) pointed out

that Chinese teachers are highly respected and considered the authority of knowledge. Chinese government policy also supports the positive image of teachers as respectful profession with bright career prospects. Consequently, students who witnessed the exhibition of such features from their teachers are more likely to follow teacher career. In other words, under the guidance of aspiring and motivating teachers, students might be more likely to display a desire to follow the teaching career path.

In a similar vein, *perceived ability* and *intrinsic career value* were highly rated in Western contexts but just scored a little bit above the midpoint in Eastern countries including Vietnam. One possible explanation is that rather than endorsing *ability* and *intrinsic career value*, prospective teachers in Vietnam and China might be more concerned about *job security*. As stated in Richardson, Karabenick and Watt (2014), this tendency among East Asia countries may stem from their collectivist cultures, in which individual interests have an inferior impact on career choice as compared with *job security* and benefits. In the Vietnamese context particularly, the education sector in Vietnam provides permanent teaching job for teachers that pass a civil service examination, which can help to secure the employed status, *salary* as well as other social benefits for their whole teaching career. That kind of "security" offered may be the more common reason behind many students' choices of teaching career (rather than perceived ability or intrinsic career value).

Lowest-rated motivations. Findings from this study revealed that *fallback career* and *job transferability* were the least preferred factors. There was a slight difference between the results from the current study and those from others on a similar topic. The *fallback career* factor ranked last in this study, which possibly indicated that few participants opted for teaching career as the last-resort choice when having failed other preferred options. However, when compared with other studies using FIT-Choice scale in Turkey (Kılınç, Watt & Richardson, 2012), China (Lin, Shi, Wang, Zhang & Hui, 2012), Australia (Watt & Richardson, 2006), the Netherlands (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012), Croatia (Jugović, Marušic, Ivanec, & Vidovic, 2012), the *fallback career* motivation in this research still displayed a stronger influence on Vietnamese prospective teachers. According to Quyen (2018), many teacher training universities in 2018 received low entrance rate despite the low entrance scores, which may imply that teaching career may not be the most appealing and preferred profession to many students. Some students might have ended up in these universities as a result of the low scores and failure to be admitted to their desired programs. Intriguingly, regarding this *fallback career* motivations, the male participants were reported to be significantly unsure of what career to pursue in the future, which may suggest lower teaching retention of these respondents in comparison with that of female ones. Moreover, this fair rating of *fallback career* motivation might imply pessimistic future teaching career of participants as Richardson, Karabenick & Watt (2014) suggested that *fallback career* motivation may result in negative teaching behaviors and consequently negative teaching practices. As for the factor of *job transferability*, the low ratings were also understandable given the contextual differences between Vietnam and Australia — the context where the scale was developed and validated. In the Australian context, the national and international circulations of teachers are quite common whereas, in Vietnam, teachers generally enjoy less flexibility in terms of workplace change. For teachers working for government schools, such changes are even more limited as they must meet a certain number of demands according to Vietnamese Law on Public Employees (Luật Viên chức, 2010).

Perceptions about teaching. The results of this study were in line with those of research on similar topic terms of participants' perception teaching demand. To be specific, teaching occupation in Vietnam was perceived

to not only require expert knowledge but also involve hard work as well as emotional demand. This finding supported the beliefs about teachers being considered knowledge expert suggested in Phan and Phan (2006). Regarding *task return*, participants believed that teachers earn a poor *salary* considering the hard work they have to deal with. The findings of McAleavy, Tran and Fitzpatrick (2018) also indicated a similar state when teachers "consider themselves badly paid and have to supplement their income by working as private tutors" (p. 22).

However, the research findings reported much higher values for *social status* factor with respect to other discoveries made by other studies using FIT-Choice scale. As suggested by McAleavy, Tran and Fitzpatrick (2018), the high ratings of teachers' *social status* suggested that teachers were believed to be members of a respected profession and this idea is supported by both cultural norms and government policies.

Satisfaction with choice. Participants of this study demonstrated a fair level of satisfaction with their career choice. Intriguingly, rather than statistically related to their perceptions about teaching career, participants' *satisfaction with teaching choice* were influenced by teaching motivations namely *ability*, *intrinsic career value, fallback career, shape future of children/adolescents, make social contribution* and *prior teaching and learning experiences.* The same findings were also found in Yu and Bieger (2013) when American pre-service teachers' contentment with their choice of teaching career also strongly related to their motivations for teaching.

Correlations between factor influencing teaching choice and intentions to teach

Intrinsic career value and *satisfaction with choice* were the two factors that showed the strongest correlations with *teaching choice decision*. This result corresponded with factors influencing behaviors namely expectancy of success (satisfaction with choice) and task value (intrinsic career value) as suggested in the expectancy-value theories (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), on which FIT-Choice scale was based. In other words, if students show *a strong desire to teach* and *a complete satisfaction with their choice of teaching career*, they are more likely to pursue teaching career in the future and vice versa. At the same time, *perceived ability*, *social utility value* such as *making social contribution*, *shaping future of children/adolescents*, and *enhancing social equity* as well as *prior teaching and learning experience* were moderately related to intentions to teach. These factors were also proved to be the highest influential factors behind one's intention to pursue teaching career in studies using FIT-Choice scale in different contexts including Vietnamese. The results also revealed that *fallback career* negatively correlated with intentions to teach, indicating that those who choose teaching as the last-resort career would show little hope to pursue teaching career later on.

8. Implications

This study has contributed to the existing literature on factors influencing teaching choice (FIT-Choice) in different contexts. Moreover, the research has also revealed the relationship between prospective teachers' intentions to teach and their motivations to teach, which may assist educators/teacher trainers in promoting desire to become teachers among students.

First and foremost, since positive *prior teaching and learning experience* was found to be the most influential motivators behind one's decision to follow teaching career path, it is important that educators through their teaching provide those prospective teachers with positive learning experiences. Research on qualities of English teachers in Vietnam, though limited, has revealed that teacher's expert knowledge of the subject, pedagogic skills, professional behaviors and personal characteristics are all fundamental to quality

teaching and learning (Tran, 2015). Besides, McKnight, Graybeal, Yarbro and Graybeal (2016) also highlighted the role of teacher's relationship with learners, teacher's patience, caring, and dedication in effective teaching. In fact, the necessity to build a trusting and compassionate relationship between teacher and students has been highly endorsed by all Vietnamese stakeholders of education (i.e., parents, students, policy makers, principals, and teachers). It is believed that such interpersonal relationships would not only facilitate the education process but also have potential impact on students' motivation to be a teacher. Moreover, since *intrinsic career value* - which concerns one's interest and desire for teaching profession - shows the strongest correlation with *intentions to teach* as well as *satisfaction with choice,* creating a good image of teacher and a bright prospect of teaching career might help to attract more students in this profession.

The practice of effective teacher qualities above also expected to promote students' motivation to *make social contribution* and *shape future of children/adolescents*. Specifically, as stated in Phan and Phan (2006), Vietnamese teachers take the roles of knowledge expert and moral guide for students to follow. Therefore, when teachers are considered effective and worth respecting, their knowledge and actions may positively affect the academic performances, moral behaviors, and later future of students. Besides teachers' self-practice of five aforementioned qualities, it is advisable that the government help raise people awareness about the importance of education in shaping one's future, which later highlights teachers' contribution to the educational mobilization for the nation.

At program level, practical components such as the micro-teaching and teaching practicum when conducted effectively may also help these students enhance their teaching knowledge and skills, as well as form a *positive experience about teaching as a profession*. Volunteering teaching activities (i.e., teaching disadvantaged kids during a summer program, volunteering for an education organization, etc.) may help students build up their knowledge of the teaching career and feel that they are making worthwhile *contributions to the society* through teaching.

9. Limitations and suggestions for further research

Although care was taken during the whole process to minimize errors and ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings, the following limitations were unavoidable and need to be acknowledged. Firstly, due to the low response rate (about 60.8%), findings from the study may not necessarily represent the opinions of all senior ELTE students. Secondly, due to limited time and human resource, the researchers could not dig deep into the reasons for not choosing teaching profession as well as seek further explanations on factors influencing their career choices. Further research on the similar topic could take into consideration the application of interviews (together with questionnaires) to gain a better understanding on the matters revolving participants' teaching choice.

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NGHIÊN CỨU VỀ ĐỘNG LỰC DẠY HỌC VÀ MỐI LIÊN HỆ VỚI Ý ĐỊNH THEO NGHỀ DẠY HỌC CỦA SINH VIÊN SƯ PHẠM TIẾNG ANH

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Tóm tắt: Những năm gần đây, bên cạnh sự giảm về chất lượng và số lượng đầu vào của ngành đào tạo Sư phạm tiếng Anh, việc sinh viên ngành Sư phạm tiếng Anh sau khi tốt nghiệp làm trái ngành cũng đã khiến nhiều người phải suy ngẫm. Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm tìm hiểu động lực dạy của sinh viên năm cuối ngành Sư phạm tiếng Anh và mối quan hệ của động lực dạy và ý định theo đuổi nghề dạy học của sinh viên. Qua việc phân tích các dữ liệu định lượng thu được thông qua phiếu hỏi của 114 sinh viên năm cuối, nghiên cứu chỉ ra (a) các sinh viên sư phạm tiếng Anh tham gia nghiên cứu đều có ý định trở thành giáo viên sau khi tốt nghiệp, (b) *trải nghiệm học tập*, *đóng góp cho xã hội* và *định hướng tương lai của trẻ em* là những yếu tố ảnh hưởng nhiều đến động lực dạy học của các em, tuy nhiên (c) giáo viên - những người được yêu cầu có kiến thức chuyên môn và tận tâm với học trò - lại thường nhận mức lương thấp hơn mức cống hiến của họ, và (d) có mối quan hệ đáng chú ý giữa ý thức về giá trị nội tại của nghề, sự hài lòng với lựa chọn, ý thức về năng lực bản thân, và các kinh nghiệm dạy và học trước đây với ý định theo đuổi nghề dạy học.

Từ khóa: động lực dạy, ý định dạy, FIT-Choice, bối cảnh Việt Nam, giáo viên tương lai

APPENDIX 1

Section A: Personal Information

1. Name: ....
2. Gender: ....
3. Age: ....
4. Class: ....
5. Email address: ....

Section B: Intention of Becoming a Teacher

Please respond to the following items on the scale from **1** ***(strongly disagree)*** **to 7** ***(strongly agree)*** by circling the numbers that represent your choice.

No.	Items							
1	I plan to apply for teaching career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I intend to pursue teaching career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I am committed to teaching career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	It is likely that I will pursue teaching career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I have resolved to follow this occupational path.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section C: Motivations for Teaching

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements ***(1=strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree).*** Please circle an appropriate number.

"I choose to become a teacher because…"

No.	Items							
1	I am interested in teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Part-time teaching could allow more family time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	My friends think I should become a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	As a teacher I will have lengthy holidays.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I have the qualities of a good teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Teaching will allow me to provide a service to society.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I have always wanted to be a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Teaching will be a useful job for me to have when traveling.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Teaching will allow me to shape child and adolescent values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I was unsure of what career I wanted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I like teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I want a job that involves working with children and adolescents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	Teaching will offer a steady career path.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	I have had inspirational teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	As a teacher I will have a short workday.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	I have good teaching skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	Teaching qualification is recognized everywhere.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	My family thinks I should become a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	I want to work in a child and adolescent-centered environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	Teaching will provide a reliable income.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	School holidays will fit in with family commitments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

25	Teaching will allow me to have an impact on children and adolescents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	Teaching will allow me to work against social disadvantage.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	I have had good teachers as role models.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	Teaching enables me to give back to society.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	I was not accepted into my first-choice career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	Teaching will allow me to raise the ambitions of under-privileged youth.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	I like working with children and adolescents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	Teaching will be a secure job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33	I have had positive learning experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34	People I have worked with think I should become a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35	Teaching is a career suited to my abilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36	A teaching job will allow me to choose where I wish to live.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37	I chose teaching as a last-resort career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38	Teaching will allow me to benefit the socially disadvantaged.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section D: Perceptions about Teaching

Please respond to the following items on the scale from **1** ***(not at all) to*** **7** ***(extremely)*** by circling the numbers that represent your choice.

No.	Items							
1	Do you think teaching is well paid?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Do you think teachers have a heavy workload?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Do you think teachers earn a good salary?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Do you believe teachers are perceived as professionals?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Do you think teachers have high morale?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Do you think teaching is emotionally demanding?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Do you believe teaching is perceived as a high-status occupation?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Do you think teachers feel valued by the society?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Do you think teaching requires high levels of expert knowledge?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Do you think teaching is a hard work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	Do you believe teaching is a well-respected career?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Do you think teachers feel their occupation have high social status?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	Do you think teachers need high levels of technical knowledge?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Do you think that teachers need highly specialized knowledge?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	How carefully have you thought about becoming a teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	Were you encouraged to pursue careers other than teaching?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	How satisfied are you with your choice of becoming a teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	Did others tell you teaching was not a good career choice?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	How happy are you with your decision of becoming a teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	Did others influence you to consider careers other than teaching?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH INCLUSIVELY TO ADHD AND ASD PRIMARY STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: Recently included in general education as a compulsory subject since Grade 3, English has established itself in Vietnam as a crucial foreign language for the people to communicate effectively in a globalization era. As a result, English language teaching for primary students has drawn increasing attention from various educators and researchers. However, their studies and teaching practices often overlook students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ADHD and ASD) - two of the most popular mental disorders in children. In this regard, this mixed-method case study explores the challenges facing, and the solutions the teachers of ADHD and ASD students in Vietnam have been actively drawing on to facilitate their classroom management. After conducting survey questionnaires with 109 English language teachers from 20 cities located in the three regions of Vietnam, the study proceeded with a series of interviews with teachers along with in-class observations. The results indicate that despite these prevailing difficulties, teachers were able to formulate teaching techniques to showcase plenty of innovativeness and versatility in terms of classroom management, despite certain occurrences of potential harmful acts due to the lack of special education training. The discussion could carry useful implications for researchers and teachers working with ADHD and ASD students in Vietnam.

Keywords: ADHD, ASD, English language teaching, classroom management, primary education, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) stated in its 1989's The United Convention on the Right of the Children that every child, regardless of their backgrounds, should receive access to education. With reference to Vietnam, the Ministry of Education has released Circular No. 03 containing objectives, requirements, and support for children who belong to this group in an inclusive education model (Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training, 2018a). Children with special needs due to physical and mental defects are not exceptions, and have the fullest rights to be educated, trained, and supported to maximize their potentials and opportunities to develop themselves and integrate into society (UNICEF, 1989). Unlike impairments that involve bodily and sensory functions, the struggles for children with mental, behavioral, and neurodevelopment disorders are on another level of complexity for the reasons that they are not "tangible". Children with Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are one of the most common

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childhood behavioral problems, which accounted for 5% of the global population on average (Saya, Prasad, Daley, Ford & Coghill, 2018). Besides, ADHD frequently occurs in conjunction with Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and clinicians are allowed to diagnose the two disorders (ADHD and ASD) together (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Antshel, Zhang-James, Wagner, Ledesma & Faraone, 2016).

However, the new context of English language teaching and learning in Vietnam may pose new challenges to those students. For its importance as a mutual language across countries and global organizations in this globalization era (Brown, 1994), English has recently been included in the formal education in Vietnam as an optional subject since Grade 1, and become compulsory from Grade 3 to 12. In order to enhance the quality of learning and teaching English in general education, the MOET English curriculum and textbooks have been reformed endorsing the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) to foster learner language acquisition through interpersonal interaction (Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training, 2018b). Despite being considered as a beneficial approach for students around the age of primary education, CLT may pose certain challenges to ADHD and ASD students, who are disadvantaged by their distinctive behavioral and neurological features. This imposes extra pressure on the primary English teachers, particularly in managing a classroom with ADHD and ASD students among others. To investigate how teachers deal with this actual state, this article aims to answer the research question of: "What classroom management techniques are used by these teachers to facilitate their ADHD and ASD students' learning?"

2. Literature review

The definition of classroom management, despite being expressed somewhat differently in terms of word choice, revolves around governing a classroom with proper educational incentives to create an environment friendly for learning (Brophy, 1988; Kayikçi, 2009). Researchers perceive the classroom as a subunit of the school system and emphasize its management as the primordial condition for learning and teaching activities to occur (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). As a result, the public regarded classroom management as "the answer to many school problems", according to the Gallup poll from 1977 to 1992 (Evertson & Harris, 1992, p.74). In terms of the components of classroom management, the taxonomy is diverse and characteristic for each particular setting. Nevertheless, regarding elementary education, the discipline in a class mainly covers classroom arrangement, procedures, classroom rules, giving instructions and eliciting techniques, creating a collaborative learning environment, and handling students' behaviors (Evertson, 1994). These aspects are the focus of this study.

Even though classroom management plays such a pivotal role in assuring the efficacy of a lesson, it is exceptionally challenging to a classroom with ADHD and ASD students. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013), ADHD and ASD often concurrently manifest in young children and are allowed to be co-diagnosed. ADHD and ASD students share mutual symptoms, which are the constant repetition of motor behaviors (running in circles, kicking), low attention span, high sensitivity and irritability (especially in a new environment), and inadequate social skills (Reiersen, Todd, 2008). As a result, managing a classroom with special students who have ADHD and ASD prove to be extremely complicated for teachers (Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011).

Teaching ADHD and ASD students should stem from a careful assessment of each individual over a period of time (David & Floridan, 2004). Understanding of the neurodiversity manifests in strengths, weaknesses, and preferences of the students is vital to customize a well-fit learning approach

for them (Thunerberg et al, 2013). In summary, a successful inclusive environment by any means should conceive plasticity and diversity as their fundamental principles (UNESCO, 2005, p.16). Despite not suggesting particular teaching approaches for students with ADHD and ASD, experts do recommend certain teaching models or techniques to follow. For example, David and Floridan (2004) summarized three groups of teaching principles that most teaching strategies were related to, namely behavioral model, constructivist model, and ecological model.

The behavioral model directly concentrates on fostering the favorable actions of the students through rewards and using rules as the ground for regulating unwanted behavior. This model holds the belief that students' problems can be "fixed", and this is also recorded to bring visible progress in the students' learning outcomes in a short amount of time.

The constructivist model considers the learner as an active receiver of knowledge and creates a sense of satisfaction when being able to gain new experience through solving problems, participating in activities, and interacting with others.

The ecological model requires students to work as a part of a system, with more attention being paid to the ability to fit in the system of the learner. The ecological approach divides a scale to present different layouts of a system that has impacts on the students. This includes the microsystem (the classroom), with the most direct involvement with students, and other systems on the macro level, representing the cultural, social, industrial and political forces being more subtly enforced on the students. Practices of ecological model primarily focus on the microsystem (classroom) with the incorporation of outdoor activities, change of settings, community work... in order to provide students with the awareness of their roles in the broader system.

Apart from these models, it is advisable for teachers to take into consideration the factors to adapt curricula in order to provide access to both ADHD & ASD students and other students. To serve this purpose and based on the Instructional and Universal Design, Friends and Bursuck (1999) suggested a recipe for success for an inclusive classroom. This was subsequently adapted by Duvall (2006) for the language classroom, following seven steps denoted in the mnemonic INCLUDE.

Table 1. Seven steps in the successful recipe for language inclusive classrooms

Code of steps	Main principle
1 – I	Identify Classroom Environmental, Curricular, and Instructional Demands
2 – N	Note Student Learning Strengths and Needs,
3 – C	Check for Potential Areas of Student Success
4 – L	Look for Potential Problem Areas
5 – U	Use Information Gathered to Brainstorm Instructional Adaptations
6 – D	Decide Which Adaptations to Implement
7 – E	Evaluate student progress

Teachers are often assumed to take up various fundamental duties, such as detecting the children's abnormalities to refer to help and offering support in inclusive classrooms (Vaughn & Bos, 2015). With respect to an EFL teacher in particular, they also have to fulfill the role of an EFL teacher during their English lesson. As CLT has been proclaimed as the main approach for the English language teaching in the new national curriculum in Vietnam (Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training, 2018b), the pedagogical demands for

EFL teachers have become more challenging, especially in terms of the shift from teacher-as-conductor to teacher-as-facilitator (Widdowson, 2001). Meanwhile, ADHD and ASD students are often characterized by disruptive behaviors, which lead to conflict during peer-to-peer interactions (Antshel, Zhang-James, Wagner, Ledesma & Faraone, 2016). Hence, the CLT approach, which relies on classroom interactions for language learning, maybe incompatible with these two groups of students.

Teachers who took part in other research expressed their unavailability due to various reasons, namely the lack of proper training (Blanton, Pugach, & Florian, 2011), problems arising with students' disruptive behaviors in a classroom context (Barkley, Fischer, Edelbrock, & Smallish, 1990; DuPaul & Eckert, 1997, 1998), students' unsatisfied academic outcomes (Marshall, Hynd, Handwerk, & Hall, 1997; Pfiffner & Barkley, 1990) and teacher's mental exhaustion (Talmor, Reiter, & Feigin, 2005). If these problems persist, it could leave a negative influence on the teachers' welfare as well as prompt teachers to conduct incorrect or harmful acts on the students for the sake of managing their classroom. According to Pokrivčáková, S. et al. (2015), these acts may include:

1) Exempting the ADHD and ASD students from the class overall progress or treat them with ignorance for the preconception that their defectiveness would lead to incapability;

2) Overly tolerating the ADHD and ASD students with little intervention to aid students in the subject and general development;

3) Adhering to a fixed teaching approach and leaning toward exclusion of students' personal behavioral patterns or needs;

4) Giving out inappropriate or incompatible tasks or instructions for the ADHD and ASD students (for example, require a dyslexic student to read out loud a long text);

5) Making adjustments to the ADHD and ASD students' mistakes in an insensitive way (announce their mistake in front of the class, compare to other students in a way that make them feel self-deprecated etc.);

6) Accidentally separating the ADHD and ASD students from the class by constantly assigning them different tasks from the rest of the class.

Previous studies consistently indicated that teachers had the tendency to limit imposing their authority on special students due to the lack of proper training in this field and fear of losing time to take care of other students in the class (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011). This avoidant attitude resulted in special students' receiving less amount of instruction and facilitation compared to other peers (Gunter, Denny, Jack, Shores, & Nelson, 1993), and was likely to lead to a general degradation in learning outcomes of the class (Shinn, Ramsey, Walker, Stieber, & O'Neill, 1987; Cameron, Connor, Morrison, & Jewkes, 2008). Among classroom management strategies applied to classrooms with ADHD and ASD students, the tactics used to prevent unwanted behaviors were prioritized. To exemplify, preventive approaches such as enacting the class rules or schedules helped to create behavioral imprints to students and served as a framework for determining which actions would be acceptable. Therefore, teachers could refer to that to encourage the appropriate actions and hinder the inappropriate ones (Kameenui, & Sugai, 1993; Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Besides, past research claimed that effective classroom management tactics should be derived from

a collection of individual teachers' methods which were consolidated with personal justifications and classroom observation (Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011). Hence, this study aims at exploring English teachers' classroom management strategies applied to their inclusive English classrooms with ADHD and ASD students. This would be a significant contribution to the literature gap by laying the groundwork for empirical research on inclusive classroom practices.

3. Research method

This study adopted a case study research design. Traditionally, a case study mainly makes use of a qualitative approach. However, as both a deep and broad understanding of the research problem was the ultimate goal of a case study, mixed methods were applied to enrich the data. The study took place in Vietnam from 2019 to early 2020, when English had just been incorporated as a compulsory subject in formal education starting from Grade 3. This study primarily focused on English language teachers in primary schools of Vietnam, who held the ultimate responsibility for the English language learning of young students.

114 participants partook in the survey in total, with 109 valid responses by 79 English language teachers in public schools and 30 teachers from private schools in 20 major cities situated in three different regions of Vietnam (southern, northern, and the middle regions). Only five English language teachers from private schools had participated in a limited number of short-term training on special needs education. The number of respondents and their locations is presented in Table 2 hereafter.

Table 2. Survey respondents (N = 109)

Location	n
Hanoi (central districts)	16
Hanoi (others)	9
Hai Phong	5
Hai Duong	2
Thai Nguyen	2
Bac Ninh	18
Ha Nam	6
Nam Dinh	12
Phu Tho	2
Ha Giang	5
Kien Giang	2
Lao Cai	1
Thanh Hoa	2
Hue	6
Khanh Hoa	1
Da Nang	2
Quy Nhon	1
Quang Tri	3
Quang Ngai	1
Can Tho	1
Ho Chi Minh City	10

The teachers selected to enter the interview were those exhibiting strong opinions in their questionnaire and had officially recorded students with ADHD and ASD in their classes. Additionally, to avoid bias, the diversity of locations was taken into consideration. Based on these two main criteria, 20 teachers were selected for the interview round (Table 3).

Table 3. Interview participants

Code	Specifications
Teacher 1	A teacher with over 20 years of experience, currently teaching in a public school on the outskirt of Hanoi.
Teacher 2	A teacher with 8 years of experience, currently teaching in a public school in the center of Hanoi.
Teacher 3	A teacher with 15 years of experience, currently teaching in a public school in Bac Ninh
Teacher 4	A teacher with 15 years of experience, currently teaching in a private school in Hanoi
Teacher 5	A teacher with 8 years of experience, teaching in a private school in Hanoi
Teacher 6	A teacher with 21 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Quang Ngai
Teacher 7	A teacher with over 10 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Ha Nam
Teacher 8	A teacher with 5 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Vinh Phuc
Teacher 9	A teacher with 10 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Phu Tho
Teacher 10	A teacher with 7 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Nam Dinh
Teacher 11	A teacher with 3 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Bac Ninh
Teacher 12	A teacher with 5 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Quang Tri
Teacher 13	A teacher with 12 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Kien Giang
Teacher 14	A teacher with 7 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Da Nang
Teacher 15	A teacher with 4 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Bac Ninh
Teacher 16	A teacher with 18 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Thanh Hoa
Teacher 17	A teacher with 7 years of experience, teaching in a private school in Ha Noi
Teacher 18	A teacher with 19 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Ho Chi Minh city
Teacher 19	A teacher with over 25 years of experience, teaching in a public school in the center of Hanoi
Teacher 20	A teacher with 15 years of experience, teaching in a public school in Ho Chi Minh city

After being approved by the headmaster of the schools and receiving consent from Teachers 1, 2, and 19, who had confirmed cases of ADHD and ASD students, observations were carried out in their classrooms. The whole process of data collection is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Data collection procedure

Name of the stages	Activities
Stage 1	Pilot survey
Stage 2	The official survey (109 valid responses)
Stage 3	Interviewed 20 teachers from different locations and observed four classrooms in various lessons

An interview guideline for teachers was designed based on the Interpretation of Instructional and Universal Design (Duvall, 2006), Understanding SEN (Special Education Needs) students online course from the British Council and interview guidelines in the research conducted by Torres (2016). The guidelines include four parts: background information, teacher's opinion on teaching ADHD and ASD students in an inclusive classroom, teacher's English classroom management strategies, and teacher's difficulties in teaching.

Prior to the interview, the questionnaire was distributed together with the interview invitation to EFL teachers in primary schools to gain an overview of the research problems. The questionnaire consists of four parts presented below:

Part 1: Background information

This part was adapted based on the original questionnaire Opinion Relative to Mainstreaming ORM Scale (Larrivee & Cook, 1979; Larrivee, 1982; Antonak & Larrivee, 1995) and incorporated certain extension from the revision version of the ORM scale, the Teacher Attitude to Inclusion TAIS Scale (Monsen, Ewing & Boyle, 2015). This part consists of participants' information such as age, gender, years of experience, the number of students in their class and school, and the level of frequency that they have in contact with ADHD and ASD students (ranging from "never" to "frequently").

Part 2: Teachers' attitude on teaching students with ADHD and ASD in an inclusive classroom

The main content of this part revolves around teachers' attitudes, which are specified into three aspects: teachers' belief, willingness, and difficulties when working with children with behavioral problems. The participants rate their level of agreement to each item by choosing a number on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). This part is a synthesis and adaptation of the ORM and its revisions, the TAIS scale by Monsen and Frederickson (2004), the TAIS scale by Saloviita (2015), and an adaptation of ORM made by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000). There are a number of studies from reputable groups of researchers to testify their validity and reliability (Monsen, Ewing & Boyle, 2015; Ewing, Monsen & Kielblock, 2018; Kielblock, 2018). Thus, the original framework and its revised versions are widely used in research relating to teachers' attitudes on the inclusion of children with disabilities and special needs. Because the framework covers all types of special needs students including students with behavioral disorders and different aspects of learning and teaching, the questionnaire was adapted and narrowed down to align with the target of the study. This part has 27 items in total.

Part 3: Teachers' classroom management strategies

This part is divided into two sub-divisions: teachers' beliefs and classroom management techniques. The items in this part aim at measuring the level of assimilation of an EFL teacher in an inclusive environment, their readability to the MOET's objectives of English for elementary students, and their flexibility in the classroom management strategies they use in an inclusive classroom with ADHD and ASD students. The participants need to choose a number on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 in accordance with their opinion, similarly to Part 2. The items were adapted to suit the research purposes from Duvall's interpretation of Instructional and Universal Design (2001) and the Understanding Students with Special Educational Needs course online of the British Council.

The quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive methods while qualitative data analysis drew on thematic analysis. These results are presented in the following discussion.

4. Findings and discussion

Table 5. Classroom management techniques in an English inclusive classroom

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Mode	SD
5.1 I arrange the classroom to make it a safe and accessible place	5.50%	1.83%	13.76%	62.39%	16.51%	3.8	4	0.92
5.2 I only need my ADHD and ASD students to obey my commands.	8.26%	20.18%	49.54%	17.43%	4.59%	2.9	3	0.94
5.3 I make deductions about the potential problems that the ADHD and ASD students might face in my class.	2.75%	4.59%	31.19%	55.96%	5.50%	3.6	4	0.79
5.4 I encourage them to engage in social interactions with peers through group work and discussion.	3.67%	1.83%	6.42%	68.81%	19.27%	4.0	4	0.82
5.5 I allow ADHD and ASD students to behave in their own way in condition that those behaviors would not disrupt the class.	3.67%	2.75%	16.51%	63.30%	13.76%	3.8	4	0.84

Generally, English teachers acknowledged ADHD and ASD students' behavioral patterns and did not force them to act like other students of the classes on every occasion, with approximately 77.06% of the total responses for Item 5.5, Table 5 ranging from "agree" to "strongly agree". In order to create a safe, friendly, and supportive learning environment, classroom arrangement and collaborative activities were the two other factors that received attention from the English teachers, with a similarly high level of agreement with Items 5.1, 5.3, and 5.4. The reasons behind these trends will be elaborated with the help of qualitative data in turn as follows:

4.1. Physical classroom arrangement

When asked about class management techniques, the teachers highlighted the seating organization in class. They generally attempted to organize the class to ensure maximum safety and flexibility for primary students at the age from six to eleven. This age group were not fully aware of the physical risks around and could easily hurt themselves. Extra guidance and actions were also taken for the needs of ADHD and ASD students, with the majority (78.9%) choosing "agree" to "strongly agree" with the statement. As for their seating in the class, a preferred place for them was in the first or second front row within or near the action zone of the teachers. Some teachers elaborated:

> I often place them in the first or second row, near the board where I usually stand, even though they prefer to sit at the end of the class to freely pick up at their friends. When they sit near the teachers, their manners are improved, and they are also more attentive to the lesson. (Teacher 2)
>
> Sometimes the homeroom teacher is in charge of assigning fixed seating for each

> student, and the English teachers retain that arrangement in our class. If the homeroom teacher is considerate and thoughtful, they will let these special students sit at the front to take care of them better. However, there are also teachers who regard these students as a nuisance, so they will put them further in the back then neglect their existence. (Teacher 5)
>
> They can be arranged either in the back or the front. It depends on the teacher's preference. (Teacher 11)

When ADHD and ASD students were seated closer to the teacher, it was easier for the teachers to observe these students' behaviors and interfered immediately when unwanted incidents occurred. Furthermore, plenty of studies have highlighted the benefits students could reap from staying in teachers' action zone. Specifically, a close-distance contact with the teachers would facilitate them in drawing the special students' attention and engage them in the lesson (Jones, 1989; Ford, Olmi, Edwards, & Tingstrom, 2001; Bohlin, Durwin, & Reese-Weber, 2008). For ADHD and ASD students, who are characterized by distractibility, overreaction, and recklessness, it is even more crucial for them to stay under the teacher's influence.

Although previous studies had stressed challenges ADHD and ASD students had to face in interpersonal interactions among themselves and other peers in classrooms (Barkley, Fischer, Edelbrock, & Smallish, 1990; DuPaul & Eckert, 1997, 1998), 88% of the teachers participating in this study advocated establishing social relationships to foster special students' good manners. For example, Teacher 14 would form a pair of special one next to a neighbor with the opposite personality, so the special student could have not only a friend but also a role model to learn after.

In a classroom with ADHD and ASD students, it was of critical necessity to set up a corner inside or outside (but near) the class, called the "tranquil corner". This served as a place where children could go and had some time alone to pull themselves together. Other students could also use this place whenever they felt distressed about what happened in the class, or the lesson reached a point that was too overwhelming for them. As reported by Teacher 4, 5, and 17, in several private schools, a consulting room was normally placed near the classroom, so the special students could be escorted there and spent time with the experts until they could calm down and felt ready to go back in class. However, this service was only available if their parents agreed to pay extra fees.

4.2. Classroom regulation system

Following the model summarized in the meta-study conducted by David and Floridan (2004), the earliest teaching approach for young special students was the behavioral model. In this model, a system of punishment-and-rewards was applied to consolidate appropriate behaviors and restrict the unwarranted ones. According to Lewis and Sugai (1999), a system of classroom rules was one of the highly recommended preventive strategies for classrooms with behavioral problematic students. In line with this, English language teachers perceived the mechanism of this model as a fundamental factor to regulate a classroom with ADHD and ASD students effectively. While ADHD and ASD students were often known for posing extra needs on the operation of a language classroom, a cohesive and consistent regulation system was reported to be exponentially useful in alleviating the stress in classroom management and create a healthy learning routine for the class. Classroom regulation normally consisted of the following components:

1. Tasks to do before class: arrange the seating, picking up trash, clean the board.

2. Commands during class time: sit nicely (students have to sit nicely with their back straight and their hands on the table), work in the group of … (students have to form a group with the number of members accordingly).

3. Permissions to go out during class time with specific sentence samples in English: May I go out to drink water, please? May I go to the toilet, please? (students have to ask the teachers in English when they want to leave the classroom temporarily for personal reasons).

4. Tasks to do after class: might be similar to the tasks before class.

This list of rules would be written out and pinned on an observable wall in class, and repeated before every lesson. Several teachers followed their own styles to encourage the students to conform with the rules, such as giving the students/groups who did their job well with a sticker, star or a smiley face. Also highlighted was a bonus scheme (each requirement met by the student would earn one bonus point, which was represented by a star, sticker and the like), where the bonus point could be exchanged into rewards (treats, or applause from the class, etc.). Teachers highlighted outstanding positive outcomes they observed after a period of time they strictly applied the regulation or bonus point system to their classrooms:

> To prevent students' disruptive behaviors, a system of classroom's regulation which is clearly clarified and repeated is the key. (Teacher 13)
>
> My class rarely suffers from the special students' impulsivity, because I tend to be serious and consistent in enforcing classroom rules. For example, if students want to leave their seats or leave the classroom, they need to ask for permission first. It is not advisable for being too harsh on the students; however, we should remind students of the class's disciplines. (Teacher 5)[d1] [WU2]
>
> I reinforce students' memory of the class's rules with proper repetition at the beginning of the lesson. Recently, I give each student a bonus point whenever they comply with the rules, which can be exchanged into snacks or small gifts. Both the special students and others become more obedient, attentive, and active to get the rewards. Because students' level of participation is now measurable, the teacher can keep track of the special ones' involvement in the lesson and take action if they are too inactive. (Teacher 15)

Seven interviewees who applied this system claimed that not only the class ran more smoothly than before, but also the special students' attitude towards learning had been significantly improved. These interviewees also recommended applying a class regulation system as an effective solution to prevent disruptive behaviors of the ADHD and ASD students and reinforce their correct behaviors. One of the teachers even highlighted another benefit of this system by stating that the system facilitated teachers in governing the class as a whole and ensured that "no children were left behind". Based on the number of points each individual or each group had, they could detect the inactive students in class and motivate them to participate more.

4.3. Buddy system

From Table 5, Item 5.4, how to create a collaborative learning environment for ADHD and ASD students, who particularly struggled with social interactions, was one of the teachers' major concerns. Buddy system was an innovative classroom management strategy to address this issue as well as compensate for the lack of additional

support of professionals and teaching assistants. Standing in stark contrast with the precedent investigation, which emphasizes ADHD and ASD's inability to form and maintain a relationship with their peers due to the underdevelopment of social skills and disorderly manner (Barkley, 1998; Kellner, Houghton, & Douglas, 2003), teachers were strongly rooting for the effectiveness of buddy system. It had an exceptionally high number of advocators, with 19/20 teachers who expressed their preference for it during the interview. In this system, a (more) mature and proficient student was assigned to work in a partnership with the ADHD and ASD ones. This "little mentor" could replace the teachers' role in instructing, correcting, and answering detailed problems of the special student, which was rather time-consuming and impossible to conduct by the teacher alone under such limited time. The teachers could use their spare time to check on these pairs' progress and guide them on a more general level. In fact, Teacher 2 even reported, "Some of the primary students were more mature than we thought. They could instruct their peers with dedication like a teacher and took care of them like older siblings".

When concern was expressed regarding the mentors' willingness to support their peers, 16/20 teachers claimed that "it was not an issue". In fact, the mentor would be eager to help after being incentivized.

> If I arrange the more competent student into a pair or group which has special ones, I would encourage that pair/group with a bonus point if they can reach a goal that I have specially designed for them. This motivates the more proficient student to put effort into supporting the weaker ones, hence, all members in the pair/group have a favorable learning outcome after the activity ends. (Teacher 19)

Drawing on the mentors' preference to be treated as adults, the teachers praised them for being "grown-up" when they successfully help the special students. Furthermore, bonus points were also granted for the pair if they could complete a given task together. With the mentioned incentives, rarely any case where the mentor refused to cooperate was reported.

Teachers 5, 8, 13, and 19 even flexibly combined both the buddy system with the bonus point system to synergize the strengths of both regimes. When assigning collaborative activities, they would arrange mixed-ability groups with a competent student as the group leader and one or two special students. The group leader then followed the teacher's instructions to guide the special ones to complete tasks that were intriguing and simple for them, and the whole group would get bonus points for successfully supporting each other to reach both individual and mutual goals. Former explorations had stated that ADHD and ASD students were capable of completing tasks equal to their level and could be stimulated by meaningful and thought-provoking activities (Greene, 1995; Zentall, 1993; DuPaul & Power, 2000).

However, this strategy was not always effective, especially to inactive special students. From the the classroom observation, the three teachers (1, 2, and 19) generally neglected the inactive special students, leaving them silent in group work and pair work. Based on the list of the harmful teacher' acts by Pokrivčáková, S. et al. (2015), this might be one of the most potentially prevalent ones. However, 16/20 teachers who highly recommended this model claimed that even though the children remained passive compared to other peers in a group or a pair, their spirit was lightened up over time and they displayed a positive attitude towards learning at the end of the semester.

4.4. Resolving interpersonal conflicts

Interpersonal conflicts were part of teaching to ADHD and ASD children, especially in a subject that relied on an interactive and communicative approach like English. Children with ADHD and ASD often had a volatile temperament, controlling manner, and extreme reactions (Erhardt & Hinshaw, 1994; Hinshaw & Melnick, 1995). They could be oblivious to social cues, a pivotal skill to maintain mutual understanding with their classmates (Atkinson, Robinson, & Shute, 1997). In a similar vein, 20/20 teachers confirmed the manifestation of these problematic traits in their special students. ADHD and ASD students tend to be vulnerable and susceptible to stimulants which possibly caused stress, so to maintain a stable and pleasant environment for them to study in was critical.

Fortunately, their classmates tended to express their sympathy with the special students, according to the teachers' observation. They might quarrel because of trivial affairs but would forgive each other soon later. In a broader sense, most previous studies that examine the problems in a bilingual inclusive classroom did not record the interpersonal relationship between ADHD and ASD students and other peers in class as a significant difficulty. In a study conducted by Pandurean (2014), most students in an inclusive classroom were willing to work with their ADHD and ASD peers.

To restrict the risk of collision in class, the teachers paid great attention to the class and attempted their best to devoid their class of any abusive circumstances together with lecturing the students about tolerance and affection towards those who were different. Nonetheless, the teachers asserted that they would not lavish the special children with bias, but preferred to resolve the problems rationally. To exemplify, if a special student and another peer got into a fight, the teacher would explicate the situation for both of them to understand and demand the one at fault to apologize to the other. They stressed that the impartiality in dealing with such situations would eventually adjust the behavior and consolidate the rightful manner of both the special and other students.

However, in reality, some teachers could be perplexed when encountering conflicts among special and other students. For example, during a lesson of Teacher 1, a student got into a fight with a special tablemate, then repeatedly accused the special student of pulling her hair. Teacher 1 showed signs of avoidance and attempted to buy time so that the homeroom teacher could handle the situation thereafter.

4.5. Other techniques

Apart from the aforementioned strategies, versatility was the element needed to adapt to each unique case of ADHD and ASD students effectively. By inspecting the personality traits of the special students, teachers could discover novel techniques to explore new potentials in the students.

> After a while teaching an ADHD and ASD child in my class, I realized he/she was deeply affectionate to his/her mother and was deadly afraid of doing anything that might bother him/her. Understanding that, whenever he/she did something wrong, other than simply explain to him/her that was wrong, I also mentioned his/her mother's discontent when knowing it. He/she never repeated the undesirable behavior afterward. (Teacher 7)

Another feature to notify was that ADHD and ASD students could be exceptionally

sensitive. According to Teacher 13 and Teacher 20, they could detect the change in teachers' nonverbal signals, such as the variation in the voice, intonation, body gestures or eye movements. Therefore, teachers could purposefully send the signals to their special students if they were about to conduct a mischievous deed, encourage them to open up or strengthen the bond between them and their teachers. This could help teachers avoid putting off their task in the middle of a lesson to tackle the student. However, 16/20 teachers reported that from time to time they had to deal with extreme cases, where students were so stubborn that they turned down nearly every technique that was applied to govern their behaviors. English teachers from a few private schools which had an apartment for students with special needs could receive support from specialized teaching assistants; however, the collaboration of special students' parents was of crucial necessity to most teachers.

Handling an English inclusive classroom with ADHD and ASD students is extremely challenging; however, the teacher had devised different techniques with great flexibility and creativity. Concerning a more general approach, all the teachers participating in the interview session stated that it was advisable to draw attention to two criteria in order to design an effective classroom management regime: 1) Consider special students' characteristics and 2) Reinforce special students' self-esteem. As for the first principle, this is what the teacher should be mindful of, especially when enacting a classroom's regulation system. The classroom of Teacher 13 which had a student diagnosed with ASD could be a case in point. The children were required to "sit nicely" facing the teacher, but this student preferred to turn his back to the teacher and stared at the wall in the back of the class instead. Although the teacher had repetitively reminded him not to do so, he proceeded with this action. In this case, despite the students' violation of the class's rules, the teacher should be considerate and gradually adjust his behavior in lieu of forcing him to change immediately. According to Teacher 13, "He still learns English quite well in that position, he only does so to feel secure. It is best for him to sit like other students but I do not regard his current posture as some taboo, the prejudice that teachers would hold if they were in my place." Turning to the second principle, 20/20 teachers gave priority to consolidating students' confidence via various means. Teacher 19 provided a realization of this principle by calling ADHD students, who could not stand being immobile, to be a part of the demo session before each activity incorporated in the lesson. The sense of achievement they got from serving themselves as role models for other students would be beneficial for their self-confidence. These two principles embraced INCLUDE by Friends and Bursuck (1999) and Duvall (2006), which also promotes student-centeredness.

5. Conclusion

Despite certain limitations in terms of scope, data size, and certain practical issues, this study has shed light on the classroom management in inclusive classrooms that have ADHD and ASD students, calling for increased awareness of their needs and difficulties. By foregrounding five groups of classroom management techniques, the study could bring a general understanding of the teachers' challenges when handling ADHD and ASD students within the context of Vietnam primary schools. Many of those issues call for the cooperation of these four stakeholders PETS: Parents – Experts – Teachers – School to facilitate their English language learning inclusively. Regarding

classroom management, the teachers proposed two systems that were deemed helpful for establishing a constructive classroom, namely the classroom regulation system and the buddy system. The former aligns well with past research, as behavioral models had been traditionally applied to adjusting ADHD and ASD children's behavior. However, the latter seemed to contradict previous examinations on the ground that ADHD and ASD students encountered enormous difficulties in forming relationships with classmates. Although the suggestions were personal and not flawless, teachers could reap the benefits from both the behavioral and collaborative approaches or utilize them in combination with their own versatility and perspicacity. Besides the aforementioned regimes that could serve as valuable references, the study also formulated two principles teachers should take into account when devising classroom management strategies, which are: 1) Consider special students' characteristics and 2) Reinforce special students' self-esteem. Apart from strategies to aid teachers in classroom management, the study also pointed out potential harmful teachers' acts that deserve more attention in the subsequent examinations. From the findings presented, future research could delve further into the measures to form a strong association of PETS, the solutions to undesirable teachers' behaviors to ADHD and ASD students, or the research to testify the effectiveness of these proposed classroom management techniques.

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NHỮNG KỸ THUẬT QUẢN LÝ LỚP HỌC TIẾNG ANH THEO MÔ HÌNH GIÁO DỤC HÒA NHẬP CHO HỌC SINH TIỂU HỌC MẮC CHỨNG RỐI LOẠN TĂNG ĐỘNG GIẢM CHÚ Ý VÀ RỐI LOẠN PHỔ TỰ KỈ

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Tóm tắt: Nhận ra tầm quan trọng của tiếng Anh như một ngôn ngữ thiết yếu trong giao tiếp toàn cầu hóa, Việt Nam đã đưa ngôn ngữ này trở thành môn học bắt buộc trong chương trình giáo dục phổ thông từ lớp ba. Do đó, việc giảng dạy tiếng Anh cho trẻ em dần trở thành vấn đề thu hút được sự quan tâm của các nhà giáo dục và các nhà nghiên cứu. Tuy nhiên, đối tượng trẻ mắc rối loạn tăng động giảm chú ý và rối loạn phổ tự kỉ, hai dạng rối loạn tâm thần thường gặp nhất ở trẻ em, lại chưa nhận được nhiều sự quan tâm. Vì những lý do đó, nghiên cứu trường hợp điển hình theo đường hướng tiếp cận hỗn hợp này được thực hiện nhằm khảo sát những khó khăn mà giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học gặp phải, cũng như những giải pháp khắc phục mà họ đã sử dụng để quản lý một lớp học có những học sinh mắc chứng rối loạn nói trên trong mô hình hòa nhập. Sau khi điều tra và thu được 109 phiếu trả lời từ 20 thành phố thuộc ba miền trên cả nước, nghiên cứu tiếp tục phỏng vấn sâu với giáo viên kết hợp với quan sát lớp học để rút ra kết luận. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy giáo viên gặp nhiều khó khăn, trong đó khó khăn lớn nhất là sự bất đồng trong giao tiếp với phụ huynh trẻ rối loạn. Ngoài ra, giáo viên có thể xây dựng những kỹ thuật dạy học thể hiện sự sáng tạo và linh hoạt cao để quản lý lớp học, dù vẫn còn sự xuất hiện của một vài hành vi chưa chuyên nghiệp xuất phát từ việc giáo viên hiếm khi được đào tạo về giáo dục đặc biệt. Nhờ đó, bài báo này có thể là một nguồn tham khảo có giá trị dành cho những giáo viên và nhà nghiên cứu làm việc với trẻ rối loạn tăng động giảm chú ý và rối loạn phổ tự kỉ tại Việt Nam.

Từ khóa: Rối loạn tăng động giảm chú ý, Rối loạn phổ tự kỉ, quản lý lớp học, tiểu học, Việt Nam

EFFECTS OF DICTOGLOSS ON NON-ENGLISH MAJORED UNDERGRADUATES' LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract: Listening has long been considered a hard-to-deal skill for both ESL teachers and learners. Although there are abundant studies on this field aiming to diversify in-class listening activities and make them more efficient for learners, the demand for one which manages to provide or reinforce necessary linguistic knowledge for students is still high. This action research was conducted with 40 pre-intermediate non-English majored students through three qualitative methods including focus group interview, teacher's diary and artifacts to examine the effects of dictogloss on listening comprehension in English teaching and learning process and to explore the learners' attitudes towards this practice. Findings of the study were that dictogloss helped to improve the learners' listening comprehension through activating and raising their awareness of linguistic knowledge and providing them a clear context for listening, which also made them more interested in the activity.

Keywords: action research, dictogloss, listening comprehension, linguistic knowledge

1. Introduction

In some Asian developing countries like Vietnam, education is paid a lot of attention; it is considered a key to success in life. A person with high qualifications is much appreciated in the society, which also means certificates are sometimes considered more important than competences or skills (Le, 1999). That fact results in the purpose of learning, which may be for passing exams or getting certificates. Besides, Vietnamese students are often complained to be lazy and passive, which is believed to be the consequence of following Confucianism, in which a teacher plays a dominant role in class, he or she is expected to organize and assign tasks in the classroom whereas students are expected to keep silence and go after their teacher's instruction.

In order to enhance national English language competency, Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam has implemented Project 2020. The project once again emphasizes the important role of English for Vietnamese learners. For non-English majored students, this means a lot when they have to reconsider their way of learning English because now, they are not only tested in written exams with lots of grammar, reading and writing exercises but speaking and listening as well. The importance of listening has been discussed among various studies. According to Hedge (2000), in communication, we spend 9% of our time on writing, 16% on reading, 30% on speaking and 45% on listening. This skill is particularly significant in the context of Vietnam where the teaching and learning of listening has still been neglected for years.

At the author's institution, most students are non-English majored coming from all parts of the country and majoring in technical fields. All of them have studied English for at least 7 years since primary school, but many of them are from rural areas where they rarely have a chance to speak and listen in English.

At university, the students have to study English for 6 semesters from elementary to achieve level B1 according to CEFR-V, a Vietnamese version of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The research was carried out with 40 non-English majored students at pre-intermediate level during 10 weeks with 5 listening lessons at semester 3. The participants are from 18 to 20 years old, including seven male and thirty-three female students. The students have two English lessons every week, and each lesson is taught with one language skill for two contact hours. The researcher-teacher has been teaching English for more than 10 years, and she also has much experience working with non-English majored undergraduates.

The study is conducted on the theoretical framework of the learning and teaching of listening and the theory of dictogloss, which will be justified in the literature review. The rationale for choosing dictogloss to improve listening comprehension is because of the problem arising in the researcher's context and the advantages of dictogloss. In the author's listening class, there are often three main parts: pre, while and post-listening; due to the scope of this study, only pre- and post-listening stages are mentioned. In the pre-listening step, the common activities for students are describing pictures and answering some topic-related questions, or matching words with pictures or definitions. After these activities, students are expected to be activated with background knowledge or provided with some vocabulary about what they are going to listen. However, as the researcher observed, most of the time, the students still cannot use or even recognize the new words in the while-listening step. Hence, in this case, linguistic knowledge is not provided effectively. Besides, in post-listening activities, students are often given some noticeable structures in the listening text and practice with speaking or writing skill. Students repeat the structures mechanically and they soon get bored with that. Hence, the teacher usually skips or makes this step the homework exercise. Meanwhile, according to Hedge (2000), the post-listening activity is important for reinforcing students' understanding about the text through investigating language features deeply. Consequently, as noted by the teacher, rhetorical knowledge is not sufficiently and effectively provided through both steps of pre- and post-listening, which may result in students' poor performance in while-listening process. For that reason, dictogloss is expected to address the problem with its advantages in promoting students' awareness of linguistic features, cooperative learning and giving them a clear objective as well as context for listening (Wanjryb, 1990; Vasiljevic, 2010; Smith, 2012). This study is conducted to answer the research question:

How does dictogloss affect non-English majored undergraduates' ability of listening comprehension regarding linguistic knowledge?

2. Literature review

2.1. Listening comprehension

Listening comprehension is a complex process involving types of knowledge, which are classified as in-speech and in-head knowledge (Hedge, 2000). Hedge (2000) explained that in-speech knowledge refers to knowledge of language and acoustic signals, which are available in the speech to comprehend what is presented whereas in-head knowledge implies the listener's general world knowledge or prior knowledge. These types of knowledge are also known as two common approaches in the teaching and learning of listening comprehension, which are bottom-up and top-down process (Hedge, 2000; Nunan, 1997; Richards, 2008). In bottom-up approach, listeners use linguistic knowledge in the text to construct meaning. Specifically, Nunan (1997) explained the rule of this process as follows: from the smallest linguistic unit like phoneme, the listener links it together to form words; grouping words he/

she forms the meaning of a phrase, and linking phrases the listener understands utterances; then utterances form the whole meaning of the text. Consequently, understanding comes in the end after the listener utilizes what he/she can hear from the text itself. Nevertheless, with each topic, the ability for listening comprehension changes due to each listener's background knowledge. As a result, the other approach is named top-down process. In this one, the listener brings his/her own prior knowledge to the text to make sense of it. The real listening stage is to confirm what he/she is expected in advance and adds more detailed information if there is (Richards, 2008). However, there is a concern that when listening, which approach will the listener use? Scrivener (2005) explained that in a real listening process, the listener consciously or unconsciously applies both approaches, in which the linguistic and background knowledge interact with each other to support the listener to comprehend the input. That is called an interactive approach. Based on the process of listening, three steps of teaching listening have been introduced in class for ages with pre-, while- and post-listening. In the scope of this study, only pre- and post-listening steps are taken into consideration. As Hedge (2000) stated, the function of pre-listening stage is to assist the listener to contextualize the speech, provide him/her with a clear purpose for listening and help him/her to predict or give out any hypothesis of the coming input. Adding to the point, he said that pre-listening should also activate and/or provide the listener with background knowledge for the topic as well as introduce vocabulary that he/she may not know. Sharing this point, Richards (2008) confirmed that the activities in pre-listening serve the purpose of preparing the listener with bottom-up and top-down approach. Meanwhile, post-listening step helps students to have a more intensive look into the text (Hedge, 2000). Students may be asked to discuss or give their reflective thinking about the topic or if there is any part they need to clarify, the teacher will go back and analyze the text in more detail, in which the bottom-up process is practiced.

2.2. Dictogloss in listening comprehension

Dictogloss was first presented by Wajnryb (1990). This activity originated from dictation; however, it makes up for the drawbacks of its predecessor for a rote teaching method, in which the learners merely note down teacher's reading without thinking anything (Jacobs & Small, 2003). In order to simplify the term, the researcher adopts a definition of Newman (2012), which divided "dictogloss" into two parts: "dicto" means dictation and "gloss" is equal to paraphrase or interpret the text. Thus, unlike traditional dictation, dictogloss requires the learners to revise the text as long as the original meaning is kept. Concerning the process of dictogloss, many researchers suggested some slightly different ones; however, in this study, the researcher follows the original process proposed by Wajnryb (1990), which have four steps:

a. Preparation: The teacher provides some key vocabulary and introduces the topic.

b. Dictation: The text is read twice at normal speed. At the first time, the learners are required to do nothing but listen to get the main ideas of the text. At the second time, they are allowed to take notes.

c. Reconstruction: The learners work in groups to compare their notes and build up a new version of the text provided that they keep the meaning close to the original one.

d. Analysis and correction: The learners compare the reconstructed text with other groups' or with the original text to make any correction.

Dictogloss is beneficial to the teaching of listening comprehension in the following ways. First and foremost, dictogloss raises students' awareness of linguistic knowledge (Vasiljevic, 2010). In the reconstruction step, the learners use their notes and discuss with their friends how to reproduce the text. Through this, they have a chance to consider

the text more intensively, they link each word in the notes to make sentences and form a meaningful text. Besides, by taking notes and discussion, the listeners can practice some new words explicitly in both written and spoken forms; thus, the vocabulary is acquired effectively. Moreover, when reconstructing the notes, the learners have to rearrange ideas in a logical way. Then in the last step of analyzing and correcting, they have to compare their reconstructed text with other groups' or with the original text carefully to find any differences. Hence, through this process, they self-notice and self-realize rhetorical patterns and language features in the target language (Shak, 2006). Second, dictogloss promotes collaborative learning among learners. In traditional listening class, the learners work individually most of the time; however, with dictogloss, they have a chance to cooperate with their group mates. Collaborative learning enables the learners to freely express themselves, collect more ideas from people with different background knowledge, and reduce the workload (Burdett, 2003). Especially in listening skills, collaboration helps the listeners propose more hypotheses to understand the text without hesitation when they only have to speak in their small group. Third, dictogloss provides the learners with a clear purpose and context for listening (Vasiljevic, 2010). Dictogloss is a meaning-based activity, in which the learners reproduce the text based on what they listen. They cooperate with friends to work out the meaning and have a reconstructed version in the end. The learners are actively engaged in this process rather than only listen and do exercises like in traditional listening class. Thus, listening becomes more interesting.

3. Research Method

To begin with, action research methodology is taken into consideration. Action research was developed by Kurt Lewin in 1940s in the United States. Since then, this methodology has been widely applied in social sciences as well as education in many undergraduate and graduate courses (Price, 2001). To define the term, Hinchey (2008) stated clearly that action research is an on-going process of systematic examination where the same steps are conducted repeatedly by a community insider; its purpose is to make some changes or innovation that improves the current situation. The on-going or cyclical process of this methodology varies according to different researchers. Besides, one thing that makes action research different from traditional research is the researcher is not the outside experts but the community insider like classroom teacher. That enables the researcher to investigate problems arising from his/her own context and brings about the change to the situation of the researcher, which he/she believes to be important. Thus, the result of an action research cannot be generalized; it is not true for every circumstance and merely applicable in the research's one. However, action research is now a preferable model because its aim is to bring about the change in some community or program; it can tell each individual teacher the best solution to his/her specific case at an exact moment (Hinchey, 2008). Hence, owing to the aim and the advantage of action research, this study applied this methodology to investigate the problem in the researcher's classroom and find out a solution to improve the situation.

In this study, the researcher followed qualitative methodology for the following reasons. Firstly, qualitative methods enabled the researcher to have a better understanding of how and why the innovation worked and did not work. Specifically, they helped to focus on the investigation of participants' attitude, perspectives, preference and thought in the context (Harwell, 2011). Secondly, for a small-scale study like this with only 40 students, qualitative methodology was more appropriate to be employed. Finally, qualitative method was chosen because of its inductive style. This means the researcher

would develop any theories or ideas of the innovation after collecting data from her participants rather than start with fixed ones before the data is collected (Becker & Bryman, 2004; as cited in Dahlberg & MacCaig, 2010). In this study, with the research question: *"**How does dictogloss affect non-English majored undergraduates' ability of listening comprehension regarding linguistic knowledge?**"*, the author did not wish to grow any theories fixed in advance but through the data she wanted to know whether and of what aspects dictogloss could improve the current problem in her listening class. In this research, three data collection instruments were employed, which were focus group interview, teacher's diary and artifacts.

Focus Group Interview

Focus group interview was chosen because it enabled the researcher to investigate in-depth information of the participants' thought, attitude and opinion about a particular issue through their communication (McLafferty, 2004). Focus group was beneficial as the participants follow their peer's answer and had more thought than in other kinds of one-to-one interview (Webcredible, 2006). In this study, focus group interview was employed to collect data about the participants' attitude and opinion after dictogloss was applied in their listening class. The interview was carried out at the end of the course with four representative groups; each group involved seven students with different study ability and from mostly dissimilar groups in dictogloss activity. The reason for choosing diverse interviewees was because this enabled the researcher to get rich sources of data from different points of view when the participants were encouraged to talk more than in the same old group. Each group interview lasted for about one hour and the researcher was also the moderator. In order to capture all responses, she audio-recorded the interview; besides because focus group is advantageous for the researcher to know about the participants' attitude and behaviour through discussion, the researcher decided to note down any important occurrences and observation as well. The interview questions were adapted from Shak (2006) with his attitude questionnaire. In the interview, the participants were allowed to use Vietnamese if they wish to in order to express themselves clearly because they were just at pre-intermediate level and more importantly, the purpose of the interview was not testing their English speaking competence. Data from focus group interviews were transcribed and categorized into different themes namely *Students' engagement, Students' awareness of linguistic knowledge* and *Students' ability of listening comprehension;* then the themes were sorted to make any relationship among categories basing on literature.

Artifacts

Artifacts were used in this study to collect data about the participants' variations in work, which informed the researcher about their learning progress or any difficulties when they comprehended the text. Both students' individual notes and groups' notes were collected. Students' individual notes were used to compare with theirs in the previous lessons with dictogloss to see whether each individual could make progress in comprehending the text or whether they could improve their note taking skill in listening comprehension, particularly, their ability to realize and note down key vocabulary and information. Groups' notes were collected to compare with the listening script, which was divided into smaller main parts according to several main criteria, including *the ability to realize verb tense and key vocabulary to form sentences,* and *the awareness of key discourse markers and rhetorical patterns*. Each criterion was rated at three levels: *not aware, partially aware* and *fully aware*, which was adapted from Smith (2012). In analysis step, any mistakes that did not cause content misunderstanding would not be counted because the focus of the activity is checking

comprehension. Both students' mistakes and success in comprehending the text should be noted with the same criteria in dividing the script to find reasons for their progress or difficulties. For example, one group was able to be aware of key vocabulary and text structure; however, they used wrong verb tenses, which led to misunderstanding of the text. All of that was noted down carefully.

Teacher's Diaries

Explaining the term, Moon (2006) said diary is a collection of the writer's reflective thinking such as questions, comments, analyses, or tentative justifications for something... Adding to the point, Hinchey (2008) stated that diary is used as a means of reflection, which helps to record what happens in one's professional life. Diary is a widely used method because it is cheap and easy to be conducted but can help to collect rich sources of data. This qualitative data collection instrument was employed in the study to record the teacher-researcher's reflective thinking about the participants' engagement and ability to understand the text throughout the innovation. Besides, data from the teacher's diaries was also exploited to triangulate data from group interview and artifacts. Initially, observation method was intended to be used; however, as it took time for the teacher to both handle group discussion and observe, teacher's diary was more advantageous when most of the time, the teacher-researcher just needed to note down her thoughts at the end of the class. To keep her thoughts, the researcher used the combination of both structured and unstructured diaries in which there are three criteria: *The participants' engagement, The participants' ability to understand the text* and *Others*. The column "*Others"* was for noting down any occurrences or immediate thoughts of the researcher while the activity was implemented. Each diary was written after every lesson with dictogloss and all diaries were looked back in the end for reflection. Teacher's diaries were kept in narrative form which were also put into various themes and enabled the researcher to analyze under the same code tree. These data were also used to triangulate data from interviews and the students' artifacts.

4. Results

After analyzing data, the following sections present key findings of the research.

Students' Engagement

The data showed that most students were engaged in the activity enthusiastically. One student answered in group interview, *"The thing I liked most in this activity was that we had a chance to work in group, I was so eager to share notes, discuss, even argue and fight for my opinion"* (Interview 2, Student A). Through the researcher's observation and interview, not only strong students but the weak ones got involved much in group discussion. Some weak students stated that they were interested in discussing in their group despite their less contribution than others. Explaining to this, one said, *"I could not take much note and my vocabulary was limited but I didn't care much. I still enjoyed group work because while my friends were discussing, I could check my notes and my understanding of the text, I could learn much from that"* (Interview 2, Student B). Another student in the same group with her added, *"Although she took little note, her role was really important because with some new words that we did not know, she transcribed into Vietnamese, which we based on to find out the words later"* (Interview 2, Student C). This was confirmed when the researcher looked at the students' individual notes, in which many of them unconsciously jotted down the words, made spelling mistakes and used Vietnamese, for examples, *"I really **thing** that…", "make the heart **bit** fast…", "me trơ po li tần"* (Vietnamse transcription of "metropolitan"). It was clear that group work provided the students with a comfort

zone to express themselves fully and freely, which stimulated them to share more and give out more hypotheses to comprehend the text. Moreover, another student commented, *"I liked working with other students, if I missed any information, there would probably be someone in my group who did not, and I could learn from group discussion. Besides, it also helped me to show off what I'd known. Group work enabled us to share the workload."* (Interview 3, Student A). This comment was shared by many other students in group interviews. Also, the students got involved in group work because they thought it was beneficial to them in learning.

Unlike usual listening activity, dictogloss brought about a new atmosphere, in which the participants had a chance to interact with others rather than working individually. One more factor that motivated the students is the competitiveness of the activity. In analysis step, each group compared their text with the others' or with the original one and they always tried to win over the other groups. In teacher's diary 2, it was recorded: "*Group 1 made many mistakes. There was a small argument among these group members after the teacher corrected their text. It seemed like they thought they could do better. Some members felt upset when other groups could reconstruct the text but they could not. One member even asked the teacher to do dictogloss one more time immediately!*"

Despite the participants' great involvement, it was obvious that there was time they did not get really engaged in the activity. In teacher's diary 1, it was noted, "*The text seemed to be easy, students collected all notes and just one member worked, he/she wrote a new note for the group"*. Besides, the topic of the text may also limit students' involvement. Answering in the interview, one student said, "*I think the topic of dictogloss number 3 was difficult, I was not familiar with it, I did not know much about housing and living conditions of working people in the past. Even I can hear all single words but I could not understand the meaning. So I discussed less*". Meanwhile, as cited in the teacher's diary 3, the overall class engagement was lower than in the previous classes, which meant that the background knowledge for some specific topics might limit some learners' involvement in the activity. Besides, the participants' understanding of the activity instruction also affected their engagement. Teacher's diary 1 and 3 noted some points, "*Some students were reluctant in group discussion because they thought they had taken notes and given them to their group leader to write, that was enough.*" Or "*Some students thought it was not necessary to work out some new words, provided that they still got the meaning of the text so they let go and did not try their best."*

Students' Awareness of Linguistic Knowledge

Another positive finding through the application of dictogloss was that the students were better aware of linguistic knowledge, especially vocabulary, grammatical structures, rhetorical patterns, and discourse markers. Answering in the interview, many students shared the same point that this activity was very helpful for them to learn vocabulary. One student said, "*Compared with normal listening text, the text in dictogloss did not have many new words, however, it made me memorize the words much easier because when I listened, I heard the sound, noted it down, then we spoke it out, even repeated the sound many times in group discussion to find the exact word and wrote it again. After this, I remembered how to pronounce and write the new word better than the usual way of learning vocabulary*" (Interview 4, Student A). Another added, "*When reconstructing the final text, we considered the part of speech very carefully to make the sentence not only meaningful but also grammatically correct. When taking notes, we often did not write down the full form of the word, maybe just its abbreviation or symbols, so we needed to discuss to put the right word in the right place, for example, following a normal verb should be an adverb and after*

the verb "to be" should be an adjective...." (Interview 4, Student B). Besides vocabulary, the students also pointed out that dictogloss enabled them to activate and be more aware of grammatical structures, as one said, "*I remember one lesson with dictogloss, I heard of the verb "house" in the sentence, and one member in my group made sure that she noted "had to be" before "house", that reminded me of the passive voice. Some argued that there should not be "to be" in front of a normal verb but because I knew it for sure, then I talked to them about passive voice, and so this phrase should be "had to be housed" and they were convinced when we looked back at the text content."* (Interview 1, Student A). In addition, through the researcher's observation during group discussion, it was noted, "*Students were aware and knew how to note some discourse markers such as: but, despite, however, as a result... and then based on those to reconstruct the meaning of the text. I could listen to group 3 discussing, one student said he had the word "but", so it meant the meaning of two sentences linked by "but" were opposite"*. (Teacher diary 4). Hence, it could be concluded that the linguistic knowledge gained or activated during the activity did support the listeners to work out the text meaning better by making sense of the sounds to find words and linking words to understand relationship among sentences.

Although the students' awareness of those linguistic factors was improved, they still did not notice much about the verb tenses. Data from artifacts showed that verb tenses were not used properly even the learners could realize some adverbial phrases of time. For example: "*At the beginning of the century, living conditions with majority of working people in East London* ***are*** *basic..." or "I was born in England, but I* ***had lived*** *in Germany for the past 20 years. I* ***had arrived*** *in Berlin for 4 years. Before that, I* ***lived*** *in Bonn for 6 years..."* (Groups' artifacts). Even though mistakes related to verb tenses appeared fewer in the following lessons, it was clear that the students hardly looked at the text as a whole, i.e. they were still passive in learning. When the text was read, some signals of verb tenses might not be very clear or the students did not have enough time to take note of those inputs, then in group, they merely discussed and linked what they had in the notes to make sentences. This point was noticed by the researcher so that she can clarify the instruction and regulate group discussion better.

Students' Ability of Listening Comprehension

Besides the finding that linguistic knowledge activation resulted in students' better listening comprehension, one more noticeable discovery about the participants' ability to understand the text was that they could base on the context to reconstruct the meaning. For example, the students knew how to link the sound of the word they heard with the topic or some surrounding words to find the meaning. One student said, "*When coming up with a new word, I transcribed its pronunciation and, basing on that, in group we looked up in the dictionary to find which word had the meaning that matched the context"*. Another added, "*Sometimes, we could also lean on the surrounding words to guess the new word, for example, we could note "the poor and needy/ nitde", at first we were not sure about the word "needy" or "nitde" but because it was linked with "the poor" by "and", so it must have the same meaning with "the poor", then we checked it in the dictionary."* (Interview 1, Student B). Many other students shared the same point and it was understandable that dictogloss provided the learners with a clear context to help them comprehend the content more easily than usual listening exercises which merely have one or two sentences in the instruction to introduce the context. Besides the advantage of a context-based activity, the participants thought that dictogloss was also beneficial to listening comprehension because it supported them to realize key words and

main ideas. Some comments collected from group interviews were, "*It was an effective way to study listening because I could get the main content from some key words",* or "*It helped me to be more focused on listening and sharpened my skill of realizing key words"* or *"It was useful for me to detect, note down key words and understand the main content to do exercises like True/ False".*

Through interviews, most participants believed that their listening comprehension skill was enhanced from dictogloss because thanks to it, they could know how to note down key words to comprehend the text. However, data from artifacts showed some difference. The students' individual notes were looked at and what noted were not key words but any words that the students could jot down, from which each individual could hardly base on to reconstruct the text. For example, one students' note was, "*At the beginning century, very basic, living condition, rather than, houses were, has to be houses…"* or "*At the beginning of, living condition for major in East London was basic, how this world crowded and usually very badly…, because there was no…".* Another matter relating to students' individual notes was that they tried to write down full sentences while there may not be sufficient time for them to do so. Consequently, they were likely to miss the next one because the teacher did not wait for them to complete a sentence to read the followings. Hence, data from individual notes indicated that most students did not know how to note down key words, and they just tried to write as much as possible.

Despite the participants' poor notes, groups' artifacts confirmed that every group could understand main ideas from the text. Even though they still made some grammatical mistakes, the major content was conveyed, which was all that listening comprehension required for. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, although each note was not good, when they shared the notes, they could make up for the missing part in their friends' to make a better one. Secondly, at the first time of listening, the students might get the main idea of the text, so in discussion they might both use notes and their short-term memory to recall the content.

In short, the awareness of linguistic knowledge, a clear context, group work and short-term memory were elements from dictogloss activity to help the students comprehend the text while their ability to take notes of key words was still weak.

5. Reflection and suggestions

In this part, the research will be evaluated according to the factors that made dictogloss effective or not; besides, some problems arising during the process of applying dictogloss will be discussed for further study.

Firstly, dictogloss enabled the participants to engage in the activity. The result of students' high engagement was also confirmed in previous studies such as Shak (2006) and Harwood (2008). The reasons for this were because of group work and the newness and competitiveness of the innovation. While group work provided a free environment for the learners to give out their opinions without hesitation and stimulated them to share more, the innovation also brought about a new atmosphere, in which the students try to compete with others for the best reconstructed listening product. Another factor that contributed to the effectiveness of using dictogloss in the context is the choice of texts. Initially, texts were chosen from listening books at the same level of the students; however, the researcher realized that the students found it easy and did not engage much in the activity, because they were familiar with their teacher's voice and her speed of reading the text was somehow much easier to catch up with than in the recording. Then, the researcher decided to change the level of difficulty to "i + 1" as Krashen put it (1982; cited in Kidd, 1992). This did improve the students' engagement in

the next lesson with dictogloss. The teacher's diary 5 noted, "*The text this time was more difficult, which encouraged discussion more and students gave out more hypotheses. They worked together sentence by sentence to find out the text meaning*". One noticeable finding in this theme was that their low language proficiency did not prevent weak students from engaging in the activity. Another reason to increase student engagement in group discussion is because of the research's context, in which there were only 20 students in each class and they had more than 10 weeks studying together from elementary level; thus, they were quite close and open to each other. This made them more confident when working in groups. Besides, before enrolling in the course, all students were required to take a placement test; hence, their English level was somehow similar to each other. Even there were still some who were not as good as others but in general, they were all at pre-intermediate level, which contributed to the success of the intervention. However, although weak students were eager to join group discussion, they had fewer chances to talk because they could not take as much note as others. Despite the fact that most students enjoyed the activity, there were some having low involvement in discussion, it was because of their understanding of the instruction and the topic of the text as explained above.

Secondly, through dictogloss, the students' awareness of linguistic knowledge was improved much because the students could activate their knowledge and through the process of self-realizing and self-correcting, they could memorize the information much better than in a normal listening activity. In order to carry out dictogloss successfully, it is necessary that the participants be at a certain level of English so that they have something in their mind in advance to share with friends and they can activate something from what they have learnt. Thus, in this research, one factor that made the technique work was that the students were able to help each other in learning and they could actually make up for the part that their friends were missing. Besides, the researcher realized that analysis step played an important role in making the learners aware of linguistic knowledge when they had chance to check the text sentence by sentence. The activity would not have been so effective if in this step, they had just read their version out rather than written it on the board. In the first lesson with dictogloss, the students read out their rebuilt texts to save time and it was recorded: "*When one was reading, the others were busy completing their text or chatting to wait for their turn. Only when the teacher asked the student to repeat one sentence or phrase which she thought contained some mistakes, did the rest of the class pay their attention to.*" (Teacher diary 1). Although rewriting the text took more time than reading, in the researcher's observation, it was more beneficial for the learners; they could analyze grammatical features more carefully, which made them self-aware of the mistakes. Thus, from the second lesson, the students were asked to write their texts on the board. In the mean time, the main reason for the students' being unable to put the verb tense correctly was their passive learning, which is the consequence of the teacher-centered class model remaining in Vietnam for years. In this model, the teacher is supposed to organize and assign tasks to students, who are always expected to follow their teacher's guide. Although in Vietnam, learner-centered class was introduced and it has been already applied, the mind-set of teachers and learners about this has not been improved much.

Thirdly, the prominent advantage of dictogloss was that it was a context-based activity; thus, it provided a clear context for the participants and supported them in the comprehension process. The first time of only reading enabled the students to concentrate 100% on listening and got general meaning of the text. Most students agreed that listening without doing anything at the same time enabled them to comprehend the information

much easier. Later, in group discussion they utilized their notes together with what they could remember when listening to reconstruct the text. Analyzing the students' products, the researcher realized that they could convey the main ideas of the text, which was in the same line with Husseinali (2011) when in his study, he found out that dictogloss enabled his students to get main ideas rather than listen to details. However, some students did not know how to take notes properly. When listening, they might realize key words; however, when taking notes, they just jotted down as much as possible. Students might find it difficult to understand their notes later because in fact, they did not have enough time to note much and did not know what to note. Thus, poor note-taking skill may prevent the students from having better reconstructed texts.

Another important factor leading to the effectiveness of dictogloss was that there was enough time available to implement it. As stated above, dictogloss contains four steps; thus, it requires substantial amount of time to be carried out. In the research's context, each listening lesson lasts for 2 hours and thanks to the fact that the syllabus is flexible, the teacher is allowed to spend one first hour covering one unit in the text book. In the other one, she could find supplement exercises or activities to improve the students' listening ability. Hence, dictogloss was often conducted in one hour after the class finished the text book.

6. Conclusion

In a nutshell, dictogloss was advantageous in improving the students' listening comprehension through activating and raising their awareness of their linguistic knowledge and providing them with a clear context for listening, which also made them more interested in the activity. However, some arising problems and factors that affected its effectiveness should be considered for future study to ensure equal benefits for all students. Although the technique was carried out in a short period of time, it brought about advantages for the students in listening comprehension and changed their mind as well as their teacher's mind about the learning and teaching of listening. Because of the above values, the researcher expects to be able to expand this activity widely so that all students at her institution can benefit from it. Throughout the process of conducting the study, by instructing and reflecting in every lesson, the teacher has realized the important role of innovation and action research in improving her teaching, which encourages her to learn more and apply more teaching methods to benefit the students.

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ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA HOẠT ĐỘNG NGHE-CHÉP ĐẾN KHẢ NĂNG NGHE HIỂU CỦA SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH

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Tóm tắt: Kỹ năng nghe từ lâu đã được xem như một kỹ năng khó đối với cả giáo viên lẫn người học ngoại ngữ. Tuy đã có nhiều nghiên cứu về kỹ năng này nhằm đa dạng các hoạt động trên lớp cũng như làm cho các hoạt động này hiệu quả hơn với người học, song nhu cầu tìm kiếm một hoạt động nghe có cung cấp hoặc củng cố kiến thức ngôn ngữ cần thiết một cách hiệu quả cho việc nghe hiểu vẫn còn cao. Bài báo trình bày một nghiên cứu hành động với 40 sinh viên không chuyên ở trình độ tiền trung cấp với ba công cụ nghiên cứu định tính là phỏng vấn nhóm, nhật ký giáo viên và phân tích bài làm sinh viên nhằm đánh giá ảnh hưởng của hoạt động nghe-chép đến khả năng nghe hiểu và tìm hiểu thái độ của người học ngoại ngữ đối với hoạt động này. Kết quả thu được cho thấy hoạt động nghe-chép đã giúp sinh viên nghe hiểu tốt hơn thông qua việc kích hoạt và nâng cao nhận thức của người học về kiến thức ngôn ngữ, đồng thời cung cấp ngữ cảnh rõ ràng cho hoạt động nghe, qua đó làm cho người học cảm thấy hứng thú hơn với hoạt động này.

Từ khóa: nghiên cứu hành động, hoạt động nghe-chép, kỹ năng nghe, kiến thức ngôn ngữ

SPEAKING LEARNING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY ENGLISH-MAJORED SOPHOMORES AT COLLEGE OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

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Abstract: The increasing demand for good communicative skills in a globalized society activates English speaking learning around the world. Specific to the Vietnamese context, after many years of being much exposed to English, most of tertiary students still find it difficult to communicate effectively in realistic situations since they have not yet possessed effective speaking learning strategies (Richards, 2002; Rababa'h, 2005). This study aimed at exploring speaking learning strategies employed by 82 English-majored sophomores at College of Foreign Economic Relations (COFER), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Mixed-methods design was used for collecting data, involving the two research instruments: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. While quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed by SPSS 22.0, interview results were thematically analyzed. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of the English-majored sophomores usually utilized both direct and indirect strategies. The most frequently used strategies consisted of structuring or planning of ideas and language input, using dictionary for vocabulary learning, compensating for linguistic limitations by code-switching, nonverbal forms, synonyms, paying attention, deeply breathing, and asking for clarification. However, activating prior knowledge, self-training language input, self-evaluating speaking performance were less frequently used among many students. For implications, teachers should make students aware of the importance of background knowledge and create more opportunities for students to utilize their prior knowledge in their speaking performance, encourage them to frequently practice their listening skills and pronunciation to improve speech quality, and guide them how to assess their own speaking performance.

Keywords: speaking learning strategies, English-majored, sophomores, COFER

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

The increasing demand for good communicative skills in a globalized society activates English speaking learning around the world. English is spoken all over the world, that is, one can communicate easily with both native speakers of English and non-native ones if she/he is proficient in English. By virtue of this, being competent in oral communication is a strong desire of all English learners. And speaking is a fundamental skill that learners need to master in order to communicate effectively. Phan (2014) shows

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that English is considered a "passport" to integrate with the world. Therefore, the EFL learners in general and the students at COFER in particular are also aware of the importance of English speaking learning. According to Brown and Yule (1983), in the process of language learning, speaking is highly evaluated to be important, yet the most difficult of the four skills. However, many language learners, even after several years of studying English, still find it very difficult to speak effectively. Brown (2001) believes that colloquial language, reduced forms, performance variables, redundancy clusters, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm and intonation are among the characteristics of speaking that contribute to the difficulty of this skill. Moreover, in order for language learners to manage oral communication, they need to produce connected speech, have interaction ability, speak in different contexts, develop a balance between accuracy and fluency, and talk about unfamiliar issues based on their knowledge (Lindsay & Knight, 2006). Especially, one of various possible reasons for speaking incompetency among EFL learners is that students have not yet handled their speaking learning strategies effectively. It is also inferred that learners can improve communicative proficiency by developing an ability to use specific speaking strategies that enable them to compensate for their target language deficiency (e.g. Richards & Renandya, 2002; Mahripah, 2014).

Language learning strategies have been the heart of foreign language education, attracting an ample of language theorists for the last few decades (e.g. Hedge, 2000; Richards & Renandya, 2002; López, 2011; Mahripah, 2014). The aspects of learning strategies have been extensively concerned to get deep insight. More recently, the focus of the research studies has been specified to each language skill, and speaking is an illustration (e.g. Rachmawati, 2012; Gani, Fajrina & Hanifa, 2015; Eskandari, Behjat & Kargar, 2015). Speaking strategies help students become more strategic and active in oral productions and rescue them so that they can overcome speaking problems such as linguistic barriers or lack of ideas (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot; 1990; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995). The verbal and non-verbal strategies (e.g. verbal circumlocution, clarification, non-verbal gestures) may be exerted to compensate for a breakdown in communication or for unknown words/topics, and they may be used to yield effective communication.

In this domain of speaking skill, many studies (e.g. Rachmawati, 2012; Gani, Fajrina & Hanifa, 2015; Eskandari, Behjat & Kargar, 2015) have been conducted on the theoretical bases of Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) assert that speaking strategies benefit language learners "in negotiating meaning where either linguistic structures or sociolinguistic rules are not shared between a second language learner and a speaker of the target language" (p. 43). The primary goal for any language learners is that they are able to use the target language for their oral communication, and finally become a competent speaker. Accordingly, Hedge (2000) convinces that a competent speaker is the person who can use speaking strategies effectively to compensate for speaking problems and to maintain his stream of verbal messages. Alternatively stating, knowing and utilizing speaking learning strategies is of utmost importance to students for their oral language development.

In brief, speaking strategies are essential because they sufficiently provide foreign language learners with valuable tools to communicate in the target language in diverse contextual situations and help them to survive a multiplicity of speaking problems. Put it differently, speaking learning strategies become vital to develop students' language ability in order for them to be more self-sufficient and active in their own learning process.

1.2. Problem statement

In reality, there have been more and more communication courses in Vietnam held to respond to leaners' need of improving English communicative competence. However, many Vietnamese learners have still found it difficult to speak English fluently and accurately. After many years of being exposed to English in secondary and high schools, and even at tertiary level, many of them still cannot perform a simple and short conversation in English due to a multitude of factors (Than, 2019; Truong, 2019). Richards (2002) labels several problems faced by poor learners in their English speaking learning. For example, 1) students cannot sustain long conversations or keep the interaction going; 2) students often encounter communication breakdowns and misunderstandings; 3) students' lack of vocabulary and language structures negatively impacts their oral production of ideas; 4) and students' lack of effective communication strategies. Tallying Richards' ideas (2002), Rababa'h (2005) adds one more factor that hinders English speaking ability among EFL learners, that is, inadequate strategic competence and communication competence. In other words, they are deficient in being aware of and applying speaking strategies to facilitate their oral production.

In order to reduce speaking problems and enhance oral performance, language learners need to manipulate particular speaking learning strategies and use them appropriately. Indeed, it is obvious that learners can improve their speaking ability by developing learning strategies that help them to be more strategic and flexible in overcoming speaking problems (Nakatani, 2005). In the same line, there is a positive relationship between learning strategies and students' proficiency level (Hismanoglu, 2000; Anderson, 2003). The greater variety and number of learning strategies students employ, the more language proficient they would be. In general, Chamot (2004) claims that learning strategies contribute to the considerable improvement on the less successful learners' speaking performance. Given the positive impact of speaking learning strategies and the possible speaking problems, the researchers were urged to discover how the EFL second-year students at COFER used speaking strategies during their speaking learning.

1.3. Research questions

Accordingly, the research paper formulated one research question as follows: *How do the English-majored sophomores at COFER use speaking strategies for their speaking learning?*

2. Literature review

2.1. Definition and importance of speaking skill

Each expert has yielded different ways of defining speaking skill from another. Thornbury (2005) defines that speaking is an activity in real life that is carried out by speaker to express his/ her ideas to interact with interlocutors. To be more specific, according to Nunan (1991), speaking refers to the ability to express a sequence of ideas or to produce utterances fluently. Emphasizing the function of speaking skill, it is about making people understand speaker's feeling and ideas by speaking out the language (Cameron, 2001). Likewise, Kayi (2006) attributes speaking to the process of erecting and dispensing meaning through the manipulation of verbal and non-verbal modes in a multitude of contexts. In summary, speaking is an activity in which the speaker produces utterances (Nunan, 1991) through the use of verbal and non-verbal forms (Kayi, 2006) to express ideas

in order to exchange information, so the other interlocutor understands what the speaker wants to convey (Cameron, 2001; Thornbury, 2005).

In leaning language, it is rather uneasy to make a conclusion on the most important skill among listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, speaking is deemed to be the closest to the goal of language teaching; that is, speaking performance. Ur (1996) considers that of all the four skills, speaking seems intuitively the most important one because the ability to speak skillfully provides the learners a favorable condition to establish and maintain relationships, to negotiate with others. In specific, Carnegie (1977) assumes that business, social, and personal satisfaction depend heavily on people's ability to communicate to others about their identities, desires and beliefs. Nunan (1991) views good speaking performance as the most important aspect of acquiring a foreign language, which is assessed by the ability to sustain a conversation in the target language. In short, speaking plays a crucial part in social life and is a dispensable skill for any language learner.

2.2. Definition and categories of speaking strategies

Speaking strategies are referred to as "communicative strategies, communication strategies, conversation skills or oral communication strategies, used by students to solve any communication problem when speaking in English" (Lopéz, 2011, p. 3). A competent speaker knows how to make use of speaking strategies, which "come into play when learners are unable to express what they want to say because they lack the resources to do so successfully" (Hedge, 2000, p. 52).

In principle, Oxford (1990) differentiates language learning strategies into six groups, namely i) memory strategies, ii) cognitive strategies, iii) compensation strategies, iv) affective strategies, v) metacognitive strategies, and (vi) social strategies. These six strategy groups are categorized into two major classes, namely direct strategies and indirect strategies (see Table 1). Direct strategies consist of memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies, while indirect strategies comprise metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies.

Table 1. Oxford's Language Learning Strategy Scheme (1990, pp. 18-21)

Language Learning Strategies	Description
Memory strategies	"Creating links mentally, applying sounds and images, reviewing well".
Cognitive strategies	"Practicing, reviewing and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, creating structure for input and output".
Compensation strategies	"Guessing intelligently, and overcoming limitations in writing, speaking".
Metacognitive strategies	"Centering one's learning, planning and arranging one's learning, evaluating one's learning".
Affective strategies	"Lowering one's anxiety, encouraging oneself, and taking one's emotional temperature".
Social strategies	"Asking questions, cooperating with others and empathizing with others".

Besides, the taxonomy of Dörnyei and Scott (1995) not only refers to strategic behaviors, but also involves three main categories, namely direct strategies, indirect strategies and interactional strategies. This scheme is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Dörnyei and Scott' (1995) Taxonomy of Speaking Strategies

Categories	Strategic speaking behaviors
Direct strategies	Message abandonment; reduction; replacement; circumlocution; restructuring; code switching; self-repair; self-rephrasing
Indirect strategies	Verbal strategy markers, stimulating understanding, repetition
Interactional strategies	Requesting clarification; requesting repetition; requesting confirmation; inference; expressing non-understanding, understanding check; own-accuracy check, asking for assistance

As can be seen from Table 1 and Table 2, Dörnyei and Scott' (1995) direct strategies refer to the use of an alternative method, which is more manageable and self-contained to convey the intended meaning. Oxford's (1990) subcategory of memory, cognitive and compensation strategies reflects this, which are the members of the main category of direct strategies. What is more, indirect strategies, according to Dörnyei and Scott (1995), offer support for mutual understanding, such as making use of verbal markers or stimulating understanding to sustain the conversation. Similarly, Oxford (1990) attributes indirect strategies to those that support learning without the direct involvement of the target language. Interactional strategies place their primary emphasis on the cooperative conduction of problem-solving exchanges (e.g. providing clarification, requesting confirmation or asking for help). This is also comparable to Oxford's (1990) definition of social strategies.

The current study was based on Oxford's (1990) framework of language learning strategies and the specific strategic speaking behaviors framed by Dörnyei and Scott (1995). Indeed, Oxford's classification aimed at overall language learning but this study only focuses on speaking learning. Thus far, Dörnyei and Scott's (1995) taxonomy which is presumed to be more problem-oriented and process-based with specific strategic behaviors is also referred. Table 3 below presents the framework of speaking strategies used in this study.

Table 3. The Framework of Speaking Strategies Used in This Study

Categories	Description	Strategic speaking strategies
Memory strategies	Structuring the process of reviewing; building mental links; retrieving.	Putting a new word in a meaningful context for memory & use Revising previously learned knowledge in English Thinking about new words before speaking Imagining situation that speakers want to talk about
Cognitive strategies	Enhancing learning through various ways.	Practicing listening and pronunciation through formal exercise Structuring some ideas in mind before speaking Using the dictionary to prepare vocabulary for speaking activity
Compensation strategies	Overcoming limitations; guessing based on clues	Making prediction from contextual and linguistic clues Switching to mother tongue Using mime and gestures Using a synonym
Metacognitive strategies	Managing learning by planning, organizing, evaluating, monitoring	Setting a goal or objective for a communicative task Paying attention while speaking Evaluating learning outcomes

Affective strategies	Reducing anxiety; making positive statement; viewing risk	Taking deep breath or using laughter Encouraging oneself Exchanging feelings to other speakers
Social strategies	Asking others for help; cooperating with others; enhancing mutual understanding	Asking someone for mistake correction Asking for clarification Practicing English with peers or proficient users Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

2.3. Previous studies

Lopéz (2011)'s study sought to find what speaking strategies were used the most by the students from five public Mexican universities, which used a self-designed questionnaire with 14 speaking strategies. The results revealed that three speaking strategies most used by the students in their language learning including one compensation strategy (the use of paraphrasing or a synonym for unknown words) in the direct strategies and two social strategies (asking for repetition and asking for clarification) in the indirect strategies. His study also emphasized the importance of strategy training and encouraged teachers to apply and impart speaking strategies in communication classes beforehand. It is implied that the more strategies students use, the more success they gain in their speaking learning.

To explore the use of students' learning strategies in developing their speaking ability, Gani, Fajrina and Hanifa (2015) conducted a study on 16 participants being low and high speaking performance students at a high school in Indonesia. The data were garnered via 53-item questionnaires and interviews. The results recognized that high performance speaking students had better balance in using all kinds of learning strategies developed by Oxford (1990) for reinforcing their speaking skills. The low speaking performance students only focused on two learning strategies: compensation from the direct strategies and social from the indirect strategies. On the contrary, the high performance students employed more learning strategies appropriately compared to the low performance students.

Eskandari, Behjat and Kargar (2015) investigated the use of speaking strategies by 60 Iranian EFL university students, comprising of 35 female and 25 male students. An Oxford Proficiency Test was conducted to identify the students' proficiency level, assigned to three groups of high, intermediate, and low proficiency levels. Then, a 38-item strategy questionnaire was sent to these students. The result proved that gender and proficiency level played considerable roles in using metacognitive strategies, with females showing greater favor over this factor than males. Besides, high proficient students tended to be more interested than intermediate and low level ones. For compensation strategies, gender showed to have a significant influence on strategic choice, with males having more preference for this strategy group than females. For other groups like cognitive, memory, and socio-affective strategies, no statistically significant differences were found among variables of the study.

Bouaassria (2016)'s study probed speaking strategies used by Moroccan EFL university students. The study addressed the strategies the students used in developing speaking proficiency, as well as gender and motivation; and the most and least frequent strategies used. The study employed a quantitative method approach, using a questionnaire for data collection from 42 students. The results demonstrated that the students used a wide range of strategies that spread over six strategy groups, favoring memory and metacognitive strategies. Regarding strategy use related to learner factors, the results revealed a statistically significant relationship between the degree of liking English and students'

overall strategy use. The results showed that speaking proficiency and gender significantly affected the use of strategies. Finally, the results also pointed out that the students had a low use of affective strategies.

2.4. Research gaps

Regarding the area of speaking learning strategies used among EFL learners, the previous studies above were conducted constantly (e.g. 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016) in foreign countries such as Mexico, Indonesia, Iran, or Marocco. Nonetheless, there has been no study at COFER, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam so far. It is inferred that the use frequency rate of speaking learning strategies also needs to be investigated and depicted in different contexts. Given these reasons, the current study investigated the reality of the English-majored sophomores' use of speaking learning strategies at this research site.

Pertinent to methodology, most of the previous studies above-mentioned primarily utilized questionnaires to get answers. Thus, the current study employed both quantitative results from the questionnaire and qualitative results from the semi-structured interview to assure triangulation of data collection methods.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research setting and participants

The study was conducted at Faculty of Business English of College of Foreign Economic Relations (COFER), Vietnam. COFER is an educational institution training students and providing them with college degrees and vocational certificates, doing research and making scientific and technological experiments in order to meet the requirements of training, production, business and services in commerce and society. Thanks to the convenience sampling technique, the researchers recruited the participation of 82 English-majored sophomores from two classes of TATM19I and TATM19K. Among these 82 EFL college students, there were 31 males, accounting for 37.8%, and 51 females, constituting 62.2%. Their English proficiency was expected to reach B1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

3.2. Research Design

To garner sufficient data for the research questions, the current study utilized mixed-methods design, which is a procedure for mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study to address a research problem (Creswell & Clark, 2011), "to provide a better understanding of the research problems and questions than either method by itself" (Creswell, 2012, p. 535). It is plain that each method needs to be saluted and their integrated use must contribute to healthy tensions and new insights (Creswell & Clark, 2011). To this study, the researchers gathered quantitative data from the questionnaire (N=82) and then the interview results (n=5) as qualitative data were used to support these quantitative results.

3.3. Research instruments

Questionnaire

The researchers decided to utilize a questionnaire which is known to be one of the easiest methods to manage, even with large numbers of subjects (Dörnyei, 2010), which helps researchers save time processing the results and gives them a clearer prediction from respondents' choice (Dörnyei, 2007). The 21-item questionnaire involved six distinct groups of speaking learning strategies adapted from Oxford (1990), Dörnyei and Scott (1995), including memory strategies (Items 1-4), cognitive strategies (Items 5-8), compensation strategies (Items 9-12), metacognitive strategies (Items 13-15), affective strategies (Items 16-18), and social strategies (Items 19-21). The items were rated on a five-point Likert-scale, including *1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually,* and *5=always* (see Appendix A). The

questionnaire was highly reliable as proven by its Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.824 greater than 0.700 (Pallant, 2005).

Semi-structured Interview

Interview is used to provide a credible account of the collected data already yielded by the questionnaire (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The researchers employed this useful tool so as to grasp a broader picture of the sophomores' EFL speaking learning strategy use. The combination of the questionnaire and interview permits a degree of triangulation in the study (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). In harmony with the questionnaire, the semi-structured interview included six questions in total, which addressed the English-majored sophomores' use of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies, respectively, in terms of types, frequency and reasons (see Appendix B). The difference between the questionnaire items and the interview questions is that the latter could provide responses to "Why" questions in place of the former.

Collection and analysis procedures

The questionnaire copies which had been translated into Vietnamese beforehand were delivered to 82 participants. On the receipt of questionnaires from the respondents, the researchers found that all 80 copies (100%) were valid and accepted. Finally, the researchers employed Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 to analyze the descriptive statistics of the collected questionnaires in terms of percentage (P, %), mean (M) and standard deviation (S.D.). Finally, the researchers organized the coded data into the pre-determined themes, including the participants' use of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies, respectively.

After finishing the questionnaire treatment, the researchers invited five members from the target sample to participate in the interviews, and they were randomly chosen. They were labeled from S1 to S5. The interviews were conducted in the Vietnamese language using a set of semi-structured questions to ask and a tape recorder to record the interviewees' answers. Afterwards, the researchers transcribed and translated the interview transcripts for analysis. The qualitative data were arranged according to the questionnaire themes.

4. Findings and Discussion

Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the collected data were used to respond to the research question. With regard to quantitative analysis, the descriptive statistics in the forms of Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) and Percentage (P, %) from the questionnaire were run and presented in the following tables. Alternatively, qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed and reported adjacently to the questionnaire results to provide further information or explain these data.

Table 4. The Sophomores' Use of Memory Strategies

Item	Memory Strategies		N*	R*	S*	U*	A*	M	S.D.
1	I think about what is most important to listeners so I can focus on it.	P (%)	0.0	2.4	26.8	47.6	23.2	3.91	0.773
2	I visualize what I want to talk about to help my speaking.	P (%)	1.2	11.0	32.9	34.1	20.7	3.62	0.977
3	I learn new words by grouping them by their meanings with contexts	P (%)	6.1	17.1	32.9	29.3	14.6	3.29	1.105
4	I link my background knowledge to what I am going to say.	P (%)	9.8	19.5	40.2	22.0	8.5	3.00	1.077

(*) N: Never, **R:** Rarely, **S:** Sometimes, **U:** Usually, **A:** Always

As Table 4 illustrates, nearly three quarters of the total sample reported that they frequently thought about important pieces of information to the listeners so that they could focus on those in their oral productions (Item 1, M=3.91, S.D.=0.773, 47.6% usually, 23.2% always). Likewise, it is apparent that many respondents also often visualized whatever they were going to speak (Item 2, M=3.62, S.D.=0.977, 34.1% usually, 20.7% always). With respect to vocabulary learning which builds up linguistic competence for the students' speaking performance, only some English-majored sophomores learnt new words by grouping them by their meanings with different situational contexts (Item 3, M=3.29, S.D.=1.105, 29.3% usually, 14.6% always). Contrary to three memory strategies above, it seems obvious that most of the students were not in favor of activating their background knowledge for speaking activities. Indeed, of all 82 surveyed sophomores, 16 students "rarely" (19.5%) and 33 students "sometimes" (40.2%) exploited this type (Item 4, M=3.00, S.D.=1.077).

Consonantly, the interview data also exhibit this preference on memory strategies perceived by the interviewees. Four of the five interviewees except for S3 stated that they frequently used memory strategies for their speaking learning. For example, S1, S2 and S4 revealed that they usually imagined or thought about some important ideas before speaking since it could help speakers focus on the main content of the utterances (S1), facilitate their thoughts during speaking (S2), or avoid hesitating to seek ideas during speaking (S4). S5 supplemented two types of memory strategies: she usually utilized her own background knowledge to expand her oral production during speaking activities, and used memory strategy in learning vocabulary for speaking tasks such as by grouping them in accordance with word family or word meaning. In contrast, S3 admitted that he did not frequently think about key information prior to his speaking; at the same time, he disregarded activating background knowledge for his oral production due to his dearth of this knowledge source.

Memory strategies enable the transfer of information to long-term memory and recall it for communication (Bölükbaş, 2013). Strikingly, both the quantitative and qualitative results of the study indicate that the majority of the participants preferably used memory strategies in their English speaking learning. Especially, they frequently imagined or thought about important pieces of information to the listeners so they could focus in their oral productions. The preference for this memory strategy was documented by the qualitative results that it could help speakers focus on the main content of the utterances, facilitate their thoughts during speaking, or avoid hesitating to seek ideas during speaking. It entails that memory strategies play a pivotal role in helping the speakers remember ideas of coming speech. However, only some English-majored sophomores at COFER learnt new words by grouping them in association with their meanings and putting them in different situational contexts. It is implied that to expand vocabulary memory capacity and to recall the words with ease, the learners should learn and practice them in varied contexts. In another point, both the results emerged from the questionnaire and interview highlight that most of the students ignored to activate their background knowledge for speaking activities. However, coupled with linguistic knowledge, topical knowledge has a great impact on learners' speaking performance (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Thus, it is imperative for speakers to exploit both language and background knowledge when orally producing English utterances. It should be noted that language knowledge is deemed as a means of communication (how to say) while topical knowledge looks like messages (what to say).

Table 5. The Sophomores' Use of Cognitive Strategies

Item	Cognitive Strategies		N*	R*	S*	U*	A*	M	S.D.
5	I structure or take notes of some ideas before speaking.	P (%)	4.9	8.5	32.9	43.9	9.8	3.50	0.958
6	I use the dictionary to prepare some vocabulary for my speaking activity.	P (%)	8.5	6.1	28.0	29.3	28.0	3.62	1.203
7	I myself practice some formal exercises to improve my pronunciation, listening ability, relating to speaking ability.	P (%)	12.2	23.2	29.3	31.7	3.7	2.91	1.091
8	I repeat silently to myself when someone is speaking English.	P (%)	2.4	7.3	23.2	41.5	25.6	3.80	0.897

(*) N: Never, **R:** Rarely, **S:** Sometimes, **U:** Usually, **A:** Always

As can be seen from Table 5, one-third of the total sample only "sometimes" structured or took notes of some ideas before their speaking (32.9%); yet, up to 43.9% of the total participants "usually" practiced this strategy (Item 5, M=3.50, S.D.=0.958). Besides, for Item 6, many students also frequently used the dictionary to prepare some needed vocabulary for their speaking activities (M=3.62, S.D.=1.203, 29.3% usually, 28.0% always). However, it is observable that in speaking learning, formal exercises of pronunciation and listening skills were not favorably experienced by the surveyed students (Item 7, M=2.91, S.D.=1.091, 23.2% rarely, 29.3% sometimes). In contrast, approximately two-thirds of the response community highly appreciated the repetition strategy (Item 8, M=3.80, S.D.=0.897, 41.5% usually, 25.6% always). Specifically, within this cognitive strategy, these students repeated to themselves when someone was speaking English.

The qualitative data, congruously, verified the actual utilization of this strategy category. All the five interviewees claimed that they frequently employed cognitive strategies when learning speaking lessons. According to these students, cognitive strategies could help them manipulate language input to produce output, and monitor their speaking process. In particular, four of the five participants mentioned using dictionary to look up meaning (S1, S3), to check pronunciation (S3), or to prepare some necessary words for their speaking tasks (S2, S3, and S4). In addition, S2 and S5 unraveled that they frequently made a list of some key ideas before speaking. Furthermore, three out of the five interviewed students stated that they often repeated silently to themselves when someone was speaking (S3, S4, and S5). However, only S5 was often concerned about listening comprehension and pronunciation exercises. She considered that these language elements were closely associated with the good quality of speaking performance.

With reference to cognitive strategies, the quantitative findings cleared up that this strategy group was much practically regarded by many English-majored sophomores of COFER. Indeed, many often structured or made a list of some key ideas before speaking as well as used the dictionary to prepare some needed vocabulary for their speaking activities. Consistently, the qualitative results from the interview produced the similar trend. These cognitive strategies are actually beneficial to speakers since they help them to manage the content of coming speech, and to facilitate spontaneous vocabulary recalling while speaking. However, only a much smaller group of the students practiced formal exercises of pronunciation and listening skills, which can enrich their language input necessary for their oral productions. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) proved that learners are unable to develop their speaking competence

until they improve their listening ability. Indeed, any communicators have the dual role of listeners and speakers, in which they have to listen to what is uttered by others and then reply accordingly. Most strikingly, almost all the sophomores frequently repeated silently to themselves when their partners were making their speech. Actually, this action is deemed as a valuable tool in keeping track of what the other speakers are uttering and then the learners can catalyze their responses immediately. In sum, these cognitive strategies (e.g. structuring ideas and preparing language input before speaking, repetition, or listening and pronunciation practice) are necessarily important for speakers. These strategies help learner speakers to develop the thinking skills that make them strategic and flexible (Ellis, 1997), which improve speakers' knowledge and their understanding of linguistic system.

Table 6. The sophomores' use of compensation strategies

Item	Compensation Strategies		N*	R*	S*	U*	A*	M	S.D.
9	When I cannot think of a word, I use Vietnamese.	P (%)	0.0	0.0	20.7	34.1	45.1	4.24	0.779
10	When I cannot recollect a word, I use known words/ phrases (i.e. synonyms).	P (%)	6.1	8.5	24.4	6.1	54.9	3.95	1.304
11	When I cannot think of a word, I use gestures.	P (%)	0.0	17.1	25.6	36.6	20.7	3.61	1.003
12	I use either contextual or linguistic clues to understand what is being uttered by others.	P (%)	0.0	20.7	26.8	31.7	20.7	3.52	1.045

(*) N: Never, **R:** Rarely, **S:** Sometimes, **U:** Usually, **A:** Always

As indicated in Table 6, most of the participants favored code-switching with the highest level (Item 9, M=4.24, S.D.=0.779, 45.1% usually, 34.1% always). Specifically, when unable to think of a word during a conversation in English, they used a Vietnamese equivalent. Similarly, a large number of the participants reported that when not knowing how to say something, they often employed synonyms to compensate for communication breakdown (Item 10, M=3.95, S.D.=1.304, 54.9% always). In many cases, gestures or any non-verbal forms also turned out to be the useful tool for many learner speakers to overcome the uncomfortable situation when they were incapable of seeking a word during a conversation in English (Item 11, M=3.61, S.D.=1.003, 36.6% usually, 20.7% always). Furthermore, for Item 12 (M=3.52, S.D.=1.045), during communication, roughly half of the total sample often employed either contextual or linguistic clues to understand what was being uttered by others (31.7% usually, 20.7% always). In general, a great part of the students seemed to prefer compensation strategies in their speaking learning.

Qualitatively, the interview results also yielded the same trend. All the five interviewees determined that they frequently used compensation strategies to minimize their communication breakdown. To be specific, three out of the five students including S2, S4 and S5 revealed that they often utilized synonyms, antonyms or circumlocution to express what they intended, especially when they could not recall those words exactly. Therewith, S2 and S5 shared the same practice in employing non-verbal communication forms such as mimes, gestures, and facial expressions to rescue them and overcome linguistic or topical limitations and gain their self-confidence if any. Furthermore, S4 and S5 also frequently focused on contextual or linguistic clues (e.g. intonation, stress, linking words) to understand the meaning of others' speech. Both of them pointed out that this strategy was really helpful to get the general messages from a string of utterances involving

too many unfamiliar words or phrases. Additionally, both S1 and S5 supplemented that they also often switched to their mother tongue (Vietnamese) when they could not recall needed vocabulary. More specifically, S1 admitted that her English lexicon is too small.

Compensation strategies have come to the rescue to help the learners to overcome their problems in their speaking learning (Bölükbaş, 2013). This author exemplifies some strategies belonging to this group such as making logical guesses, overcoming language limitations while speaking, and using body language. Both the quantitative and qualitative results highlighted that most of the students favorably employed different sets of compensation strategies in case that they confronted some linguistic or topical constraints. To begin with, they often switched to their mother tongue or borrowed synonyms or circumlocution when they were unable to recall a word during a conversation in English. Besides, mimes, gestures or any other non-verbal forms also became the useful tool for many learner speakers to overcome their lack of vocabulary. Interestingly, a great part of the participants also usually made their guesses based on linguistic or contextual clues to minimize their unpleasant communication breakdown. Through qualitative results, it is inferred that this strategy was really helpful to get the general messages from a string of utterances involving too many unfamiliar words or phrases. Finally, a notable finding was ultimately found in the interview that selecting familiar topics for speaking practice was also a good idea to improve speaking performance, especially among low proficient speakers. It is clear that in speaking learning, students will meet several difficulties negatively affecting their speaking performance like their paucity of linguistic resources, scarcity of topical knowledge, or deficiency in listening comprehension. To rescue themselves from these common problems, the students need to exploit compensation strategies effectively (Hendriani, 2013).

Table 7. The Sophomores' Use of Metacognitive Strategies

Item	Metacognitive Strategies		N*	R*	S*	U*	A*	M	S.D.
13	Before speaking, I set up a clear goal to push up my motivation.	P (%)	0.0	4.9	31.7	35.4	28.0	3.87	0.886
14	While speaking, I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	P (%)	0.0	0.0	28.0	39.0	32.9	4.05	0.784
15	After speaking, I evaluate how well the task has been done.	P (%)	14.6	30.5	36.6	18.3	0.0	2.59	0.955

(*) N: Never, **R:** Rarely, **S:** Sometimes, **U:** Usually, **A:** Always

From the data analysis in Table 7, it is apparent that all the 82 participants paid their attention to what was spoken by their interlocutors at any rate (Item 14, M=4.05, S.D.=0.784). Specifically, 28.0%, 39.0% and 32.9% of the total sample "sometimes", "usually", and "always" practiced this metacognitive strategy while speaking. Likewise, to push up their motivation for speaking, almost all the participants set up a clear goal before their oral productions regardless of frequency (Item 13, M=3.87, S.D.=0.886, 31.7% sometimes, 35.4% usually, 28.0% always). Unlike the two metacognitive strategies mentioned above, it can be observed from Item 15 that the majority of the respondents were ignorant of evaluating strategy after their speaking (M=2.59, S.D.=0.955, 14.6% never, 30.5% rarely, 36.6% sometimes).

Consistently, the qualitative data obtained from the interviews also demonstrated the similar fashion. All the five interviewed students espoused that they frequently used

metacognitive strategies at before-speaking phase like cognitively setting up their clear goals for speaking tasks, increasing their motivation to complete these communicative tasks. Furthermore, S2, S4 and S5 also frequently planned some ideas and language input like words, phrases and grammatical structures for their coming speech production. Based on their explanation, these strategies could direct them to speak out what should be necessary and even rescue them from communication breakdown. Similarly, while speaking, all the five interviewees favorably exploited metacognitive strategies. In reality, all of them paid much attention to whatever someone was speaking. In accordance to these interviewees, this indirect strategy facilitated them to understand the sent messages most fully. However, it seemed that some interviewees were ignorant of employing metacognitive strategies after their speaking including S1, S3, and S4. To clarify this indifference, some causal factors were ultimately found. S1 stated that she did not have much time for the post-speaking phase, and she personally assumed that strategies used after speaking were not more necessarily important than those in before- and while-speaking phases. Likewise, S3 was not consciously aware of the necessity of metacognitive strategies applied after his speaking. S4 admitted that she was actually unconcerned about using metacognitive strategies after her speaking like self-evaluating. Nevertheless, S2 and S5 reckoned that metacognitive strategies should be applied after their speaking so that they can erase their weaknesses and reinforce their strong points in their English oral productions.

Theoretically, Gani, Fajrina and Hanifa (2015) acknowledge that the necessity of metacognitive strategies that they can help learners to regulate their own cognitive abilities and to plan, monitor and evaluate their speaking progress as they move toward communicative competence. Similarly, these metacognitive strategies can facilitate students' speaking activities through planning and monitoring, and improve their speaking performance not only this time but also other times via self-evaluating (Oxford, 1990). Thus, the students in this study need to use self-evaluation more frequently to see where their mistakes and flaws are in terms of fluency, accuracy or appropriacy, and then they can avoid them and make better subsequent speaking performance.

Table 8. The sophomores' use of affective strategies

Item	Affective Strategies		N*	R*	S*	U*	A*	M	S.D.
16	I try to relax or breathe deeply to reduce anxiety before speaking.	P (%)	0.0	0.0	29.3	41.5	29.3	4.00	0.700
17	Before speaking, I encourage myself that I can finish the speaking task.	P (%)	0.0	8.5	32.9	37.8	20.7	3.71	0.896
18	I share my feeling with my friends to increase my self-confidence.	P (%)	7.3	17.1	30.5	26.8	18.3	3.32	1.175

(*) N: Never, **R:** Rarely, **S:** Sometimes, **U:** Usually, **A:** Always

As shown in Table 8, nearly three quarters of the questionnaire respondents reported that they relaxed and breathed deeply to reduce their anxiety before producing English orally (Item 16, M=4.00, S.D.=0.770, 41.5% usually, 29.3% always). In a similar vein, many English-majored sophomores also frequently encouraged themselves that they could accomplish the speaking task well (Item 17, M=3.71, S.D.=0.896, 37.8% usually, 20.7% always). Nevertheless, it is apparent that not many students preferred the other affective strategy that they needed to share their feeling with their friends to increase their self-confidence when speaking (Item 18, M=3.32, S.D.=1.175, 17.1% rarely, 30.5% sometimes).

This tendency, concomitantly, was found in the interviews. Three out of the five interviewees frequently confronted affective problems (S1, S3, and S4), while S2 and S5 only occasionally experienced these problem types in a few cases. Specifically, S1 was almost always nervous or embarrassed when presenting ideas or performing speaking tasks in front of the class. To overcome this negative psychological state, she used "deeply breathing" technique. In case of S3, he often felt uncomfortable and shy when being asked to make speech; therefore, apart from breathing deeply before orally producing words, he used his body language to make himself more comfortable. Likewise, S4 usually showed her low self-efficacy in oral productions. With her expectation of relieving this negative factor, she also usually breathed deeply and encouraged herself that she could complete the speaking tasks successfully. Meanwhile, S2 sometimes became anxious when speaking English and he considered that deeply breathing, smiling and even practicing speech in front of a mirror could help him to get rid of anxiety and then his speaking performance got better. Specific to S5's circumstance, she only seldom turned out to be unconfident a little bit when she met a strange speaking topic and her background knowledge was unsatisfactorily adequate. Henceforth, she had to encourage herself to finish the speaking tasks as well as possible.

In language learning, affective strategies should be deployed since these strategies help speakers "develop self-confidence" (Gani, *et al*., 2015, p. 21), and "control their feelings, motivation and attitudes related with learning" (Bölükbaş, 2013, p. 57). Emphatically, most of the questionnaire respondents often tried to relax and breathed deeply to reduce their anxiety before producing English orally. At the same time, they encouraged themselves that they could accomplish the speaking tasks successfully. It means that these students highly approved of utilizing affective strategies to manage their negative feelings and psychological states. In addition to these strategies, the qualitative results showed that smile, body language movements and even self-talk with a mirror also enabled speakers to get rid of anxiety and raise their self-confidence. Obviously, successful oral productions of EFL learners also can be impeded by their affective states such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety (Oxford, 1990). In fact, Leong and Ahmadi (2017) testified that learners with low self-esteem, higher anxiety, and low motivation have serious difficulties in building up speaking ability. Therefore, students should maximize their use of affective strategies like "reducing anxiety, encouraging oneself" (Bölükbaş, 2013, p. 57) in their speaking learning.

Table 9. The Sophomores' Use of Social Strategies

Item	Social Strategies		N*	R*	S*	U*	A*	M	S.D.
19	I ask my partners to repeat a word/ phrase if I do not hear it clearly.	P (%)	0.0	4.9	20.7	32.9	41.5	4.11	0.903
20	If I do not know how to say something, I ask a more proficient speaker for help.	P (%)	9.8	13.4	32.9	17.1	26.8	3.38	1.283
21	While speaking, I am aware of others' thoughts to modify my utterances.	P (%)	0.0	22.0	23.2	35.4	19.5	3.52	1.045

(*) N: Never, **R:** Rarely, **S:** Sometimes, **U:** Usually, **A:** Always

Table 9 depicts that a big proportion of the participants frequently exploited the first type of social strategies (Item 19, M=4.11, S.D.=0.903, 32.9% usually, 41.5% always); they asked their partner to repeat a word or phrases if they did not hear it clearly. The

second type of social strategies, namely asking a more proficient speaker for help, was also favored by some students (Item 20, M=3.38, S.D.=1.238, 17.1% usually, 26.8% always). Interestingly, more than half of the participants frequently took the partners' thoughts and feelings into account to modify their utterances suitably (Item 21, M=3.52, S.D.=1.045, 35.4% usually, 19.5% always).

Qualitatively, all the five interviewees highly applauded that social strategies significantly enhanced their speaking performance, and in reality, they used social strategy group at high frequency rate. In particular, these participants almost always asked their partners to clarify their unclear speech (S2, S3), to paraphrase their ideas (S1, S5) or to alter difficult words (S4) during oral productions. Additionally, S1 and S4 uncovered that they also often asked help from their more-proficient classmates in suggesting ideas or vocabulary or language forms. In discrete case of S2, he usually tended to seek his partners for speaking practice and consequently he could improve his speaking ability, especially in terms of fluency. Interestingly, in the process of exchanging ideas, S5 usually took her partners' current ability and thoughts into account so that she could modify her speech suitably.

As far as social strategies are concerned, it is believed that social strategies can maintain mutual understanding among speakers (Oxford, 1990). In this study, a large number of the respondents preferably employed these social strategies for their better speaking performance. In general, social strategies can provide increased interaction and more empathetic understanding for speakers. Past research (e.g. Gani, Fajrina & Hanifa, 2015; Than, 2019; Truong, 2019) has documented that learning from different resources like from teachers, friends, classmates, can maximize the learners' learning outcomes. Thus, social strategies need to be more frequently practiced in EFL speaking classrooms.

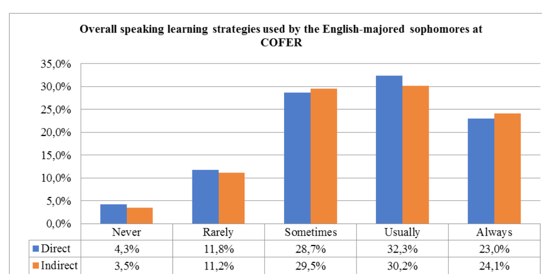

Chart 1. Overall Speaking Learning Strategies Used by the English-majored Sophomores at COFER

As can be seen from Chart 1, both direct and indirect strategy classes were quite equally employed in their speaking learning. To highlight this conclusion, each of the frequency rates from both classes was compared in pair; for example, "never" rate (4.3% and 3.5%), "rarely" (11.8% and 11.2%), "sometimes" rate (28.7% and 29.5%), "usually" (32.3% and 30.2%), and "always" rate (23.0% and 24.1%), respectively. Overall, a majority of the participants, in their EFL oral acquisition, employed a diversity of speaking learning strategies to facilitate their speaking learning process and enhance their speaking performance in terms of fluency, accuracy and appropriacy. As an illustration of this, 32.3% and 23.0% of the participants "usually" and "always" exploited the direct strategy class, respectively such as memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. Meanwhile, 30.2% and 24.1% "usually" and "always" exploited the indirect class including metacognitive strategies, or affective-social strategies, respectively.

According to Oxford (1990), all six types of learning strategies, no matter whether they are direct or indirect, interact with each other. It means that in speaking learning, students need to use these strategies flexibly and skillfully but separately. To this survey, the notable findings concluded that direct (e.g. memory, cognitive, compensation) and indirect (e.g. metacognitive, affective, social) strategy classes were quite equally employed in their speaking learning. To recap, the

English-majored sophomores at COFER should use appropriate language learning strategies more consciously, purposefully, and frequently to be more successful in developing their speaking skills (Lopéz, 2011; Gani, *et al.*, 2015). In fact, the students may encounter different speaking problems, and if they only possess a limited range of speaking strategies, they fail to sustain their simple communication. Since communication is a complicated process, summoning different components, students are required to utilize different strategies flexibly so that they can survive in any given communicative situation.

5. Conclusion

Although this study faced some limitations such as the time restriction for carrying out the study and the small number of participants, it also yielded remarkable findings as follows. Both direct (memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies) and indirect strategy classes (metacognitive strategies, affective-social strategies) were practically favored in English speaking learning of the English-majored sophomores at COFER. Overall, it is a positive signal that the majority of the participants, in their EFL oral acquisition, usually employed a diversity of speaking learning strategies to facilitate their learning process, improve their speaking performance in terms of fluency, accuracy and appropriacy, and nourish their motivation and self-confidence in oral production. The most frequently used learning strategy in each strategy group consisted of (1) structuring or planning of ideas and language input, (2) using dictionary for vocabulary learning, (3) compensating for linguistic limitations by code-switching, non-verbal forms, synonyms, (4) paying attention, (5) deeply breathing, and (6) asking for clarification. However, activating prior knowledge, self-training language input, self-evaluating speaking performance were less frequently used among many students.

6. Implications

Firstly, both the quantitative and qualitative results implied that background knowledge was not prioritized by almost all the participants in their speaking learning. In fact, many students found it difficult to continue their oral production due to their lack of topic knowledge. It is recommended that they should take advantage of this knowledge source since it helps oral communication more interesting, persuasive and realistic. Specifically, students can exploit this knowledge source to compare, contrast, or illustrate what they are speaking. In sum of this point, teachers should make students aware of the importance of background knowledge and create more opportunities for students to utilize their prior knowledge in their speaking performance.

Secondly, all the questionnaire and interview yielded the overlapped results that many English-majored sophomores did not frequently practice their listening skills and pronunciation. On the other hand, they admitted that they were deficient of listening comprehension and sound vocalization. Teachers should encourage students to do so. Once again, listening ability and the ways of producing sounds directly impact the quality of speech.

Thirdly, after speaking, most of the students neglected self-evaluating what they had done previously. Based on this finding, the study suggests that teachers should guide students how to assess their own speaking performance. From that, they can minimize or even eliminate these weak points and fortify their good points.

Fourthly, the results emerged from both instruments indicated that some students were much anxious and unconfident when speaking English. Research has shown that such affective problems can negatively hinder thoughts and use of language and knowledge during their speaking activities. Thus, it is the teachers' role to facilitate a relaxing

environment for students to be relaxed and motivated to gain pre-determined speaking goals.

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CHIẾN LƯỢC HỌC KỸ NĂNG NÓI CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ HAI TRƯỜNG CAO ĐẲNG KINH TẾ ĐỐI NGOẠI

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Tóm tắt: Nhu cầu về kỹ năng giao tiếp tốt trong một xã hội toàn cầu hóa ngày càng tăng cao đã thúc đẩy việc học nói tiếng Anh trên khắp thế giới. Cụ thể hơn với bối cảnh Việt Nam, sau nhiều năm tiếp xúc với tiếng Anh, hầu hết sinh viên cao đẳng, đại học vẫn còn giao tiếp kém hiệu quả trong các tình huống thực tế do họ chưa có được những chiến lược học nói hiệu quả. Xét về mục đích, nghiên cứu này nhằm khám phá các chiến lược học nói của 82 sinh viên năm thứ hai chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tại Trường Cao đẳng Kinh tế Đối ngoại (COFER), Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, Việt Nam. Thiết kế phương pháp hỗn hợp đã được sử dụng để thu thập dữ liệu, gồm hai công cụ nghiên cứu là bảng câu hỏi và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc. Trong khi dữ liệu định lượng thu được từ bảng câu hỏi được phân tích bằng SPSS 22.0 thì kết quả phỏng vấn được phân tích theo chủ đề. Kết quả nghiên cứu chỉ ra rằng phần lớn các sinh viên năm thứ hai chuyên ngành tiếng Anh thường sử dụng cả chiến lược trực tiếp và gián tiếp. Các chiến lược được sử dụng thường xuyên nhất bao gồm cấu trúc hoặc lập kế hoạch cho ý tưởng và ngôn ngữ, sử dụng từ điển để học từ vựng, khỏa lấp cho những hạn chế về ngôn ngữ bằng cách chuyển đổi mã, diễn tả bằng hình thức phi ngôn ngữ, từ đồng nghĩa, tập trung chú ý, thở sâu và đề nghị người nói làm rõ ý. Tuy nhiên, việc sử dụng kiến thức nền, tự chuẩn bị ngôn ngữ, tự đánh giá hiệu suất nói không được nhiều sinh viên sử dụng.

Từ khóa: chiến lược học tập nói, chuyên ngành tiếng Anh, sinh viên năm hai, Cao đẳng Kinh tế Đối ngoại

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

How often do you employ speaking learning strategies?

Please put a cross (X) and rate yourself based on the given statements using the following scale:

1=Never **2**=Rarely **3**=Sometimes **4**=Usually **5**=Always

No.	Statement	Scale				
Memory Strategies						
1	I think about what is most important to listeners so I can focus on it.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I visualize what I want to talk about to help my speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I learn new words by grouping them by their meanings with contexts	1	2	3	4	5
4	I link my background knowledge to what I am going to say.	1	2	3	4	5
Cognitive Strategies						
5	I structure or take notes of some ideas before speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I use the dictionary to prepare some vocabulary for my speaking activity.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I myself practice some formal exercises to improve my pronunciation, listening ability, relating to speaking ability.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I repeat silently to myself when someone is speaking English.	1	2	3	4	5
Compensation Strategies						
9	When I cannot think of a word, I use Vietnamese.	1	2	3	4	5
10	When I cannot recollect a word, I use known words/ phrases (i.e. synonyms).	1	2	3	4	5
11	When I cannot think of a word, I use gestures.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I use either contextual or linguistic clues to understand what is being uttered by others.	1	2	3	4	5
Metacognitive Strategies						
13	Before speaking, I set up a clear goal to push up my motivation.	1	2	3	4	5
14	While speaking, I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	1	2	3	4	5
15	After speaking, I evaluate how well the task has been done.	1	2	3	4	5
Affective Strategies						
16	I try to relax or breathe deeply to reduce anxiety before speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Before speaking, I encourage myself that I can finish the speaking task.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I share my feeling with my friends to increase my self-confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
Social Strategies						
19	I ask my partners to repeat a word/phrase if I do not hear it clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
20	If I do not know how to say something, I ask a more proficient speaker for help.	1	2	3	4	5
21	While speaking, I am aware of others' thoughts to modify my utterances.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Q-1: Do you frequently use memory strategies for your speaking learning? If yes, specify your situation. If no, why?

Q-2: Are you frequently in favor of cognitive strategies for your speaking learning? Specify your response.

Q-3: When you encounter with communication breakdown, do you often employ compensation strategies? If yes, how? If no, why?

Q-4: Do you often exploit metacognitive strategies before, while and after speaking? If yes, specify your situation. If no, explain.

Q-5: Do you frequently incur affective problems in your oral productions? If yes, name them. In fact, what affective strategies do you apply to manage your psychological states in speaking learning?

Q-6: Do you often ask for clarification or cooperate with peers to accomplish speaking tasks? In yes, specify your case. If no, explain.

A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON ATTITUDE IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE MEDIA TEXTS IN THE LIGHT OF APPRAISAL THEORY

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Abstract: This paper investigates the use of evaluative language in two articles concerning the destruction of the Earth's largest rainforest, the Amazon, in 2019. The articles were carefully chosen from prominent newspapers, the New York Times in the USA and VnExpress in Vietnam. The analysis of the evaluative language in the two texts was conducted mainly in terms of their attitudes based on the Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005). Moreover, White's (1998) systemic linguistic approach was utilized in order to reveal both experiential and interpersonal meanings of news text with the use of lexico-grammar as a tool for analysis. One significant feature of the evaluative language in terms of attitude which was found was the dominance of negativity in both articles regarding the severity of the fire and the passive reactions and scarce solutions to the problems of the local authority. Another conclusion was drawn from the investigation of the two texts was the use of quantification in implied expression of attitude to emphasize the devastation of the Amazon.

Keywords: appraisal, evaluative languages, attitudes, news texts, genres

1. Introduction

Without doubt, the media cannot stay out of this worldwide phenomenon as "The burning of the Amazon" has continuously been the leading key words in all means of media. Over a short period of time, thousands of articles and news have been published regarding this hot issue, creating such a multinational sensation. It is undeniable that the media all over the world has played a vital role in updating every breaking news to their subscribers and readers. In Vietnam, some prominent newspapers have also made every attempt to catch up with their international colleagues in updating news related to the Amazon rainforests.

Although sharing the same topic of the massive burning of the Amazon rainforests, a variety of articles in different countries seem to adopt dissimilar uses of language to address the issue. In order to discover the ideas underlying the words and sentences, it is urgent that discourse analysis is utilized to examine the language in specific articles.

Discourse analysis is often referred to as the analysis of language "beyond sentences". As Cook (1989) defined, "discourse as stretches of language perceived to be meaningful, unified and purposive." Among

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voluminous theories which lay the foundation for discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics (hereafter SFL) puts emphasis on the notion of language function. Introduced and developed primarily by Michael Halliday in the 1980s, SFL has grown in popularity as one of the most substantial theories on linguistics and applied linguistics. In SFL, the focus point is placed on the function of language, or in other words, how language is used, rather than what language structure is about and the manner by which it is composed (Halliday, 1994). The adoption of SFL can be advantageous when investigating the use of language in particular articles. Systemic Functional Grammar advocates three sorts of metafunctions, namely ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions which are interdependent and can affect each other. Among the three proposed metafunctions, interpersonal function is the interaction among participants in oral or written texts.

Within the four categories of interpersonal function, namely modality, mood, intonation and appraisal, the appraisal theory can be helpful in determining the linguistic resources by which a text/speaker comes to express, negotiate and naturalize particular inter-subjective and ultimately ideological positions. Consequently, this theoretical theory tends to put concentration on the analysis of 'meaning in context and rhetorical effects rather than grammatical forms due to the fact that grammar and discourse of language are perceived as a set of written or spoken texts that are able to "make" meanings, not as rules to govern structures' (Martin & Rose, 2008). According to the Appraisal Theory, evaluative language used within the content of a specific text is actually the direct reflection of the author's own ideologies which may be expressed explicitly or implicitly. Attitude is the central system of the appraisal system, through which the speakers/writers' feelings can be revealed and their statuses can be explored. Thus, in this paper, we use the Attitude system within Appraisal Framework as one of our theoretic bases to see the deep meanings of the articles under investigation.

Among different kinds of genres, news stories are used with the highest frequency and they are often highly appreciated in all cultures. This particular genre has woven into everyday life and has played an integrated role no matter in daily life, school education, popular culture or literature. A variety of generic structures of stories can convey numerous differences in terms of their social purposes along with their authors' attitudes and ideologies. Thus, the main aim of this paper is analysing two articles of the same news story genre and the same topic in terms of their evaluative language from the perspective of generic staging based on the Appraisal Theory. The study specifically aims to:

(1) Describe the use of evaluative language in the two articles; and

(2) Compare the use of evaluative language in the two articles and how it can convey the authors' attitudes and ideologies.

2. Literature review

2.1. The Appraisal Theory/Framework

Established as an extension of the SFL theory by Halliday (1994) and a number of linguists, the Appraisal Theory has its roots from a considerable number of studies conducted by a group of researchers in Australia. Advocates of SFL assume that there are three metafunctions of language, namely ideational, interpersonal and textual. Appraisal belongs to the interpersonal metafunction, the function that indicates relationships among people.

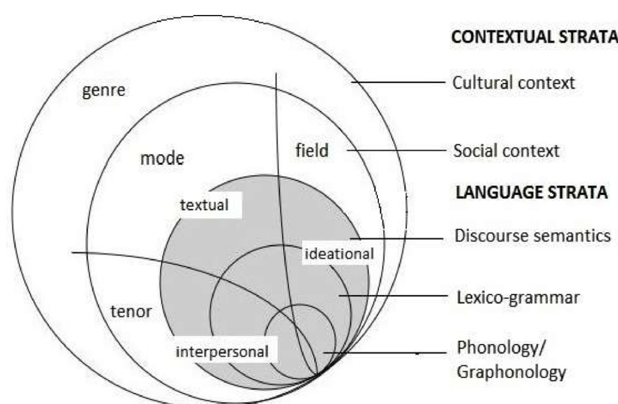

Figure 1. The language stratification and meta-functions (adapted from Martin and White, 2005)

Appraisal, or evaluative language, is a key term in SFL, discourse analysis and other branches related to applied linguistics. In the Appraisal Theory, it is believed that even in one single sentence, writers or speakers express their approval or disapproval directly or indirectly. Therefore, this theory plays an irreplaceable role in exploring the way language is used to evaluate, adopt stances, construct textual personas and manage interpersonal positioning and relationships. It is also claimed that evaluations of people and events can be perceived accurately through emotions (appraisal). Moreover, appraisal is concerned with "evaluation — the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned" (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 25). Mentioning the three fundamental functions of the Appraisal Theory, Hunston and Thompson (2003, p. 6) state that it can express the speaker's or writer's opinions, based on which the value system of that person and their culture and society can be revealed as well. Finally, this theory also plays an important role in constructing and maintaining relations between the speaker/ writer and the listener/reader as well as to organise the discourse.

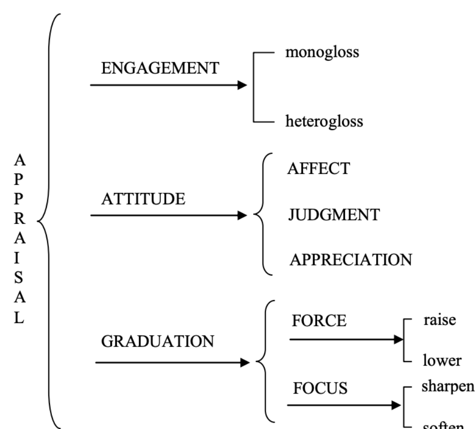

Figure 2: An Overview of Appraisal Resources (Adapted from Martin and White, 2005)

It can be inferred from the given overview of Appraisal Resources taken from Martin and White (2005) above that evaluative language consists of three main factors, engagement, attitude and graduation respectively. Engagement is the category that refers to the resources for introducing voices into a discourse analysis through projection, modalization or concession. This broad term is later divided into two smaller branches, concerning whether the key choice for engagement has to do with voice (monogloss) or more than one voice (heterogloss). The second domain in the Appraisal Resources

is graduation which is made up of force and focus: the former puts emphasis on the choice to raise or lower the intensity of gradable items while the latter involves the decision of sharpening or softening an experiential boundary.

This paper adopts the remaining category, Attitude, as shown in the theoretical framework. The three components of Attitude are Affect, Judgement and Appreciation as shown hereafter.

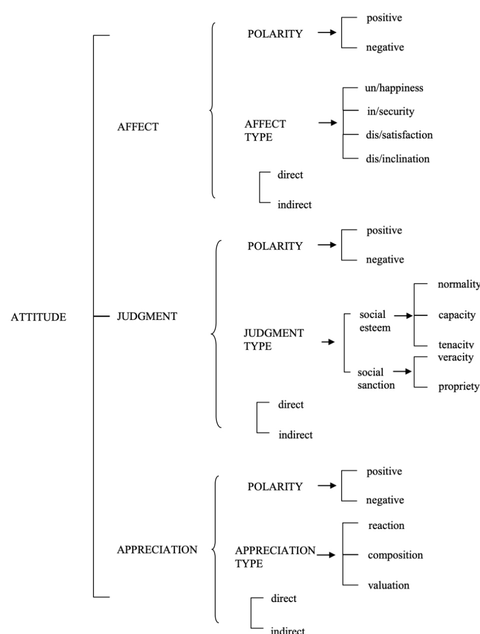

Figure 3: An Overview of Attitude (Adapted from Martin and White, 2005)

Attitude considers a wide range of values thanks to which the authors express judgement and associate emotional/affectual responses with participants and processes. Attitude is classified into three broad categories: affect, judgement and appreciation. Martin and White (2005) claim that the social or relational elements of mentality indicate people's feelings, people's duty to specific guidelines, good standards or people's inclination. Affect is the resource that deals mostly with emotional evaluation. Judgement concerns the assessment or attitudes towards people's character and their behaviors whereas appreciation puts emphasis on the evaluation of the qualities of things and objects. The evaluation can be positive or negative and it can also be delivered directly or indirectly.

Humphrey et al. (2012) provide an outline of some common ways to create implied evaluative meanings: intensification, quantification, repetition and listing, punctuation, figurative language (e.g. metaphor and simile), references to values and icons shared in the community or culture.

2.2. Genre analysis – Media genres

In the field of genre studies, the three main schools are *Systemic Functional Linguistics*, *New Rhetoric* and *English for Specific Purposes* (Hyland, 2004).

The purpose of this paper is to identify the interpersonal meaning realized by evaluative languages. White's (1998) systemic linguistic approach which focuses both on experiential and interpersonal meaning of news texts with the use of lexico-grammar as a tool for analysis is adopted.

A news text, on the basis of his approach begins with a headline and lead which act as a nucleus of the news story. The headline/lead is followed by a set of specifications in the body known as elaboration, contextualization, cause-and-effect and appraisal. In the light of the Appraisal Theory, the most noticeable linguistic features of news story genre that can be perceived are affect, judgement and appreciation vocabulary to evaluate the phenomena and grading vocabulary to intensify description. This paper is conducted with a view to examining evaluative language regarding these significant language items as well.

2.3. Previous Studies

Since its introduction as an invaluable guideline for emotion investigation, the Appraisal Theory has attracted increasing interest in numerous fields. Hence, a number of research papers have been conducted using this framework.

In 2012, Soo-Guan Khoo, Nourbakhsh and Na used the appraisal theory to investigate a collection of political news concerning George W. Bush and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's economic policies with the overall aim of evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of this theory. On finishing the study, they concluded that the framework was useful in revealing various aspects of sentiment that should be useful to researchers such as the appraisers and object of appraisal, bias of the appraisers and the author, type of attitude and manner of expressing the sentiment. However, there were also a few drawbacks, some of which were problems in identifying appraisal phrases and attitude categories because of the subtlety of expression in political news articles, lack of treatment of tense and time frame, lack of a typology of emotions, and need to identify different types of behaviors (political, verbal and material actions) that reflect sentiment.

In the same year, the appraisal theory was applied in the study of Bippus and Young (2012) which emphasized the way primary and secondary students deal with hurtful messages. Analyzing the appraisal variables, the researchers were able to not only discover the participants' feelings after receiving hurtful messages but also conclude that most of them treated hurt as an outcome instead of an antecedent of the appraisal process. The results also suggested that appraisals could predict the amount of hurt recipients experienced. In terms of the methodological framework, the two writers stressed on the appraisal theory's potential in explaining individuals' responses to hurtful communication.

A few years later, appraisal theory was once again proved a useful framework thanks to Mori's (2017) work. In her article, she praised the effectiveness of such a theory when dealing with evaluation and dialogic voicing in a case study of engagement and dialogism in two undergraduate students' writing. The application of this invaluable framework enabled the author to find out the similarities and discrepancies due to students' dissimilar linguistics competences and writing experiences. In her conclusion, she complimented Appraisal theory in the way it provided credible strategies to investigate texts with the purpose of interpreting the linguistic mechanics of such organizations.

In Vietnam, Appraisal Theory has been applied to analyses of texts in both written mode and spoken mode as well. Regarding written discourses in particular, the Appraisal point of view has been adopted to the studies of comparative analysis of English and Vietnamese languages. D. Duy, Vo (2011) conducted doctoral research on style, structure and ideology in English and Vietnamese business hard news reporting. Drawing on Appraisal Theory, the study compares English and Vietnamese business hard news reporting with respect to journalistic voices with a corpus analysis of 50 texts. Later on, T.H. Lan, Nguyen (2019) made a description of language in English and Vietnamese textbooks at primary school level in Singapore and Vietnam, with particular reference to Appraisal, namely the system of Attitude and the system of Graduation.

The success in the application of appraisal theory in a number of research papers has proved its ability when dealing with the way language is used to evaluate, adopt stances, construct textual personas and manage interpersonal positioning and relationships.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection method

The subject of this paper is two articles concerning the same matter, which is the burning of the Amazon rainforests. One is written in English and the other is in Vietnamese. In order to select the two subjected articles, the author has been reading a number of articles in both languages. One of the most important reasons why the two articles are chosen among a large number of published items is the consideration of the publishers' credibility. The English article is taken from the New York Times website whereas the Vietnamese news is available on Vnexpress.net. The New York Times has long been recognized as one of the most prominent newspapers not only in the USA but also in the whole world. This printing organization is also known to have world-famous and trustworthy reporters and journalists who are always willing to give audience news on the spot. Hence, their articles are often comprehensive and objective once writing about an event or a hot issue. On the other end of the scale, Vnexpress.net is a leading online newspaper in Vietnam. Despite the fact that there are thousands of online sites which update news on a regular basis, VnExpress still owns a stable number of subscribers and avid readers in Vietnam, contributing to its leading position in the media market of Vietnam. The data for this paper is extracted directly from the two articles having the same topic of the catastrophe in the Amazon recently.

3.2. Research method

There are two research methods in the world of science which have been utilized to comprehend a horde of phenomenon: the qualitative method and the quantitative method. Concerning the advantages and disadvantages of both research methods in the field of linguistics, this study adopts the qualitative method, which is defined by Strauss and Corbin (1991, p. 11) as "any type of research that produces findings not arrived by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings as well as organisational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between them". It can be concluded that the qualitative method puts heavy emphasis on a much deeper understanding of multiple perspectives relating to the subject of the study rather than a set of numbers and figures which now can be delivered by statistical tools or technology within a few minutes or even some seconds.

Based on the previously-mentioned descriptions of this method, it is decided that qualitative is the most appropriate method for this research paper for a number of reasons. Firstly, the fundamental subjects of this paper is the evaluative language in the two chosen texts which can only be recognized by the manual analysis of the words in their own specific contexts. Therefore, an effective method for this study must be one that can produce in-depth and detailed information for comprehensive understanding of

various dimensions of the words under analysis. As a result, the qualitative method has proved itself to be a competent tool when dealing with deeper meanings of the words in general, and evaluative language in particular. Moreover, the process of identifying evaluative features has not yet been quantified despite considerable efforts given by worldwide scholars throughout the years, which contributes to the superiority of the qualitative one in this research paper. Utilizing qualitative approach here is beneficial as any language assessment cannot be set apart from context, culture and values of where it was used (McNamara, 2003).

The qualitative method was adopted in two stages. For the first stage, each article was put into Microsoft Word. The Attitude of each article was investigated manually following the same model of description, which is the Appraisal Framework (Martin and White, 2005). Each article was examined individually, using the color coding system in order to show whether the attitude belongs to Affect, Judgement or Appreciation. The language items was also investigated based on whether they were used in positive (+ve) or negative (-ve), direct or indirect ways.

After analyzing the articles separately, a manual comparison was be carried out to show the similarities and differences between the English and Vietnamese texts, which is also the second stage using qualitative method. It is uncontroversial that even though talking about the same topic, each writer will have his own way of using evaluative language in order to convey his ideas. Therefore, putting these two articles under comparison will be likely to result in better understanding of the authors or the newspapers' opinion over this natural disaster.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. The analysis of evaluative languages in the English article

4.1.1. Direct attitudes

Each article makes use of resources from each of the three categories of attitude. The explicit attitudes are categorized below using different color coding systems. Pink is used to mark words and expressions which tell us the feelings of the writer or character (affect); blue is used to mark words and expressions which judge the behavior or personality of the author or character (judgement) and green is used to mark words and expressions which evaluate the qualities of things (appreciation). In the table, what or who is evaluated and the source of evaluation (if it is given) are demonstrated in bold as well. "+ve" and "-ve" are also added to indicate whether positive or negative evaluation is being made.

Table 1. Identifying explicit attitudes in the English article

	Extract from Text	Types of attitudes
1	Wildfires **raging** in the Amazon rainforest have jumped this year,	Affect (-ve)
2	The surge marks an 83% **increase** over the same period of 2018, **the agency** said on Tuesday,	Appreciation (-ve)
3	and is the **highest** since 2010.	Appreciation (-ve)
4	as **concerns** grow over right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro's environmental policy.	Affect (-ve)
5	***Amazonas*** declared an **emergency** in the south of the state and in its capital Manaus on August.	Affect (-ve)
6	**Wildfires** are **common** in the dry season,	Affect (+ve)
7	**Wildfires** have **increased** in Mato Grosso and Para,	Appreciation (-ve)
8	but are also **deliberately set** by farmers **illegally** deforesting land for cattle ranching.	Judgment (-ve)
9	The **unprecedented** surge in wildfires	Affect (-ve)
10	**ignoring** international concern over increased deforestation.	Judgment (-ve)
11	Asked about the spread of **uncontrolled** fires, Bolsonaro brushed off criticism	Appreciation (-ve)
12	**Space agency INPE,** however, said the large number of wildfires could not be attributed to the dry season or natural phenomena alone. There is **nothing abnormal** about the climate this year or the rainfall in the Amazon region	Appreciation (+ve)
13	"The dry season creates the **favorable** conditions for the use and spread of fire, but starting a fire is the work of humans, either deliberately or by accident," **Setzer** said.	Appreciation (-ve)
14	People frequently blame the dry season for the wildfires in the Amazon, but that is **not quite accurate**, **he** said.	Appreciation (-ve)
15	but starting a fire is **the work of humans**, either **deliberately** or **by accident**," Setzer said.	Judgement (-ve)
16	Bolsonaro recently fired **the director of INPE** after he **criticized** agency statistics	Judgement (-ve)
17	Bolsonaro recently fired the **director of INPE** after he criticized agency statistics showing an increase in deforestation in Brazil, saying they were **inaccurate**.	Appreciation (-ve)
18	If they are **alarming**, **I** will take notice of them in front of you," he told reporters.	Judgement (-ve)

As it can be inferred from the table above, among the three components of attitude that can be detected directly, appreciation is used with the highest frequency. Affect comes at the second place and finally judgement. Affect is utilized mostly to describe straightforwardly the worries and concerns of people from all over the world over this issue. Language items belonging to affect also demonstrates that fact that the situation is getting worse and worse in the Amazon as the fire keeps on spreading. On the other hand, judgement is found to have the aim of talking about people's actions during the fire.

One of the most noticeable features of the evaluative language items in this article is the

prevalence of the negative evaluation. Among 20 extracts taken from the article, only two of them are positive, and the rest eighteen are negative. Based on the taken extracts, the negative attitude is utilized whenever the severe destruction of the Amazon rainforests is mentioned.

Negativity also appears when it comes to the reactions of the Brazil government to this natural calamity, or when they are being asked about the real cause of such a debacle. The only positive extract found within 20 taken ones is the one that claims about the normal natural condition of the Amazon, saying that there is nothing unusual regarding the natural features of the world's largest rainforest.

4.1.2. Indirect expressions of attitude

Along with the transparent evaluation made in the text, a number of implied expressions are found within the content of the English article, which is demonstrated in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2. Identifying implied expressions of attitudes in the English article

	Indirect expression of attitude	Resource	Attitude meaning
1	Wildfires raging in the Amazon rainforest have ***jumped*** this year	Figurative Language	(-ve) Judgement
2	with ***72,843 fires*** detected so far by Brazil's space research centre INPE	Quantification	(-ve) Appreciation
3	as concerns ***grow*** over right-wing	Figurative language	(-ve) Judgement
4	The surge marks an ***83%*** increase over the same period of 2018	Quantification	(-ve) Appreciation
5	INPE said satellite images spotted ***9,507 new forest fires*** in the country	Quantification	(-ve) Appreciation
6	INPE said satellite images spotted 9,507 new forest fires in the country, ***mostly*** in the Amazon basin, home to the world's	Intensification	(-ve) Appreciation
7	Amazonas ***declared an emergency*** in the south of the state	References to shared values	(-ve) Judgement
8	Images show the northernmost state of ***Roraima*** covered in dark smoke. ***Amazonas*** declared an emergency in the south of the state and in its capital ***Manaus*** on Aug. 9. Acre, on the border with ***Peru***, has been on environmental alert since Friday due to the fires.	Listing	(-ve) Judgement
9	but are also ***deliberately*** set by farmers illegally deforesting land for cattle ranching.	Intensification	(-ve) Judgement
10	ignoring international concern over ***increased*** deforestation.	Quantification	(-ve) Appreciation
11	Bolsonaro took office in January ***vowing*** to develop the Amazon region	References to share values	(-ve) Judgement

12	Bolsonaro brushed off criticism, saying it was the time of the year of the ***“queimada”*** or burn, when farmers use fire to clear land	References to shared values	(+ve) Appreciation
13	“I used to be called ***Captain Chainsaw***. Now ***I am Nero***, setting the Amazon aflame”	References to shared values	(-ve) Judgement
14	said ***the large number*** of wildfires could not be attributed to the dry season or natural phenomena alone	Quantification	(-ve) Judgement
15	wildfires could not be attributed to the dry season or natural phenomena ***alone***	Quantification	(-ve) Appreciation
16	which is just ***a little*** below average,”	Quantification	(+ve) Appreciation
17	People ***frequently*** blame the dry season for the wildfires in the Amazon	Intensification	(-ve) Judgement
18	Bolsonaro recently ***fired the director*** of INPE	References to shared values	(-ve) Judgement
19	I will ***take notice of them in front of you***,” he told reporters	References to shared values	(-ve) Judgement
20	showing an ***increase*** in deforestation in Brazil	Quantification	(-ve) Appreciation

Taking into consideration the implied expressions of attitude, quantification is likely to be used with the highest frequency. References to shared values come at the second place and then intensification, figurative language and listing. Similarly to direct expressions which have been discussed above, negative language is used much more than positive one. Regarding the three categories of attitude, affect is not used even once whereas judgement appears the most with 11/20 times of appearance. Appreciation is at the second place in the rank of frequency with 9 times appearing over 20 extracts from the text.

It can be inferred from the aforementioned statistics that the Western paper uses two main groups of quantifiers with different purposes. The first are those describing large quantities such as “the large number”, “mostly”, etc. to describe the escalation in the worrying spread and damages of the fires to the Amazon. On the other hand, expressions depicting small quantities like “a little”, “alone”, etc. serve as indicators for the idle reactions to the catastrophes of authorities. Another feature related to quantification that is worth noticing is the integration of exact statistics and places such as “72,843 fires”, “9,507 new forest fires”, “83% increase”, Roraima, Amazonas, Manaus, Peru, etc. The emergence of such truthful data contributes greatly to the disastrous picture of what is happening in Amazon forests and these numerical values may leave a strong impression in readers’ minds.

4.2. The analysis of evaluative languages in the Vietnamese article

4.2.1 Explicit attitudes

The same color coding process is applied in the analysis of the evaluative language in the article published by VnExpress. Pink, blue, and green are used to mark affect, judgement and appreciation respectively. The source of evaluation (if it is given) is demonstrated in bold as well. “+ve” and “-ve” are also added to demonstrate whether positive or negative evaluation is being formed.

Table 3. Identifying explicit attitudes in the Vietnamese article

	Extract from Text	Type of Attitude
1	Gần 79.000 vụ cháy rừng **đã được ghi nhận ở Brazil trong năm nay, cao nhất** kể từ năm 2013	Appreciation (-ve)
2	nơi **được coi là "lá phổi xanh"** của hành tinh.	Appreciation (+ve)
3	riêng hai ngày 23 và 24/8 đã có hơn 1.600 đám cháy mới tiếp tục **bùng phát** tại Amazon.	Judgement (-ve)
4	Tuần trước, khói và tro từ đám cháy rừng thậm chí bay qua 2.735 km tới thành phố Sao Paulo, **nhuộm đen** bầu trời vào ban ngày.	Judgment (-ve)
5	Bang Rondonia là một trong những nơi chịu ảnh hưởng **nặng nề nhất** trong thảm họa cháy rừng, khi người dân phải chung sống với màn khói mù mịt.	Appreciation (-ve)
6	khi người dân phải chung sống với màn khói **mù mịt.**	Appreciation (-ve)
7	**Các chuyên gia** cho hay việc người dân địa phương phá rừng để làm nương rẫy hoặc chăn thả gia súc trong những tháng mùa khô đã khiến tình trạng cháy rừng trở nên **nghiêm trọng hơn.**	Affect (-ve)
8	**Copernicus**, chương trình vệ tinh của Liên minh châu Âu, chia sẻ bản đồ cho thấy khói **lan tới** vùng ven biển Đại Tây Dương của Brazil	Judgement (-ve)
9	**bao phủ** gần nửa đất nước và tràn sang các quốc gia láng giềng Peru, Bolivia và Paraguay.	Judgement (-ve)
10	dù chính phủ của ông bị chỉ trích là **phản ứng chậm chạp** trước thảm họa	Judgment (-ve)
11	**Tổng thống Bolsonaro hôm 21/8 đổ lỗi** cho các tổ chức phi chính phủ **gây ra các vụ cháy**	Judgement (-ve)
12	**ông nói rằng các nông dân có thể là thủ phạm** dẫn tới thảm họa này.	Judgement (-ve)
13	**Thảm họa** ở rừng mưa lớn nhất thế giới **đang gây ra một làn sóng phẫn nộ** toàn cầu,	Affect (-ve)
14	**các lãnh đạo của nhóm các nước công nghiệp phát triển**, đã **nhất trí hỗ trợ càng sớm càng tốt** những quốc gia chịu ảnh hưởng do cháy rừng mưa ở Amazon	Affect (-ve)
15	**Tổng thống Mỹ Donald Trump và Thủ tướng Anh Boris Johnson** trước đó cũng đã **đề nghị giúp đỡ** Brazil khống chế thảm họa cháy rừng.	Affect (+ve)

Among the 15 excerpts taken from the Vietnamese article, judgement seems to outweigh the other two categories with the highest frequency of 7. Appreciation and affect both appear four times. The sources of evaluation are stated clearly in most extracts, contributing to the credibility of the assessment in particular and the article in general. One noticeable feature of attitudes in this article is the dominance of negative evaluation with 13 out of 15 expressions being made negatively compared to only 2 positive assessments. The implication of such evaluative language choice is that the Vietnamese article concerns more about the people involved in the fires.

4.2.2. Implied expressions of attitude

Table 4. Identifying implied expressions of attitudes in the Vietnamese article

	Indirect expression of attitude	Resource	Attitude meaning
1	Rừng Amazon ở Brazil hứng chịu ***hàng nghìn*** đám cháy,	Quantification	(-ve) Appreciation
2	khiến khói lan rộng ***một nửa đất nước,***	Quantification	(-ve) Judgement
3	Gần ***79.000*** vụ cháy rừng đã được ghi nhận ở Brazil trong năm nay	Quantification	(-ve) Appreciation
4	nơi được coi là ***"lá phổi xanh"*** của hành tinh	Punctuation	(+ve) Appreciation
5	riêng hai ngày 23 và 24/8 đã có hơn ***1.600 đám cháy mới*** tiếp tục bùng phát tại Amazon.	Quantification	(-ve) Appreciation
6	khi người dân phải ***chung sống*** với màn khói mù mịt.	Figurative Language	(-ve) Judgement
7	diện tích rừng mưa Amazon bị phá hủy mỗi phút ***lớn hơn 1,5 sân bóng đá.***	Figurative Language	(-ve) Judgement
8	Tuần trước, khói và tro từ đám cháy rừng thậm chí ***bay qua 2.735 km*** tới thành phố Sao Paulo	Quantification	(-ve) Judgement
9	nhuộm đen bầu trời vào ban ngày.	Figurative Language	(-ve) Judgement
10	cho thấy khói lan tới ***vùng ven biển Đại Tây Dương của Brazil***, bao phủ gần nửa đất nước và tràn sang các quốc gia láng giềng ***Peru, Bolivia và Paraguay***.	Listing	(-ve) Judgement
11	***30 lính cứu hỏa*** cùng ***6 máy bay***, gồm ***2 chiếc Hercules C-130*** có khả năng mang theo ***12.000 lít nước*** mỗi lần cất cánh, cũng tham gia chữa cháy rừng ở Rondonia.	Listing	(+ve) Appreciation
12	Thảm họa ở rừng mưa lớn nhất thế giới đang gây ra một làn sóng phẫn nộ ***toàn cầu***	Intensification	(-ve) Appreciation
13	làm dấy lên các cuộc biểu tình thu hút ***hàng nghìn người*** ở Brazil lẫn các nước châu Âu	Quantification	(-ve) Judgement

The information delivered by Table 4 illustrates the ascendancy of quantification in implied expressions of Attitude with nearly half of the expressions found are under this category. Figurative language and listing come at the second and third place with three and two detected expressions respectively. Finally, punctuation appears only once within the content of the Vietnamese article.

It can be inferred from the summary of Table 4 above that quantifiers are applied with a high frequency when emphasizing the casualties caused by this incident. The existence of numbers with high values indicate the seriousness of the current situation in the Amazon and it also suggests there should be solutions immediately to stop this natural disaster.

4.3. The deployment of evaluative languages in the two articles

4.3.1. Explicit Attitudes

The two articles picked from The New York Times and VnExpress share some common features regarding the use of explicit attitudes. The most noticeable similarity is

the dominance of negativity evaluation over positive one. It is detected that negativity is often created when both articles mention the catastrophic conditions of the Amazon rainforests and the passive reactions of the Brazil government. On the other hand, positive language is made when it comes to the importance of the world's largest tropical forest and the efforts to extinguish the fire.

Despite some similarities, the two articles have their own ways of expressing their explicit attitudes. The most frequently-used category of attitude in the English text is appreciation whereas it is judgement in the Vietnamese one. Moreover, affect is applied with a higher frequency in the text by the New York Times than in the text by VnExpress.

4.3.2 Implied Expressions of Attitude

A number of indirect evaluations of attitude are found in the two articles, contributing immensely to the efficiency of the evaluative language in both texts. Judgement and appreciation are the two categories that are used a lot of times whereas affect is hardly seen in this underlain section. A remarkable similarity in the use of hidden evaluation in the two chosen texts is the plentifulness of quantification in order to intensify the troublesome situation in the Amazon. Listing and intensification appear in both texts, but only once or twice. In addition to that, the same as in direct evaluation, negative attitude outweighs the positive, indicating that both articles share a common pessimistic viewpoint about the conditions of the rainforests.

However, there are some differences between the use of indirect elements in the two articles. Firstly, the application of references to shared values can only be detected within the content of the New York Time's text whereas none is found in the VnExpress's text. On the contrary, only the Vnexpress' paper uses punctuation to imply the importance of the Amazon rainforests. Figurative language is detected in both texts. This kind of indirect evaluation is used in the English text with a view to emphasizing increasing worries about this natural emergency whereas in the Vietnamese it is used mostly to describe the uncontrollable spread of the fire and the sufferings of the people in the nearby areas.

4.4. How interpersonal meaning is conveyed through evaluative languages in the two texts

Considering all the previously-mentioned data and analysis, several interpersonal meanings can be interpreted from the evaluative language in the two texts.

First of all, the dominant negativity in both articles strongly emphasizes the seriousness of what is happening in the Amazon. Both authors transparently show their concerns and worries about this natural disaster, indicating the fact that this problem is no longer nationwide, but it is a world-wide threat to every nation on Earth. The writers of both articles make use of a large number of quantifiers to intensify the large scale and the increasing damage and spread of the fire, implying the fact that the problem is still under control and it does not seem to be over yet. The alarming situation has been depicted vividly and comprehensively thanks to the evaluative language made by the two writers. Negative evaluation is also detected when mentioning the efforts that have been made to save our rainforests. Therefore, it can be inferred that the problem has not yet been given adequate awareness and attention by the local government, or on a larger scale, by the whole world. Despite the fact that some actions have been taken in order to tackle the problem, it seems that too little has been done compared to what actually is occuring in the rainforests, given thousands and thousands of new fires nowadays.

Affect, the category of attitude that shows feelings of the authors or the characters, is often utilized to demonstrate the feelings of other people related to the incident, not the author himself. As a result, it is indicative

that reporting such a worldwide phenomenon demands the writer to be as objective as he can, showing no personal opinions or subjective comments on the issue. The case is more obvious in the Vietnamese article, with no personal evaluation being made by the author, who is only reporting neutrally what is happening without giving any evaluation.

Between the two articles, only the English one quoted the Brazilian's authorities and other related people's words whereas the Vietnamese only reported indirectly without quoting anyone. It seems the English article is taking advantage of what people say directly to form evaluative language while the article written in Vietnamese does not want to mention anyone specifically. The discrepancy between the two articles may result from the differences in the East and the West cultures. In Western countries, the media can evaluate even the person who is leading the country just as McQuail (2006) concluded that one of the most important roles of media in Western countries is to help raise the voice of the public to reach political authorities and vice versa. On the contrary, people in the East tend to report only the news without attributing the responsibility for anyone publicly to the newspapers. Therefore, it is often avoidable in Vietnam to use a person's words directly in order to evaluate his/her comments over the matter, especially such a sensitive problem which receives the attention of billions of people like the burning of the Amazon rainforests. In contrast, the New York Times tends to exploit the Brazilian government's announcement to indirectly make evaluation about it.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the two texts under the Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005) have revealed noticeable evaluative language factors in terms of attitude. The most significant feature is the pre-eminence of negativity in both articles when describing the severity of the fire and the slow reactions and solutions to the problems of the local authority. Another language element that is worth considering is the use of quantification in implied expression of attitude in order to emphasize the serious destruction of the Amazon.

This is a preliminary research in a bigger project. This paper, therefore, has some limitations. Firstly, the two texts with approximately 1000 words are not large enough for the findings to be highly generalized. Not to mention the fact that they are just two in several texts which have been published concerning the same topic. Hence, the evaluative language discussed may not be the same in other texts of the same genre.

It is proposed that further research should be taken with a larger corpus in order to achieve a more objective and accurate result. This study only took two among many articles from various newspapers, so the materials left are abundant and can be taken great advantage of. Furthermore, the authors only devote to interpreting the Attitude in the Appraisal Theory whereas there are other noticeable features in the framework. Therefore, a closer look into those left-behind items will be addressed in future research.

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NGHIÊN CỨU BƯỚC ĐẦU VỀ THÁI ĐỘ TRONG BẢN TIN TIẾNG ANH VÀ TIẾNG VIỆT NHÌN TỪ GÓC ĐỘ LÝ THUYẾT ĐÁNH GIÁ

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Tóm tắt: Bài viết nghiên cứu việc sử dụng ngôn ngữ đánh giá trong hai bài báo liên quan đến việc phá hủy rừng nhiệt đới lớn nhất Trái đất, Amazon, vào năm 2019. Đây là hai bài báo đã được lựa chọn cẩn thận từ hai tờ báo nổi tiếng, New York Times ở Hoa Kỳ và VnExpress tại Việt Nam. Việc phân tích ngôn ngữ đánh giá trong hai văn bản được thực hiện chủ yếu theo thái độ dựa trên Lý thuyết của Martin và White (2005). Hơn nữa, cách tiếp cận ngôn ngữ chức năng hệ thống của White (1998) đã được sử dụng để khai thác cả ý nghĩa kinh nghiệm và liên nhân của văn bản tin tức với việc sử dụng ngữ pháp từ vựng làm công cụ phân tích. Một đặc điểm quan trọng của ngôn ngữ đánh giá về thái độ đã được thể hiện rõ nét sau khi phân tích là sự thống trị của ngôn ngữ đánh giá mang tính tiêu cực trong cả hai bài viết khi đề cập đến mức độ nghiêm trọng của đám cháy cùng với sự thụ động trong cách đối phó và tìm ra giải pháp của chính quyền địa phương. Một kết luận khác được rút ra từ nghiên cứu là việc cả hai văn bản đều sử dụng các từ định lượng trong biểu hiện thái độ với mục đích nhấn mạnh việc Amazon đã bị phá huỷ nghiêm trọng.

Từ khoá: lý thuyết đánh giá, ngôn ngữ đánh giá, thái độ, bản tin, thể loại

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: The English Article

Amazon burning: Brazil reports highest forest fires since 2010

BRASILIA — Wildfires raging in the Amazon rainforest have jumped this year, with 72,843 fires detected so far by Brazil's space research center INPE, as concerns grow over right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro's environmental policy.

The surge marks an 83% increase over the same period of 2018, the agency said on Tuesday, and is the highest since 2010.

Since Thursday, INPE said satellite images spotted 9,507 new forest fires in the country, mostly in the Amazon basin, home to the world's largest tropical forest seen as vital to countering global warming.

Images show the northernmost state of Roraima covered in dark smoke. Amazonas declared an emergency in the south of the state and in its capital Manaus on Aug. 9. Acre, on the border with Peru, has been on environmental alert since Friday due to the fires.

Wildfires have increased in Mato Grosso and Para, two states where Brazil's agricultural frontier has pushed into the Amazon basin and spurred deforestation. Wildfires are common in the dry season, but are also deliberately set by farmers illegally deforesting land for cattle ranching.

The unprecedented surge in wildfires has occurred since Bolsonaro took office in January vowing to develop the Amazon region for farming and mining, ignoring international concern over increased deforestation.

Asked about the spread of uncontrolled fires, Bolsonaro brushed off criticism, saying it was the time of the year of the "queimada" or burn, when farmers use fire to clear land. "I used to be called Captain Chainsaw. Now I am Nero, setting the Amazon aflame. But it is the season of the queimada," he told reporters.

Space agency INPE, however, said the large number of wildfires could not be attributed to the dry season or natural phenomena alone. "There is nothing abnormal about the climate this year or the rainfall in the Amazon region, which is just a little below average," said INPE researcher Alberto Setzer. People frequently blame the dry season for the wildfires in the Amazon, but that is not quite accurate, he said. "The dry season creates the favorable conditions for the use and spread of fire, but starting a fire is the work of humans, either deliberately or by accident," Setzer said.

Bolsonaro recently fired the director of INPE after he criticized agency statistics showing an increase in deforestation in Brazil, saying they were inaccurate. "I am waiting for the next set of numbers, that will not be made up numbers. If they are alarming, I will take notice of them in front of you," he told reporters.

Reporting by Lisandra Paraguassu,

(*This report was taken from www.nytimes.com*)

Appendix 2: The Vietnamese Article

Thảm họa cháy rừng Amazon

Rừng Amazon ở Brazil hứng chịu hàng nghìn đám cháy, khiến khói lan rộng một nửa đất nước, đe dọa cuộc sống của hàng chục triệu dân.

Gần 79.000 vụ cháy rừng đã được ghi nhận ở Brazil trong năm nay, cao nhất kể từ năm 2013, và một nửa trong đó xảy ra tại rừng mưa Amazon, nơi được coi là "lá phổi xanh" của hành tinh. Theo Viện Nghiên cứu Không gian Quốc gia Brazil, riêng hai ngày 23 và 24/8 đã có hơn 1.600 đám cháy mới tiếp tục bùng phát tại Amazon.

Bang Rondonia là một trong những nơi chịu ảnh hưởng nặng nề nhất trong thảm họa cháy rừng, khi người dân phải chung sống với màn khói mù mịt.

Các chuyên gia cho hay việc người dân địa phương phá rừng để làm nương rẫy hoặc chăn thả gia súc trong những tháng mùa khô đã khiến tình trạng cháy rừng trở nên nghiêm trọng hơn.

Theo Viện Nghiên cứu Vũ trụ Brazil, diện tích rừng mưa Amazon bị phá hủy mỗi phút lớn hơn 1,5 sân bóng đá.

Tuần trước, khói và tro từ đám cháy rừng thậm chí bay qua 2.735 km tới thành phố Sao Paulo, nhuộm đen bầu trời vào ban ngày. Copernicus, chương trình vệ tinh của Liên minh châu Âu, chia sẻ bản đồ cho thấy khói lan tới vùng ven biển Đại Tây Dương của Brazil, bao phủ gần nửa đất nước và tràn sang các quốc gia láng giềng Peru, Bolivia và Paraguay.

Tổng thống Brazil Jair Bolsonaro đã ký sắc lệnh huy động quân đội đối phó các đám cháy và cam kết bảo vệ bằng được rừng Amazon, dù chính phủ của ông bị chỉ trích là phản ứng chậm chạp trước thảm họa. 44.000 binh sĩ Brazil đã được triển khai tới 7 bang, trong đó có Rondonia, để hỗ trợ địa phương dập tắt các đám cháy. 30 lính cứu hỏa cùng 6 máy bay, gồm 2 chiếc Hercules C-130 có khả năng mang theo 12.000 lít nước mỗi lần cất cánh, cũng tham gia chữa cháy rừng ở Rondonia. Tổng thống Bolsonaro hôm 21/8 đổ lỗi cho các tổ chức phi chính phủ gây ra các vụ cháy, tuy nhiên sau đó một ngày, ông nói rằng các nông dân có thể là thủ phạm dẫn tới thảm họa này.

Thảm họa ở rừng mưa lớn nhất thế giới đang gây ra một làn sóng phẫn nộ toàn cầu, làm dấy lên các cuộc biểu tình thu hút hàng nghìn người ở Brazil lẫn các nước châu Âu. Tại hội nghị thượng đỉnh G7 ở miền nam Pháp cuối tuần qua, các lãnh đạo của nhóm các nước công nghiệp phát triển, đã nhất trí hỗ trợ càng sớm càng tốt những quốc gia chịu ảnh hưởng do cháy rừng mưa ở Amazon. Tổng thống Mỹ Donald Trump và Thủ tướng Anh Boris Johnson trước đó cũng đã đề nghị giúp đỡ Brazil khống chế thảm họa cháy rừng.

(*This report was taken from vnexpress.net*)

IMAGINED COMMUNITY, IMAGINED IDENTITY, AND INVESTMENT IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

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Abstract: Language learning, viewed through post-structuralist prism, is not the practice of the individual *per se* but a social practice characterized by the multiple and changing learner identity in direct contact with inequitable power relations (Norton, 2013). Not always does it deal with the immediate identity of the learner in the real-time setting, but also identities defined through "the power of the imagination" in "not immediately accessible and tangible" communities (Norton, 2013, p.8). It is this set of imagined identities that governs the learner's investment in meaningful learning practices, which in turn provides him/her with a wide range of capital. With this departure point in mind, in this autoethnography-based study, I told my own story of language learning and arrived at two findings. One, my identities as a language student, a language teacher, and a language teacher-researcher formed primarily with social factors, especially my imagination of social power gains. And two, my investments in language learning were regulated by these imagined identities and done so in ways that investment was prioritized over the identity related to higher social status and that where my identity was not invested, I took the initiative to invest to realize it.

Keywords: post-structuralism, language learning, imagined community, imagined identity, investment

1. Introduction

English in the new world order is no longer the predominant language of the Inner Circle countries (McKay, 2010) but has grown into an asset that every global citizen wants a fair share. This is not striking, given as early as 1986, Kachru came to suggest that the ownership of English means "possessing the fabled Aladdin's lamp, which permits one to open the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science, and travel" (p.1). In that same year, Bourdieu (1986) published his book chapter called *The Forms of Capital* and used the term *capital* to underscore the practical values that mastering English affords learners. He posits that capital covers a wide range, including material (income, real estate, wealth), symbolic (language, education, friendship), cultural (knowledge and appreciation of cultural forms and values), and social (connections to networks of power). Regardless of the capital form an individual may wish to gain, learning English provides a means to this end and thus is essentially made integral in his/her academic and professional journeys.

Acquiring the language and hence such forms of capital is, on the other hand, demanding from a post-structuralist point of view. This is an argument by Bonny Norton (2013), one of the most influential scholars who approach second language acquisition (SLA) in a non-traditional way. She argues that language learning is not an activity of an individual in his or her own right but the intertwining of multiple facets: the language, the linguistic community, and the identity he

or she positions and is positioned by others. Language, according to Norton, is far from having idealized meanings or as a neutral medium of communication but must be understood with reference to its social meaning. Building upon Norton's conception of language, Walsh (1991) adds that it is a vehicle of social practice via which individuals define and negotiate meanings in relation to others. The linguistic community, while deemed "relatively homogeneous and consensual" by structuralists, is envisaged in post-structuralist scholarship as "heterogeneous arenas characterized by conflicting claims to truth and power" (Norton, 2013, p.54). This means that the speaker/learner is not a free self in the community of practice but constrained by myriad discrepancies, e.g. ethnicity, gender, race, and power, which in turn gives him/her a set of characteristics referenced as identity. Norton explains identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p.45). This definition responds, not in a respective manner, to her conceptualization of identity as a trinity of non-unitary essence, a site of struggle, and changing temporally and spatially. Put differently, identity is fluid and contradictory as opposed to being fixed and coherent; supplies room for discourse and thus relations of power to be questioned, negotiated and renegotiated; and changes over historical time and social space. In brief, with the position she takes and the scholarship she draws on (e.g. Bourdieu, 1977; Weedon, 1997; Norton Pierce, 1995), Norton correlates language learning with a social practice in which the individual and the social interact, with stratification of power.

Language learning has also been stressed in identity theories (e.g. Norton & Toohey, 2001; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) as inseparable from the notions of imagined community, imagined identity, and investment. I will delve into these notions in the section below, but a glimpse is needed here to explain the departure point of this paper. It is indeed fair to say that learners would not invest their resources in language learning without a relative idea of who they would become and what they would merit in the future. This is depicted as "the power of the imagination" by Norton (2013, p.8), upon which premise she arrives at the formulation of imagined community – a current or future group of people to which the learner feels a sense of belonging, and imagined identity – "a desired sense of self the learners project for themselves" through affiliation with potential communities of practice (Norton, 2001, as cited in Wu, 2017, p.103). In this study, the inextricable link among these ideas was illuminated with a focus on the classroom and natural settings as a whole and with the perception that all my study and professional activities were language learning *per se*.

2. Literature review

Investment

The construct of investment emerged as a result of Norton's (2013) observation that existing scholarship as to the construct of motivation is not congruent with her research data. While learners who experienced language learning failures were often deemed devoid of learning commitment, and there was a dearth of attention paid to unequal relations of power between the learner and the target language speaker, Norton's data lay bare the fact that highly motivated learners were not necessarily successful ones and that power inequity was inevitable in the communication process. For this reason, investment is established by Norton as a sociological construct to complement the psychological construct of motivation (Dornyei, 2001), and hence must be understood within a sociological framework, marked by the relationship between learner identity and learning commitment. In the spirit of Bourdieu's works (1977, 1991), *investment*

seeks to dismantle the dichotomous views associated with learner identity as good or bad, introvert or extrovert, motivated or unmotivated, etc. In addition to asking "To what extent is the learner motivated to learn the target language?", the teacher or researcher asks "What is the learner's investment in the language practices of the classroom or community?". Further, Darvin and Norton (2015) comment on the motivation versus investment contrast as follows:

> While constructs of motivation frequently view the individual as having a unitary and coherent identity with specific character traits, investment regards the learner as a social being with a complex identity that changes across time and space and is reproduced in social interaction. (p.37)

As suggested by this statement, investment is intrinsically bound by the multiple identities leaners take up in different contexts and at different points in time. When learners invest in language learning, they do so with the recognition that they will be rewarded with a broader range of symbolic and material resources, which eventually enhance their cultural capital and social power (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Imagined community and imagined identity

Imagined community and imagined identity are interdependent theoretical constructs that come into existence through "the power of the imagination" on the part of the learner (Norton, 2013, p.8). The term *imagined community* was originally coined by Anderson (1991) as he redefined nations as imagined communities with the rationale that "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p.6). This ideology molded Wenger's (1998) attempt to refute *engagement* as the mere way to signify the sense of community involvement and to envision imagination as another valid source, and later inspired Norton (2013) to formally develop imagined communities as "groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible" (p.8). By 'tangible' and 'accessible', Norton refers to diverse communities such as neighborhoods, workplaces, educational sites and religious groups, etc., whose existence is concrete and current, and by 'not immediately' so, she meant the same communities but in near or distant future and which we imagine we would be affiliated with one day. In the realm of SLA, the pertinence of this construct is that learners not only interact with their actual learning spaces but also picture in their mind a set of imagined sites with learning opportunities as powerful as and "no less real than the ones in which they have daily engagement" (Norton, 2013, p.8). This might in turn have an impact on their learning trajectories with an array of accompanying identity positionings, and on the extent to which they invest in their learning experiences. In this regard, Norton (2010) claims that an imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner's investment must be construed in light of this imagined identity construction.

Studies on imagined community, imagined identity, and investment in the world and in Vietnam

While there has been ample research on the constructs of actual identity and investment over the past 20 or so years in most parts of the world (e.g. Duff, 2002; McKay & Wong, 1996; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002; Haneda, 2005; Potowski, 2007; Cummins, 2006), the relationship between imagined identity and investment has only been explicitly addressed with a modest quantity in more recent scholarship. The contexts in which these studies were conducted were mainly in North America. The foundational study was Norton's (1993) doctoral dissertation which was later published as a book entitled *Language Learning, Social Identity, and Immigrant Women* in 2000. In this study, Norton analyzed life histories of five immigrant women to Canada in the early 1990s so as to accentuate

how their investments in English learning were intimately aligned with the varied spheres of their identity and unequal relations of power, either overt or covert, in different contexts. She described how Mai, a blue-collar worker in a fabric factory, in an episode of her professional life, imagined herself as an office worker, so invested in English speaking and writing skills and hoped to gain legitimacy to this imagined community. Nevertheless, while Mai had tremendous motivation to learn, she was insufficiently invested, evidenced by the classroom's focus on past lives of students, and this curbed her from making a connection between her language practices and imagined identity. In a similar vein, Norton examined the narrative of Katarina, a teacher with depth of experience back home and now finding ways to access the professional community in Canada. With her imagination of a professional status, she wanted to take a computer course but was dispirited by her teacher, so she withdrew from her ESL class. In 2011, Chang examined two Taiwanese doctoral students in the United States and argued that the students routinely aligned their investments to their imagined identities. For example, the doctoral candidate named Hou, with an expectation to become a teaching professional, opted to invest immensely in academic writing skills rather than interpersonal skill such as speaking. Later in his study at a Canadian university, Schwieter (2013) designed a semester-length magazine project for an advanced composition class and assigned participants imagined roles in editorial advisory boards he created as imagined communities. Schwieter's conclusion was that participation in the project fostered students' investment in learning throughout the semester and thus consolidated their writing ability. In her qualitative case study in this same year, Kim found that a Korean graduate student in the United States made investments in academic English, imagining she would be part of a Korean elitist community from which she was able to reinforce her social status and secure financial gains.

Research work on this matter has been even scarcer in the Asian region, however. One such study was Wu (2017) which looked into anecdotal evidence of three high-achieving English learners in Taiwan and yielded important findings. First, the participants' imagined identities took shape under the influence of specific social and personal aspects and had a marked impact on their choice of learning investments in corresponding phases of their learning adventure. Second, imagined identities, when rationed, limited investment to the school context while gearing it toward both formal and informal settings, if pluralized. With regards to the setting of Vietnam, to the best of my knowledge, no studies have embarked upon the relationship among these notions, so attempts to shed light on this are demanded. Methodology-wise, most studies to date have used a variety of qualitative data collection instruments (e.g. biographical or autobiographical accounts, interviews, informal talks etc.) other than autoethnography research. By approaching a well-established issue from a brand-new methodological lens and in a different geographical region, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. *How do my imagined identities form during my language learning process?*
2. *How do these imagined identities impact my investment in language learning?*

3. Methodology

Research design

Identity approaches to language learning broadly and SLA in particular tend to be qualitative rather than quantitative because "static and measurable variables" fail to justify the multiple and changing nature of learner identity (Norton, 2013, p.13). Among a host

of qualitative methodological foci, narrative accounts are much favored and habitually collected either through field work (Block, 2006; Miller, 2003) or from biographical and autobiographical evidences (Kramsch, 2009). However, these methods often silence the voice of the researcher and turns him or her into an outsider or a mere storyteller of the participants' insights. With a view to locating a method that gives room for my own story to be told in a more vivid manner and in a more appealing writing format so that a connection between myself as the individual and the readers as the social can be produced, I found it plausible to use autoethnography, a variation of ethnography research.

Autoethnography is defined as "research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical to the cultural, social, and political through the study of a culture or phenomenon of which one is a part, integrated with relational and personal experiences" (Ellingson, 2011, p.599). The central idea of this understanding is that the researcher carries out critical analysis of the introspection related to himself or herself in intimate conjunction to the phenomenon or culture under investigation and radiates it to people with cultural homogeneity. It is on this so-called phenomenon or culture that Bochner and Ellis (1996) rely to refute criticism on autoethnography that the research is limited in its conclusions if attached to a personal narrative. Critically, they ask, "If culture circulates through all of us, how can autoethnography be free of connection to a world beyond itself?" (p.24). Like culture, identity and the related matters of imagined identity, investment, and language learning are inherent in each of us, so by using autoethnography to study this relationship, I attempted to make my personal feelings and experiences resonate with individuals within the same language learning culture. A number of advantages can also be documented here to support my choice of autoethnography, including its researcher- and reader-friendliness, its ability to evoke self-reflection and self-examination on the part of the readers and to transform the self and the others in the process of writing and reading the autoethnographical script (Chang, 2008). With respect to the writing style of autoethnography research, Anderson (2006) distinguishes evocative autoethnography from analytic autoethnography. While evocative autoethnography is a form of storytelling that has much resemblance to a novel, biography or an emotional account and primarily concerns the researcher's introspection on a given topic, analytic autoethnography is directed towards objective analysis of a particular group (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). According to Méndez (2013), evocative autoethnography is gaining momentum in research practice since it allows readers to enter the researcher's private worlds and conversely the researcher to verbalize his or her own inner feelings and thoughts, so it was purposively employed in this study.

Data collection and analysis

Data collection and data analysis, according to autoethnography researchers (e.g. Richardson, 2000; Wall, 2016), should be done simultaneously rather than sequentially. Characterized by a participant-free approach, autoethnography owes its data primarily to the researcher's memory (Chang, 2008). Though personal memory functions as the backbone during the data collection process, the reliability and transparency of such data can be insured and improved by more concrete artefacts such as diaries, journals, books, sketches and the like (Maric, 2011). So, I began by scanning an extended version of my Curriculum Vitae (I often condense my CV in three pages maximum but do keep a longer version of it) where all my major learning and work events and achievements are recorded and arranged in a chronological order. This helped me relive my experiences and string them up in my head to initially form the story although it was still quite fragmented at this point. To further evoke my memory, I

reviewed an assortment of certificates, my scholarship application pack as well as email and Facebook communications pertaining to my work (e.g. translation, tutoring, news reporting) and study (Bachelor's, Master's). With the obtained information, I was able to add details to the storyline I had formed earlier and started writing a first draft of events of the last ten or so years. While the idea of using artefacts to back abstract memory is central to the data collection process, autoethnographers (e.g. Duncan, 2004; Taber, 2010) also suggest that the experience of family, friends and colleagues can also help enrich and support personal experiences. So, to gain more accurate insights into my family background in the past and my early learning stage, I had talks with my mother. It was after these talks that I wrote a second draft of my autoethnography, one that was full-fledged now and mirrored the most remarkable milestones of my language learning phases. Once the draft was finished, I read it multiple times, trying to maintain a chronological flow of the narration while simultaneously pinpointing the identities that emerged and the investment activities that were performed *en route*. The final version was thematically analyzed and is presented in the Findings section below.

Ethical considerations and significance of the study

The caveat about autoethnography research is that attention is pulled towards the self and away from the other, leading to improper and/or inadequate consideration of ethics (Maric, 2011). Though a number of individuals and institutions were mentioned in the autoethnography because of the interactional nature between the individual and the social as far as identity is concerned, I tried to avoid explicit statements about the identities of the individuals and use pseudonyms to safeguard the anonymity of the institutions (Chang, 2008). What seems to be more problematic, however, lies in my present vulnerability, i.e. my story and emotions are exposed to judgements, and my future vulnerability, i.e. the story, in written form, might be subject to changing personal and social perspectives and attitudes as life continues (Tolich, 2010; Wall, 2016). Thus, I tried to be as faithful to my lived experiences as I could, but at the same time not to push my emotions and arguments to the extreme point.

The significance of this study is twofold. First, identity has been under-researched in the context of Vietnam, and the interrelationship among imagined community, imagined identity, and investment has been even more so. By tapping into this matter, the present study aimed to make it better known in the language learning culture that imagination has a pivotal role to play in learners' learning practices and the range of capital from which they can benefit. Second, this study was an attempt to investigate an old issue from a new methodological viewpoint – autoethnography, and to disseminate this approach among qualitative researchers and academic readership as a whole.

4. Findings

Starting out with an imagined identity of a language university student

I was born into a family in which educational security was not taken for granted: my parents quit school at a very young age; my mom effortfully maintained a morning outdoors food stall; and my dad worked as a motorbike taxi driver for every single penny. As time passed by, I nurtured and grew the thought that I would not do manual work like them. When high school neared, with an exceptional interest in the English language, I asked my mom to hire me an English tutor who coached me for one month in preparation for my entrance exam to High School N for gifted pupils in my hometown – Hai Phong. I failed the exam, but not letting myself disheartened by this failure, I kept on learning English during my high school years and developing the long-standing interest into a genuine passion, alongside with my

newly-established enthusiasm for Chemistry. At the turn of my 11th and 12th grades, I was selected to compete in the city-level contests for excellent students for both the subjects, and I could choose one only. At this very moment did I seriously reflect upon what I would want to learn at college and who I would become later in my life. So, I went for English. In 2007, I succeeded in the university entrance exams to both a local university called G for civil engineering training and University H in Hanoi for the English language. I was in a dilemma now. Though my parents persuaded me to stay close to home with their reasoning about the comfort and care I could have been accommodated, I was determined to embark on the adventure of the new land to pursue a language learning major.

Developing an imagined identity of a language teacher

Matriculating at University H, I formally became an English-major student. It was here that I was initially exposed to language practice with anglophones and that my previous on-going imagination of the merits of knowing English began to turn real – I read about foreign cultures; I socialized with foreign pals; and I had part-time jobs as an English tutor and a translator. As my junior year approached, I sat down and asked myself which professional career I would be pursuing when I left college, the one that would bring me a wide range of social networks and relationships. After some significant self-searching, I settled upon being an English news presenter and an English teacher. So, I carried on with occasional translation and interpretation deals and one-on-one tutoring, in addition to participation in multiple English clubs, all in quest of a stronger command of English. The summer prior to my senior year, I spent it at the English division of a radio center called I, immersing more deeply in the actual work of a news anchor. When the summer ended, I worked part time for a local TV channel for a few months before having a semester-length break for my graduation thesis in 2012. In May that year, I graduated, and my work at the TV channel resumed on a full-time basis. The turning point came soon afterwards when one day in August, I was offered the position Head of English News Program. I turned down the promotion to my own surprise and insisted that I was going to become an English teacher. That saddened relations of mine, for they thought I let go a title, a stable income, and a chance to reach out to a circle of individuals with social ranks from all walks of life. I rationalized with them about the same set of benefits I could reap and on top of that a solid educational foundation I could lay for my future family being a teacher. In fact, I had earlier suspended my work at the TV channel, so I was able to concentrate my full energy on the thesis, thinking to myself that a quality graduation paper would be a facilitative condition for my pursuit of teaching profession.

Moving further with an imagined identity of a language teacher-researcher

That fall, I formally joined the language teaching faculty at University H where I had undertaken my graduate study. For at least three years ever since, I had been teaching course after course, witnessing my colleagues delegated the additional task of Bachelor's thesis supervision as Master's degree holders. It crossed my mind from time to time the idea that without greater engagement in research and supervision duties, my doorway to a larger social network would be shut. This instilled in me the will to earn my Master's qualification. To this end, I studied hard for a desirable IELTS certificate, took part in language projects, and then applied for a scholarship. In early 2016, my postgraduate study in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) commenced at University A in New Zealand. It was about this time that I started to envision about my further study following this Master's program. Learning that an achiever of 8.0 GPA overall would be granted a guaranteed

doctoral scholarship at a New Zealand university, I strived for the target. In mid 2017, I returned to University H and felt even more concretely that possessing the academic knowledge and qualification of a PhD holder would bring me steps closer to an expansion of social relationships. So, I planned to study further. To broaden my academic prospects, I have recently explored opportunities in other countries like Australia and found that the institutions set it amendatory for applicants to hold a Master's by thesis and disqualify those with a Master's by coursework who are deemed less strong in research skills. Only by strengthening my research work, I am aware, am I legitimized as a member of this academic community, where I have no doubt my acquisition of relationships with high-profile language researchers will be fostered.

5. Discussion

Research question 1: How do my imagined identities form during my language learning process?

The first question this study sought to answer was how my imagined identities formed during my language learning process. The findings showed that my three imagined identities – a language student, a language teacher, and a language teacher-researcher, were constructed primarily in association with social factors, and at a few points, with individual values. For example, my imagined identity as a language learner was driven by my family' loose economic and educational background. As "I nurtured and grew the thought that I would not do manual work like [my parents]", I started to think about the advantage I could gain if pursuing education. The social impact was even stronger when I decided upon language learning instead of civil engineering training at university, envisioning, albeit with vagueness, the power of knowing a foreign language. This is echoed in Norton's (2013) data that one of her research participants Katarina believed that a good education and knowledge of English would guarantee a wide range of non-manual occupational options in life. The construction of this identity was, on the other hand, not without the consideration of my personal interest. It is important to note here that my imagined identity as a language learner was once jeopardized by my newly found interest in Chemistry as Norton (2013) states that identity changes across time and space. Still, it was not only my greater interest in English that kept me focused on the goal of attaining this symbolic asset (Bourdieu, 1986) but also other individual elements such as background, experience, and competence, which are theorized by Kharchenko (2014) as having a remarkable impact on the formation of imagined communities and imagined identities.

When I became a university student, my imagined professional identity as a language teacher took shape as a result of my imagination of the social status associated with this career. Yet, before feeling at ease with this identity, I faced the reality that identity is fluid and plural (Norton, 2013) when I had to choose whether to become a language teacher or a news anchor. As far as personal interest is concerned, I could have invested in the identity of a news anchor for its not less varied social relationships, but it was the social consensus that teaching was among top five prestigious occupations worldwide at that point (The Harris Poll, 2007) that directed me at the other. This practice can be similarly found in Norton (2013). She found that Mai, a blue-collar worker in a Canadian fabric factory, imagined herself belonging to the community of office workers because it was where she would have greater social status. Or in the case with Katarina, being detached from the professional community in Canada, she imagined the status of a teacher she had had back home in Poland. In a similar spirit, Kim (2013) demonstrated the Korean elitist community of which a Korean graduate imagined herself as a member and was able to

consolidate her social power gains. My data and these findings are synonymous in that an imagined identity should be understood with reference to the learner's evaluation of the share of social capital he/she can gain being part of that imagined community.

My imagined professional identity was cultivated into a language teacher-researcher some time after my identity as a language teacher was fulfilled. Again, as unearthed by the data, this imagined identity was far from disengaged with my expectations for wider networks of social relations. After three years during which teaching was my only task while I wished to supervise Bachelor's theses as well, I started to negotiate access to this type of work by imagining myself as a Master's degree holder and later as a doctoral degree holder in order to expand my social relationships with academia even further. It is noteworthy here that while my two other imagined identities formed without myself interacting with inequitable power relations, institutional experiences placed me in such unavoidable encounters. As a case in point, without a Master's certificate, I was not in position to do supervisory chore which was held by those of my colleagues with ownership of greater symbolic capital (e.g. assumed higher command of English and Master's or PhD qualification) (Bourdieu, 1986). So, I had to depend on these 'old-timers' to grant me the permission to join this community with which they themselves were not entitled because of the established system (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.100). This is indexical of the fact that power operates at both the micro level of daily social encounters between individuals with differential possession of symbolic and material repertoires and at the macro systems of law, education, and social welfare, etc. (Foucault, 1980). This can be further illuminated by the second circumstance in which I considered pursuing PhD in some Australian institutions but was automatically disqualified by the system due to my lack of symbolic resource (i.e. a Master's by thesis qualification).

In summary, three imagined identities emerged during my language learning journey, and the construction of these identities must be understood with reference to my aspirations to widen my social networks and at times unbalanced power relations.

Research question 2: How do my imagined identities impact my investment in language learning?

The three imagined identities elicited in the previous section are those of a language learner, a language teacher, and a language teacher-researcher. The data showed that these identities formed in connection to my imagination of social capital I would benefit when they turned real, and to unequal relations of power. It is also clear from the data that these identities governed my multiple investment activities in different language learning events. For example, despite my family's poor economic and educational background, I did not deprive myself of the identity of an English learner by asking for a short-term tutor and conquering the exam to High School N. Later as a university student, I invested in the imagined identity of a language teacher by reading English materials, befriending with foreigners, partaking in English clubs, doing interpretation and translation work, and tutoring. I did all of these with a view to fulfilling my aspiration to become a language teacher, the profession that put me in contact with higher social relationships. In Norton and Toohey's (2011) words, in so doing, learners are awarded with a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which ultimately enhance their cultural capital and social power. As a further illustration of this, projecting that I would continue with PhD study, I focused my utmost energies on achieving a GPA of 8.0 to secure a guaranteed doctoral scholarship during my Master's program. In his or her study, Wu (2017) also found such investments with two participants Brie and Alicia, whose respective imagined identities as an English teacher and a proficient English user led to their efforts to strengthen their language skills.

In an attempt to contrast the constructs of motivation and investment, Darvin and Norton (2015) claim that "investment regards the learner as a social being with a complex identity that changes across time and space and is reproduced in social interaction" (p.37). This understanding of investment can be exemplified by the two circumstances in which when my imagined identities were plural at the same time, I struggled to choose appropriate investment directions. One was the struggle between an imagined identity of a civil engineering student and that of a language student, and the other was between a news anchor and a language teacher. It was my adherence to social power gains that navigated my investments in the identities of a language student and a language teacher, evidenced by my choice of the English contest, pausing work at the TV channel for my graduation thesis and so on. What is more, my investments at times must be understood with reference to dynamic negotiation of power (Norton Peirce, 1995). For example, even though I was self-motivated to supervise Bachelor's theses, my lack of symbolic resources curbed me from being invested, so I took the initiative to invest in my imagined identity as a Master's degree holder. Likewise, the fact that I was not invested when it comes to PhD entry requirements of some Australian institutions led me to make investments in my research work. Indeed, it is not just about learners' motivation to learn the language, but equally about the extent to which they are invested to do so (Norton, 2013). In brief, my imagined identities influenced my investment in two ways: where there were multiple identities at the same time, the one that would lead me to gain more social power was prioritized, and in cases that I was not invested, I took the initiative to invest towards positions with social status.

6. Conclusion

Drawing on Norton's (2013) post-structuralist notions of identity and language learning, this study further brought into prominence related concepts of imagined community, imagined identity, and invesment. In so doing, I employed autoethnography as the methodological approach, in which I told my own story of language learning and found three imagined identities as a language student, a language teacher, and a language teacher-researcher. These identities formed mainly with social factors and guided my investment in ways that social power was targeted throughout and that where my present identity was not invested, I invested in it and tried to make it become real. Based on these findings, the study stressed the importance of imagination of identities in association with different capital forms because they would steer learner's investment activities to create meaningful language practices, and thus would lead them to desirable academic and professional experiences.

I acknowledge that language learning is an idiosyncratic experience embodied by diverging patterns, so the limitation of this paper is, first, in its generalizability. Second, though the format of an autoethnography can be stimulating to readers, the accuracy and adequacy of information may be traded off to a certain extent due to the overreliance on memory, not to mention formal ethical procedures being hard to attain. Replication research can be conducted in order to compare findings and shed further light on the interdependence of the notions being investigated. Also, further studies could limit the scope to the classroom context and look into how these notions manifest with teacher-student interactions.

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CỘNG ĐỒNG TƯỞNG TƯỢNG, BẢN NGÃ TƯỞNG TƯỢNG VÀ ĐẦU TƯ VÀO VIỆC HỌC NGÔN NGỮ: TỪ GÓC NHÌN CỦA NGHIÊN CỨU TỰ NGÃ

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Tóm tắt: Dưới lăng kính của Hậu cấu trúc luận, việc học ngôn ngữ không còn là hoạt động của một cá nhân riêng lẻ mà là một tập quán xã hội mà ở đó bản ngã luôn ở trạng thái thay đổi và đa chiều của người học tương tác với các mối quan hệ quyền lực không bình đẳng. Tuy nhiên, không phải lúc nào quá trình học ngôn ngữ cũng diễn ra với bản ngã và cộng đồng ở thực tại mà thường là những bản ngã và cộng đồng được hình thành thông qua "trí trưởng tượng" của người học. Bản ngã tưởng tượng này sau đó ảnh hưởng tới đầu tư của người học vào việc học ngôn ngữ và giúp họ đạt được những lợi ích về vật chất hoặc các mối quan hệ xã hội. Đây chính là xuất phát điểm của nghiên cứu này, từ đó tôi áp dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu tự ngã kể lại câu chuyện học ngôn ngữ của chính mình và đi đến hai kết quả như sau. Một là, bản ngã người học ngôn ngữ, giáo viên ngôn ngữ và giáo viên-nhà nghiên cứu ngôn ngữ của tôi được hình thành song song cùng các yếu tố xã hội, đặc biệt là việc mở rộng các mối quan hệ xã hội. Hai là, các bản ngã tưởng tượng này quy định việc đầu tư vào việc học của tôi thông qua một số cách thức. Cụ thể, bản ngã nào gắn liền với địa vị xã hội cao hơn sẽ được ưu tiên đầu tư, và nếu một bản ngã không nhận được đầu tư trong quá trình tương tác xã hội, tôi sẽ chủ động đầu tư để hiện thực hoá bản ngã đó.

Từ khoá: hậu cấu trúc luận, học ngôn ngữ, cộng đồng tưởng tượng, bản ngã tưởng tượng, đầu tư

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE UK AND POLICY IMPLICATION TO VIETNAM

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Abstract: This paper explores how community engagement is implemented by the third sector organisation in public service delivery in the UK. This research applied a case-study approach involving two third sector organisations involved in public service delivery in the UK. The study's findings revealed community engagement as an important aspect in public service delivery that fosters social cohesion and social capital and thus, the implementation of community engagement needs attention to stakeholders' interaction, social network, and capability. The results are discussed in relation to the implications for policy, especially in relation to frameworks that can support public value enhancement.

Keywords: Community engagement, Public service delivery, Third sector organisations

Abbreviations: CE (Community engagement), DV (domestic violence), NPM (New Public Management), PPP (Public-private partnership), PSD (Public service delivery), TSOs (Third sector organisations),

1. Introduction

The transformation of the welfare state and public service delivery (PSD) in the UK towards marketisation and managerialism resulted from the perceived inefficiency of state-led public services and an increased welfare burden (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). However, it is also argued that the values created by the market and the state are in conflict, since the goal of the private sector is to create private (economic) value, whilst that of government agencies is to create public (social) value (Moore and Khagram, 2004). This leads to an increased focus on the involvement of the third sector which, it is argued, has the social goals and social legitimacy to understand local needs (Di Domenico *et al*., 2009a).

Furthermore, it is important in public service provision to address an effective approach to collaboration and innovative relationships with multiple stakeholders (third sector organisations, community, and the public sector), to deliver what Eriksson (2018) termed 'representative coproduction' and 'value co-creation'. Therefore, community engagement (CE) is seen as an important aspect in PSD that fosters social cohesion (Amin *et al*.,1999; Davies and Simon, 2012) and social capital (Bovaird *et al*., 2016), and subsequently social value. CE promotes choices and voices, which lead the service providers and public officials to be more accountable and responsive to the community (Davies and Simon, 2012). In another aspect, CE in PSD is also strengthened through cooperation and co-production with the government and other sectors (Alford, 1998;

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Needham, 2008). Therefore, CE in PSD is more than just being actively involved in decision-making but also being collaborative in producing and delivering services. However, previous research has approached CE based upon the level of power distribution and the role of the community in the relationship with the public sector. Meanwhile, CE is also affected by many contextual factors, such as the institutional environment, citizens' education and awareness of their human rights (Di Domenico *et a*l., 2009a), people's political self-efficacy (Bovaird *et al*., 2016), and the capability of TSOs.

Over the last four decades, PSD reform has attracted the attention of many researchers and policymakers. Studies on PSD focus mainly on the forms of transformation (Torres and Pina, 2002); the types of partnership and collaboration, including public-private partnerships (PPP) and co-production (Needham, 2008); public service mutuals (Hazenberg and Hall, 2016; Le Grand and Robert, 2018); and community partnership, together with joined-up and entrepreneurial government (Alford and O'Flynn, 2012; Donahue and Zeckhauser, 2011; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Previous research also extensively discusses concepts and functions, in addition to the impact of the third sector organizations (TSOs) on the social economy (Young, 2006; Nicholls, 2006), and its involvement in PSD (Di Domenico *et al*., 2010). There is a lack of an in-depth research on a process of engagement between TSOs as service providers and the community as service users, which can help to identify a better way where public services could deliver a better social impact. This under-researched area is important, as it can provide recommendations for all stakeholders in understanding their community and the implementation of PSD within each context. Therefore, this research explores CE through the observation of process of engagement between community, service providers, and policymakers to reveal the motivation and barriers for interaction and the impacts of that.

In this paper, the research is going to explore the process of CE in PSD in the UK through two case studies. The qualitative coding of data in two case studies revealed important findings on the process of CE in PSD. Finally, some recommendations to Vietnam are presented.

2. Literature review

2.1 Public services and the third sector

Humphrey (1998) defines public services as ones that are funded by taxation and mainly include the following areas of public management: central and local government, the health authorities, education, defence, justice/ home affairs, and non-commercial semi-state organisations. He also demonstrates how public services do not need to be delivered by just the government, but that other sectors (private and third) can engage in PSD, albeit still funded from taxation and administrated by central/ local government (Flynn, 2002). Public services are different from private ones in terms of profitability, as they are normally non-profit and non-commercial (Humphrey, 1998). These features distinguish them from the private services provided by the private sector as they have to create profit to distribute to shareholders.

In terms of the relationship with customers, O'Shea (1992) describes that between the customer and state as one of indirect payments, compared to the direct payment relationships between customers and the market. The interaction between customers and the state is not a payment process, but one that is driven through taxation and redistribution. In

other words, it is a transfer from taxation to redistributed money through public services in order to meet the demands of citizens that otherwise would not be met by the market. This relationship is, however, often not one that is characterised by the community (i.e. the customer) as being overtly engaged in the design and delivery of services. Indeed, it could be argued that in traditional models of PSD the market is one that is supply-side driven, as opposed to one in which suppliers meet demand-led requirements. This is an area where PSD centred on CE can offer additional value (which will be discussed in the next section). Therefore, this paper focuses on public services which are supposed to be delivered by the government but now are transferred to and/ or in collaboration with the community. In this paper, two kinds of public services discussed are public library and services supporting domestic violence victims. The details of cases will be explained in the next section.

With the focus of this paper on the involvement of community in public service delivery, the third sector organisations are the focused public service provider to discuss. TSOs refer to organisations that belong neither to the private sector nor to the public. These organisational forms are normally voluntary/ charitable entities (both trading and non-trading) and social enterprises (including social firms, social businesses, community enterprises, mutual societies, and fair trade companies) (Pearce, 2003). In this paper, the two organisations are a social enterprise led by community (Case 1) and a charitable organisation (Case 2). As public services are different from commercial ones (as demonstrated earlier), the key issue when externalising public services is the selection of service providers, who do not ignore the features of public services as a non-profitable, fair, and equal set of values (Torres and Pina, 2002). In the third system of the economy, social interaction between a variety of actors is the norm in defining the third sector (Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005). Many scholars argue that factors of production (economic capital, human capital) cannot adequately explain contemporary society's undesirable outcomes, such as income inequality and unemployment, and that social and cultural capital, which refers to norms, values and networks, as in Putnam's definition (1993), should also be taken into account. TSOs are said to have a hybrid nature that neutralises the behavioural tensions between the state, the market, and the community (Defourny and Nyssens, 2006). These behavioural tensions are those of market orientation and profit distribution between the state and private sectors; the tension between public and private value that the state and private sectors pursue; and the tension between the formal organisation of the state and informal family, personal and social networks. Therefore, this paper examines the collaboration and engagement between TSOs as service providers and their service users (community) and the authority to deliver better public services.

2.2. New public government

The transformation toward more entrepreneurial government with increasing public-private partnerships has been termed New Public Management (NPM). This new theory of public management was first introduced in the UK by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during the 1980s and later became the dominant reform strategy across OECD countries (OECD 2004; Pollitt and Bouckeart, 2004). A core feature of NPM is the introduction of entrepreneurial government. The 1980s and early 1990s saw a focus on more customer-based and entrepreneurial government (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). This transformation is defined and synthesised by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) in Table 1.

Table 1 - Transformative aspects of entrepreneurial government

Transformation	Traditional government	Transformative government
Community owned	Serving people	Empowering people by placing control into the community; greater voice of the private sector; more transparency in assessing government activities
Competitive	Monopoly in delivering public services	Involving other sectors in PSD
Result-oriented	Focus on inputs (budget)	Focus on outcomes
Mission-driven	Driven by rules and regulations	Driven by mission
Customer-driven	Bureaucratic and monopolistic	Treating clients as customers and giving them choices
Anticipatory	Offering solutions to problems	Offering prevention for problems
Entrepreneurial	Spending	Earning
Decentralised	Centralised power and management	Decentralised authority; embracing participatory management
Market-oriented	Bureaucratic mechanism	Market mechanism
Catalytic	Rowing (doing everything directly and on their own)	Steering (catalysing all sectors – public, private and third – to solve community problems)

Source: Summarised from Osborne and Gaebler (1992)

There are three features of this dimension that distinguish a transformative government from a traditional one, namely an interactive relationship with people (empowering, partnering, and involving people in public service provision), an innovative approach to public service provision (diversifying resource mobilisation through decentralisation and market mechanisms, and offering prevention instead of solutions), and outcome-oriented governments which assess efficiency on outcomes, not budget allocation (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Therefore, transformative government is more active than the passive traditional government model. The state, by contracting or outsourcing, pays other providers to supply public services to citizens (Le Grand, 2011). Possible alternative external providers could be (other) local government bodies, (other) provincial/ national government bodies, private firms, voluntary agencies, volunteers, clients, and regulators (Alford and O'Flynn, 2012).

2.3. Public service reform in the UK

In the UK, under Thatcher's Conservative government, the market-base reform implemented in PSD were through large-scale privatisation and decentralisation, which resulted in an overall contraction in the role of the state in PSD (Hula, 1993). Since 1997, the New Labour government applied the "best value" criterion in the performance framework for PSD, and the 'Third Way' policy was first introduced. Many authors have described the Third Way policy as the blending of Thatcher's neoliberalism with new forms of moderate government in order to correct the negative impact of free market policy on the poor (Haugh and Kitson, 2007; Kitson and Wilkinson, 2007). Competition was emphasised as an important feature of the public sector in this period, with the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) in some sectors, such as health and local government (Entwistle and

Martin, 2005). The Third Way policy shows a commitment to providing public services for all, promoting fairness and flexibility through the introduction of choices and voices.

In the UK, the focus on users' needs and collaboration with service providers has been coupled with a focus on using Third sector organisations (TSOs) in public service provision. The Voluntary Sector Compact launched in November 1998 aimed to boost the involvement of the social economy in delivering public services (Osborne and McLaughlin, 2004). A subsequent range of policies/legislation enabling the development of the social economy was introduced, such as the Localism Act 2011 (UK Parliament, 2011), the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (UK Parliament, 2012) and the creation of Public Service Mutuals (spin-outs), which gave powers to local authorities in designing services and encouraged the third sector to participate in PSD (Hazenberg and Hall, 2016). Along with the increasing power of local governments, communities were given more opportunity to investigate and assess how services were being delivered by their government. The relationship between the state and TSOs is structurally interdependent, as TSOs receive significant support from the state, whilst the state can refrain from direct action in certain areas by providing funding. The engagement and interdependent relationship between the state and community in providing social welfare and services in the UK, therefore, is rooted in a long history of liberal government and the development of TSOs in the country.

2.4. Community engagement in public service delivery

2.4.1. Definition of community engagement

Community engagement (CE) refers to a process that involves people in economic, social, cultural and political actions that directly affect their lives (UNDP, 1993). More specifically, it is a process of collaborating with groups of people who share geographic proximity and interest in addressing issues in relation to their well-being (CDC, 1997). The community can be based on mutual interest (for example, a community of the disabled, or one of young offenders); geographic location (for example, a local or neighbourhood community); or governance and engagement (McCabe *et al*., 2006). In this paper, the community refers to the residents who live in the area where public services are provided. They could be public service users (such as library users or domestic violence victims like two cases in this paper) and non-service users but participating in providing the services (such as volunteers, neighbours). The engagement of the community in public activities is demonstrated in a ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969), as shown in Figure 1.

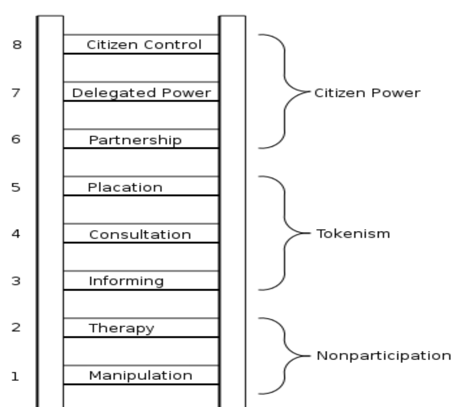

Figure 1 - Ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969)

The levels of involvement increase from the passive involvement of the community (being informed and consulted) to playing an active role (working directly, partnerships, decision-

making). In relation to PSD, the engagement of the community is an important aspect of the public service innovation process, as it plays a key role in suggesting new improvements and discovering and identifying issues (Nambisan and Nambisan, 2013; Merickova *et al*., 2016). Engagement between the community and public organisations in PSD can take three main forms: *citizens as co-implementers* (the community performs a public service task that used to be performed by public organisations); *citizens as co-designers* (the community is closely involved in how public services are designed and implemented); and *citizens as initiators* (the community takes the initiative for public services and the government is invited to join) (Voorberg *et al*., 2015).

In PSD, CE can also be conducted through intermediaries such as service deliverers, including the private and third sectors. While not all service providers can deliver CE, TSOs who focus on marginalised people can provide social legitimacy and social innovation. This is because they are socially embedded within the community; they are better positioned to understand local issues than the local authority (Di Domenico *et al*., 2009a). Therefore, policies promoting CE in PSD must support service providers in engaging, empowering and enabling community action/collaboration (Joshi, 2008). This also implies an interactive relationship between policy groups in the policy framework.

2.4.2. The effect of community engagement

Community or civic engagement has been regarded as an important element of sustainable development. It is argued that CE contributes to social capital development (Bovaird *et al*., 2016). Through participation, people can exchange interests, opinions, capabilities and demands, which lead to a process of mutual understanding and collective action. Through collective co-production, CE is argued to create more social value-adding outputs to society, through the exchange of individual values in a community, the linkages of the monetised economy, and civic society (Figure 2).

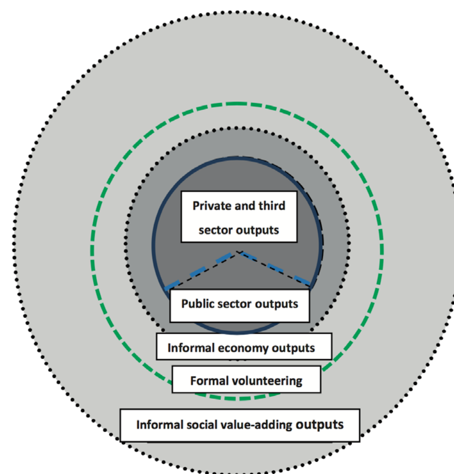

Figure 2 - Economic and social value adding outputs in society (Bovaird *et al*., 2016)

CE is also believed to strengthen social cohesion (Amin *et al*., 1999). Amin *et al*. (1999) argues that it is not the simple act of participation that leads to social cohesion, but the way participation is conducted, where equality is ensured, transparency and accountability are guaranteed, and inter-group cooperation is required. In PSD, CE must be conducted at multiple levels so as to ensure that accountability, interaction and social intervention are present where needed (as shown in Figure 2). By increasing the choices and voices of CE, public officials and service providers are able to be more accountable to consumers and responsive to their needs. Community participation will, therefore, reduce levels of corruption, increase democracy for citizens, and empower local voices (McGee and Gaventa, 2010).

3. Methodology

3.1. Overall methodological approach

The current research use a case-study approach to explore how CE is implemented in PSD in the UK. In each case-study, the qualitative methods used were semi-structured interviews held with managers of both TSOs and the government, and focus groups held with the community (i.e. the service-users of all the cases), in order to assess different perspectives, implementations and outcomes toward CE activities delivered. The findings made reference to the literature in order to make adjustments to the proposed model and ensure that the findings were empirically and theoretically grounded.

A purposive sampling method was adopted. Each case-study was a public service, delivered through engagement and connection with service providers, government and the community, and possibly also alongside professional service providers. The research involved a total of 25 participants with three stakeholders as detailed in Table 2 hereafter.

Table 2: Number of participants

Number of participants	Service providers	Policymakers		Service users
		Commune/ village level	Provincial/ county level	
Case 1	3	2	1	9
Case 2	2	0	1	7

3.2. Case-studies

Case 1 – Community libraries in the UK

The two social enterprises in Case 1 are community-led libraries that are entirely run by volunteers and registered as social enterprises. Following the decision of the county council in 2011 that they could no longer afford community library services, public consultations were held to decide the future of library services. In both areas where the two CLs are located, people decided to keep the libraries and a small group of volunteers took charge of running the library services. Therefore, both libraries in their current form were founded in 2012. Both libraries run regular library services with book exchanges, and are restocked from the county council's central library services. In addition, they both have income generation activities from their photocopy machines, and also hold some events through which they raise revenue by charging small fees. However, most of their income is still sourced from grants received from the county council, their respective parish councils, and other donor organisations. Both libraries in Case 1 demonstrate CE through their community events, their local knowledge and networks, as well as their networks of local volunteers. Case 1 shows a model of community empowerment in PSD where community designs and decide the public services they want with the support from the government.

Case 2 – A domestic violence support service provider in the UK

Case 2 is a charitable organisation working in the field of domestic violence support services. It has been running a refuge house for over 35 years with mission of helping women and families suffering from domestic violence. They undertake a range of activities, from raising awareness of domestic violence, running a women's and family's

refuge house, to training professionals. It is an independent organisation, with funding from a variety of sources, in which the funds provided by the central government and the county council play a significant role. It is important to investigate how the organisation works with the government and how it obtains support from it. Case 2's programmes focus on community demand, and its 'service users' forum that aims to gain feedback from its beneficiaries. This case shows a model of outsourcing public services to TSOs in which the government funded Case 2 to support DV victims. However due to austerity, the fund from the government is reducing and therefore, Case 2 and the government need to find alternative models to deliver better services to the community.

3.3. Data analysis

The current research employed 'coding' and the Constant Comparative Method (CCM), as the main tools to analyse the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Data collection stops when a point of saturation is reached and when no new information is emerging (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This process of coding was followed by the CCM to adjust the categories and concepts of the cases (Lincoln and Guba, 1991). After comparing incidents, the researcher compared them with the property of the categories resulting from the initial comparison. Finally, modification was made to remove irrelevant properties so that the theory could be formed with a smaller set of concepts.

3.4. Ethical consideration

As this research is a part of the researcher's PhD degree, the research plan, proposed methods and ethical protocol were approved by the University of Northampton's Committee where the researcher conducted her PhD degree before she conducted the fieldwork. Therefore, the researcher had to ensure participants' and organisations' anonymities were protected throughout the study, from data collection, analysis and writing up, to the dissemination of the research. This was done by including a reference number on the consent form and replacing participants' and organisations' names. All the data were stored on the researcher's computer and another backup portable hard drive, with password protected files for both. All the data collected were subject to the Data Protection Act (UK Parliament, 1998) and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). The researcher also followed the University of Northampton's Code of Practice for Research Ethics to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the research.

4. Discussion and Findings

The analysis of both cases revealed three major themes, namely: Capability, Engagement, Impacts. The findings from the analysis of the two cases revealed that both had some CE activities delivered through similar forms of engagement. However, the actual level of interaction between the service providers and community, and the impact of the engagement in both cases, were different. Furthermore, it is crucial to discuss the capability of the stakeholders involved in the engagement process.

4.1. Engagement requires two-way communication and collaboration

In the theme 'engagement', in both cases, the common CE forms were 'communication' and 'collaboration'. Regarding 'communication', both cases show the main forms of communication to be 'informing' and 'consultation'. The category 'communication' describes forms of communication between

service providers, policymakers and the community. Different ways of 'informing' the community emerged, such as publicity, community events, social media, and awareness-raising campaigns. Publicity was disseminated through leaflets, websites and telephone hotlines (promoted by the councils, the police and other organisations). Although these were considered by the organisations as the best means available to them given their resource constraints, both service providers and service users contended that they were not always effective. Although Case 2 made significant efforts to approach the community, the victims reported that they did not know about the organisation until they were referred by other organisations or their social workers.

Case 1:

"Well, it would be better to have more events here, because if you have an event about something [...] so they come here because of a lecture or a performance or a meeting for a particular group. I think that's one way through, but the other way is leaflets, for example, giving leaflets to real estate agents so they can put them into everybody's hands [...] so it could be a parish council's welcome package to tell them what is going on."

"There are one or two local free magazines, and they tend to put things like local events in free of charge, but sometimes people look at the interesting events in the magazine and it goes in the bin, so it's a tricky angle."

Case 2:

"We communicate with them in all of those ways. Since I came to the post in 2014, we have made it sound much more accessible I think in terms of the website, Facebook, Twitter, all those sorts of things as well. We even have Instagram posts."

"We've been to the volunteer fair at universities, so a lot of students hear that way. Wherever we go and talk to raise awareness of the issue of domestic abuse and our service, we then often have a trail of volunteers who come in and say "can I help?"

The information was not always easy to access as most of the people were either disinterested and/or limited in their ability to access the materials and they tended to not have a strong bond with their community. Many of the residents are always on travel and do not communicate often with their neighbours.

Case 1:

"I suspect there are an awful lot of people that have nothing to do with what happens in the community because it's a dormitory community to a certain extent. People are going out to work early in the morning and come home late at night and are unaware of a lot of activities. So, I think this area is very dependent on some very active, mostly retired, people I would say."

This suggests that the attention to information comes not only from personal interest, but also from social networks through which people share their mutual interests. Indeed, a person's valuation is influenced by that of others (Schumpeter, 1909), and not solely in the economic sphere. Therefore, social interactions and bonds are very important in shaping people's values and perceptions. Without a strong sense of community and local networks, the community in both cases in the UK were potentially unaware of the social problems in the community in which they live. The volunteers in both cases were people who stood up during public consultations and had more local connections, so a better sense of community, which was built up through social interaction (Emerson, 2003). Therefore, these people tended to respond better to the

information, even though it was given to everybody.

In term of accessibility, the participants reported that one of the barriers to engagement in the services was the lack of available space for the community to held activities and events. In addition, it is very important that accessibility to information is easy, such as leaflets in General Practices (GPs) or women's toilet doors. Furthermore, the online information and social media services provided helped the services become more accessible, thereby promoting CE. Therefore, engagement depends upon the accessibility of the community to the information and services where available.

Case 2:

"I think there's always room for more. There's a wonderful campaign putting our numbers on the back of women's toilet doors, which is fantastic. Because that's the place you go on your own and you're allowed to go on your own. If you are being controlled and you can see the numbers, and you could choose what you would do with them because you know whether it's safe to write them down or put them on your phone."

'Communication' between the service providers and the local authority was also crucial. The two libraries received significant support from the parish council and county council on advice and training. The county council library staff kept regular communication with the library directors to support them with their needs, and there was a helpline so that the libraries and their volunteers could seek help related to issues they were concerned about. The council also kept track of what was going on in the libraries through annual reports, in which they confirmed whether the library was doing well. Such regular communication is essential for these community-led libraries, as it provides support for problems that they feel they cannot solve. It also demonstrates a good relationship between the service providers and policymakers.

Case 1:

"There is a budget, so you can compare. And we [the county council library] have to make sure we understand their [Case 1] financial issue. If they have anything like problems and they have to close for days and something like that, they send their schedule to us."

"Yes, and building a very good relationship. I like what we have. I [The county council library's officer] always hug them [Case 1's managers] when I see them. They like to tell me everything they are doing, and they also pull in people that have got skills sometimes. They are independent, and we think the main problem would be the managers making sure we have enough people to staff them, also handling difficult volunteers."

However, the communication in both cases in the UK was not only one-way, but was also two-way through 'consultation'. This 'consultation' was conducted between service providers and their users through feedback forms or surveys, and between the local government and their community through public consultations and meetings. The consultation with the service users and the community showed a higher level of engagement, which empowered the community better, as it was given the chance to engage in instrumental-rational social action, which aims to do things in the most efficient way (Weber, 1978). The service users in both cases indicated that they were happy with the engagement meetings, where they could discuss ongoing issues with the service providers.

Case 1:

"So it's open when we have the parish council meeting, and this is where we are spending the money when we have the budget [...] So by engaging with people and what they said in the meeting, you get what's important and whether we're prepared to pay the money for it."

"We conduct surveys from time to time, every couple of years. But we find that people are very pleased with the service they received."

"The other thing is we have our volunteer meeting every three weeks, so they actually know what's happening."

Case 2:

"In terms of CE, we've got our own communication team within the police and also our office, the PCC. We've got an organisation that we created called [Organisation name]."

"Yeah, I think it does, I think it's important, but then we have the feedback form that we have to fill in every after a session."

However, when the consultation was taken to the wider (public) level by the local authority, the participants reported that the community was often more neglected and only attracted attention as a result of negative issues.

Case 1:

"It's a terrible thing that people tend to engage more when it's a negative. If you want people to come to a parish council meeting, you have to have something controversial. If you don't have something controversial, people don't tend to come."

Community consultation was undertaken to capture the range of opinions of the community, not just individual thoughts, and so this is perhaps to some degree inevitable (Spicker, 2006). Although the community's opinions had influence, the organisation or local authority still retained the decision-making power (Bishop and Davis, 2002). This may explain why at a wider public level, the consultation did not always guarantee engagement, as the community was not a homogenous whole, but rather a collection of smaller communities, all from different backgrounds and with different opinions, needs and cultures. In contrast, on a smaller scale, at which they had a closer relationship with and better understanding of the organisation, community consultation was often more effective, as it engaged with a more homogenous group, specifically focused on the aims of the organisation in question. This suggests that it is not the act of consultation that leads to engagement, but that this is mediated by the strength and quality of relationships between service providers and users.

In both cases, especially Case 2, engagement was also implemented through the "collaboration" between community and service providers, and between service providers and local authority. Regarding the collaboration between the community and the service providers, the service provider in Case 1 created many groups and social events to engage and work with the community in their activities. The library also collaborates with local schools or supermarket to held activities or raise fund so that it can spread its impact to the community. The collaboration, in this case, was achieved through a shared vision to maintain a social asset (reading culture) to adapt to the new changed conditions (funding cuts) (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). These forms of collaboration were essential to library operation, as by partnering with various stakeholders, the library could take advantage of different resources, get closer to the community, and enrich their service quality. Case 2 engaged their community through the 'involvement' of their users in

different activities, such as participating in research, creating a service users' forum, involving them in housing tasks, and trying to create more activities to enhance their social interactions. By being involved in groups such as the service users' forum, the community not only had the chance to co-design services, but it was also presented with opportunities to socialise with other people, which is important for social inclusion. Case 2 also tried to engage the service users by involving them in research on projects. These activities were good chances for them to communicate with different stakeholders, giving them a sense of social life and enhancing their self-esteem. They were in effect co-researchers and Case 2 was engaging in co-production.

Case 1:

"We do have regular activities with the local supermarket [by donated token]. That gives us a little extra, but we are looking at the other ways of making money, that's why we have "the knit and natter" group, which brings in income. We also have the events, you know, a little bit of income. But primarily, we're not there to make money, we are here to be sustainable and continue to offer the services."

"I think there is some linking going on with the primary school. We've got the little ones coming in to use the library more, so the children can understand what's available."

Case 2:

"You've got like a meeting once a month here, and you are like "what's going on, is there any improvement that can be made, how is everything; there's always opportunity within this, you know?"

"They're also heavily involved in any research if you know one of our programmes is being evaluated by [University name], and they will be involved in a focus group or something like that."

Engagement in such activities can create informal social networks, which are not necessarily based on the neighbourhood, and can promote individualised forms of engagement (Fischer, 1982; Warde *et al*., 2005). Although community involvement in Case 1 was able to enhance social interactions, Case 1 did not empower the service users to be a part of the decision-making process. One of the directors of Case 1 also contended that the 'friends' scheme' which encourage service users to donate and subscribe to the library service to be a part of the library did not work, because people did not earn the right to vote as they thought they would. This suggests that involvement can only be effective if it can provoke people's voices and power in the decision-making process, which makes it different from mere 'consultation' (Bishop and Davis, 2002). Community involvement in both cases showed that two-way communication can increase trust among stakeholders and empower the community (Grunig and Huang, 2000).

The 'collaboration' between the service providers and the local authority was also a result of community 'involvement'. The county council in Case 2 empowered the community to start the services, involving them in the county council library systems with a range of activities, and collaborating with them to deliver the services. The county council and the Police Crime and Comissioner (PCC) had contracted out the services to certain service providers to provide domestic violence support services. They were aware that they could not do it alone and that these external organisations could do better in terms of CE. Case 2 also worked with other organisations in the field to provide more comprehensive support through supporting agencies that linked organisations together and to the government. These agencies also

connected the community with the service providers, such as referring volunteers to the organisation. In Case 1, although the libraries were run by the community, the county council still included them in the public library system and provided them with training, book rotation, and held community events through the councils, such as summer reading challenges. Furthermore, the county council contracted out their support services to community development agencies so that the community libraries could seek help regarding volunteers, funds and training from these organisations.

Case 1:

"The council was very keen to keep the library supported and make sure, unlike some other authorities, the community management library is a part of our team so they have the same level of stocks as they had previously. They get new stocks delivered to them, there are not any different to any of these."

"They [the community libraries] could ring us [the county council library] and if they've got any problem with the library management system, a customer's question, stocks gap, probably all of those. I [the county council library's officer] did the training sessions for the library management system and we have webpages for information. And then some of them [the community libraries] need a second training session."

Case 2:

"Absolutely, it needs to be a partnership between all stakeholders, and again, it's what we are trying to have here. We know who our stakeholders are, we work really hard to communicate with them. And I have personally written to the government and have had questions asked in parliament when we haven't had funding in the past, but we need that partnership to extend to include both local government and national government."

4.2. Capability facilitates the engagement

The 'capability' theme is an important means of enabling engagement, as it is a primary source of development (Sen, 1988). CE can be achieved through a strategy that develops community knowledge, skills, values and motivations (Littlejohn, 1999). In the two UK cases, the capability of all the stakeholders was expressed through their 'awareness' and 'qualifications'. First, regarding the capability of the community, in both cases it lacked the knowledge and information that was required to have an appropriate understanding of the services. While the community in Case 1 still possessed an idealised vision of an old-fashioned library, the users in Case 2 had little knowledge of how the refuge house operated. The capability of the community was also reported to depend on the background and personal circumstances of the individuals themselves. People who were more active in social activities tended to engage more easily with the services than those who were experiencing social exclusion. Case 1 also revealed that social class also affects people's ability/willingness to engage. People from the middle class and living in a wealthy area (such as the volunteers in Case 1) tended to be more involved in public issues than those who were vulnerable and less educated (such as the victims in Case 2). In Case 2, the community was not aware of their need to engage and/or how to engage. Furthermore, there were incorrect perceptions of what the services did in the community, which discouraged engagement. For example, before entering the refuge house, the victims had a vague perception of what the place looked like and what they did, which discouraged them from signing up for the services. Therefore, raising awareness is a crucial capability of

organisations that enhance CE. This also suggests that the contextual conditions of the community can have an impact on their capability to engage.

Case 1:

"I think it is the general social attitudes toward libraries; that a library isn't an essential place. You might go to a leisure centre, which is more cool, trendy and modern."

Case 2:

"I think there is a community or people, women. I need to understand what the word refuge means because when you are out there, the perception of a refuge is different. For me, it used to put me off."

Regarding the capability of the service providers, both cases demonstrated their capability to sustainably run the services, even in times of austerity. Both cases are very active in fundraising. In an environment where the voluntary sector has a long history and is well-developed, funding sources in the UK are more diverse. Many characteristics of service providers were identified, such as 'accountability', 'being active', 'being friendly', 'being business minded', 'creativity', and 'dedication'. The service providers in both libraries were reported to be very friendly compared to the time when the council ran the library. The service providers of the current community libraries were much more dedicated and proactive in their activities and events. Both the organisation and community were familiar with the culture of voluntary and fund-raising activities, which enabled them to join together and collaborate in community events to raise funds. Therefore, capability should be accompanied by the availability of opportunities.

Case 1:

"Well, we exercise our brains, and we talk to people. In 2015, we had a series called 'World Apart' and they were all locally sourced speakers. Basically, it is based on the social network that we have with people here; we tried to draw the resources from people who live here."

Case 2:

"They give a lot of help. If you need an appointment with the council, they will go with you to assist you. They are actually like your back bone."

4.3. Community engagement facilitates social changes

Regarding the theme 'impacts', the enhancement of social bonds and social capital in both cases was critical in driving impact. The service users reported that they experienced a sense of community belonging when engaging in the services and social activities that Case 1 and Case 2 had designed for them. Before that, they were socially isolated because of their age or family situation. Users in Case 1 felt that they were part of the town and it brought people together, which strengthened social bonds. People changed their view of the library as a place just to lend books once they had come and used the services there. The events and meetings at the libraries enhanced social interaction, and thus social cohesion. Furthermore, the participants believed that the libraries would provide an important long-term impact by educating the next generation. The service users in Case 2 reported that they felt much more connected to the community when participating in the activities and programmes provided by the organisation. They also had the chance to build more relationships with other people, which helped them to build their confidence and restore their lives. Therefore, social bonds and social capital among the victims were enhanced.

Case 1:

"I think it is bringing people together, isn't it? Some people go to the library, some people don't. It is different groups in the community that can make a community, isn't it?"

"Well, I think very useful things like the small children when they leave school they first come here, so they grow up knowing we are here. But it is long term, isn't it?"

Case 2:

"There are opportunities they are trying to provide to you that stop you from sitting in your room with your kids all day. They're like social elements, when you have coffee and chat every Friday."

"Building a link when they're ready with another organisation, being able to come out and volunteer, really helps their confidence and self-esteem, also to build a network for themselves."

More importantly, the service users reported positive changes in themselves after using the services. Users in Case 2 felt much more confident and that they had their self-esteem back. They were given the opportunity to open up about their experience and share it with the community through conferences or involvement in research. The victims were equipped with knowledge and skills that helped them to understand the acts of violence against them and their rights. Changing awareness made the victims much more involved in community activities, such as volunteering or sharing experiences with other victims. This suggests that participation was not just the result of the interaction between the community and service providers, but also of the motivation of the community to engage, which lead to a social change. Indeed, the engagement of a community depends on individual interest, trust, knowledge, and a sense of community belonging (Barkan, 1998).

Case 2:

"We also give them the opportunity to speak at conferences, often within a sector where we have a conference, we would want input from service users, and it's generally us that provide that."

"There'll be one group of people in the house, they'll leave but then they will come back to volunteer, and the next group will come in."

"I've done freedom, now doing stay free. I find it really useful; it is very helpful; it does help you build up your self-esteem; it's all about you, looking after yourself."

The final category of the theme 'impacts' is 'impact measurement', which reflects the fact that social impact measurement has not been well implemented by both cases. Although both cases did always record any impacts through feedback from their users in order to prove to sponsors that they were delivering good services, they only employed simple frameworks to measure such impacts. The policymakers also admitted they did not undertake much social impact measurement and thought that this would be good to engage with in the future.

Case 1:

"Measuring the impacts, only if we know how to do that. It is hard to measure the impacts, very hard […] We let them do what they feel they have the capacity to do because they are volunteers. Impacts are so hard to measure. Sometimes they just tell us the differences have been made."

Case 2:

"Going forward, I think it (Social impact measurement) would be a very, very good thing to be able to do. Yes, it has been difficult; we would like to be able to do that. In the past, it hasn't been difficult, going forward we would like to."

4.4. The process of community engagement in the UK cases

From which emerged from the data, Figure 3 outlines this process. Social capital, together with social interaction, social bonds, social networks and mutual understanding, have a great influence on the forms of engagement (which are informing, consultation, involvement and collaboration), and their impacts. Capability, as discussed, is important in transforming social capital into an ability and desire to engage. The social capital created through engagement results in impacts, which eventually create more social bonds and social interactions, and subsequently yet more impact.

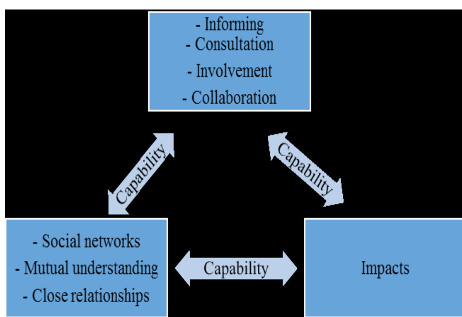

Figure 3 – The process of community engagement in the UK cases

5. Conclusion and implication to Vietnam

The paper suggests that regardless of the forms and levels of engagement, CE should be built on good relationships, mutual understanding and mutual interest. The current research has therefore identified the importance of building social capital in order to improve people's capability to engage. The building of social capital needs to be conducted at many levels and with all stakeholders, between service providers and service users, and between the local authority and the community. This is an area where Vietnam can learn from the UK, and also other counties in the UK can learn from the example provided through Case 1. Therefore, any strategy in CE needs to be embedded into the building of social capital. This could be done through building good relationships with the service providers and the community.

The analysis also suggests that the capability of the community to engage and that of service provider to encourage the community to engage is an important factor to facilitate the engagement. The long history of third sector development and community empowerment through collaboration and partnership in the UK promotes the collaboration and engagement of the third sector and community in PSD. This could be a lesson learnt for Vietnam in terms of providing more training and support for local authorities and public service officials to equip them with the knowledge and skills to engage in genuine partnership or co-production with the community. However, the capability of vulnerable groups in the UK is not effective, which suggests that capacity building needs to be targeted at vulnerable or socially disadvantaged groups (Lelkes, 2013).

Finally, the impacts of engagement were revealed to be improvement in social capital and changes to people's self-esteem, subsequently driving CE itself. This finding is important and especially relevant for policymakers in assessing the impact of public services delivered. The focus of social impact, social value creation and community empowerment in the UK is a good reference for Vietnam, such as the Social Value Act 2012 (UK Parliament, 2012) or the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (UK Parliament, 2015), which empowers commissioners to be innovative and flexible in designing more suitable procurement processes within

different contexts, partnering with social actors, and inviting social value considerations in all relevant procurement. This improvement in the approach to embedded social value policy implementation is what Vietnam can learn from the UK.

There are a number of research limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the relatively small number of cases. The limited resources did not allow the researcher to travel to as many cases as desired, due to the high travel costs. The limited social networks and resources, as well as the limited time scale, were also barriers to the possibility of approaching more policymakers in the UK, especially national ones, given that the researcher is an international student in the UK. Therefore, the researcher tried to recruit as many participants from all three stakeholders as possible to ensure that each group had appropriate representative participants. Thus, this model can be considered to be preliminary one from an exploratory study. By acknowledging the above limitations, the researcher suggests that future research is required. First, employing more cases in both countries would be useful in order to validate and amend the findings of the current research. A larger-scale research project could explore the relationships and engagement between stakeholders in more detail.

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GẮN KẾT CỘNG ĐỒNG TRONG PHÂN PHỐI DỊCH VỤ CÔNG Ở VƯƠNG QUỐC ANH VÀ HÀM Ý CHÍNH SÁCH CHO VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Bài báo phân tích việc thực hiện gắn kết cộng đồng trong phân phối dịch vụ công được thực hiện bởi các tổ chức thuộc khu vực thứ ba (The Third sector organisations) tại Vương quốc Anh. Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu trường hợp điển hình tại hai tổ chức thuộc khu vực thứ ba tham gia phân phối dịch vụ công tại Vương quốc Anh. Bài báo chỉ ra rằng gắn kết cộng đồng là một yếu tố quan trọng trong phân phối dịch vụ công, giúp thúc đẩy sự phát triển của vốn xã hội và gắn kết xã hội. Do đó, việc gắn kết cộng đồng trong phân phối dịch vụ công cần được quan tâm tới thúc đẩy sự tương tác và năng lực của cộng đồng, người cung cấp dịch vụ, và chính quyền. Các kết quả của bài báo được thảo luận trong mối liên hệ với các hàm ý chính sách, đặc biệt là các chính sách thúc đẩy việc tạo ra giá trị xã hội.

Từ khóa: Gắn kết cộng đồng, Phân phối dịch vụ công, Tổ chức thuộc khu vực thứ ba

FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERACTION IN AN ONLINE ENGLISH COURSE IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: This study examines the factors that influenced learners' online interaction in an online English learning course offered at a Vietnamese university using mixed methods approach and principal component analysis. It explores which factors would have impact on learners' interaction with the content, peers and instructors in the course as well as the level of importance for each factor. The findings of the study indicated that factors related to the online course were its content and flexible delivery while those concerning the learners were their internet self-efficacy as well as their perceived usefulness of interaction processes. The factors related to the instructors included timeliness and usefulness of feedback and their online presence. In addition, in Vietnamese context, the cultural factors such as being passive, fear of asking questions to instructors also influenced learners' online interaction.

Keywords: factor, interaction, feedback, usefulness, online presence, Vietnam

1. Introduction

Online learning is becoming increasingly popular with more and more students having access to web-based courses at universities across the globe. In Vietnam, the setting of this study, language learners have few opportunities to practice the language they are taught, especially with native speakers of English. Hence, language teaching institutions have increasingly sought to provide learners with online learning courses with the aim of increasing learner-instructor, learner-learner and learner-content interactions – the three main types of online interaction (Moore, 1989).

Recent advanced technologies have enabled technological and content language experts to make the most use of computer assisted language learning (CALL), web-based learning (WBL) and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) to offer language courses. In Vietnam, a few online learning courses have utilized updated technologies to teach the English language online, especially for speaking skills. For example, Augmented Reality is used as a platform to teach speaking by TOPICA NATIVE (https://topicanative.edu.vn/). Artificial intelligence technology is also exploited in a mobile application to teach speaking through short, fun dialogues (https://elsaspeak.com/).

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, studies about online language learning in Vietnam are still limited. Therefore, this study makes some contributions to research on influencing factors in an online language learning environment implemented in a developing country where technological conditions and online teaching pedagogy are yet as advanced as in the developed countries. This specific paper presents an updated part of a larger doctoral research project by the same author about learner interaction in an online language learning course (Pham, 2015).

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2. Literature Review

Review of the literature in online learning has revealed that there are many factors that influence learners' interaction with the course content, peers and instructors (Yukselturk, 2010; Zaili, Moi, Yusof, Hanfi & Suhaimi, 2019). These factors are divided into different criteria or elements such as satisfaction and attitude of learners and instructors about online learning, Internet speed, ease of use, course content and delivery. The following sections present an overview of the influencing factors that are related to learner, instructor and online course.

Learner-related factors: Learners have always been the key subject of studies about influencing factors of online interaction. For example, researchers have been studying the impact of learner prior internet experience on their online learning outcomes or satisfaction (Kim, Kwon & Cho, 2011; Yukselturk, 2010). The results of these studies have been inconclusive. While some researchers (Chang, Liu, Sung, Lin, Chen & Cheng, 2013; Chen, 2014) claimed that learners' technical prior experience or computer/internet self-efficacy was significantly associated with course satisfaction and confidence, studies by Kuo, Walker, Belland and Schroder (2013) have suggested that computer and internet self-efficacy was not a significant predictor of learners' satisfaction or perceived usefulness of an online course. Other learner-related factors were learners' availability of time, their self-regulated learning, feedback and online presence from peers and instructors (Kuo et al., 2013; Chen, 2014; Mekheimer, 2017, Pham, 2019).

Instructor-related factors: Instructors also have critical influence on the success of an online course. Their understanding about, commitment to, active participation in and attitudes about online learning are some of the key factors (Cho & Tobias, 2016; Palloff & Pratt, 2011). Other factors include their shift in pedagogy (from traditional to online teaching), timely response and individual, group feedback to learners' queries, learner engagement (Cox, Black, Heney Keith, 2015; Cho & Tobias, 2016; Gómez-Rey, Barbera & Fernández-Navarro, 2017). Successful online instructors should connect their learners together, especially with native speakers or excellent speakers of the language they are studying so as to increase learners' motivation (Wu, Yen & Marek, 2011). However, online instructors often find it difficult to keep up with the pace of the discussion forums, especially in a large class (de Lima, Gerosa & Conte, 2019).

Course-related factors: The third important set of factors that influences online interaction is related to the online course itself. These factors include such elements as course content, design and technology or course quality as a whole. Studies have shown that there was an association between learners' interaction with the course content and their learning outcomes and grades (Murray, Pérez, Geist, Hedrick & Steinbach, 2012; Pham, 2018; Zimmerman, 2012). In this regard, Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen & Yeh (2008) claimed that course quality "is the most important concern in this e-learning environment" (p. 1196). In order to have a quality online course, it is important for computer experts and content teachers to work collaboratively so as the course is well designed technologically, academically and flexibly to ensure learners' and instructors' satisfactions (Chen & Yao, 2016; Kuo, Walker, Schroder & Belland, 2014). Similarly, a study by Kuo et al. (2013) has suggested that "the design of online content may be the most important contributor to learner satisfaction" (p. 30). Chen and Yao (2016), however, viewed that design is the second most important factor.

The above review of literature reveals that there are many factors that may promote or hinder learners' online interaction. Therefore, in this study, the researcher attempted to use mixed methods approach and principal component analysis to explore which factors

would have impact on learners' interaction with the content, peers and instructors in an online English language course as well as the level of importance for each factor.

3. Methodology

The participants

The participants of the study were first-year students who used the online course as part of a four-year study in a Bachelor of Arts degree specialising in interpreting and translation. In the first two years of this degree, they focus on English language practice, both in traditional face-to-face lessons and online study. At the beginning of their first academic year, every learner was provided with an account to access the online course together with a hands-on orientation session. They were required to complete 80% of interaction with the content of assigned levels by the end of each semester. Failure to do so meant that they were not allowed to sit for the end-of-semester tests. Two hundred and seven students voluntarily took part in the survey, ten in the semi-structured interviews and nine in the focus group discussions respectively.

The instructor participants were the lecturers of the university where the online course was delivered. They taught learners in the traditional face-to-face lessons and were also assigned to supervise online study. The instructors' online duties included assigning the learners with homework, answering their queries, and reminding learners of the online study. They were also requested to write monthly reports to course managers about online learning situation of the groups they were supervising. Twelve instructors took part in semi-structured interviews and six participated in focus group discussion.

The online course

At the time the research project was conducted, the online English course (called English Discoveries Online) was a commercially available online language learning platform. Its main content was divided into three levels of language learning: basic, intermediate and advanced, which provided the learners with learning materials and interactive practice in reading, listening, speaking and grammar. At each level there were eight units covering different topics such as family life, sports and business. The learners received instant and automated feedback from the course Learning Management System (LMS) about the correctness of their answers. There were five forums for interpersonal interactions: one for learner-instructor (Support) and four for learner-learner (Class Discussion, Community Discussion, You!Who? and Webpal). The Community Discussion Forum was designed for all the users who had access to the course. The topics in this forum were created and moderated by the course developers. There were eight general discussion topics in this forum. Each topic had a lead-in statement which invited opinions from the course users. For example, the topic *'Getting To Know You'* had the following lead-in statement:

> This is the place to write all about yourself: the country you come from, your interests, your family, etc. Read about others and what their lives are like (sic).

The learners took part in the discussions by selecting the topic(s) of their interest and created a new message or commented on a pre-created post.

Research design

A sequential explanatory mixed methods design (Creswell, 2009) was used for data collection and analysis. Data about factors that influenced interaction were obtained through a survey questionnaire, online messages, and then focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The study is guided by Moore's (1989) model of online interaction to answer the following research question: Which factors influence learners'

interactions in an online English language learning course?

Instruments and data analysis

A questionnaire consisting of 21 Likert-type scale questions was administered to 207 learners of the English Department who were present during face-to-face lessons. Prior to its administration to the target population of the study, the questionnaire was emailed to five instructors who had experience with the online course for feedback and to obtain their professional comments to ascertain validity and clarity of the instrument. This resulted in the deletion of a few items in the questionnaire to make it more focused.

The questionnaire was then given to 41 learners who also used the online course as part of their curriculum but studied in a different English department of the same university. This was aimed to enable the researcher to decide if the items included in the questionnaire would produce data from which meaningful conclusions could be drawn to answer the research questions. It also aimed to make sure that the data could be processed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20, with meaningful results. In addition, it double-checked the level of clarity with learners, whose English was apparently at a lower level than the instructors. The participants involved in the pilot testing were not included in the final administration of the survey and data analysis. Although the sample of the pilot study was small, a test of reliability showed an acceptable internal consistency among test items with the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.76. The researcher also extracted asynchronous messages of these participants in the discussion forums for triangulation purposes where appropriate.

Once preliminary analyses of the quantitative data were completed, two separate focus group discussions were organized with the participation of nine learners. The focus group discussions aimed to confirm and develop some of the results emerged in the analyses of survey questionnaire and online messages. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in parallel with the aforementioned focus group discussions. There was a constant comparison and contrasting of both numeric and text data to explore empirical evidence to answer the research questions. The survey questionnaire was in English but the focus group discussions and interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to enable the participants to easily express their opinions.

The quantitative data from the survey were analysed using simple descriptive statistics (Byrne, 2002) while qualitative data were processed using content analysis (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). A triangulation technique (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) was also adopted in the analysis of data in which the results of analysing quantitative data were supported and/or explained by findings from analysing qualitative data of the focus group discussions and interviews.

4. Results

The following sections present the results and discussion for the part about influencing factors of online interaction in the aforementioned doctoral research project.

4.1. Analysis of quantitative data

a. Descriptive analysis

Table 1 shows the results of the learners' response to the survey question about the factors that influenced their online interactions with the course content, peers and instructors. The survey question was: *How important is each of the following factors in facilitating your online interactions in the course?* Due to low count in some cells, responses were collapsed into three categories. The original variables were *extremely important, very important, important, not important* and *no opinion*.

Table 1. Factors influencing interaction

Factors	Important (%)	No opinion (%)	Not important (%)
Ability to communicate in English	94.6	0.5	4.9
Content of the online course	81.9	2.0	16.1
Learners' availability of time	76.9	6.4	16.7
Sense of belonging to a virtual group	45.4	18.7	35.9
Linkage between interaction and learning goals	74.3	8.0	17.7
Interaction preferences: face-to-face vs. online	57.2	11.4	31.4
Technical support	80.7	5.9	13.4
Regulations about online interaction	47.0	12.5	40.5
Level of confidence in using the Internet	49.6	6.4	41.0
Typing skills	41.7	9.2	49.1
User-friendliness of the communication tools	52.0	15.0	31.0
Cost of the online course	67.7	7.8	24.5
Internet speed	79.8	5.4	14.8
Regularity of online presence by instructors	71.2	10.7	18.1
Usefulness of feedback from instructors	86.8	3.4	9.8
Timeliness of feedback from instructors	68.5	9.4	22.1
Joy of interaction with the instructors	63	13.3	23.7
Regularity of online presence by peers	46.9	13.8	39.3
Usefulness of feedback from peers	62.6	11.3	26.1
Timeliness of feedback from peers	47.0	14.8	38.2
Joy of interaction with peers	63.2	11.8	25.0

The results show that the major factors influencing interaction in this course were related to **learners, instructors, technology** and **course content**. These factors were classified into two categories: having influence and not having influence on the interaction process. The influencing factors are those that have important values accounting for 60% and above of the total respondents. Although this is not a clean procedure for cutting up the threshold, as a working device, it might work in differentiating the factors (Byrne, 2002).

b. Principal component analysis

In order to investigate further the relative importance of each factor, a principal component analysis (PCA) using SPSS was conducted. The 21 items that facilitated the learners' interaction processes were subjected to this analysis. Initial analysis results showed that three items (1, 8, 17) had low loadings (e.g. under 0.3) suggesting that these components be removed from the analysis. Examination of communalities values also showed that six items (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) had low values (e.g. less than 0.3) indicating that these items did not fit well with other items in its component. Altogether it was decided that seven items (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 17) be removed from analysis.

Prior to performing the PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of 0.03 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was 0.71, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974) and the Bartlet's Test of Sphericity indicated statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Principal components analysis revealed the presence of seven components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 19.9%, 8.1%, 7.3%, 6.7%, 5.4%, 5.2%, and 4.8% of variance respectively as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Principal component analysis – total variance

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings[a]
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of variance	Cumulative%	Total
1	4.170	19.859	19.859	4.170	19.859	19.859	2.914
2	1.711	8.147	28.006	1.711	8.147	28.006	2.218
3	1.535	7.309	35.315	1.535	7.309	35.315	1.846
4	1.407	6.700	42.015	1.407	6.700	42.015	2.398
5	1.141	5.432	47.446	1.141	5.432	47.446	1.630
6	1.098	5.227	52.673	1.098	5.227	52.673	1.242
7	1.013	4.823	57.496	1.013	4.823	57.496	1.781
8	.969	4.616	62.112				
9	.911	4.336	66.448				
10	.868	4.133	70.581				
11	.845	4.024	74.605				
12	.829	3.949	78.553				
13	.714	3.398	81.952				
14	.687	3.269	85.221				
15	.636	3.028	88.249				
16	.555	2.645	90.894				
17	.518	2.466	93.360				
18	.452	2.150	95.510				
19	.404	1.923	97.433				
20	.292	1.389	98.823				
21	.247	1.177	100.000				

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Before accepting the factors, additional criteria were used such as Scree plot and parallel analysis. The Scree plot is a graph of eigenvalues. It is recommended to retain components lying to the left of the elbow which is a break from linearity. An inspection of the Scree plot (Figure 1) revealed a clear break after the fourth component.

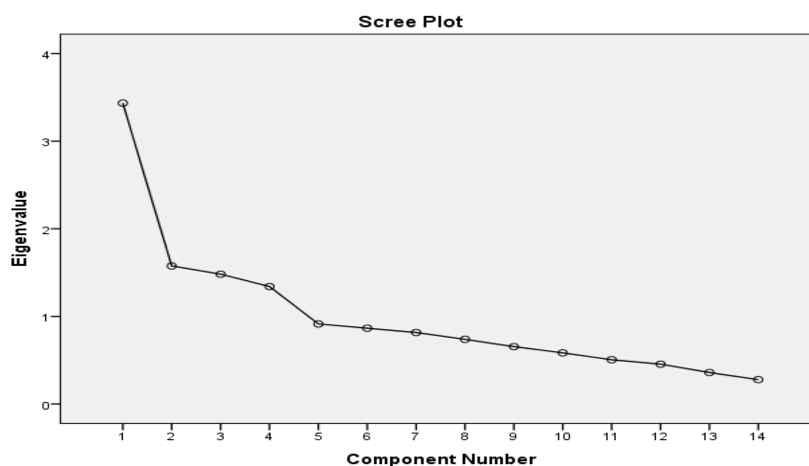

Figure 1. Scree plot of four groups of factors

The findings from the Scree plot were further supported by the results of parallel analysis, which showed only four components with eigenvalues exceeding the corresponding criterion values for the randomly generated data matrix of the same size (21 variables × 207 respondents). Table 3 shows the results of parallel analysis.

Table 3. Eigenvalues from PCA versus parallel analysis values

Component number	Actual eigenvalue from PCA	Criterion value from parallel analysis	Decision
1	4.170	1.6180	Accept
2	1.711	1.5137	Accept
3	1.535	1.4244	Accept
4	1.407	1.3517	Accept
5	1.141	1.2860	Reject
6	1.098	1.2279	Reject
7	1.013	1.1705	Reject

The four-component solution explained a total of 55.9% of the variance, with Component 1 contributing 24.5%, Component 2: 11.3%, Component 3: 10.6% and Component 4 contributing 9.6% as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Total variance explained by each of four groups of factors

Total variance explained			
Component	**Initial eigenvalues**		
	Total	**% of variance**	**Cumulative%**
1	3.434	24.532	24.532
2	1.576	11.258	35.790
3	1.482	10.583	46.372
4	1.341	9.577	55.949

To aid the interpretation of these four components, oblimin rotation was performed. The rotated solution revealed the presence of simple structure with four components showing a number of strong loading, and most variables loading substantially on only one component. The interpretation of four components was consistent with a study on factors influencing interaction in an online course (Chen & Yao, 2016) with high loadings on aspects such as online course (content, cost), learner prior experience (Internet skills, typing) and instructors (pedagogy, presence, feedback). The Cronbach alpha values for all the retained items were over 0.70, which suggests acceptable internal consistency among the items (DeVellis, 2003).

Table 5. Principal component analysis of influencing factors

Factor	**Pattern coefficients**					**Cronbach's alpha if item deleted**
	Item	**Component**				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	
Other learners	20. Timeliness of feedback from peers	**.831**	–.124	.099	.143	.712
	19. Usefulness of feedback from peers	**.758**	–.041	.224	.065	.715
	18. Regularity of online presence by Peers	**.531**	.397	–.181	.124	.718

Prior experience	09. Level of confidence in using the Internet	.087	**.710**	–.144	.108	.737
	10. Typing skills	.073	**.601**	.039	.054	.735
Online course	02. Content of the online course	.093	–.095	**.689**	–.095	.746
	13. Internet speed	–.056	.304	**.559**	.110	.727
	03. Learners' availability of time	.120	–.089	**.555**	.099	.734
	12. Cost of the online course	–.161	.421	**.548**	.034	.738
Instructor	14. Regularity of online presence by Instructors	–.150	.213	–.238	**.780**	.740
	16. Timeliness of feedback from Instructors	.216	–.126	.089	**.744**	.725
	15. Usefulness of feedback from Instructors	.049	–.073	.228	**.712**	.726

The data contained in Table 5 reveal four distinctive groups of factors that had an impact on the learners' interaction process. The first factor (items 18, 19, 20) concerns other learners, more specifically their social and cognitive presence in the interaction process. The highest loadings for items 19 and 20 (0.76 and 0.83 respectively) show that learners wanted timely and useful feedback from peers.

The second factor (items 9, 10) is mainly related to the learners' prior experience – more specifically their competence in using the Internet and typing skills. Although these two items had rather high loadings of 0.71 and 0.60, the simple descriptive results mentioned above did not show levels of importance (only 49.6% and 41.7% respectively). Hence, these items were not used in focus group discussions and interviews with the students.

The third factor (items 2, 3, 12, 13) was about the online course with the exception of item three (learners' availability of time). Most of these items had rather low loadings (around 5.5) excepted the content of the online course (loading of 6.9). This accords with the results of simple descriptive analysis in which 81.9% of learners put a high level of importance on the course content.

The fourth factor (items 14, 15, 16) that emerged from the principal component analysis was related to the regularity of presence of the instructors, timeliness and usefulness of their feedback (rather high loadings of 0.78, 0.74 and 0.71 respectively). These loadings complemented the aforementioned results of descriptive analysis (71.2%, 68.5% and 86.8%).

4.2. Analysis of qualitative data

Taken together, the above quantitative analyses revealed that course content and feedback from peers and instructors were considered important factors. These issues were discussed in the focus group discussions and interviews, together with online messages extracted from the LMS.

Regarding course content one learner stated in the focus group discussion,

All students look forward to quality. And the content of the course has to guarantee quality study outcomes. That's why I think content is the most important. (sic-learner 8)

The learners commented that the content of this course was at a lower level than their English ability. Hence, they could do all the exercises without having to seek support. This is an excerpt from the open-ended question of the survey.

And the level of the test annoys me a lot. I'm a student in a university and I have to do more extremely easy tests just for grade 5 students (sic).

The quantitative methods of marking their doing of reading, listening and grammar exercises, mostly in the form of multiple-choice, did not seem to accurately measure their performance either. In response to the question about required interaction with the course content, while some learners stated that it was necessary, others expressed their concerns in the focus group discussion, *"I think the required interaction does not represent quality. The fact is most learners finish it just because they have to*".

In the interviews, the learners suggested that songs, films and television series should be included to make learning enjoyable. While the instructors agreed that course content was important, *"I think this one [content] is the most important"* (instructor-ID 05), they mentioned other factors such as required interaction, discussion topics, and even promotional activities such as organizing contests to motivate the learners.

Examining the way that the instructors assigned online study levels to their learners showed another factor concerning the course content: flexibility of learners' interaction with it. In this course, all the learners were required to complete the same levels of study, usually from basic English, before moving on to the next level without taking into account their actual level of English proficiency. Only one of the instructors tried to individualize the learners' study basing on their language competence as seen in the following statement:

> *With the class that I assign different levels to different learners, if a learner fails to complete the tasks, I would mark that red, and then give a warning [...] so they are afraid and do as told. (instructor-ID 04)*

The learners of this course highly valued the usefulness of feedback from peers and instructors. However, in the focus group discussion, most of the participants stated that they always turned to the instructors when they were not sure of the peers' answers. One of the learners commented, "*If we are not sure who's right, or if we're not sure of the answer, then the instructor will have the last say*" (learner 6). They demanded more work and online presence from the instructors as expressed in some answers to the open-ended question of the survey.

> *The interaction between instructor and students is necessary so teachers should do many things to help students (sic).*
>
> *There should be a more regular and fixed online meet up between instructor and learners as well as between learners and learners (sic).*
>
> *Instructor should regulate a specific time to be online so learners know and interact easily (translation)*

The content analysis of the instructors' online posts also revealed that they used corrective feedback method to show the learners how to correct sentences. Underneath is an example of a learner' online message:

> *i don't know how to start my edo. can u suggest me what i should do the first.the second.......etc when i do my edo for the first time. thaks u so much! (sic-learner-ID 224)*

The above message contained many linguistic errors related to grammar, spelling and lack of capital letters. The instructors often replied to messages like this without explicitly correcting the mistakes. Instead, they applied the corrective feedback method as shown below:

> *I do not really understand your request, I think. You said you did not know how to start EDO, but at least you know how to log in the site, right? (sic-instructor-ID 06)*

An analysis of the instructors' online messages showed that the majority of them aimed to inform the learners of their study progress, remind to complete required interaction with the course content and even suggested technical solutions as in the following message:

> *It just came to my mind that probably you did your work at our university using wifi. [] That's why you could not log in[]. Could you try with another computer or your wired connection at home? (sic-instructor-ID 02)*

These messages were considered useful to encourage the learners to interact with the course content, and possibly resolve technical glitches.

In respect of the timeliness of feedback, the descriptive analysis of the instructors' online messages shows that almost three quarters of the learners' posts (72%) were replied to within one to five days. However, there were a few occasions when the learners' questions were answered very late and some were not responded at all. The instructors had different frequencies of checking and responding to their learners' messages. While some did it regularly and instantly, others were only online on certain days of the week, "*I often check my email on Tuesday and Saturday to answer interesting questions*" (instructor-ID03).

5. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the factors that influenced learners' online interaction in an online language course. The results of this study will now be compared with the findings of other works.

It was indicated in the findings of the study that course content was considered one of the most important factors. In this study learners placed high value to the importance of course content when answering the survey. However, they reported that the content of the existing online course was not useful because of uninteresting study materials, easy exercises, and most importantly the quantitative method of measuring learner-content interaction. This method of evaluating online learning has been questioned by earlier researchers (Chen, Zhang & Liu, 2014). The learners also expressed their doubts about the effectiveness of the required interaction with the course content. These findings seem to be consistent with earlier researchers viewed that it was the quality that mattered, not quantity of interaction (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005). In some instances, higher education institutions made interaction with content compulsory to ensure highest possible frequency of interaction. Nonetheless, some researchers have suggested that standard for online teaching need not contain arbitrary thresholds for required interaction (Grandzol & Grandzol, 2010).

The learners' views indicated that in order to make learning enjoyable, it was necessary to include songs, films and television series to the course content. This is in agreement with the result of other studies which indicated that enjoyment had a major impact on the long term study of learners (Yükselir, 2016; Wu et al., 2011). It is also supported by earlier studies which have shown that by watching TV shows, video clips and songs, together with doing interactive exercises, learners can be in control of their learning; at the same time, they feel more motivated (Wu et al., 2011).

Another factor concerning the course content, or interaction with it is the flexibility of interaction. In this course, all the learners were made to start from basic English despite their different language competence, which reduced course flexibility and learner autonomy - critical factors for success of an online course (Boelens et al., 2017; Tuncer, 2009). According to Kuo et al. (2013), a rigid course made learners less autonomous. However, providing individualized learning requires a radical pedagogical shift on behalf of the instructors (Cox et al., 2015; Sun, 2011).

Regarding interaction with peers and instructors, the participants stated that interpersonal interaction should not be made compulsory. For them, the interaction should be for a reason and meaningful which should consist of exchange of messages to solve some real tasks. This finding corroborates findings of other studies that interaction must lead to mean making and that in language learning producing meaningful sentences is important (Hwang, Shadiev, Hsu, Huang, Hsu & Lin, 2014; Woo & Reeves, 2007). Thus, instructors' application of various moderating strategies to create meaningful interactions might be more effective than required

interaction (Ernest, Heiser & Murphy, 2013). However, this may be a big challenge to the instructors because of their lack of time (Park & Son, 2009; Yükselir, 2016).

The next group of important factors were related to feedback from peers and instructors, more specifically, the timeliness and usefulness of the feedback. The longitudinal mining of online messages showed that most of the learners' queries were responded between one to five days. According to Hew and Cheung (2008), an average response time of two to three days or even less would be more acceptable to learners. However, in order to provide timely feedback to learners, teaching assistants would be needed for several hours each week to respond to students' queries (Chang, Chen & Hsu, 2011; Ntourmas, Avouris, Daskalaki & Dimitriadis, 2018). No such assistance was available in this online course and an instructor had to supervise nearly 100 learners. Hence, some of them might have not been able to respond to the learners' feedback in a timely manner. This finding mirrors those of another study that examined the difficulties instructors had in moderating online discussion forums (de Lima et al., 2019).

Concerning the usefulness of the instructors' feedback, the analysis of focus group interview data reveals that the learners of this course valued the instructors' messages. This finding matches those observed in other studies (Ghadirian et al., 2017; Gómez-Rey et al., 2017) which showed that learners participated more if instructors' posts were of high quality and usefulness. In this study, however, the majority of instructors' messages, interestingly, aimed to inform the learners about their study progress, to respond to technical questions and remind students about undone exercises. These findings support the idea of the need to have frequent reminding to make the learners study hard throughout the course, including regular participation in online discussion forums (Verenikina, Jones & Delahunty, 2017).

Instructors, however, did not comment on or correct learners' assignments or messages despite them having linguistic errors. Instead, they applied the corrective feedback methods through modelling correct ways to use the language. However, it was evidenced from other studies that there was not significant learning as the result of online corrective feedback, at least through indirect error correction from instructors (Loewen & Erlam, 2006; Shooshtari, Jalilifar & Ostadian, 2018). Feedback needs to explain learners' mistakes and be direct for language learning (Gibby, 2007; Shooshtari et al., 2018).

In this study, the majority of learners also placed a high level of importance on the regularity of instructors' online presence. These findings seem to be consistent with other research which found that the instructors' teaching presence plays a crucial role in pedagogical instruction, using different types of interactional matrices (Cox et al., 2015; Gómez-Rey, 2017). However, the instructors themselves had different levels of online presence: some were online only twice a week. These inactive instructors might have held the attitudes that their online presence did not encourage learning. This interpretation accords with other observation, which showed that instructors' presence did not promote learning (Cho & Tobias, 2016).

There are several possible explanations for some of the instructors' limited online presence in this course. Firstly, English lecturers in Vietnam often have a high teaching load (Le, 2011); thus, their online presence might have been limited to performing the required tasks. In other words, their lack of time might be among the inhibiting factors (Park & Son, 2009; Yükselir, 2016). Secondly, it might have been because of their different online teaching attitudes and behaviours accordingly: while some of the instructors were active in facilitating participation and replying to the learners' queries, others were not. Thirdly, their weekly face-to-face meeting with the learners may also have diminished the need

to interact online as has been suggested by Marden and Herrington (2011).

Finally, concerning usefulness of feedback from peers, although the learners valued peer feedback, they tended to rely more on the instructors' answers. There are several explanations for the above results, one of which could be that these learners were of newly enrolled students, thus they might have been reluctant to comment on peer's posts; furthermore, they could have been unsure of the correctness of their answers or comments. These findings match those observed in earlier studies which revealed that learners did not provide enough input and feedback in their discussions (Vrasidas & McIsaac, 1999; Yukselturk, 2010). The learners' limited interaction with peers in English was possibly due to their fear of 'losing face', a feature of collective community in a country like Vietnam (Borton, 2000). They tend to have difficulties in asking questions for clarification or give different views (Dan, Mai, Da, Chau & Hai, 2018). They are also passive in engaging in classroom activities (Le, 2011; Raymond & Choon, 2017).

6. Conclusions, limitations and suggestions for further studies

This paper presents the findings of a study examining the key factors that influenced learners' interactions in an online English language course in a Vietnamese university.

First, the factors relating to the course consisted of its content and flexibility of interaction with it. In this course, the language practice exercises were easy for the learners to complete; hence, it demotivated their interaction with it. The rigid requirement making all of them start from basic English did not produce much learning enthusiasm either. Furthermore, it seems that the required level of interaction with the content resulted in superficial performance of the learners. This issue should be further investigated.

Second, the key factors relating to the learners and instructors included their feedback and online presence. While the learners might have been reluctant to give feedback to peers due to their own limited language proficiency level and cultural reasons, the instructors might have been too busy to respond to each and every message from the learners. The provision of online feedback to the learners, especially in English, required a great deal of instructors' time; hence, they should be trained and motivated on how to make sure that their feedback was both timely and useful. It also means that their online presence has to be improved. Further investigation of the instructors' views on this issue should be conducted.

The findings in this study are subject to a number of limitations. Firstly, the study was conducted with only one cohort of learners, and thus could not provide a comprehensive picture of factors influencing learners' online interactions. Thus, it is suggested that future studies should be implemented with different groups of learners who use the same online course. Secondly, this study did not take into account the relationship between learners' online study and their learning outcomes at the end of study semester (conducted in traditional mode). Hence, it was not possible to draw a definite conclusion about the effectiveness of the course content or online discussions. Future research should include investigation of the contribution of online learning to their final semester results. This would help obtain a fuller picture of learner-learner, learner-instructor and learner-content interactions in online English language learning courses.

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CÁC YẾU TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG ĐẾN TƯƠNG TÁC TRONG MỘT KHÓA HỌC TIẾNG ANH TRỰC TUYẾN Ở VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này khảo sát các yếu tố ảnh hướng đến sự tương tác của người học trong một khóa học tiếng Anh trực tuyến ở một trường đại học ở Việt Nam, sử dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu kết hợp định lượng, định tính và phân tích nhân tố. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy các yếu tố liên quan đến khóa học bao gồm nội dung và tính linh hoạt khi triển khai, trong khi các yếu tố liên quan đến người học bao gồm khả năng sử dụng interenet và quan điểm của họ về hiệu quả của học trực tuyến. Các yếu tố liên quan đến giáo viên bao gồm tính kịp thời, hiệu quả của ý kiến phản hồi và tần suất truy cập. Ngoài ra, trong bối cảnh ở Việt Nam, một số yếu tố văn hóa như sự bị động, ngại hỏi giáo viên cũng làm ảnh hưởng đến sự tương tác của người học.

Từ khóa: yếu tố, tương tác, phản hồi, hiệu quả, tần suất truy cập, Việt Nam.

STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR TEACHING COMPETENCY ASSESSED BY A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING STUDENT TEACHERS' ENGLISH TEACHING COMPETENCY (FASTETC)

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Abstract: Training teachers to meet the professional standards is one of the top missions prioritized by teacher training institutions. Nevertheless, how student-teachers' teaching competency is assessed is considered as one of the highest concerns by teacher trainers and educators. This study, therefore, aims at examining student teachers' perception of their teaching competency assessed by a framework for assessing student teachers' English teaching competency (FASTETC) in the TESOL methodology course at a Ho Chi Minh City-based university, Vietnam. The study involved 85 student teachers majoring in TESOL methodology in answering a self-evaluation questionnaire. The results indicated that the research participants realized they could meet the course outcomes and professional standards in terms of attitudes, knowledge and skills of English teaching methodology (ETM) and English language proficiency. Furthermore, student teachers were aware that their knowledge and skills of ETM outperformed their attitudes of ETM. Such preliminary results can encourage the use of a teaching competency framework for assessing and assuring the quality of student teachers' teaching competency in similar contexts.

Keywords: methodology, student teacher, teaching competency, teaching competency framework, TESOL

1. Introduction

Many scholars (e.g., Alqiawi & Ezzeldin, 2015; Bhargava & Pathy, 2011; Zeichner, 2010) have asserted that building teaching competency plays a pivotal role in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Zeichner (2010) states that teaching competency should be embedded into the framework for assessing and self-assessing teaching competency. Likewise, Bhargava and Pathy (2011) pinpoint that educators and teacher trainers should integrate the teaching competency framework into teaching and training in an attempt to assure the quality of teaching and learning and fulfill their roles in teaching and learning appropriately and effectively. In a similar vein, Alqiawi and Ezzeldin (2015) postulate that teaching competency framework can be used as criteria and standards for orienting and determining the identities of good teachers. Based on the importance of teaching competency as such, different teaching competency frameworks for teachers have been designed and developed in many educational contexts.

In the Vietnamese context, educating teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) to meet the professional standards has been prioritized in recent years. Accordingly, Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has issued different decrees, decisions

and guidelines on quality standards of teaching competency. In terms of English language teaching, in particular, teaching competency framework for teachers introduced by MOET (MOET, 2014) which features five domains, namely knowledge of language, language learning, and curricular content; knowledge of language teaching; knowledge of language learners; ethics and values in teaching; and practice and content of language teaching. Such a framework provides teacher-training institutions with guidelines on the development of frameworks for assessing teachers and student teachers' teaching competency in a bid to assure the quality of teachers' teaching competency as well as to respond to social needs. Nevertheless, how such frameworks are evaluated is a big issue for many educational teacher-training institutions. As for the Faculty of English of a Ho Chi Minh City-based University, albeit a newly emergent institution in training EFL teachers, it has designed and developed a framework for assessing student teachers' English teaching competency (FASTETC) in order to assure the training outcomes. FASTETC has been employed as a quality standard for assessing EFL student teachers' teaching competency in the teacher teaching program; however, there is a lack of research on the use of FASTETC in these programs. Therefore, within its scope, this study only endeavors to examine student teachers' perception of their teaching competency assessed by FASTETC in the TESOL methodology (hereafter: FASTETC-based TESOL methodology) course at this University, and the research question to be addressed is:

What is student teachers' perception of their teaching competency after the FASTECT-based TESOL methodology course?

2. Literature review

Scholars (e.g., Barman & Paramanik, 2019; Deakin, 2008; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Koster & Dengirnk, 2008; Rychen & Salganik, 2003) have addressed the terms of competence and teaching competency in different aspects. Deakin (2008) describes competence as a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities, attitudes and passion which enable one to act effectively. In a wider sense, Rychen and Salganik (2003) define that teaching competency encompasses components of knowledge, practical skills, motivation, belief, qualities and emotion which empower teachers to perform their teaching tasks. Furthermore, teachers' teaching competency, as confirmed by Koster and Dengirnk (2008), helps them to meet perplexing demands and accomplish their teaching tasks professionally and appropriately in specific circumstances. Barman and Paramanik (2019) have pointed out that competence has several characteristics: (i) Competence can include one or multi-skills enabling one to maintain that competence; (ii) Competence links three components of attitude, knowledge and skill which are used to assess a particular act; (iii) Competence is visible; (iv) competence can be assessed. Nevertheless, teaching competency differs from teacher competence. As explained by Hagger and McIntyre (2006), the former refers to teachers' roles in classroom to perform the teaching tasks, while the latter, in a wider sense, refers to teachers' professional competence implying "a wider, systemic view of teacher professionalism, on multiple levels – the individual, school, community and professional networks" (Ibid., p.10; as cited by European Commission, 2013). Likewise, researchers (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 2001; McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008) have confirmed that teaching competency encompasses three basic components, namely knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Among those three, firstly, *Attitude* refers to commitment, confidence, belief and respect in teaching, and it can be positive and negative. It is a connection between knowledge and skills which helps teachers to carry out teaching tasks to meet the common educational goals and maximize learners' learning competence (Council of Europe, 2008; Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Secondly, *Knowledge*

refers to teachers' profound pedagogical and professional knowledge which can help them to teach effectively in different educational environments (e.g., McDiarmid & Ckevenger-Bright, 2008; Krauss et al., 2008; Shulman, 1987). In order to fulfill the teaching missions well, teachers need to have knowledge of syllabus, classroom management, pedagogy, educational theories and learner assessment (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Finally, *Skill* refers to the ability to teach flexibly to meet learners' learning needs (Hatano & Oura, 2003; Vogt & Rogalla, 2009). Teachers' teaching skills are demonstrated by curriculum design, classroom management, teaching strategy use and learner testing and assessment (Scheerens, Luyten, Steen & Luyten-de Thouars, 2007). Moreover, teachers' teaching skills are skills of evaluating their teaching systematically on the basis of theories, research, professional experiences and evidence to improve teaching and learning quality (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006). The three abovementioned components are three pillars of teaching competency which are closely interconnected and support one another. Within the scope of this paper, based on the training outcomes, student teachers' English teaching competency is expanded as the ability to teach effectively in specific situations, comprising *attitude*, *knowledge*, *skill* and *English language proficiency* which enable teachers to transfer knowledge to others and solve educational classroom-based problems appropriately and effectively.

The importance of teaching competency and teaching competency framework for teachers has been confirmed by many researchers. Verloop (1999) has stated there is an increasing demand for assessing teaching competency for quality assurance and recognition of the teaching profession. Similarly, Roelofs and Sander (2007) mention that teacher training institutions should focus on competence-based training for assessing teachers' teaching competency. In another aspect, European Commission (2013) pinpoints that teaching competency frameworks can bring various benefits such as helping to stimulate teachers' active engagement in their career development and assess teachers' teaching competency development. Furthermore, a teaching competency framework for teachers has different features: it is institutionalized and contextualized; it is designed based on underlying educational/teaching philosophy, and a negotiated consensus about teaching goals and learning outcomes; and it has key features of stability, durability and flexibility (European Commission, 2013).

A number of teaching competency frameworks for teachers have been found in the body of literature. Internationally, for example, British Council Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Teachers of English (British Council, 2011) aims at providing a guide for primary and secondary school teachers to self-evaluate their teaching knowledge and skills and develop their profession. It includes four stages of development (awareness, understanding, engagement, integration) and 12 professional practices (Planning lessons and courses; Understanding learners; Managing the lesson; Knowing the subject; Managing resources; Assessing learning; Integrating ICT; Taking responsibility for professional development; Using inclusive practices; Using multilingual approaches; Promoting 21st century skills; Understanding educational policies and practice). In 2013, EAQUALS Framework for Teacher self-assessment, Language Teacher Training and Development (EAQUALS, 2013) was developed in England in an attempt to give guiding principles and tools for the enhancement of quality in language teaching and learning. This framework features three key professional competencies (attitudes, knowledge and skills), three development phases, and five main areas of competencies (planning teaching and learning; teaching and supporting learning; assessment of learning; language, communication and culture; the teacher as professional). A similar framework named Cambridge English Teaching Framework (UCLES, 2015) has been developed, and it aims at indicating the main knowledge

and skills needed for effective teaching at different teaching stages and in different circumstances. This framework encompasses five main categories (Learning and the Learner; Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Language Ability; Language Knowledge and Awareness; Professional Development and Values) with 36 framework components, and it has four stages of teacher competency: Foundation; Developing; Proficient; Expert. It is noticed that although all the three frameworks are from the same country, they have different purposes and components.

In Vietnam, some teaching competency frameworks have been found. In 2012, Duong, Pham and Thai built an Assessment Competence Framework for Pre-service and In-service ELT Teachers. This framework includes five domains of competences (Competence in language assessment design and process; Competence in connecting language assessment to instruction; Competence in developing language assessment instruments; Competence in using measurement models and statistics; Competence in conducting research in language assessment). However, this framework focuses on competences for conducting effective language assessment. In 2016, Pham and Ta developed a Theoretical Framework for ESP Teacher Training which aims at providing prospective ESP teachers with skills and knowledge in ESP. It has two components: ESP methodology (ESP pedagogical competence) and ESP acquisition (Field-specific linguistic competence and multi-disciplinary subject knowledge). Bui, Nguyen, Dao and Hoan (2017) presented professional standards for Vietnamese teachers. They analyzed the core competencies of Singaporean teachers and did the analysis and evaluation for the Grad and in-service teacher competencies framework in Vietnam. These frameworks have been designed for developing teachers' teaching competence; however, they are only theoretical ones and not yet evaluated.

Within this study, FASTETC was based on the training outcomes of the TESOL methodology course and developed for assessing student teachers' English teaching competency in the course of TESOL methodology at a Ho Chi Minh City-based University. FASTETC was developed based on the steps of the ADDIE model (Analyse – Design – Develop – Implement – Evaluate) (Branch, 2009), and it has nine components (Theories of Language Learning Teachers and Learners; Planning lessons; Learning Resources; Classroom management; teaching techniques; Testing and Evaluation; Educational Technology; Class Observation; English Language Proficiency) with 24 criteria which are employed for assessing student teachers' teaching competency within a five-point scale (Fail, Average, Fairly Good, Good and Outstanding). The nine components of this framework serve as a part of the theoretical framework of this study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research setting

This quantitative study was conducted at a Ho Chi Minh City-based university in Vietnam which offers different training programs at different levels and has 25 faculties, institutes and centers. The Faculty of English Language has the English Language training program, which includes three sub-majors: English for translation and interpretation, English for Business, and TESOL methodology. Students of these three majors have to study the same courses within the three academic years, and they have to study discrete courses for their sub-majors. Students who study TESOL methodology should take courses of *Teaching Methodology 1* (3 credits), *Teaching Methodology 2* (3 credits), *Classroom Language and Management* (3 credits), *Contrastive Linguistics and Language Teaching* (3 credits). Student teachers learn the theories of ETM from *Teaching Methodology 1*, teaching techniques from *Teaching Methodology 2*, English language use and classroom management from *Classroom Language and Management*, and theories of contrastive linguistics in language teaching from *Contrastive Linguistics and Language*

Teaching. The sequence of courses should be *Teaching Methodology 1, Classroom Language and management*, *Teaching Methodology 2* (Appendix for the main contents of the mentioned courses), and *Contrastive Linguistics and Language Teaching*.

For the purpose of this study, the FASTETC was introduced and explained to student teachers at the beginning of the course of TESOL methodology. However, the teaching practice was conducted in the course of *Teaching Methodology* 2 which included 45 periods divided into nine sections. During this course, student teachers were required to learn lessons of teaching techniques and do class observations within the first five sections. Regarding class observations, student teachers watched five clips of teachers teaching English at different levels of education. They had to write class observation individually and then in groups while watching those clips. Within the rest four sections, students had to demonstrate their teaching skills in groups of four people twice. Each group taught a self-chosen 60-minute lesson (15 minutes/person). During teaching demonstration, other students played roles of learners and had to write class observation. At the end of each demonstration, both teacher trainer and student teachers gave feedback and comments on the teaching demonstration, and evaluation on teaching demonstration was carried out by both teacher trainer (80%) and students (20%).

3.2. Research participants

This study involved 85 student teachers in answering a questionnaire. They were conveniently sampled from three intact classes of student teachers who were majoring in TESOL methodology at a Ho Chi Minh City-based university, Vietnam. As seen from Table 1, there were 18 males (21.2%) and 67 females (78.8%). Most of the research participants were aged 21-30 (98.8%), and 74 out of 85 students (87.1%) had learned English for more than 10 years. More than a half (57.8%) opted for TESOL methodology because of passion, from family's career orientation (31.8%) and others (10.6%). Nearly 60% of student teachers had teaching experience at different positions (teaching assistant: 22.4%; tutor: 28.2%; full-time teacher: 7.15%), and most of them (42/49) had taught English for less than 2 years. There were 23 student teachers (27.1%) who had ever taken a course of TESOL methodology before.

Table 1. Research participants' background information

No.			n=85	
			F	**%**
1	Gender	Male	18	21.2
		Female	67	78.8
2	Age	Under 20	1	1.2
		21-30	84	98.8
		Over 30	0	0
3	English learning experience	Under 5 years	0	0
		5-10 years	11	12.9
		Over 10	74	87.1
4	Reasons for studying TESOL methodology	Passion	49	57.8
		Family's carrier orientation	27	31.8
		Others	9	10.6
5	Experience of English teaching	Teaching assistant	19	22.4
		Tutor	24	28.2
		Full time teacher	6	7.1
		Not yet	36	42.2

6	Years of English teaching	Under 1 year	20	23.5
		1-2 years	22	25.9
		Over 2 years	7	8.2
7	Experience of previous study of the TESOL methodology course	Yes	23	27.1
		No	62	72.9

Note: n: sample; F: frequency; %: percentage

3.3. Research instrument and procedures for data collection and analysis

A questionnaire designed from the theoretical framework was employed to collect data. It encompasses two parts: Part A asking for general background information; Part B including 73 items of perception of English teaching competency in terms of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and English language proficiency. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale from *Very low* to *Very high.* The total Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire is .94 (73 items). The Cronbach's alpha of groups of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and English language proficiency are .92 (23 items), .92 (23 items), .94 (23 items), and .87 (4 items), respectively. This means that the reliability of the questionnaire is very high.

Regarding the data collection, the questionnaire had been piloted before the questionnaire was officially used in the main study. The questionnaire was administered with 123 student teachers at the end of *Teaching Methodology* 2 course. It took from 30-35 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Only 85 copies of questionnaire were returned. With respect to data analysis, the SPSS software was utilized to analyze data in terms of descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation). The interpretation of mean scores is 1.00 – 1.80: *Very low*; 1.81 – 2.60*: Low*; 2.61 – 3.40: *Moderate*; 3.41 – 4.20: *High*; 4.21 – 5.00: *Very high*.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Student teachers' perception of their teaching competency after the FASTETC-based TESOL methodology course

As seen from Table 2, the mean score of research participants' teaching competency after the FASTETC-based TESOL methodology course is 3.84. Among four components of the teaching competency, the mean score of *knowledge* (Group B: M = 3.93; SD = .43) is the highest, followed by *skills* (Group C: M = 3.81; SD = .46) and *English language proficiency* (Group D: M = 3.60; SD = .67). The lowest mean score is *attitudes* (Group A: M = 3.14; SD = .71). This can be interpreted that student teachers realized that their teaching competency was at a high level. Their *knowledge, skills of* ETM and *English language proficiency* were at a high level, while their *attitudes* towards ETM was at a moderate level.

Table 2. Student teachers' perception of teaching competency

Group	Components	n=85	
		M	SD
A	Attitudes	3.14	.71
B	Knowledge	3.93	.43
C	Skills	3.81	.46
D	English language proficiency	3.60	.67
	Total	**3.80**	**.36**

Note: n: sample; M: mean; SD: standard deviation

4.1.2. Components of student teachers' perception of teaching competency after the FASTETC-based TESOL methodology course

Regarding the student teachers' teaching competency in terms of *attitudes*, Table 3 shows that research participants perceived that their attitudes of theories of "language teachers" (Item 3: M = 4.02; SD = .53), "common language teaching methods" (Item 4: M = 4.01; SD = .66), "language learning" (Item 1: M = 4.00; SD = .61), "language learners" (Item 2: M = 3.62; SD = .59) were at a high level. Additionally, they believed that they could gain a high level of attitudes towards techniques for teaching English "vocabulary" (Item 5: M = 3.56; SD = .71), "grammar" (Item 6: M = 3.56; SD = .74), "pronunciation" (Item 7: M = 3.75; SD = .55), "reading skill" (Item 8: M = 3.76; SD = .54), "how to assess learner' learning" (Item 20: M = 3.42; SD = .87), "how to design a language test" (Item 21: M = 3.54; SD = .94), and "how to evaluate a teaching class" (Item 23: M = 3.40; SD = .84).

Nonetheless, their attitudes towards techniques for teaching "listening skill" (Item 9: M = 3.00; SD = 1.01), "speaking" (Item 10: M = 2.94; SD = .52), "writing skill" (Item 11: M = 2.89; SD = .64), "how to design lesson plans" (Item 12: M = 3.34; SD = .61), "how to design a teaching curriculum" (Item 22: M = 2.99; SD = .77), "how to use teaching materials" (Item 14: M = 2.98; SD = .78), "how to use teaching aids" (Item 15: M = 3.02; SD =.53), "how to use educational technology in teaching" (Item 16: M = 3.12; SD = .89), "how to manage the classroom" (Item 17: M = 3.06; SD = .51), "how to solve classroom-based problems" (Item 18: M = 3.06; SD = .96), "how to organize teaching activities" (Item 19: M = 3.35; SD = .86), and "how to observe a teaching class" (Item 22: M = 3.31; SD = .88) were at a moderate level. These findings can mean student teachers discerned that they had positive attitudes towards theories of ETM.

Table 3. Student teachers' perception of teaching competency in terms of attitudes

No.	I like learning…	n=85	
		M	**SD**
1	theories of language learning.	4.00	.61
2	theories of language learners.	3.62	.59
3	theories of language teachers.	4.02	.53
4	theories of common language teaching methods.	4.01	.66
5	techniques for teaching English vocabulary.	3.56	.71
6	techniques for teaching English grammar.	3.56	.74
7	techniques for teaching English pronunciation.	3.75	.55
8	techniques for teaching English reading skill.	3.76	.54
9	techniques for teaching English listening skill.	3.00	.61
10	techniques for teaching English speaking skill.	2.94	.52
11	techniques for teaching English writing skill.	2.89	.64
12	how to design lesson plans.	3.34	.61
13	how to design a teaching curriculum.	2.99	.77
14	how to use teaching materials.	2.98	.78
15	how to use teaching aids.	3.02	.53
16	how to use educational technology in teaching.	3.12	.89
17	how to manage the classroom.	3.06	.51
18	how to solve classroom-based problems.	3.06	.96
19	how to organize teaching activities.	3.35	.86
20	how to assess learner' learning.	3.42	.87
21	how to design a language test.	3.54	.64
22	how to observe a teaching class.	3.31	.88
23	how to evaluate a teaching class.	3.40	.84

Note: n: sample; M: mean; SD: standard deviation

As seen from Table 4, after the FASTETC-based TESOL methodology course, research participants thought that their knowledge of theories of "language learning" (Item 24: M = 3.93; SD = .73), "language learners" (Item 25: M = 3.89; SD = .75), "language teachers" (Item 26: M = 4.01; SD = .62) and "common language teaching methods" (Item 27: M = 4.04; SD = .62) was at a high level. Likewise, they also gained knowledge of techniques for teaching English "vocabulary" (Item 28: M = 4.06; SD = .63), "grammar" (Item 29: M = 4.12; SD = .64), "pronunciation" (Item 30: M = 3.98; SD = .55), "reading skill" (Item 31: M = 4.02; SD = .67), "listening skill" (Item 32: M = 3.96; SD = .66), "speaking skill" (Item 33: M =3.86; SD = .67), and "writing skill" (Item 34: M = 3.98; SD = .70) at a high level.

Regarding other areas of knowledge of ETM, they knew how to "design lesson plans" (Item 35: M = 3.93; SD = .70), "design a teaching curriculum" (Item 36: M = 3.98; SD = .69), "use teaching materials" (Item 37: M = 3.99; SD = .66), "use teaching aids" (Item 38: M = 3.95; SD = .59), "use educational technology in teaching" (Item 39: M = 4.01; SD = .58), "manage the classroom" (Item 40: M = 3.95; SD = .57), "solve classroom-based problems" (Item 41: M = 3.95; SD = .65), "organize teaching activities" (Item 42: M = 3.92; SD = .74), "assess learner' learning" (Item 43: M = 3.96; SD = .58), "design a language test" (Item 44: M = 3.54; SD = .69), "observe a teaching class" (Item 45: M = 3.88; SD = .64), and "evaluate a teaching class" (Item 46: M = 3.82; SD = .67) at a high level. Such findings can indicate that student teachers believed they had profound knowledge of ETM.

Table 4. Student teachers' perception of teaching competency in terms of knowledge

No.	I have learned knowledge of…	n=85	
		M	SD
24	theories of language learning.	3.93	.73
25	theories of language learners.	3.89	.75
26	theories of language teachers.	4.01	.62
27	theories of common language teaching methods.	4.04	.71
28	techniques for teaching English vocabulary.	4.06	.64
29	techniques for teaching English grammar.	4.12	.64
30	techniques for teaching English pronunciation.	3.98	.63
31	techniques for teaching English reading skill.	4.02	.67
32	techniques for teaching English listening skill.	3.96	.66
33	techniques for teaching English speaking skill.	3.86	.67
34	techniques for teaching English writing skill.	3.98	.70
35	how to design lesson plans.	3.93	.70
36	how to design a teaching curriculum.	3.98	.69
37	how to use teaching materials.	3.99	.66
38	how to use teaching aids.	3.95	.59
39	how to use educational technology in teaching.	4.01	.58
40	how to manage the classroom.	3.95	.57
41	how to solve classroom-based problems.	3.95	.65
42	how to organize teaching activities.	3.92	.74
43	how to assess learner' learning.	3.96	.58
44	how to design a language test.	3.88	.69
45	how to observe a teaching class.	3.85	.64
46	how to evaluate a teaching class.	3.82	.67

Note: n: sample; M: mean; SD: standard deviation

Similarly, results in Table 5 present that student teachers supposed they had skills applying theories of "language learning" (Item 47: M = 3.95; SD = .59), "language learners" (Item 48: M = 3.84; SD = .59), and "language teachers" (Item 49: M = 3.79; SD = .63) and "common language teaching methods" (Item 50: M = 3.86; SD = .62) into their teaching at a high level. Regarding their skills of techniques for teaching English "vocabulary" (Item 51: M = 3.91; SD = .64), "grammar" (Item 52: M = 3.89; SD = .57), "pronunciation" (Item 53: M = 3.85; SD = .60), "reading skill" (item 54: M = 3.91; SD = .66), "listening skill" (Item 55: M = 3.95; SD = .61), "speaking skill" (Item 56: M = 3.86; SD = .63) and "writing skill" (Item 57: M = 3.82; SD = .65), they gained such skills at a high level. They had skills of "designing lesson plans" (Item 58: M = 3.82; SD = .65) and "designing a teaching curriculum" (Item 59: M = 3.76; SD = .75), "using teaching materials" (Item 60: M = 3.76; SD = .70), "using teaching aids" (Item 61: M = 3.85; SD = .62) and "using educational technology in teaching" (Item 62: M = 3.89; SD = .61) at a high level.

What is more, their skills of "managing the classroom" (Item 63: M = 3.82; SD = .67), "solving classroom-based problems" (Item 64: M = 3.81; SD = .66), "organizing teaching activities" (Item 65: M = 3.73; SD = .73), "assessing learner' learning" (Item 66: M = 3.88; SD = .62) and "designing a language test" (Item 67: M = 3.73; SD = .71) were at a high level, too. For other skills of "observing a teaching class" (Item 68: M = 3.68; SD = .69) and "evaluating a teaching class" (Item 69: M = 3.68; SD = .67), they believed they gained those skills at a high level.

Table 5. Student teachers' perception of teaching competency in terms of skills

No.	I have had skills of …	n=85	
		M	SD
47	applying theories of language learning into my teaching.	3.95	.59
48	applying theories of language learners into my teaching.	3.84	.59
49	applying theories of language teachers into my teaching.	3.79	.63
50	applying theories of common language teaching methods into my teaching.	3.86	.62
51	using techniques for teaching English vocabulary.	3.91	.64
52	using techniques for teaching English grammar.	3.89	.57
53	using techniques for teaching English pronunciation.	3.85	.60
54	using techniques for teaching English reading skill.	3.91	.66
55	using techniques for teaching English listening skill.	3.95	.61
56	using techniques for teaching English speaking skill.	3.86	.63
57	using techniques for teaching English writing skill.	3.82	.65
58	designing lesson plans.	3.73	.64
59	designing a teaching curriculum.	3.76	.75
60	using teaching materials.	3.76	.70
61	using teaching aids.	3.85	.62
62	using educational technology in teaching.	3.89	.61
63	managing the classroom.	3.82	.67
64	solving classroom-based problems.	3.81	.66
65	organizing teaching activities.	3.73	.73
66	assessing learner' learning.	3.88	.62
67	designing a language test.	3.73	.71
68	observing a teaching class.	3.68	.69
69	evaluating a teaching class.	3.68	.67

Note: n: sample; M: mean; SD: standard deviation

With respect of *English language proficiency*, Table 6 reveals that after the FASTETC-based TESOL methodology course, student teachers self-reported that they had a high level of "listening skill" (Item 70: M = 3.69; SD =.72), "speaking skill" (Item 71: M = 3.60; SD =.77), "reading skill" (Item 72: M = 3.54; SD =.82), and "writing skill" (Item 73: M = 3.62; SD =.77) to become teachers of English.

Table 6. Student teachers' perception of teaching competency in terms of English language proficiency

No.	I am competent in…	n=85	
		M	SD
70	Listening skill to become a teacher of English.	3.69	.72
71	Speaking skill to become a teacher of English.	3.60	.77
72	Reading skill to become a teacher of English.	3.54	.82
73	Writing skill to become a teacher of English.	3.62	.77

Note: n: sample; M: mean; SD: standard deviation

4.2. Discussion

The study has uncovered some significant results which indicated that student teachers realized their teaching competency was at a high level after the FASTETC-based TESOL methodology course. This can be inferred that the employment of FASTETC in the course of TESOL methodology to assess student teachers' teaching competency could contribute to the development of their teaching competency. One of the possible explanations for this result is that student teachers may have recognized the FASTETC as a benchmark for their teaching competency development. This result is supported by Bhargava and Pathy (2011) who confirmed that teaching competency frameworks embedded into teaching and training can help to assure of the quality of teacher training, and it is also in alignment with Alqiawi and Ezzeldin's (2015) statement which confirmed that teaching competency can be used for quality assurance and identity of good teachers.

As regards the components of teaching competency, it was noticed that student teachers believed that their *knowledge* of ETM developed at the highest level, followed by *skills* of ETM and *English language proficiency*, and *attitudes* of ETM. It can be explained that student teachers could find it easier to gain *knowledge* and *skills* of ETM than other components of teaching competency. Remarkably, student teachers' *attitudes* of ETM developed at the lowest level in comparison with other components of ETM. It is possible that student teachers may believe that *knowledge* and *skills* of ETM could be more important than their *attitudes* of ETM. Another reason may be that student teachers' *knowledge* and *skills* of ETM could be the components of teaching competency that they had to learn and practice more than other components. Further explanation can be from the fact that 60% of research participants had teaching experiences and over 25% of research participants had ever learned a course of ETM before.

In respect of items in *attitudes* of ETM, student teachers indicated that their *attitudes* of theories of language learning, language teachers and common language teaching methods were at the highest level of development, while their *attitudes* of techniques for teaching English writing skill and speaking skill, how to use teaching materials and design a teaching curriculum were at the lowest level of development in comparison with other items. It seems that student teachers may prefer learning something easier to them. This can be one of the plausible reasons why their *attitudes* of ETM demonstrate that way. Such positive attitudes of ETM can help to acquire other components (knowledge and skills) of ETM. This finding corroborates with the idea of Council of Europe (2008) and Feiman-Nemser (2008) who have asserted that positive attitudes

of language teaching can be a connection between knowledge and skills for teachers to accomplish their teaching tasks.

Within the items in *knowledge* of ETM, student teachers self-evaluated that they could gain knowledge of techniques for teaching vocabulary, grammar, and reading skill, theories of common language teaching approaches and language teachers, and using educational technology in teaching at a higher level of development than other items. It seems easy to understand that some items (item 12: theories of common language teaching approaches & item 13: theories of language teachers) in *attitudes* of ETM which student teachers liked to learn were at a high level of development in the *knowledge* of ETM. However, their knowledge of techniques for teaching vocabulary, grammar, and reading skill and using educational technology may be closely relevant to themselves, so they could have gained more knowledge of those items than other ones. Furthermore, one of the plausible explanations for this can be that student teachers had positive *attitudes* of ETM, which possibly entails the profound of *knowledge* of ETM as confirmed by Council of Europe (2008) and Feiman-Nemser (2008). Consequently, student teachers were knowledgeable of ETM. This finding is in alignment with the statement made by Darling-Hammond (2006) who indicates that teachers should possess pedagogical knowledge to do teaching missions well.

Nonetheless, the items in *skills* of ETM were at a relatively equal rate of development. This can be explained that student teachers had a chance to practice their teaching skills within the course of ETM development, and many of them had teaching experiences, so they could have focused more on *skills* of ETM than the other components of ETM. As discussed that the three components of teaching competency can influence one another (Council of Europe, 2008; Feiman-Nemser, 2008); therefore, when student teachers' knowledge of ETM was substantial enough, their skills of ETM could easily develop at a high level. They had skills of teaching learners effectively as confirmed by Hatano and Oura (2003) and Vogt and Rogalla (2009), those of curriculum design, classroom management, teaching strategy use and learner testing and assessment described by Scheerens et al. (2007).

Regarding student teachers' *English language proficiency*, they self-evaluated it at a high level, and they were proficient enough to become teachers of English; however, the level of development was relatively lower than *knowledge* and *skills* of ETM. This can be that it could take student teachers more time to develop their English language proficiency than other components of ETM, and they could pay more attention to knowledge and skills of ETM.

5. Concluding remarks

This study has indicated that student teachers perceived that the FASTETC-based TESOL methodology course could, to some extent, help them to achieve the stipulated learning outcomes. Such a positive result on student teachers' development of teaching competency can be a threshold for their later teaching competency development when they become in-service teachers. Moreover, student teachers realized that this FASTETC-based TESOL methodology course could help them to have positive *attitudes* of ETM and delve into *knowledge* and *skills* of EMT significantly.

In order to better the use of FASTETC in the course of TESOL methodology, the following recommendations can be considered. First of all, teacher trainers should train student teachers in detail about the FASTETC so that student teachers can understand what FASTETC is, how it works, and in what way it is relevant to the course outcomes. Moreover, teacher trainers should be consistent in assessing student teachers' teaching competency, basing on objective criteria. Secondly, lecturers who teach language skills should be informed about the FASTETC so that they can train their students in accordance with the assessment criteria of FASTETC in terms of English language proficiency. Likewise, students should pay more attention to improving their English language beforehand, so they will be able to avoid the English language difficulties in taking the course of ETM as well as to meet the learning outcomes. Thirdly, student teachers

should look for part-time jobs relevant to English language teaching in order to gain knowledge and skills of ETM, which can facilitate their teaching competency during the ETM course.

Nevertheless, this study still bears some limitations. Firstly, the pure quantitative research was employed in this study, so a further study should involve a mixed-methods study in triangulating the data as well as validating the findings. Secondly, a survey was conducted to gather research participants' perception of their teaching competency; hence, there should be an experiment with pre-test and post-test to measure student teachers' teaching competency for the future study so that the effectiveness of FASTETC can be further confirmed. Last but not least, this study used the FASTETC in a TESOL methodology course in which student teachers did not have much time to practice their teaching, so the FASTETC should be applied in the course of Teaching Practice in which student teachers will have more chances to practice and demonstrate their teaching.

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NHẬN THỨC CỦA GIÁO SINH VỀ NĂNG LỰC GIẢNG DẠY ĐƯỢC ĐÁNH GIÁ THEO KHUNG ĐÁNH GIÁ NĂNG LỰC GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG ANH

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Tóm tắt: Đào tạo giáo viên nhằm đáp ứng chuẩn nghề nghiệp là một trong những ưu tiên hàng đầu được các cơ sở đào tạo giáo viên đặt ra. Tuy nhiên, việc đánh giá năng lực giảng dạy của giáo sinh như thế nào được các nhà đào tạo giáo viên và giáo dục xem là một trong những mối quan tâm lớn. Do đó, nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu nhận thức của giáo sinh về năng lực giảng dạy (NLGD) của họ được đánh giá theo khung đánh giá NLGD thông qua khóa học Phương pháp giảng dạy tiếng Anh (PPGD) tại một trường đại học ở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Tham gia trả lời bảng câu hỏi là 85 giáo sinh chuyên ngành PPGD tiếng Anh. Kết quả cho thấy giáo sinh cho rằng họ có thể đáp ứng chuẩn đầu ra của khóa học và chuẩn nghề nghiệp về thái độ, kiến thức, kỹ năng giảng dạy tiếng Anh và kỹ năng ngôn ngữ Anh. Ngoài ra, giáo sinh còn nhận thấy kiến thức và kỹ năng giảng dạy của họ phát triển cao hơn so với thái độ về PPGD tiếng Anh. Những kết quả đạt được ban đầu này có thể giúp cho việc phát triển và sử dụng khung đánh giá NLGD để đánh giá và đảm bảo chất lượng NLGD của giáo sinh ở các cơ sở đào tạo giáo viên tương tự.

Từ khóa: giáo sinh; khung đánh giá năng lực giảng dạy; năng lực giảng dạy; phương pháp giảng dạy; tiếng Anh

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WASHBACK OF AN ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT TEST ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AT A VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Research on washback, i.e. test impacts on teaching and learning in class, of high-stake English tests is prevalent. Little attention has, however, been paid to washback of an English achievement test (EAT) albeit its highly practical significance including reporting and improving teacher effectiveness right in a programme in a specific context (El-Kafafi, 2012; Antineskul & Sheveleva, 2015). The present paper aims to explore teachers' perceptions of the teaching contents under the influence of an EAT which steps up to an English Proficiency Test - PET (or B1 level equivalent) for university undergraduates in Vietnam as required for graduation by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). The EAT, mirroring the PET, was designed to expect positive washback in the course English 2. The research tools were interviews with four teachers teaching the same English course. Each teacher was interviewed twice at two different time points so that their temporal developmental cognition of the EAT could be recorded. The findings revealed the heavy impact of the test on teachers' perceptions of their teaching contents. Two dominant points were (1) all the participants thought the course primarily served the EAT orientation, particularly in the test format and the linguistic input, and (2) the teachers should strictly follow the textbook as the major instructional source. There existed a mismatch between the university's purpose of enhancing the students' communicative ability and the teachers' perceptions. Differences in the teachers' backgrounds entailed their diverse perceptions. The study provides a reference case for the interested readers in and beyond the researched context.

Keywords: washback, English achievement tests, teachers' perceptions

1. Introduction

Language testing and assessment has emerged as an issue of due concern for its complex and pivotal nature in language education all over the world in recent decades. The 1990s recognized it as a mainstream of applied linguistics (Bachman, 2000) for its substantial contributions to innovative educational practices towards individual and societal demands (Alderson & Banerjee, 2002; Bachman, 2000; Hughes, 2003; Messick, 1996; Onaiba, 2013; Shohamy, 1993). Such countries as China, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam always highly appreciate the testing culture. In the epoch of globalization, Vietnam places more emphasis on the English language training in the national education system. The National Foreign Language (NFL) Project 2020, extended to 2025, requires innovation on learning, teaching and assessment of foreign languages at all levels. Vietnamese non-English-majored??

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undergraduates are required to reach a minimum of B1 (Independent Users), which pushes a large number of undergraduates to graduation delays because of the high failure rates in such graduation tests (Cao, 2018; Ha, 2016; Huy Lan, 2019; Thuy Nhan, 2016; Vu, 2016). Those at the researched university are of no exceptions. TOEIC, followed by simulated VSTEP, was applied but those tests seriously challenged the students. The university has recently shifted towards PET orientation, expecting more confidence from teachers and students and better success in the training. In other words, positive washback was expected like in Saif's study (2006) on test effects, i.e. washback, that turns dominant with "significant implication regarding test validation and fairness" (Cheng & Curtis, 2012, p. 440). In fact, research on washback of English language tests in the Vietnamese context has been conducted on either the international tests (Barnes, 2016b, 2017; Nguyen, 1997; Thuy Nhan, 2013; Tran, 2016) or national tests (Bùi, 2016; Nguyen, 2017a; Nguyễn, 2017b; T Nguyen, 2017; Nguyen, 2018). However, little research of this type has been recorded in Vietnam on a single university's internally-developed test in an attempt to meet MOET's requirement of tertiary students' English language proficiency. The current study will fill the gap by investigating the washback effects of an English achievement test (EAT) at a Vietnamese university on teachers' perceptions of their teaching contents. Teachers' perceptions normally attract researchers because they are considered a driving force to teachers' practices (Liauh, 2011; Pajares, 1992; Wang, 2010; Zeng, 2015). Teachers are selected as the informants for the research on the basis that teachers are facilitators or triggers of the washback process (Antineskul & Sheveleva, 2015; Bailey, 1999; Liauh, 2011; Onaiba, 2013; Richards & Lockhart, 2007; Tsagari, 2011; Wang, 2010). The EAT follows the PET format and its contents cover students' learning achievements within the course English 2. The training and assessment aim to familiarize students and teachers with the contents and formats of PET. The full PET exam will be the measurement tool for undergraduates' English proficiency as a condition for graduation.

A research question is posed as follows:

How does the EAT exert its washback effects on teachers' perceptions of their teaching contents at a university in Vietnam?

A qualitative approach with interviews was exploited to investigate the EAT washback on teachers' perceptions of their teaching contents. An overview of washback concepts, achievement tests, teachers' perceptions, and results from relevant empirical washback research initiated the methodology and the findings of the current study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Washback concepts

Washback is frequently mentioned beside *backwash, consequences* and *impact. Washback* and *backwash* refer to the same phenomenon (Cheng et al., 2004; Hughes, 2003) while it is not fully synonymous with *consequences* and *impact* (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Cheng et al., 2015; Pan, 2009). Consequences belong to general education measurement, pertaining to the matter of validity. Washback and impact, on the other hand, are narrowed down to the area of applied linguistics. Washback can be seen as a part of test impacts limited in the classroom (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Hughes, 2003) or spread its effects beyond the school (Alderson & Banerjee, 2001, 2002). The current research concerns washback in its narrow sense, limited to individuals in the classroom context.

Buck (1988, p. 17, cited in Bailey, 1999) was the first researcher to introduce washback as a "natural tendency for both teachers and students to tailor their classroom activities to the demand of the test" or "the influence of the

test on the classroom". Other general concepts of washback can be provided as "the effect of testing on teaching and learning" (Hughes, 2003, p.1); "the impact of external language tests to affect and drive foreign language learning in the school context" (Shohamy, 1993, p. 153); "the direct impact of testing on individuals" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 30) or the force for "teachers and learners to do things they would not necessarily otherwise do because of the test" (Alderson & Wall, 1993, p.1). If these definitions sound fairly general, specific factors are involved in the coming ones. Cohen (1994, p. 41) claims washback clarifies "how assessment instruments affect educational practices and beliefs". Messick (1996, p. 4) considers washback "the extent to which the introduction and use of a test influences language teachers and learners to do things they would not otherwise do that promote or inhibit language learning".

Other researchers extend the definition by identifying factors and participants involved in the change. Pierce (1992, p. 687), for example, adds washback as "the impact of a test [that] has on classroom pedagogy, curriculum pedagogy, curriculum development and educational policy". Pearson (1988, p. 7) states washback from the psychological perspective that "public examinations influence the attitudes, behaviours, and motivation of teachers, learners, and parents, and because the examinations often come at the end of a course, this influence is seen working in a backward direction, hence the term, washback". Nonetheless, he admitted that this direction can operate forward since tests can lead teaching and learning. Bullock (2017) states very clearly that washback effect is "the influence of the format or content of tests or examinations on the methods and content of teaching and learning leading up to the assessment". It is noted that the effects are only washback if they can be linked to the introduction and use of the targeted test (Messick, 1996).

The above analysis yields a clear shape of washback which means the test influence on teachers' psychological mechanism and actions to reach the educational goals. This research conceptualizes washback as the classroom impact of a test on teachers' and learners' perceptions and actions toward the teaching, learning and testing goals. Washback can operate in two ways, either positive or negative (Pan, 2009). A test has a beneficial washback if it enhances teaching and learning, especially improving students' language competence. By contrast, deleterious washback is seen if teaching and learning heavily stick to the test rather than true language ability. In the washback process, teachers are "the 'front-line' conduits for the washback processes related to instruction" (Bailey, 1999, p.17). They are supposed to introduce tests to students and accompany them to reach the goal. The present research endeavors to examine the washback mechanism of the EAT to teachers at a Vietnamese university to figure out how the test exerts its influence on their perception of the teaching contents in their English class.

2.2. Achievement tests

Tests can be categorized into *achievement* and *proficiency* (Hughes, 2003; McNamara, 2000; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Brown, 2013, Bachman, 1990). While proficiency tests are theory-based, i.e. testing test takers' "can-dos" in real life according to a given language proficiency theory, achievement tests are syllabus-based, i.e. assessing the curriculum objectives (Bachman, 1990; Bailey, 1998; Brown, 2013; Brown & Hudson, 2002; Cheng, Watanabe & Curtis, 2004; Hughes, 2003). Within this research scope, achievement tests are reviewed in terms of its role, definition and types.

Achievement tests play a central role in assessing students' accomplishment by the end of a unit or a programme (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 9; McNamara, 2000, p. 12; Walberg, 2011, p. 2). Its principal purpose is to announce the standard achievement for all stakeholders like students, teachers,

authorities, or parents from which appropriate decisions pertaining to learning and teaching reforms or mastery certification are made (Hughes, 2003; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). By definition, achievement tests evaluate the fulfilled amount of course contents pertaining to the course objectives (Hughes, 2003; McNamara, 2000; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Brown, 2013). Hughes (2000, p.13) classifies achievement tests into two types: *final* and *progress ones* in terms of the administration time. He provides sound arguments on the final achievement test approaches. Final achievement tests, happening at the end of the course, can follow either the syllabus content or the objectives. The syllabus-content-based approach appeals fair to students since tests cover what students have learned in the course. Nonetheless, if the school has unqualified syllabus and tests, the students' language ability that is expected to be measured with that achievement test can be misleading. For example, the old Vietnamese K12 English course books exclude listening, a radical element of communicative language. Hence, a high score in the English test, which is deficient of the listening test, cannot signify the score gainer's true language ability. The second approach aligns the test content with the course objectives. In this way, course objectives are made explicit to all course designers, teachers and students. Hughes (2003) believes that final achievement tests sticking to course objectives can interpret students' language ability better, therefore more positive washback can be created. However, choosing appropriate materials for established objectives is demanding. Plus, course objectives are more challenging to reach than course contents, which can lead to students' dissatisfaction of test results. This approach results in the blur between achievement tests and proficiency tests. Hughes (2010) argues, "If a test is based on the objective of a course, and these are equivalent to the language needs on which a proficiency is based, there is no reason to expect a difference between the form and content of the two tests" (p. 14). Final achievement tests are usually standardized since all the tests follow the same structures. Test writers and developers should ground on specific course objectives to design tests. Besides final achievement tests of the summative meaning, progressive achievement tests of the formative purpose are popular in language classrooms to measure to what extent students progress toward the end-course achievement. This achievement test runs into two streams. The first one administers final achievement tests repeatedly to expect a score rise as indicators of progress. This is blamed to be impractical, especially when students have insufficient syllabus exposure. The second one aims at short-term objectives, which matches the limited amount of the content students have learned. Feedback or reflection is fairly important for both teachers and students to adapt their teaching and learning correspondingly.

The achievement test in the current research, the EAT, is characterized as the second type which intends to gauge the sum of knowledge and skills non-English majored freshmen have attained in the course English 2 in the second semester. Generally, the EAT format mirrors the PET format, despite the reduction of the part number in each paper in the EAT. The overall aim of the test is to help the teachers make the students familiarise with the real PET format and samples, which they will encounter in their English graduation examination at the researched university. The two tests share three major common points. Firstly, both test students in four skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking. Secondly, both have a balanced weighting of 25% each part. Thirdly, the purpose of each paper in the two tests seems to be the same. According to B1 Preliminary Exam Format, the PET reading paper requires test takers to show they "can read and understand the main points from signs, newspapers and magazines, and can use vocabulary and structure correctly". The writing paper aims to assess

their ability of using "the structure correctly and produce communicative messages and informal letter/story". Their ability "to follow and understand a range of spoken materials including announcements and discussions about everyday life" should be shown in the listening paper. In the speaking part, they are expected to "show the ability to follow and understand a range of spoken materials including announcements and discussions about everyday life, then to take part in conversations by asking/answering questions and talking, for example, about your likes and dislikes". The same purpose is set for the EAT although these abilities are measured in the restricted topics given in the course English 2 because while the PET is a proficiency test, the EAT is an achievement one.

Paker (2012) investigates washback of test items in four language skills of the achievement tests in preparatory classes in 13 Turkish schools of Foreign Languages. Test items are selected to analyse, aiming at potential washback. To this extent, the research fails to address washback from participants' perspective, especially from the teachers'. The current study aims to fill into the gap by investigating washback of an English achievement test to teachers' perceptions of the course objectives and contents at a Vietnamese university.

2.3. Teachers' perceptions in washback research

Perception is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as "a belief or an opinion" or "an understanding". According to Buehl & Fives (2009), there is inconsistency in defining teachers' beliefs. While Green (2013) and Richardson (1996) distinguish beliefs from attitudes and knowledge, Borg (2003) and Pajares (1992) define beliefs as knowledge, perceptions and attitudes. Then, perceptions can be understood through the definitions of beliefs. Rokeach (1969, p. 113 as cited in Skott (?, p. 17) sets beliefs as an "integrated cognitive system" or "any simple proposition . . . inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase 'I believe that …". Pajares (1992, p. 316) defines beliefs as an "individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do". Richardson (1996, p. 102) names beliefs as "a subset of a group of constructs that name, define, and describe the structure and content of mental states that are thought to drive a person's actions". Perceptions belong to these constructs.

In washback research, teachers' perceptions are grounded on the label "attitudes", "feelings" (Mahmoudi, 2013; Tsagari, 2011, pp. 434-435), "beliefs" (Wang, 2010), "understanding" (Cheng, 2004; Hsu, 2009). Antineskul and Sheveleva (2015) link teachers' perceptions to such terms as "attitude", "think", "like", and "know" (pp. 8-12). Onaiba (2013, p. 56) accredits perception washback to feelings, beliefs, attitudes toward the test. Only Mahmoudi (2013) mentions perceptions and attitudes separately from the title of his research, and only Green (2013) talks about beliefs, not perceptions. Green (2013) raises specific questions on teachers' beliefs about teaching and testing. Regarding teaching, they are teachers' beliefs of effective teaching strategies and their compatibility with test demands, of test preparation challenges and of "local precedents" for that preparation. In terms of a specific test, the author is concerned about teachers' beliefs of their familiarity with the test, of its use and role. Cheng (2004) and Hsu (2009) are two researchers who best specify teaching aspects under the test influence. Both Cheng (2004) and Hsu (2009) propose aspects of classroom teaching in teachers' perceptions, including test rationales and formats, the teaching methods and activities. Cheng (2004) extends his concerns to workload and teaching difficulties under test impacts, while Hsu (2009) is interested in teachers' using mock exams and course books and students' learning strategies and activities.

From the above review, teachers' perceptions under the influence of a test denote how teachers feel, think about, believe and understand that test and their classroom teaching practices. Nonetheless, it would be reasonable to exclude test formats in the current study of teachers' perceptions since test factors should be seen as triggers to classroom practices rather than practices as Cheng (2004) and Hsu (2009) discuss. This view is in accordance with Shih's (2009) framework on teachers' factors in washback mechanism. Washback to teachers' perceptions, according to Dinh (2019), ranges from teaching contents, methodology and professional development. The present research is limited to the first component of what teachers think they teach under the influence of the EAT.

2.5. Empirical washback research on teachers' perception of teaching contents at the tertiary level

Publications reveal that teachers perceive washback to teachers' perceptions of teaching contents in two opposite trends, either a match or a mismatch between the test contents and the taught contents.

Wall and Horak (2011) report the washback effects of the TOEFL iBT on the teaching contents positively from European higher education institutions. Textbooks are updated, informing both teachers and students of the content of teaching, learning and testing. They even orient their classroom behaviours. VSTEP in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2017) exerts positive effects on teaching sources. The author appreciates the material called "Learners' Outcomes and Profile", which specifies students' required knowledge and skills in each learning stage and the supplementary materials of grammar points and vocabulary banks for each level. The teachers in her study believe that the materials and skills taught in the courses for VSTEP can support students to cope with any test types. This is an idea which has not appeared in other studies in this review. In addition, the participants in Saif's (2006) study believe that the textbook strategies well enhance students' learning of presentation skills.

On the other hand, Liauh's (2011) research on the washback effects of the Exit English Examination (EEE) in Taiwanese universities reports teachers' beliefs in the need of further provision of good quality teaching materials for the students' self-study for their EEE. They ask for additional English courses in the curriculum to increase their students' passing rate in the test. Outdated course books are used in the case of the test for Business English Certificate (BEC) in Russia (Antineskul & Sheveleva, 2015); therefore, teachers need collaboration to enrich and update their teaching materials although sometimes the relationship is hard to be established. The two authors have reported the discrepancies between the course contents and the students' needs. Teachers have to face students' command of their present practical skills rather than teachers' preparation for their long-life skills. For example, a student just needs to learn to write the letter of offer instead of the letter of complaint because they are in need of it for the moment (Antineskul & Sheveleva, 2015, p.11). Teachers have to explain and balance the want and the need. In Vietnam, Thuy Nhan (2013, p.38) also adds the mismatch between the curriculum and the contents required for an exit gate-keeping test of TOEFL. Those authors expect the correlation between the materials employed in the teaching process and the contents measured the product. Nonetheless, Hsu (2009, pp.136-137) reports a group of Taiwanese teachers think tertiary English language teaching should serve the world of work, not the test only; therefore, their textbook choice is not impacted by the test policy. In addition, they think students need various sources of materials to meet the demand of a proficiency test. They use textbooks, language laboratory, test-oriented materials and other authentic materials of magazines, newspapers, radio and television,

with textbooks being dominant. Wall & Horák (2006) are in line with these authors. The teachers in their research, while agreeing on in-class textbooks, encourage students to practice with authentic materials. Teachers in Tran's (2016) research at a Vietnamese university agree with those in Hsu's (2009) and Wall & Horák's (2006). Although the content of the textbook is not directly relevant with that of TOEIC, which serves as a gate-keeping test, the teachers think highly of its relevance to the world of work after students' graduation.

In most of the previous studies, teachers believe that it is necessary to have the correlation between the taught contents and the test contents and that they both should back up students' language ability at work. These results are mainly extracted from the high-stakes tests. The question on how teachers believe their taught contents under the influence of a low-stakes test will be answered in this study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Setting

The research was conducted at a university in the North of Vietnam. English is taught as the dominating foreign language to the undergraduates. Generally, the students at the university were of low English proficiency. Under MOET's requirement, the institution adopted the two-language-skill TOEIC, and then the four-language-skill simulated VSTEP as the major measurement instruments of the undergraduates' foreign language condition for graduation from 2010 to 2018. Nonetheless, these two test types challenged the students at high failure rates. The situation motivated the shift towards the four-language-skill PET instead. Prior to the formal PET examination, 2 courses English 1 and English 2 are delivered, in which the students' accomplishment was gauged with the final EAT in the shortened form of the PET. The university's leaders anticipated beneficial washback to teaching and learning.

3.2. Participants

Four female teachers teaching English 2 having the final EAT at a university in the North of Vietnam participated in the research on the basis of purposive sampling. Teacher factors, an important variable in washback research (Alderson & Wall, 1996; Read & Hayes, 2003; Shih, 2009; Wantanabe, 1996) were collected via an interview. Teacher 1 is the Head of the Division of English for Specific Purposes where English 2 in the current research is designed and implemented. She has six years of work experience in the Division. Two other teachers are not in the leadership positions but they are experienced. Teacher 2 has been working as an English teacher in the Division for 15 years, and Teacher 3 has 18 years of working experience. Teacher 2 is the person who introduces the course book and is involved in developing the EAT. Teacher 4 is a two-year-experienced teacher. All the teachers report that they are familiar with the contextual factors and the test factors. Except Teacher 3 who shows a normal degree of commitment to teaching and student success in the test, all the others own high involvement. It is noted that washback existence was ever questioned by Alderson and Wall (1993), but Watanabe (2004, p.28) suggests a way to track its evidence. According to him, washback comes into existence if (1) the *same* teacher teaches the exam-preparation class differently from non-exam-preparation class, and (2) *different* teachers teach *different* classes of exam preparations the *same*. All the participants are involved in teaching different classes with the same programme, which promises washback. The EAT measures students' final achievement. The course book selected is Complete PET.

3.3. Instruments

Teachers' perceptions "cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, do – fundamental

perquisites that educational researchers have seldom followed" (Pajares, 1992, p.314). Creswell (2009) claims that an effective means to collect information regarding beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and behavior is a survey or an interview. The current study exploited the interview instrument to reach the research aim. The semi-structured interviews were designed. The validity and reliability of the instrument were piloted with two non-participant teachers in the same context. The interviews used Vietnamese as the channel to make the respondents voice their thoughts fully in the most confident manner. Le (2011) believes that two interlocutors of the same mother tongue would feel more comfortable when communicating in their own common language.

The interviews of the teachers' perceptions of their teaching contents based on a guideline (Appendix) including three parts of course objectives, teaching sources and teaching topics. The course objectives could be represented by three questions concerning each teacher's actual teaching objectives and the syllabus and the test objectives. The researcher sought teachers' beliefs of their teaching sources by asking four questions on teachers' must-use materials and should-use materials together with their rationales. Teaching topics were found via the answers on four questions about what topics must be and should be included in the course.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

The pilot interviews took place with the non-participant teachers to check the transparency of the meanings of the questions. A recorder was used to record the data. After the pilot interview, some questions were deleted, some added and some re-worded for clarity and richness. For example, question one in the pilot interview is "*How do you think of the objectives of Course English 2?*" was modified into a set of detailed question like in the Appendix. Then, the official interview took place with the individual participating teachers. Nonetheless, the interview contents were still open to changes. The first interviews were transcribed and coded for the analysis. Only relevant data is translated into English. The convention of *T1, Int1, p.1*, for example, signified an excerpt taken from Teacher 1, Interview 1, Page 1. The sign "< >" referred to the researcher's clarification. Supplementary interviews were made to clarify several ambiguous points, thus seeking deeper data. Patterns were depicted from the analysed data.

4. Findings and discussion

The findings from the data collection and analysis are presented in themes, which allows both individual cases and cross-cases to be seen (Duff, 2008). The study aims to see how the EAT impacts the teachers' perceptions of their teaching objectives. Since the EAT mirrored the PET, these tests were mentioned interchangeably here and there. Overall, the test exerted its significant impacts on the teaching objectives most.

4.1. The washback of the EAT on the teachers' perceptions of the teaching objectives

4.1.1. PET/EAT orientation

All the four teachers agreed that the course objectives should be set to equip the students with the PET/EAT linguistic knowledge and format input so that the students could be successful in the exam. It is noted that PET is an umbrella test for EAT in the research case. In terms of the linguistic inputs, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation are three principal components. However, all the interviewed teachers were concerned about vocabulary and grammar rather than pronunciation. Only Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 were concerned about teaching pronunciation as one sub-aim. The test approach was also expressed in the teachers' view of one course objective as *providing the test skills and test format*. Teacher 1 was interested in the provision of the test format most with 41 times mentioning this (see Table 1). She believed that the

students could be more confident in the exam if they were exposed to the test format as much as possible, then this increased their passing rate. She was the only one explicitly expressing the need of providing the test sources for the students. This can be explained from her background as a head teacher who is experienced and has more responsibility of the students' exam success. Teacher 4, a novice, owned a higher frequency of thinking about the role of test source provision than Teacher 2 and Teacher 3.

"The common objectives of the course is to provide the students with the knowledge of *grammar* and *vocabulary* together with *training the test skills* in the orientation of the *graduation test of the international PET*" (T1, Int1, p.1).

Teacher 2 agreed that the course aim is to "provide the students with basic knowledge from elementary to pre-intermediate"; therefore, the teachers should "cater *grammar, vocabulary* and *test skills* which practically serves *PET tests of B1 level as the graduation test*" (In2, p.1). She believed that the teachers' duty is to "help students *acquire the knowledge* in the course… and how to *help students pass the EAT*" (Int2, p.2). In the similar vein, Teacher 4, the novice, expressed her view of the course objectives as "*serving the students' passing the exam in the PET format*" (Int1, p.2; Int2, p.3). It is interesting that she regularly talked about the word "exam advice" which is part of the book for any test tasks throughout the interview. The phrase did not occur in the first interview but the second one when she really became more familiar with the book while teaching.

By comparison, while Teacher 4 had six times mentioning her role in "helping students to pass the exam" in two interviews of her perceptions, her words did not specify any "PET" or "EAT' despite the general word "test".

Students' passing the exam was obviously stated as the main goal of the course. Learning vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, test tasks all served that goal. The research case was a little bit unique when the EAT was strongly affected by the PET as a graduation test later for the students.

4.1.2. Communicative enhancement

Communication, either in the spoken or written form, is the end of language learning. The updated English 2, which has the EAT to measure its effectiveness, was supposed to increase the students' communicative competence. A majority of the bachelors from the researched university face the problems of using English effectively. That decreased their professional opportunities, affecting the university's reputation. The data will reveal whether this expected positive washback did take place.

Surprisingly, Teacher 1 did not state her view about it while other teachers, especially Teacher 2 thought highly of one course aim as improving students' communication skill now and for the future. She stated, "The course English 2 mainly aims at equipping students' *communicative competence* not only now but in the future" (Int2, p.1), or "The teaching process has to improve students' *communication skill*" (Int2, p.10). She was aware of the university policy, which "requires the *communicative teaching approach*" so that "I think we have to teach the students to communicate with teachers, with friends, with the outsiders (Int2, p.1). Teacher 3 echoed the view when she thought that "has a practical purpose which is to improve *students' communication* skills through speaking and writing" (Int.1, p.1). Productive skills were mentioned clearly in her speech. Plus, she believed in the "*balance* between the *test purpose* <students' passing the exam> and the *communication purpose"* (Int2, p.13). According to Teacher 4, the university policy asked her to teach in the communicative approach (Int1, p.1) and she balanced between the aim of supporting the students in the exam and training their English communication (Int2, p.13).

The interview outcomes revealed that Teacher 2 and Teacher 4 considered communication purpose even more important

than test passing purpose. Teacher 4 as a novice seemed to be dependent on the university policy while no other teachers mentioned that administrative level.

4.2.3. Others

In the interviews, other course purposes emerged from the teachers' perspective. A very different point which other teachers but Teacher 2 did not care obviously was *teaching and learning effectiveness*. She stated,

"The course objective, like other courses, includes *evaluating teachers' teaching quality* and *students' learning quality.* I am interested in knowing the results of my teaching and students' learning." (T2, Int1, p.1)

"The effectiveness of my teaching can be expressed via students' *happiness in clas*s, their *participation in class*, their *test scores in the exam*…. The students' effectiveness is the same, especially their passing scores." (T2, Int2, p.1)

Looking back at her background, she is a key teacher in the course, introducing the course book, developing the EAT, showing a high commitment to students' success in the course. It is reasonable when she set a course aim as *measuring the training efficiency*. This point is very different from other teachers' in this and other washback research.

Table 1. Frequency of the teachers' words related to the teaching objectives

Words	T1	T2	T3	T4
PET/EAT vocabulary	17	11	4	3
PET/EAT grammar	7	14	3	5
PET/EAT pronunciation	2	3	0	0
PET/EAT test skills	4	7	0	4
PET/EAT format	41	1	1	3
PET/EAT sources	3	0	0	0
Communicative enhancement	0	8	2	2
Teacher effectiveness measurement	0	1	0	0
Learner effectiveness measurement	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	74	46	10	17

Course objectives are considered the triggers of teachers' teaching. According to Saif (2006, p.28), the course objectives are based on the test objectives and the test components. As stated in the literature review, the EAT aims to measure the students' language ability achievement at the end of the course with the test instrument of an imitation PET of four language skills. Furthermore, the EAT familiarizes the students with the PET graduation test at the studied site. Linguistic input is the means, not the end of the course and the test objectives. Nonetheless, the interview results revealed that the teachers highly appreciated grammar and vocabulary, which were explicitly stated in only the writing skill, not in the other three skills. Communication purpose was openly stated by Teachers 2, 3, 4, especially by Teacher 2, who regularly showed her high commitment to her teaching in both the teacher background interview and teacher perception ones. The teachers' sharing thought of knowledge and test skill/format provision in this research was in line with Nguyen (2017) who studied washback of VSTEP to teaching at another Vietnamese university. Moreover, the teachers thought they should combine the course objectives and the test objectives together. Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 believed that these two sets of objectives were the same and drew equal attention. Nonetheless, Teacher 2 and Teacher 4 were more favourable of the course objective of communicative ability enhancement as stated at the university. They believed the course objectives were actualized in every lesson. A salient summarized point from the finding was that Teacher 1 as a leader

has 74 times mentioning the word pertaining to the course objectives, followed by Teacher 2 and Teacher 4. It can be interpreted that the teachers of more accountability will be more aware of their teaching goal.

4.2. The washback of the EAT to the teachers' perceptions of the teaching sources

Regarding teachers' perspectives of the course sources, the course book and the supplement materials were studied in relevance to the teachers' evaluation of the relationship between the course book and the EAT.

4.2.1. Course book

As decided by the leadership, the course book selected was Complete PET which received all the teachers' positive attitudes. English 2 was redesigned so the book was used for the first time.. Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 thought the book "interesting". They appreciated its good features including clear explanation, good application, and exam advice. Through two perspective interviews, Teacher 1 agreed that the new course book helped the students "approach *grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation* which are very basic, and it provides them with <test> *skills*, especially the *test format*" (Int2, p.1). She added,

"…a *good point* in the book is grammar. It is very *clear*. It is explained, especially in the context. In the test format, grammar is not explicitly stated in writing or reading; however, the exercises <test tasks> are *closely relevant*. <so that the book> helps students to have a firm background. …. It is interesting that the *grammar points* were *integrated* in the topic… and the way they <the book> explains… It serves reading and writing… For example, *sentence transformation*… the present perfect and the past simple… there is the *transformation*…. the book *clearly explains* the difference between two tenses… And in the subsequent part, there is *application*, for example, for task 1 to rewrite the sentence… how to rewrite the sentence…" (T1, Int2, p7-8)

There was a growth in the teacher's belief of the course book. The second interview showed Teacher 1's deeper understanding of the book content and its application to the course and the test purposes. Grammar, vocabulary, test skills, test formats were frequently mentioned. Teacher 2 became aware of the "exam advice" in the book. She compared the book Complete PET with the book New English File which was used in the previous course English 2. It seems that the second interview conducted when the teacher was more familiar with the book increased her specific comments about the book quality. She was interested in the book grammar points, the link between grammar and its application in the test skills.

In the same vein, Teacher 4 claimed the book "gives *detailed* <course and test> *objectives* and *orientate* reading, writing parts for the students" (Int2, p.2). Her subsequent perception affirmed that point:

> "Complete Pet is *reasonable, suitable* to the students. It is classified into four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. And, in each skill, there is the phrase *Exam Advice*. The listening part has an *Exam Advice* box too … And the reading has *Exam Advice*, the students can see what they should do." (Int2, p.3, 4)

Teacher 4 was interested in the "exam advice" in the book. She compared the book Complete PET with the book New English File which was used in the previous course English 2. The previous book "does not have the *Exam Advice* to help the students… It made students *self study,* so they could not know how to cope with the lesson and the test tasks." (Lan, Int2, p.4). Differently from the experienced teachers, Teacher 4 with her novice role needed the exam advice to guide her students clearly in her lessons.

By comparison, Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 thought the book contained the whole necessary information and they used the book as a compulsory source. Teacher 4 said, "the Complete PET is rather long and fairly *contains all four skills*… and *activities… test tasks*" (Int2, p.4).

Moreover, Teacher 4 stated that she used the course book as "the mutual agreement in the Division" (Int2 p.2) and "the leader's requirement" (Int2, p.3). She and other teachers in the Division agreed that the book could "classify the knowledge and supply a standard B1 format for students" (Int2, p.2). She valued the book in helping the students pass the EAT (In2, p.3).

Once again, the novice teacher was more likely to be led by the policy. When asked whether the test impacted the teaching or vice versa, she said, "we have to decide the test first and then find out a suitable coursebook to teach students." (T4, Int2, p.5). Regarding washback research, a question that may be raised is whether the tail (the test) walks the dog (the syllabus and the teaching). Teacher 4's answer contributes to the rationale of washback research, which means the test can affect backward as Hugh (2003) defined this term. Teachers' commitment to teaching and student success seems to be a variable to the frequency of the phrase "Complete PET". The frequency in the teachers' perception is presented in Table 6 in the subsequent part.

4.2.2. Supplement materials

It is reasonable to say that if the EAT merely gauges the students' learning outcomes in a programme, one course book can be sufficient. Nevertheless, it takes a further role of equipping students with the PET sources preparing for a graduation test. Hence, other PET test series and the like are supposed to be present in the data bank.

Surprisingly, while Teacher 1 stated that the course aimed to provide the PET sources (see 4.2.1.2), she only appreciated the textbook in the second interview.

> "Actually, I think <supplementary materials are> necessary. However, the *heavy number of lessons and knowledge* prevents it. The *workbook* is enough because its content is close to what students need to learn. However, as you know, … Actually the students are of mixed abilities… so we want to provide the students with more of test format, mock tests… in reality, many feel difficult, so I only used the classwork. Those books <PET tests> I don't check in class but require them to do at home." (Int2, p.4-5)

She called out four practical reasons for the little use of supplementary materials: students' low proficiency, limited course time, large classes and students' limited interests. Teacher 2 shared the common view of the heavy reliance on the course book. She said, "I am attracted to the PET reference sources for example PET tests from 1 to 8" (Int2, p.4) and "Other materials only add more tasks for students' practice. No other course books should be exploited" (Int2, p.6).

Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 showed the change in their perception of using the textbook and the supplement materials. In the first interview, Teacher 3 (Int1, p.4) was worried about time limit while Teacher 4 (Int1, p.5) was concerned about the knowledge insufficiency. After several teaching weeks, they changed their mind and decided the PET tests could be used and that supported students' better awareness of the whole EAT format (T3, Int2, p.4; T4, Int2, p11)

Another interesting point found out from the data was Teacher 1 thought she could ask her students to bring their own materials to class. For example, she would require them to bring the family photo to class for the speaking lesson of describing a picture. She believed that this facilitated active learning and personalised the lesson, so that the students could have a better engagement sense. By contrast, Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 might spend time designing their own teaching materials for the students.

Table 2 illustrates the teachers' diverse beliefs of the instructional sources under the influence of the EAT. From the literature review (see 2.5), most researchers found teachers' dissatisfaction with the teaching materials they had for the course (Antineskul & Sheveleva, 2015; Hsu, 2009; Thuy Nhan, 2013; Tran, 2016). Only two authors,

Nguyen (2017) and Saif (2009), express their respondents' positive beliefs of the materials in use. The findings from this research provide a bright sign for washback to teachers' perceptions under the EAT at the university. All the teachers believed that the book totally fit their students' needs of passing the exam and communication. No blames on the course book were found. Only a few supplementary materials were needed to motivate students. This finding was in contrast to other researchers' when the teachers needed more materials to support their students. This can be explained by the test nature; all the test in the research, except BEC (Antineskul & Sheveleva, 2015), are highstake. Here again the total frequency of teachers' words of course materials was in cohesion with that of course objectives (4.1) with Teacher 1 at the top and Teacher 4 at the bottom.

Table 2. Frequency of the teachers' words related to the teaching sources

Words	T1	T2	T3	T4
Complete PET	19	15	6	7
PET 1-8	1	2	1	4
Online sources	1	2	0	0
Student-prepared materials	1	0	0	0
Teacher-designed sources	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	22	19	8	12

4.3. The washback of the EAT on the teachers' perceptions of the teaching topics

The book Complete PET has 12 units, but the syllabus narrows it down to eight units from one to eight. According to Pan (2009), reducing the number of the topics is one type of negative washback. The researcher looks for the teachers' thought of either topic reduction or extension and the underlying reasons for such views.

All the four teachers agreed that the topics they had to teach in class were predetermined by the division and they were exactly the topics the students would be tested in the exam (T1, Int1, pp.5-6; T2, Int1, p.5, Int2, p.13; T3, Int2, p.3; T4, Int1, p.4; Int2, p.7). However, Teacher 2 was inclined towards topic extensions for the reading skill.

> "*Regarding the speaking skill, writing skill and listening skill, <the topics> are the same*. However, *there were differences in reading skills.* In oder to have correct answers in the reading skills, *the students have to have more knowledge, not only around the topics.* If the students learn that way <the topic only>, they are limited. *They have to upgrade a bit more*." (Int2, p.13)

Teacher 4 was in alignment with Teacher 2 in extending the topics for the students if her students need (Int2, p.7)

Teacher 1 was more practical to base on the test stake to state,

> "*We don't teach all the things in the book*. Especially *the EAT is only a transformation of the PET*, an equivalent. Therefore, the requirement is lower than the international PET [....] *When we design the test, we determine that what we test is what the students learn, so the topics we deliver to the students, set in the syllabus, are those for the test […] It <topic extension> must be hard because their entrance ability is not as we expect, A2 level. Many students are under that level. So topic extensions are not possible* […] As I have said ***we do not have time***. […] Then we teach the PET format. The

teacher can guide the students to do relevant exercises. *I think the topic can be extended but in a large class, for example of 60 students, we are hard to cover them.*" (Int2, pp.3-6)

She did not think she taught all the things in the topics because the EAT was downsized from the PET. Other affecting factors were the students' low ability, the limited time allowance and the large class were repeated like the conclusion in 4.2.2.1.

When the teachers' perceptions were compared to their practices, the class observations showed that all the teachers followed the textbook strictly.

The findings from the data reveal that the teaching materials were in line with the proposed models by Bachman and Palmer (1996), Bailey (1999), Green (2007) and Shih (2009). Topic reduction is considered negative washback (Pan, 2009; Shohamy, 1996; Bachman, 2010, Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Wall, 2005, Watanabe, 1996). However, concerning the contextual factors like the students' ability, the time allocation, and the test stake, such downsize is reasonable. It enables the teachers to focus on the teaching contents in the limited timeframe (Bachman (1990), Messick (1996), and Turner (2006, cited in Wang, 2010). The textbook was updated like in the case reported by Wall and Horák (2011) and Nguyen (2017). Another shining point lied in the teachers' positive attitude toward the textbook contents, which is similar to the results in Saif (2006), Nguyen (2007). Little evidence of material development and extension was found as Hughes (1993), Nguyen (2017) call out for the nature of the achievement test. Strong washback to teaching contents was assured when the textbook illustrated the test contents.

Table 3. Frequency of the teachers' words related to the teaching topics

Words	T1	T2	T3	T4
Topics reduced due to restricted course time	2	4	2	1
Topics reduced due to student low proficiency	3	0	1	1
Topics reduced due to large classes	1	0	0	0
Topics? reduced due to the relevance to the EAT	0	0	1	0
Topics? related to the EAT topics	0	0	2	1
Topics? extended to improve students' learning	1	1	0	1
Total	7	5	6	4

With respect to the topics, no explicit words in previous review were called out; nonetheless, it is an integral part of the teaching contents. This research finding shows that the words pertaining to topics occurs less frequently than those to objectives and materials. Teacher 1 still owned the highest frequency and Teacher 3 was opposite to Teacher 1 (See Table 1, Table 2).

The following figure visualises the EAT washback on the teachers' perception of the teaching contents in English 2.

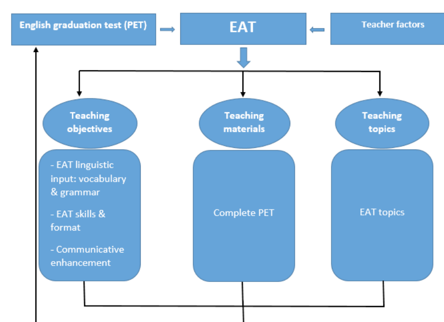

Figure 1. EAT washback to teachers' perceptions of teaching contents

5. Conclusion and pedagogical implication

The findings from the research suggested that the EAT made significant impacts on teachers' perceptions of the course contents, embracing the course objectives, materials and topics. Teachers' background had a meaning to different perception degrees.

The case was compelling because the EAT was embedded in the PET as an English graduation test for the undergraduates at the researched university. Normally an EAT is low stake. According to Alderson and Wall (1993), no washback is expected in such tests. The findings proved the opposite fact. The teaching objectives were obviously known to all the teachers, followed by the teaching materials and the teaching topics. There was a mismatch between the university expectations from the course and the teachers' perceptions of the course objectives. Communicative ability upgrading was anticipated in the course. The university hopes their undergraduates can survive well in the modern world of work with their English competencies. However, almost all the teachers thought the course goal was the students' passing rate, so they tried to equip them with the test knowledge, skill and format. Few ideas of raising the communication ability were found out. Concerning the materials, all the teachers were in favour of the course book, which directly served the exam contents. The book contained a variety of topics, but the teachers chose the topic narrowing as stated in the syllabus. Pan (2009) may call this either a negative or positive impact of the test, depending on the communicative ability gain from teaching. If this restriction allows students to acquire knowledge and be able to apply it in the real life context, the washback should be viewed as beneficial. It is opposite if students can only do well in the test. According to the research findings, communication is one test objective. This research is limited in the sense that it views teachers' perceptions, not practices; therefore, researchers should be more careful to reach the conclusion of the actual washback. Regarding teacher factors, the teachers who took more accountability to the student success showed the most impact degree. The current study is meaningful in that it provides the explicit course objectives in teachers' thoughts, from which policy makers and leaders can come to suitable administration policies.

The research leaves research gaps for further studies. The first gap lies in the number of participants. More teachers should participate in such research to release a wider data range. Secondly, triangulation methods can be applied, for example, with surveys and class observations contributing to the research validity. Thirdly, other aspects of washback of the EAT to teachers' perceptions like methodology, professional development will be for further studies.

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TÁC ĐỘNG DỘI NGƯỢC CỦA BÀI THI HẾT HỌC PHẦN LÊN NHẬN THỨC CỦA GIÁO VIÊN TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Có nhiều nghiên cứu về tác động dội ngược vào lớp học của các bài thi có tính quyết định cao. Tuy nhiên, có ít nghiên cứu chú ý tới tác động dội ngược này của các bài thi cuối khóa (EAT) dù các bài thi này có ý nghĩa thực tiễn cao, ví dụ như thông báo và nâng cao hiệu quả giảng dạy của giáo viên ngay trong chương trình học tại một cơ sở giáo dục cụ thể (El-Kafafi, 2012; Antineskul & Sheveleva, 2015). Mục đích của bài viết này là nghiên cứu tác động dội ngược của một bài thi cuối khóa (EAT) lên nhận thức của giáo viên về mục tiêu của khóa học và tài liệu giảng dạy trong lớp học. Khóa học này có ý nghĩa tương đối quan trọng, như là bước đệm cho sinh viên bước vào bài thi PET đo chuẩn đầu ra chính thức trình độ B1 tại môt trường đại học ở Việt Nam theo yêu cầu của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo. Cấu trúc bài thi EAT dựa trên bài thi PET. Công cụ nghiên cứu là phỏng vấn bốn giáo viên cùng giảng dạy khóa học này. Mỗi giáo viên được phỏng vấn hai lần để tác giả có thể ghi lại sự tiến triển nhận thức trong quá trình giảng dạy. Kết quả nghiên cứu chỉ ra bài thi tác động mạnh mẽ tới nhận thức của giáo viên về mục tiêu và nội dung giảng dạy. Hai kết quả nổi bật là: (1) tất cả các giáo viên đều đồng ý rằng mục đích khóa học phục vụ định hướng thi cử hết khóa và cả bài thi PET, đặc biệt về dạng bài thi và nguồn ngôn ngữ, (2) giáo viên nên tuân thủ chặt chẽ giáo trình. Có sự lệch pha giữa mục đích nâng cao năng lực giao tiếp của người học với nhận thức thực tế của giáo viên về việc học để thi. Sự khác biệt về kiến thức, kinh nghiệm nền tảng của các giáo viên dẫn đến sự khác biệt về nhận thức. Kết quả nghiên cứu phục vụ như nguồn tham khảo cho các độc giả trong và ngoài bối cảnh nghiên cứu.

Từ khóa: tác động dội ngược, bài thi tiếng Anh cuối khóa, nhận thức của giáo viên

Appendix – Interview guideline of teachers' perceptions of teaching contents

ASPECTS	QUESTIONS
1. Course objectives	1. What is your actual teaching objective in Course English 2? How do you think about the combination between the teaching objective of Course English 2 and the objective of the final English achievement test (EAT) of the course? Why? 2. Do you reach the test objective in every lesson or some lessons? Why?
1 2. Teaching sources	1. The teaching material for the course is Complete PET. The test materials are Complete PET and PET tests. What materials do you use ? Why ? 2. How do you evaluate Complete PET in relevance with the EAT ? 3. Do you teach all the parts in the textbook or select some parts ? What parts do you select ? 4. Do you use supplementary materials in teaching to meet the objective(s) of the EAT ? If yes, what are they ?
1.3. Topics	1. Are the topics of Complete PET the same as those of the EAT? 2. Do you think you should cover all the topics in Complete PET? Why (not)? 3. Do you think you should provide more topics? Why (not)? 4. How can the topics server students' learning? 5. How can the topics help the EAT?