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**RESEARCH**

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**CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICAN DESCRIPTIVE  
LINGUISTIC SCHOOL TO THE STUDY  
OF VIETNAMESE: A CONTEMPORARY LOOK**

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**Abstract:** This article examines the contributions of the American descriptive linguistic school in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to the study of Vietnamese. Two most important monographs on Vietnamese grammar by two foremost American descriptivist/structuralist grammarians were taken for examination: *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* by Murray B. Emeneau and *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* by Laurence C. Thompson. It is clear that among the foreign scholars who have studied Vietnamese, Emeneau and Thompson have made the most substantial contributions to the study of Vietnamese grammar. They both have made a major point in seeking to analyse Vietnamese on the basis of Vietnamese alone, trying to avoid as much as possible any distortion from Indo-European grammatical concepts; and thus have produced good and reliable results. Their descriptive works on Vietnamese are detailed and systematic, meeting most of the criteria of a standard grammar: meticulousness, comprehensiveness, lucidity, rigor, and elegance. Together with the studies of Vietnamese grammar by grammarians of other linguistic traditions, either indigenous or foreign, their works have enriched our ways of looking at language, broadening our understanding of one of the most fruitful approaches to the study of Vietnamese grammar.

*Keywords:* American descriptive linguistic school, Vietnamese language, Vietnamese grammar, Emeneau, Thompson

**1. Introduction**

In his research on the influence of different linguistic schools/approaches to the study of Vietnamese, Hoang Van Van (2012) divides the study of Vietnamese grammar into three main periods: the first period, referred to as ‘proto-grammatics of Vietnamese’, starts roughly from the early 1860s (the time the French invaded Vietnam) through to the 1930s; the second period - ‘the transitional stage’ lasts

around the late 1940s up to the end of the 1980s; and the third period - ‘the functional descriptions of Vietnamese’ brings us to the present. Of the three periods, the transitional period is perhaps the most vigorous and exciting one. It is characterized by the diversity of approaches to the description of Vietnamese. It is no exaggeration to say that almost all the ‘isms’ in world linguistics can be found in the works of scholars studying Vietnamese in this period. On the one hand, one may note that French traditional approach to language study still existed in a number of early grammars

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(e.g. Pham Tat Dac, 1950; Tran Trong Kim et al., 1940; Nguyen Truc Thanh, 1956; Bui Duc Tinh, 1952). On the other hand, the imprint of French structuralism and Russian formalism could be found in the writings of Vietnamese as well as Russian scholars studying Vietnamese (e.g. Nguyen Tai Can, 1975a, 1975b; Truong Van Chinh and Nguyen Hien Le, 1963; Le Van Ly, 1948; Solntsev et al., 1960; Nguyen Kim Than, 1977; UBKHXH, 1983) while American descriptivism or the American structuralist approach greatly influenced the work of at least some southern Vietnamese and American grammarians of Vietnamese. A brief account of the “isms” that are supposed to have influenced the study of Vietnamese grammar would be useful but would go beyond the scope of this paper. The point of reference for these schools of linguistics is to be found in such volumes as *Schools of Linguistics* by Sampson (1980) and *A Short History of Linguistics* by Robins (1997, 2012), and *An Experiential Grammar of the Vietnamese Clause* by Hoang Van Van (2012). In what follows, I shall be specifically concerned with discussing the contributions made by American descriptive linguistic school to the study of Vietnamese grammar. Two questions raised for exploration are, “How is Vietnamese anatomized by grammarians of American descriptive linguistic school?”, and “What contributions do they make to the description of Vietnamese grammar?” Among the various American scholars who have studied Vietnamese, Murray B. Emeneau and Laurence C. Thompson are the foremost writers. It is their works on Vietnamese grammar that we shall consider below.

## 2. Murray B. Emeneau

In the late 1930s, the US Government suddenly became involved in distant countries, including Vietnam. A number of American

linguists and foreign language teachers were called in to organize programmes for teaching the ‘unusual’ languages (Spolsky, 1997, p. 326) of the distant countries. Right in the mid-1940s, Vietnamese language courses were offered at various American universities such as Cornell, Columbia, Yale, and Georgetown, especially at the Defense Language Institute of the US Department of Defense. One of the first American scholars who was asked to perform this task of preparing materials for teaching Vietnamese language was perhaps Murray B. Emeneau. His book entitled *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* was published by the University of California Press in 1951. The book was the result of Emeneau’s teaching materials prepared for an Army Specialized Training Course. The preparation of the materials lasted for a year and a half: from mid-1943 to the end of 1944. The course was produced by the “ditto” process in two volumes which Emeneau was a co-author: *A Course in Annamese* co-authored with Diether von den Steinen and *An Annamese Reader* co-authored with Diether von den Steinen and Ly Duc Lam.

In *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar*, Emeneau employs analytic tools developed by American descriptive linguists (e.g. Boas, 1911; Bloomfield, 1933; Gleason, 1955; Harris, 1951; Hockett, 1958, and others) to describe and analyse Vietnamese grammar. He takes Vinh dialect (a dialect in central Vietnam) and Tonkinese dialect (a dialect in Northern Vietnam) as the objects of description. He uses a corpus of 2025 basic Vietnamese words as source of data for illustration, and two informants, one speaking Vinh dialect and the other speaking Northern Vietnamese dialect, as sources of reference to check the validity of his description and explanation.

It should be noted that right from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, French scholars such as Aubaret (1864), Bouchet (1912), Grammont and Le Quang Trinh (1911), Léon (1885), Vatlot (1897), and others, while studying the Vietnamese language, started to realize that many language features and grammatical categories of French did not have equivalents in Vietnamese. Thus, questioning whether there existed parts of speech in Vietnamese, Grammont and Le Quang Trinh remarked:

In Vietnamese there are no articles, nouns, pronouns, verbs; there are no genders and numbers either, only words; these words are all monosyllabic and in general invariable; their meanings are changed and determined by the positions of the words which precede or follow them, i.e., by their functions or positions in the sentence. (Grammont & Le Quang Trinh, 1911, pp. 201-2, as cited in Nguyen Kim Than, 1977, p. 14)<sup>1</sup>

Based on the studies of Vietnamese by previous scholars, especially French orientalists, and fully equipped with analytic techniques of American descriptivism combined with his natural ability to distinguish between language-universal categories and language-specific categories (for detail about the terms ‘language-universal category’ & ‘language-specific category’, see Matthiessen, 1995; Hoang Van Van, 2012), Emeneau

develops a sound approach to the description of the Vietnamese - an alien language to him by then. He states:

In a language with no inflection, all of whose grammar has to be presented in syntactical statements, every word must be examined in as many constructions as possible, and constant reference to a native speaker is necessary. (Emeneau, 1951, p. viii)

Emeneau’s book consists of eight chapters: I. Phonology; II. Outline of the Syntax - Word Classes and Types of Predication; III. Substantives; IV. Morphemes Restricted in Use; VI. Conjunctions; VII. Final Particles; and VIII. Interjections. Of these eight chapters, I and II are of immediate interest, and will be examined below.

With regard to Vietnamese phonology, Emeneau remarks:

The language gives those who are accustomed to the languages of Western Europe the general impression of being underarticulated. Although the articulations are all precise enough, the resulting sounds seem to be made with little force, very softly and gently. No detailed statements can be made at present about this quality; it does not figure at all in the phonemic statements, but it is of some importance for anyone who intends to learn the language with an acceptable pronunciation. (Emeneau, 1951, pp. 8-9)

Emeneau recognizes 11 vowel phonemes and 21 consonant phonemes in Vietnamese. Modifying somewhat to suit modern transcription symbols, these vowel and consonant phonemes can be presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 14. This passage appears in the Vietnamese original as follows: Trong tiếng Việt không có mạo từ, danh từ, đại từ, động từ, cũng không có giống, số mà chỉ có những từ không thôi; những từ này đều là đơn âm tiết, nói chung không biến đổi, ý nghĩa của chúng thay đổi hay được xác định nhờ những từ được đặt trước hay theo sau; nghĩa là, nhờ chức năng, vị trí của chúng ở trong câu.

Table 1. Vowel phonemes in Vietnamese (Emeneau, 1951, p. 19)

[i]	written as	i/y	[o]	-----	ô	[ɤ]	-----	â
[e]	-----	ê	[ɔ]	-----	o	[ɑ]	-----	a
[ɛ]	-----	e	[u]	-----	ư	[ʌ]	-----	ă
[u]	-----	u	[ə]	-----	ơ			

Table 2. Consonant phonemes in Vietnamese (Emeneau, 1951, p. 12)

[t]	written as	t	[tʰ]	-----	tr	[ɲ]	-----	nh	[s]	-----	x
[c]	-----	ch	[tʰ]	-----	th	[ŋ]	-----	ng/ngh	[z]	-----	d
[k]	-----	c/k	[kˣ]	-----	kh	[f]	-----	ph	[ʃ]	-----	s
[b]	-----	b	[m]	-----	m	[v]	-----	v	[ʒ]	-----	gi
[d]	-----	đ	[n]	-----	n	[g]	-----	g/gh	[l]	-----	l
									[h]	-----	h

Emeneau shows a natural ability to observe the Vietnamese tone system. He recognizes six tones, stating that these six tones are phonetic as well as phonemic (p. 16). Below is Emeneau's description of the six tones in Vietnamese:

- Unmarked in writing: high level - normal voice production; on a fairly even pitch without its whole length.
- /: high rising - normal voice production; begins at about the pitch of the high level tone and rises sharply to a higher pitch.
- \: low falling - normal voice production; falls fairly steeply in pitch.
- . : low level - normal voice production; begins on a lower pitch as a creaky falling tone and maintains a fairly even pitch throughout its whole length.
- ? : creaky falling - within the middle range; falls fairly steeply in pitch and then levels off.
- ~ : creaky level - begins at about the same pitch as the creaky falling, though there may be slight sag in the middle.

(Emeneau, 1951, p. 8)

Having examined the vowels, the consonants, and their occurrences in the syllable, and the six tones and their occurrences in the word, Emeneau turns to Chapter II where he explores Vietnamese syntax which is organized around two headings: word classes and types of predication. In Emeneau's opinion, "The basic unit of the syntactic analysis of the language is the word which is the phonological unit and, at the same time, the morphological unit" (p. 44). Emeneau observes that in Vietnamese the word is always phonologically free, but not all of them are syntactically free. The phonological relative freedom of the word lies in that it can be described in terms of distribution of phonemes and tones. The syntactic non-freedom of some words is reflected in the fact that

Many words cannot enter freely into the normal constructions of the language but occur only in restricted co-occurrences; i.e., in construction with certain words, usually themselves similarly restricted in occurrence.

(Emeneau, 1951, p. 2)

Emeneau notes that most of the Vietnamese bound morphemes are substantives and verbs. They can be distinguished from free morphemes by the fact that they cannot be freely combined with any words of appropriate meaning and word class, but only with a limited number of words in a limited number of constructions. One of Emeneau’s interesting observations is that these bound morphemes are Chinese loan words. He discusses in some detail the ordinary and restricted types of substantive and verb phrases. Their usual patterns are of three types: (i) restricted word + restricted word, (ii) restricted word + free word, and (iii) free word + restricted word (pp. 44-54). He recognises that such constructions can perform the same syntactic function as free morphemes because they can ‘substitute for single word morphemes of the same class’ (p. 44).

Emeneau classifies words in Vietnamese into five major word classes: (1) substantive, (2) verb, (3) conjunction, (4) final particle, and (5) interjection. Based on their occurrence in syntactic constructions, he subdivides substantives into classified nouns (nouns which are directly preceded by a classifier) and nonclassified nouns (nouns which do not have a classifier), classifiers, numerators, demonstrative numerators,

personal and place names, and pronouns. He distinguishes three types of substantive phrases which are referred to respectively as numeration, attribution and addition. According to Emeneau (Ibid.), a numeration substantive phrase is one in which the noun is preceded by a numerator as *hai* (two) in *hai cuốn sách* (two books) or followed by a demonstrative numerator as *đầu* (*tiên*) (first) in *cuốn sách đầu* (the first book), or both as *hai* (two) and *đầu* (first) in *hai cuốn sách đầu* (the first two books), with a classifier; e.g. *cuốn*, immediately preceding the noun if the latter belongs to the subclass called classified. An attribution substantive phrase is one in which the noun, whether numerated or not, is immediately followed by an attribute or attributes, which may be noun, numerator (rarely), pronoun, personal name (rarely), verb or verb phrase, or complete predication (sometimes introduced by *mà* ...); e.g. *một cuốn sách hay* (an interesting book). And an addition substantive phrase is one in which the head is an additive series of nouns or pronouns, usually without a co-ordinating conjunction; e.g. *thầy mẹ* (father and mother) (for more detail, see Emeneau, 1951, p. 45; pp. 84-87). The order of elements in ‘numeration constructions’ can be represented in Table 3.

Table 3. Order of elements in numerated constructions in Vietnamese (Emeneau 1951, p. 84)

Numerator	Classifier	Classified noun	± Attribute(s)	Demonstrative Numerator
	Nonclassified noun			

In describing Vietnamese predications, Emeneau notes that predication has as nucleus a predicate which may, but need not, be preceded by a subject. He observes that the presence of the subject is necessary only when it is required to denote something

that is being identified for the first time in the context, and its omission would lead to ambiguity. He distinguishes two types of predications: simple predications and complex predications. Simple predications are ones that have as nucleus a predicate

which may, but need not, be preceded by a subject (p. 46). Emeneau observes that it is impossible to determine exactly when a subject occurs, when it does not. He argues that its occurrence seems to be a matter of optional “selection”. But when it occurs, the subject is normally a one-word substantive or a substantive phrase. Predicates are of two types: substantive and verb. A substantive predicate consists of either a substantive or a substantive phrase. A verb predicate consists of a verb or a verb phrase. The class meaning is actor acts (p. 48). Emeneau discovers that in Vietnamese substantive predicates are rarer than verb predicates. Complex predications are presented by Emeneau as follows: “within the same sentence, a single predication of any type is preceded by a substantive or substantive

phrase, a verb or phrase or a predication with subject and verb predicate” (p. 54). The first member is called the subordinate, the second member is the main predication. In writing, there is usually a comma between these two members, although it is optional when the subordinate member consists of one word. Frequently the main predication has the conjunction *thì* as its first word; e.g. *Giáo này khó món phòng lắm. Phải cho hay trước vài ba ngày thì may ra mới có, vì người đông quá* (At this time, it is very difficult to rent a room. You have to inform them a few days beforehand and by good luck you may get one, because there are very great crowds of people) (p. 57). The two types of predications in Emeneau’s formulation can be shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Formulas of simple and complex predications in Vietnamese (Emeneau, 1951, p. 61)

	Simple predications (P)	
(S)	S.	
(S)	V (S) <sup>n</sup> .	
	V (S) <sup>n</sup> S.	
	Complex predications	
	S	}
	V/VPh	
(C) P	, (thì) P.	

**Note:** P = predication; S = substantive or substantive phrase; V = verb, VPh = verb phrase; C = coordinate conjunction; () indicates optional presence of that which is enclosed; <sup>n</sup> indicates one or more occurrences in series.

Based on these general observations, Emeneau continued to explore other issues related to complex predications such as complex equational predications, predications connected by coordinating conjunctions, notes on ‘tense’ and ‘voice’ and order in verb series in Vietnamese. In complex equational predications, Emeneau observes, the verb is to balance the subject with its object; for example, *Cleanliness is the mother of long life* (p. 61). In predications connected by coordinating conjunctions,

Emeneau does not provide any explanation but instead he gives some examples for illustration; one of those examples is *Khi đi tôi đã nhắc anh rồi, và tôi đã thấy anh cầm chìa khoá* (When we went, I reminded you and I saw you take the key) (p. 63). In discussing expressions that are related to the categories of tense and voice in Indo-European languages, Emeneau remarks:

The point to be made, however, is that verbs do not carry the categories of tense and mode.

These, to some extent, are carried by the sentence construction, but to an even greater extent they are left to the extragrammatical context, linguistic or nonlinguistic. (Emeneau, 1951, p. 63)

Sharing Yuen Ren Chao’s (1968) view on verbs in Chinese and carefully examining the operation of verbs in Vietnamese, Emeneau affirms:

Tense, mode, and voice, then, are not categories of the Vietnamese verb, nor are aspect, and

number and person of the subject or object. The verb has as its class meaning: it occurs or can occur as the nucleus of a predicate and cannot occur as the subject of a predicate or as the object of a verb, except when the verb of the predicate is *là*. (Emeneau, 1951, p. 63)

Apart from examining a number of single verbs by explaining their meanings and giving examples in which they occur, Emeneau explores the order of different types of verb in the series. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The first order in a verb series in Vietnamese (Emeneau, 1951, p. 74)

1		2		3	4...
cũng	sẽ		chớ / đừng	tự	.....
	đã		không / chẳng		
chưa					

According to Emeneau, *sẽ* and *đã* are assigned to the subclass of ‘time verbs’, and *chẳng*, *chớ*, *đừng* and *không* (which are actually negative words) to the subclass of ‘negative verbs’. He explains that *sẽ* can precede *chớ*, *đừng*, *không*, *chẳng*, while *đã* can precede only *không* and *chẳng*; *chưa* can neither precede nor follow any element within ‘order 2’ (for more details on these points, see Emeneau, 1951, p. 74).

With regard to the description of pronouns (Chapter III), morphemes restricted in use (Chapter V), conjunctions (Chapter VI), final particles (Chapter VII), and interjections (Chapter VIII) in Vietnamese, Emeneau does not have much to offer. Like the French scholars who studied Vietnamese grammar (e.g. Aubaret, 1864; Bouchet, 2012; and Cordier, 1930; Grammont and Le Quang Trinh, 1911; Léon, 1885; Vatlot, 1897), he divides pronouns in Vietnamese into two main categories: (i) personal pronouns and status pronouns and (ii) designative pronouns

and questionable pronouns. These types of pronouns are examined by giving examples in which they occur. Emeneau’s description of morphemes restricted in use in Vietnamese is based primarily on the Vietnamese-French dictionary entitled *Dictionnaire annamite-français à l’usage des élèves des écoles et des annamitisants* by the French lexicographer Cordier (1930).

### 3. Laurence C. Thompson

Following Emeneau’s *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar*, several other American linguists continued to show interest in studying Vietnamese grammar. Most notable of them all was perhaps Dr. Laurence C. Thompson - a polyglot, a descriptivist and comparativist credited with contributions in Vietnamese and Salish languages. Thompson’s entry into Vietnamese in his career was fortuitous. It was prompted by his opportunity to join an areal programme. He did a two-year field work in Vietnam for

his doctoral dissertation entitled *A Grammar of Spoken South Vietnamese* which was defended in 1954. He taught Vietnamese language at Yale for one year and then for two years at the Defense Language Institute at the Presidio of Monterey, California. Thompson's *A Vietnamese Grammar* was first published in 1965. In 1985 it was published by the University of Hawaii Press under the title *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar*.

*A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* can be divided into four main parts. Part I is from Chapter 1 to Chapter 4, in which Thompson introduces general features of Vietnamese phonetics, pronunciation and tones (Chapter 1), basic characteristics of the phonological system of Hanoi dialect - a Vietnamese dialect Thompson took as the main object of description (Chapter 2), basic characteristics of the writing systems through different periods of time (Chapter 3), and dialectal variations of Vietnamese (Chapter 4). Part II extends from Chapter 4 to Chapter 11. It is concerned with grammatical structure of Vietnamese language. Here Thompson examines and clarifies instrumental concepts from the morpheme to the sentence to establish a theoretical framework to describe grammatical structures of Vietnamese language (Chapter 5), characteristics of compounds and pseudo-compounds (Chapter 6), characteristics of derivatives (Chapter 7), substantive elements (Chapter 8), predicative elements (Chapter 9), focal elements (Chapter 10), and particles (Chapter 11). Part III is devoted to exploring the sentence structure in Vietnamese (Chapter 12). Here Thompson examines in detail syntactic concepts such as sentences, clauses, unmarked main clauses, main clauses marked coordinate particles, main clauses marked with isolating particles, and some other grammatical concepts. And Part IV deals with linguistic style.

Here Thompson explores issues of what he calls the "levels of discourse", address and reference, kinship system, polite address and reference, honorific address and reference, conversational style, and scholarly style (Chapter 13). In addition, Thompson devotes an entire chapter (Chapter 14) to discussing lexical complexities commonly found in Vietnamese language such as indefinite words, negation, units of measure, etc.

Like most grammarians of Vietnamese, whether foreign or indigenous, who were inspired by the American descriptivist/structuralist tradition (e.g. Gage and Jackson, 1953; Nguyen Dinh Hoa, 1957a, 1957b; and others), Thompson employs immediate constituent analysis as the main method in his *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* for isolating components of the sentence as well as constituents of each component. According to Thompson, an utterance is analysed into two or more parts which balance one another in the make-up of the whole. Each of these parts is then subjected to similar analysis, and so on until the level of single morphemes is reached and no further grammatical/morphological division can be made. Here we find linguistic terms and concepts which are defined from the descriptivist/structuralist perspective such as morpheme, word, phrase, construction, sentence, clause, model, head, complement and others. Thus following the mainstream Bloomfieldian position (Bloomfield, 1933), for Thompson too the smallest building block is the morph: it is a component which carries an identifiable meaning recognisable as contributing to the meaning of the whole utterance and contains no smaller meaningful bits which can be said to make such a contribution. Proceeding from this definition of morph, a morpheme is seen as the class of all morphs having precisely the same meaning (p. 105).

Words, in Thompson's definition, are single free morphemes and/or basic free morphemes (p. 118) or the minimum freely distributed units of which sentences are composed (p. 116). Words can be either simple or complex, independent or dependent (for more detail, see Thompson, 1985, pp. 118-9). Phrases are constituents consisting of more than one word (p. 123). Constructions are phrases which have the same arrangement of heads and complements (p. 123). There are three types of construction: (i) coordinating, (ii) subordinating, and (iii) mixed. A co-ordinating construction is one which forms phrases with more than one head; a subordinating construction is one which forms phrases with only one head; and a mixed construction is one which is basically co-ordinating (i.e., it forms phrases with more than one head) but which also has a complement. Subordinating constructions can be either restrictive (forming phrases with the order of head-complement) or descriptive (forming phrases with the order of complement-head). A sentence is a sequence of one or more groups ending with a terminal intonation and preceded by silence or by another such sequence. In printed material, a sentence may be marked with a capital letter at the beginning and a period, a question mark, or exclamation point at the end (pp. 111, 277). Sentences, according to Thompson, are of two types: independent and dependent sentences. Independent sentences are those that appear as opening sentences in independent utterances. In contrast, dependent sentences are those that appear only as the second or later sentences in utterances or as opening sentences in responsive utterances. Thompson observes that the structure of sentences is not the same: there are sentences which consist of only one clause; and there are other sentences which consist of a series of clauses of which at least one clause is the head. He calls this clause major clause and the others minor clause (p. 277).

A clause, in Thompson's view, is a predicate (together with any complement it may have) viewed as a sentence constituent (p. 277). For Thompson, each time a predicate occurs, from the point of view of the sentence in which it stands, it is a clause (or if the sentence has complements, the head is a clause). Like other sentence elements, a clause is sometimes head and sometimes complement. When a clause occurs as head or as the whole of a certain sentence, it is the main clause. Conversely, when a clause appears as complement to other sentence elements, it is a subordinate clause. Subordinate clauses are further classified as descriptive (following the head) and restrictive (preceding the head) (for more detail, see Thompson, 1985; Chapter 12).

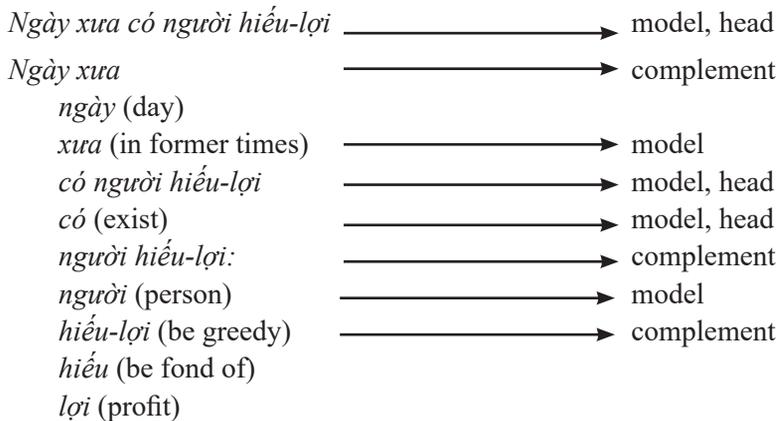
Having established the above terms and concepts, Thompson defines the terms 'model' and 'expansion' as follows:

The syntactic structure of any language is observable as a relatively small number of patterns in each of which the elements (although consisting of infinitely varied morpheme sequences) bear the same basic relationship to one another. Longer sequences are seen to have the same function as far shorter sequences - that is, a longer sequence bears the same relationship to its immediate constituent partner as a shorter sequence in the same position. This is conveniently described by saying that the shorter sequence is the **model** of the longer one, and that the longer one is an **expansion** of the shorter one. (Thompson, 1985, p. 111)

Thompson provides some examples to illustrate his definition. One of them is the English sentence *John's brother is playing tennis*. Employing the method of immediate constituent analysis, the sentence is segmented into two parts: (i) *John's brother* and (ii) *is playing tennis*. Thompson says that

a model for *John's brother* is *Jim*, as in *Jim is playing tennis*. Similarly, a model for *is playing tennis* is *works*, as in *John's brother works*. Conversely, *John's brother* and *is playing tennis* are expansions respectively of *Jim* and *works*. Thompson observes that often in Vietnamese one of the immediate constituents of a particular constitute is a model of that constitute. He terms such constitute a 'nuclear model' and defines it as 'an immediate constituent which can replace

its constitute in the larger context, remaining the same basic grammatical and referential relationship to that context'. Proceeding from this definition, Thompson defines heads as nuclear models of the constitutes which are themselves either nuclear models or complete sentences, and complements as non-model partners of heads. The analysis into model, head, and complement can be illustrated by the following example:



...

(Based on Thompson, 1985, p. 114)

As can be seen, although Thompson uses different terminologies in his framework, his analysis is similar to the immediate constituent analysis technique employed by post-Bloomfieldian scholars such as Gleason (1955), Harris (1951), and Hockett (1958) in relation to English, and Honey (1956) in relation to Vietnamese.

There are substantial differences between *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* (1985) as compared with his *A Grammar of Spoken South Vietnamese* (1954), and *Việt-Nam Văn-Phạm* (A Grammar of Vietnamese) by Tran Trong Kim et al. (1940). Whereas in *A Grammar of Spoken South Vietnamese* (1954), Vietnamese words are explicitly divided into six major classes; viz., aspects, verbals, relators, numerators, substantives, and

particles, in *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar*, they are grouped into four major categories which are termed (i) substantival elements, (ii) predicative elements, (iii) focal elements, and (iv) particles. In each of these headings, based on the relationship between head and complement in the construction and the position in which a word and an element occurs, words are further subdivided and thoroughly discussed (for more detail, see Thompson, 1985; Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11). And unlike *Việt-Nam Văn-Phạm* (A Grammar of Vietnamese) by Tran Trong Kim et al. (1940) in which word classes or parts of speech are identified based on both definition (meaning) and recognition (form) criteria; in *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar*, words are identified based primarily on their recognition criteria. For example, when analysing

substantive elements, Thompson states: “There are two sets of markers which help identify substantive elements. They are **plural markers** (appear as restrictive complements)

#### PLURAL MARKERS

*những* (plural)

*các* (plural) (all of a given set)

*mọi* (every)

*mỗi* (each)

*từng* (each) (in turn)

From these different approaches to word classification, one can see the difference between what Halliday (1978) and Halliday and Hasan (1989) refer to as ‘tenor of discourse’ of *Việt-Nam Văn-Phạm* and *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar*: while the former work is written to serve one type of audience - learners of Vietnamese grammar, the latter seems to address various kinds of audience. In other words, while *Việt-Nam Văn-Phạm* can be considered a pedagogical grammar, *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar*, as its name stands, can be considered a reference grammar, hence its title.

(1) **Nhà cháy rồi.**

(The house has burned already.)

(2) **Cái cột đồng ấy nay đã mất mà Tây-hồ vẫn còn.** [nominal group, object] (p. 240)

(That bronze pillar today is lost, but West Lake still exists.)

(3) **Ở bên nam nóng lắm.** [prepositional phrase, adverbial modifier] (p. 243)

(In the South, it’s very hot.)

(4) **Nói phải có người nói đi nói lại chớ bắt người ta nói một mình hoài!** [verb, predicate] (p. 241)

(For a conversation [you] ought to have people talking back and forth, not make somebody talk alone all the time!)

With the advantage of a linguist who knows many foreign languages, Thompson displays a keen observation of the order, structure and ways of recognizing focal elements in the sentence. He discovers that on many occasions, focal elements are marked by a restrictive subordinating particle such as *nếu* (if), *vì* (because), and more frequent

and **demonstrative markers** (appearing as descriptive complements)” (p. 179). Then he provides two lists to illustrate these two sets of plural and demonstrative markers:

#### DEMONSTRATIVE MARKERS

*nào* (which [ever])

*này* (this)

*no* (that, [an] other)

*ấy* ([the one] just referred to)

*nấy* (this [one] just mentioned)

Focal elements in Vietnamese sentences are probably one of the most original treatments in Thompson’s *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* (Cao Xuan Hao, 1991, 2004). Thompson observes that focal construction forms restrictive phrases with predicates as head. In terms of word classes, a focal element can be either a substantive, a substantival phrase or (even) a predicate. In terms of size, a focal element can be either a single word, a word group, or a phrase. And in terms of syntactic function, a focal element can be subject, predicate, object, or adverbial modifier. Below are some of the examples provided by Thompson.

[substantive, subject] (p. 239)

is the marking of the head of a focal phrase by what he calls ‘isolating particle’ *thì* (then) as in *Rừng thì rậm, đường lối đi lại thì khó khăn* (The forest was dense, the routes of communication difficult) (p. 244).

According to Thompson, focal elements can be either simple or complex. He observes that focal complexes show elements in certain



conserving and element of surprise while the circumstances are built up” (p. 290). Below are two examples to illustrate Thompson’s point:

**Cái này tiếng Việt gọi chi?** (p. 290)

(What is this called in Vietnamese?)

*Nàng vì cảm động, không giữ được nỗi thôn thức, òa lên khóc.* (p. 290)

(The girl, because she was deeply moved, was unable to withstand a disturbing emotion [and] burst into tears.)

#### 4. Concluding remarks

In this paper, we have made an attempt to explore the contributions made by American descriptive linguistic school to the study of Vietnamese. Two representative grammar monographs on Vietnamese grammar by two foremost American grammarians in the middle and the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were taken for examination: *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* by Murray Emeneau and *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* by Laurence C. Thompson. We can now say a few words of appraisal about their works in answer to the questions raised in the Introduction: “How is Vietnamese anatomized by grammarians of American descriptive linguistic school?”, and “What contributions do they make to the description of Vietnamese grammar?”

Emeneau’s *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* is a commendable attempt to describe Vietnamese language from an approach different from the traditional structuralist approach to language prevalent in Europe in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, different from many grammarians of Vietnamese in his time, he seems to be a theory user rather than a theory developer. This can be seen in the fact that the concepts he uses as the tools for analysing Vietnamese are not explicitly defined. They are often taken for granted and are used as if they were known

to the reader. Further, different from other descriptive works on Vietnamese, *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* is precisely written for foreigners studying Vietnamese. Reading *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* readers may have a feeling that they are reading a mixture of a dictionary and a grammar book of Vietnamese. But if this is really the goal of the book, it can be affirmed that *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* has fulfilled its goal: the learner of Vietnamese not only knows the word, its sound and spelling form and its meaning(s) but also how it is used in sentences - the context which the British linguist Catford (1965) refers to as ‘linguistic context’. *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* is a detailed and meticulous description of Vietnamese grammar, particularly of words and their usage.

Thompson’s *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* has provided invaluable insights into the phonological, lexical, and syntactic structures of Vietnamese in both theoretical and practical dimensions. Unlike Emeneau’s *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar*, Thompson’s *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* does not explore in detail Vietnamese words and their usage. It is not at all an applied linguistic work either. Rather, it is a descriptive work which strikes in a systematic way a balance between theory and practice: it both examines in some detail the underlying concepts for the description of Vietnamese and provides examples to illustrate them. It is a grammar work which meets most of the criteria of a standard reference grammar such as meticulousness, comprehensiveness, lucidity, rigour, and elegance. This is, perhaps, the most comprehensive work of Vietnamese grammar which has ever been described in the American descriptivist tradition. It explains why “when it first appeared in 1965, it went almost instantly to the top of the list of required reading for serious students of the Vietnamese language”, and “it

remains far and away the best thing available in English and thus, the most useful work for the greatest number of potential users” (Nguyen Dinh Hoa, 1985, p. xiii).

On the whole, although Emeneau’s and Thompson’s books were published at different times and the range of topics they treat is not always the same, they both make a major point in seeking to analyse Vietnamese on the basis of Vietnamese alone, trying to avoid any distortion from Indo-European grammatical concepts. This has produced good results. Their books are well-written, well-exemplified on Vietnamese phonology, morphology and syntax. This explains why until now *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* and *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* have had no rival in English, and are likely to remain the standard references on Vietnamese for quite a few years to come. In conclusion, Emeneau and Thompson have offered a quite fruitful approach to the description of Vietnamese. Their views of language description may spark further debates, but they will certainly lead to further advances in the analysis of language. Together with the studies of Vietnamese grammar by grammarians of other linguistic traditions, either indigenous or foreign, their works have enriched our ways of looking at language, broadening our understanding of one of the most fruitful approaches to the study of Vietnamese grammar (for detail, see Hoang Van Van, 2007).

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# NHỮNG ĐÓNG GÓP CỦA TRƯỜNG PHÁI NGÔN NGỮ HỌC MÔ TẢ MỸ VÀO NGHIÊN CỨU TIẾNG VIỆT: MỘT CÁI NHÌN ĐƯƠNG ĐẠI

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**Tóm tắt:** Bài viết này nghiên cứu những đóng góp của trường phái ngôn ngữ học mô tả của Mỹ ở những năm giữa thế kỉ 20 vào nghiên cứu về tiếng Việt. Hai chuyên khảo quan trọng nhất về ngữ pháp tiếng Việt của hai nhà ngữ pháp mô tả/cấu trúc hàng đầu người Mỹ được chọn ra để nghiên cứu: *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* (Nghiên cứu về ngữ pháp tiếng Việt) của học giả Murray B. Emeneau và *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar* (Ngữ pháp tham khảo tiếng Việt) của học giả Laurence C. Thompson. Rõ ràng là trong số các học giả nước ngoài nghiên cứu tiếng Việt, Emeneau và Thompson đã có những đóng góp đáng kể nhất vào nghiên cứu ngữ pháp tiếng Việt. Cả hai ông đều có chung một điểm quan trọng trong việc tìm cách phân tích tiếng Việt trên cơ sở từ bên trong tiếng Việt, cố gắng tránh càng nhiều càng tốt bất kì sự lệch lạc nào từ các khái niệm ngữ pháp Ấn-Âu; và do đó đã tạo ra các kết quả tốt và đáng tin cậy. Công trình mô tả của hai ông về ngữ pháp tiếng Việt rất chi tiết và có hệ thống; đáp ứng được hầu hết các tiêu chí của một công trình ngữ pháp chuẩn mực: tỉ mỉ, toàn diện, mạch lạc, chính xác, và tao nhã. Cùng với các công trình nghiên cứu về ngữ pháp tiếng Việt của các nhà ngữ pháp khác, cả người Việt Nam và người nước ngoài, công trình ngữ pháp của Emeneau và Thompson đã làm phong phú cách nhìn của chúng ta về ngôn ngữ, mở rộng sự hiểu biết của chúng ta về một trong những cách tiếp cận hiệu quả nhất đối với việc nghiên cứu ngữ pháp tiếng Việt.

*Từ khóa:* trường phái ngôn ngữ học mô tả của Mỹ, tiếng Việt, ngữ pháp tiếng Việt, Murray B. Emeneau, Laurence C. Thompson.

# FOSTERING LANGUAGE AND THINKING SKILLS THROUGH ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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**Abstract:** This study examined the effects of teacher talk on creating conditions for foreign language and thinking skills development. Through the lens of socio-cultural theory, we looked at the learning affordance/constraints that teachers in eight English speaking classes at a university in Vietnam created for learners via their actions and interactions with students. Two main, but contrastive interaction patterns emerged from this analysis. In one pattern, extended teacher talk could provide learners with more input, but at the same time deprive them of the opportunity to produce meaning-focused output and exercise high-order thinking skills. In the other, however, the interplay among teachers' proper use of referential questions, group work, extended wait-time, speakership assignment and appreciative responses was found to empower learners as active users of the target language as well as critical and creative thinkers. We therefore argue that by using talks that scaffold and facilitate learners' critical, divergent thinking, conceptualising process and effectively distributing classroom time for learners' thinking incubation and collaboration, teachers can create enabling conditions for learners to enhance both their L2 and thinking skills.

*Keywords:* teacher talk, classroom interaction, learning affordances, thinking skills, collaborative creativity.

## 1. Introduction

From the socio-cultural perspective (Vygosky, 1978, 1987), learning is socio-culturally co-constructed via their interaction with teachers and peers. Accordingly, interaction in language classroom is a fertile learning environment in which learners practice their language use and enhance thinking skills (Donato, 2000; Sfard, 1998; Young & Miller, 2004). In this environment, language is not merely a powerful mediator that facilitates learners' uptake of higher cognitive skills but also a product of this

learning process. Empirical research has shown that teacher talk has a crucial role in creating either facilitative or impeding conditions for both cognitive development and language learning process (e.g., Li, 2011; see Hall & Walsh, 2002; Thoms, 2012 for detailed accounts). In the majority of the studies that Hall and Walsh (2002) and Thoms (2012) have reviewed, they find that the teacher has the power to determine and channel the classroom discourse, enabling learners' interaction participation, optimizing their language use and creating many other learning affordances. They thus conclude that subtle changes in the way the teacher responds to learners' ideas can alter the course of interaction and create

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chances for further talk and hence potentials for advancing their language competence and cognitive skills (Thoms, 2012). However, what specific language use and interactional features of teacher talk construct such a favourable learning environment still remains underresearched in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context like Vietnam. In addition, most of the previous research in this area often centres around the effects on learning affordances of the Follow-up move in the typical Initiation-Response-Follow-up sequence of classroom interaction (henceforth referred to as IRF for short), but not that of the entire sequence. In addition, these studies tend to look at the opportunities that classroom interaction offers for learners' cognition growth in a relatively broad term. To be more precise, such a learning opportunity is not aligned with any well-established taxonomy of cognitive levels (e.g. Anderson et al., 2001, or Kolb, 1984). This study aims to fill these research gaps.

## 2. Literature review

### *Socio-cultural lens to classroom interaction*

One core tenet in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) is the interdependence between language and cognition development, in which language is both a tool and a product of mental processing. From this, classroom interaction creates enabling conditions for learners' foreign language and thinking skills development (Donato, 2000; Hall, 1997; Sfar, 1998; Young & Miller, 2004). However, according to Negueruela-Azarola, García and Buescher (2015), not all classroom interaction leads to development and learning. They specify that "some interaction leads to conceptual transformation through mindful engagement, some to learning of skills or noticing of forms, and some interaction is merely transactional

and no new knowledge, ideas, or skills are gained from the exchange" (p. 234). Classroom interaction that leads to development involves learners in active engagement in understanding and appropriating new ideas, skills, and frames for thinking. Activities that create potential for development in a second language (L2) classroom, according to Negueruela-Azarola et al. (2015, p. 240) need to facilitate learners' "intentional memory, planning, voluntary attention and rational thinking." Such activities would involve learners in, for example, not only solving problems and finding quick answers but also in creating problems, planning, and formulating questions. As most of the previous research in this area finds socio-cultural theory a useful lens to examining learning affordances that classroom interaction can offer, we also apply this theoretical framework in the present study.

### *Classroom interaction and foreign/second language learning*

Various studies with socio-cultural perspectives have been conducted in different contexts to investigate the effects that teacher-student whole class interaction might have on L2 learning (e.g. Duff, 2000; Lin, 2000; Waring, 2008). Their findings have informed our instructional practice in various ways. Most of these studies look at the effects of the prominent Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) or Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) pattern of interaction. Those studies consistently suggest that IRF/E and teachers' strict use of this interactional pattern might limit the learning opportunities for students because it can discourage students' idea contribution and language use (Lin, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Nystrand, 1997). Interestingly, Waring (2008) finds that even explicit positive assessment (such as *great*, *good*, *very good*, *excellent*, *perfect* and the like) in the third part

of IRE exchange that teachers usually assume to be positive and that it is sequentially and affectively preferred move, might actually hinder rather than promote learning because it effectively brings the sequence to a stop. Wells (1993), on the other hand, finds that the IRE interaction pattern is neither wholly good nor wholly bad in promoting learning. Its effects depend on whether or not language teachers expand the response phase to welcome more ideas from the target students or their peers before coming to the feedback/evaluation section (IR-delayed F/E). Along this line, other studies also find that subtle changes in teachers' follow-up move by acknowledging students' contribution, allowing it to expand or making it available for further class discussion and consideration can create significantly more learning opportunities for students (Boxer & Cortes-Conde, 2000; Boyd & Maloof, 2000; Consolo, 2000; Duff, 2000; Hall, 1997; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Sullivan, 2000).

### ***Classroom interaction and thinking skills***

Not just limiting the study to analysing the IRE or IRF pattern, Walsh (2002) examines the whole classroom discourse and argues that teacher talk can construct or obstruct learner participation in classroom communication, creating or limiting affordances for cognition growth. Constructive elements of teacher's actions might include direct error correction, content feedback, checking for confirmation, extended wait-time, scaffolding, while obstructive elements can be turn completion, teacher echo, teacher interruption (Walsh, 2002). In the same line, Li (2011) explores English language classroom in China and finds that by using referential questions, increasing wait time, reducing interruptions and adopting selective repair, the teacher can create, develop and manage space for students' thinking. Walsh (2006, 2011) and

Li (2011) call for further research to examine the cultural aspects of thinking skills and the micro-context in relation to thinking and language development in language education and teacher development.

Together, the review above suggests that classroom interaction has a strong impact on students' cognitive and communicative development. This study thus aims at investigating how such enabling interaction plays out in EFL classrooms in Vietnamese context and how teachers' talk can influence the cognitive and communicative learning conditions of the students. The findings hopefully can add foundation to language education and teacher professional development to help improve learning affordances for learners.

## **3. Methodology**

### ***Research participants and context***

Participants were eight novice teachers who were teaching for other more experienced teachers to observe and mentor. All the teachers graduated from the same university and had not obtained Master degrees. They majored in English language teaching in their undergraduate degree.

Learners were all first year students majoring in English. Learners of different classes were supposed to be of the similar level of competence, because they had just passed the university entrance exam, and randomly assigned into different classes. These students had from three to seven or ten years of learning English in middle and high schools. They were at about pre-intermediate to intermediate level of English. Each class had roughly 25 students.

The textbook, *New Inside-Out Pre-Intermediate* (Kay & Jones, 2008), was theme-based with themes such as animals,

transport, places, education, and lifestyle. A course guide and supplementary materials were provided to support teachers and guide the activities in the class. However, teachers were allowed flexibility to design learning and teaching activities to facilitate learning.

### ***Data collection and analysis***

Data were collected from video recordings of eight English speaking classes, lasting around 50 minutes each. The teachers and students were aware of the video-taping process. The classes were observed by senior teachers who were both mentors and peers of the class teacher. The researchers were aware of the observer effects. It was taken into consideration that due to the observer effect, the teachers were probably doing their best to perform their teaching. However, this study did not aim to investigate, evaluate or generalise about the teachers' general practices, but just looked at how interactions played out and how certain actions of the teachers created learning affordance/constraint and influenced students' learning behaviours. Thus, it is expected that the observer effect would not majorly influence the interpretation of the results.

The data were transcribed in detail adequate to the analysis. All words were transcribed using conventional spelling, not spelling designed to indicate the actual pronunciation of the speakers. Since students were not native users of the language, and the analysis focuses on the effects of the teachers' talk on the learning opportunities created and how the learners took up the learning opportunities rather than the phonetic accuracy of the language use, the choice of conventional spelling was designed to make the transcripts easily readable. The time used for group work was measured and counted as wait-time.

The teachers were coded following letters of the alphabet as Teachers A, B, or C. Since this was whole class interaction, most of the students' names were not known to the researchers. Letter S was used to denote one student speaking in a turn; two Ss - SS - were used to denote several students or the whole class response. Whenever a student's real name was mentioned by a class member or by the teacher, the pseudonyms were used during the analysis and the report of the research.

All the transcribed interactional data were repeatedly read to find patterns. When a pattern was found, it was analysed qualitatively by seeing how the sequence unfolded. Through the lens of socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987), opportunities for students' language learning and thinking development were analysed in relation to features of the teachers' talks.

### **4. Analysis and discussion**

Close repeated reading of the data reveals two major patterns of interaction. In one pattern, the teacher is the centre of the interaction process, guiding, asking questions, eliciting students' short answers, providing comments, correction, adding further information providing either language or background knowledge. In another pattern, teachers organise longer activities, giving students time for collaborative interaction and incubation of ideas before their long turn presentation of the group ideas. In three classes, only the first pattern of interaction is observed. In other five classes, the first pattern is found at the first half of the classes, and the second pattern is found in the second half. In this article, the two contrasting patterns of interaction from two critical cases, in which the actions of the teachers show clear evidence differing influences on students interaction pattern, were chosen for analysis.

In this section, we present the two cases in which the roles of the teachers and students are differently constructed in the moment by moment of the interaction.

***Teacher as knowledge transmitter and students as knowledge recipients***

In this part of the lesson, the teacher is following a set of exercises in the textbook.

**Excerpt 1 with Teacher A**

- [...]
- 1 S1: The person who... treat the animal is a vet
- 2 → T: The person...yes, hum.... is a.... a vet. Is vet is a full form of this word...
- 3 Anybody knows?
- 4 SS: vete veterinary
- 5 → T: Yes, veterinarian is the full form of the word, but because the word is TOO::
- 6 long, they tend to use the short form, is a vet ok like a doctor of animals...
- 7 NEXT the next sentence ... C ((pointing at a student))
- 8 [...]
- 9 S3: A tortoise is the animal that can live ... 70 years old
- 10 T: A tortoise //. And the last sentence Ngan
- 11 S3: An animal that..
- 12 T: The animal
- 13 S3: The animal that can recognize its image in the mirror is a dolphin
- 14 → T: A dolphin,
- 15 S3: A dolphin
- 16 → T: Yes; in a mirror, image in a mirror, right, is a dolphin. Erh so what can we infer
- 17 about dolphin here. It can recognize its own image in a mirror so is it intelligent?
- 18 SS: Yes
- 19 T: Yes=. I can assure you that there are not many animals which can recognize
- 20 its own image in a mirror. If you have a cat you may have experienced the time
- 21 when they look at themselves in a mirror and try to FIGHT with the image (.) in
- 22 the mirror. Have you ever seen that?
- 23 SS: Yes
- 24
- 25 → T: Ok. So the dolphin is a very intelligent animal in order to recognize its image
- 26 in a mirror. Ok. That's animal facts. You can find some other animal facts on page
- 27 101 too. The same, nearly the same exercise on page 101. You have to match
- 28 some characteristics or some personalities of the oh sorry some properties of the
- 29 → animals with its name too using the same methods please tell me the answer for
- 30 exercise number 5 ok.. The first one has been done for you. The animal that can
- smell (...) is an elephant Ok. Thao the next sentence
- ((similar patterns are repeated throughout the 50 minute lesson))

The topic of the lesson is about animals. Linguistically, the lesson focuses on vocabulary about animals and adjectives clauses describing features of animals. Before the following part of the interaction, the teacher asked students to make up sentences using the adjective clauses to describe features of animals. The following extract shows part of the whole class interaction with the teacher:

The teacher calls on students one by one to make up sentences with adjective clauses and corrects their grammar and pronunciation mistakes. The pattern of interaction in this class includes: teacher's explicit instruction, teacher calling on one student, student making up one sentence using the set structure, teacher doing correction, teacher choosing one part of the sentence that may have something to extend on. Quantitatively, the turns taken by students are usually short; the longest one is just a sentence with guided content and structure, while the teacher has at least one extended turn in each episode.

This activity is language-focused learning. The teacher creates a condition for students to link a given meaning (i.e., a given prompt of idea) to a standard form (i.e., the prescriptive structure of relative clauses). Occasionally, the teacher initiates some unplanned Focus-on-FormS (Loewen, 2018) episodes (e.g., lines 2 and 10) in order to introduce new lexical knowledge (e.g., line 2) or draw students' attention to their grammatical mistakes (e.g., line 10). In the former (i.e., line 2), students also have the opportunity to be exposed to an episode that the teacher talks *about* the language (e.g., the short form vs. the long form of a lexical item). This *meta-linguistic talk* opportunity is generally deemed to foster their language learning (Swain, 2005). However, the teacher's close-ended questions and rigid turn assignment restrict opportunities for students to produce meaning-focused output. They mechanically construct a sentence using a given prompt for ideas and a learnt sentence structure in a controlled practice. Even when they have already mastered such a sentence construction practice, they are still withheld there, instead of moving on to a more meaningful communicative practice. Other responses of these students are often in the form of an isolated word or phrase, but not

a full sentence, let alone a group of sentences. Taken together, there is little evidence that the interaction pattern Teacher A designates fosters students' language development. This is a typical pattern of controlled practice.

For thinking development, the teacher creates few opportunities for their students to exercise their high-order thinking skills. In the extended turn, the teacher elaborates on the answers, adding further background knowledge (lines 5-7, 19-21). Factual knowledge can form a solid base for divergent thinking later, or a condition to foster students' creativity (Cropley, 1995). However, when this does not go with other conditions to push students' thinking to higher levels, we cannot conclude about the effectiveness of such knowledge foundation on students' thinking skill development. The requirement to form sentences with relative clauses using given cues is 'applying knowledge' (Anderson et al., 2001), but at a low level of application with the sentence structure and the content given in the textbook. Sometimes the teacher follows up the students' response by a question (e.g., lines 3 or 17) or recast (e.g., line 12). Unfortunately, most of such follow-ups merely require their students to recall factual information, centering around the lowest level of thinking in Bloom's revised taxonomy – Remembering. There is no further observed evidence of students' practice applying the language creatively in more authentic, less structured, less controlled communication.

In fact, the teacher does attempt to climb up the ladder of thinking skills to such a high level as Analyzing (e.g., lines 20-21, 26). The teacher asks one higher order thinking question explicitly using the word "infer" (line 16), a higher level of understanding (Anderson et al., 2001). However, she immediately replaces the lucrative opportunities above with much

impoverished ones that, again, merely require students to recall factual information. The inference she seems to expect from the students is just a judgment that “It can recognize its own image in a mirror, so is it intelligent?” and she says such comments herself rather than let it be produced by students. The teacher’s turn is interspersed with students’ minimal response “yes” (line 18), and then she continues comparing the dolphin’s intelligence with that of a cat. Again, only minimal response from students is observed (line 23) to the teacher’s question verifying a fact. She then explicitly names what she has provided as factual knowledge. Indeed, though the higher-order thinking word “infer” is explicitly used, there is no observable evidence of students’ higher order thinking practice or development.

The teacher then coherently links to the next exercise requiring students to match factual information with the animals’ names to produce sentence by sentence. It would not be problematic if this is just a first part of the lesson, where the teacher is organizing controlled practice to scaffold students’ language use. However, the pattern is repeated throughout the whole session of 50 minutes with little students’ language production or creative thinking observed. Possibly she is more concerned about completing the lesson, covering all the materials assigned, which may unintentionally hinder opportunities for fostering higher order thinking skills and communicative language practice.

The above patterns of interaction are similar to the most widespread form of interaction found in other studies, which is initiation - response - evaluation (IRE) or initiation - response - feedback (IRF). This pattern of interaction is consistently found to limit the chance of interaction of the learners (Hall & Walsh, 2002; Li, 2011). Other studies

indicate that just subtle changes in the E or F of the IRE or IRF of the interaction can create chances for further contribution of the learners by elaborating on the ideas (Hall & Walsh, 2002). The changes in E and F of the three part interactions can facilitate students to expand on their answers or qualify their initial responses (Nassaji & Wells, 2000), affirm students’ answers and make them available for others to consider (Boxer & Cortes-Conde, 2000; Boyd & Maloof, 2000). However, in the above excerpt, the extended turns of the teacher after each IRF/IRE are chances for the teacher to provide further information, to pass on her knowledge, possibly providing a base for students’ creative thinking (Cropley, 1995), but does not facilitate students’ active contributions. The students’ responses to the extended sequences made by the teacher are only minimal one-word response said by the whole class.

Thus, in this episode, the teacher assumes the position of the transmitter of the knowledge using the target language extensively. The students are positioned as passive recipients of the knowledge, and we do not have evidence of the students’ creative language use and cognitive development, even though the input provided could provide background for further language and thinking development.

### ***Teachers as facilitators and students as creative, collaborative and empowered users of the language***

In this lesson with a different teacher and a different class of the same level of proficiency, the topic is the means of transport. In the first part of the lesson, the teacher gives students in each group a set of pictures of different means of transport and asks them to match the picture with the vocabulary. The checking part

is also typical IRE/IRF similar to the pattern of interaction found in the above class and in selected sections of other observed classes.

However, unlike the above teacher, after the E/F moves, she does not move on to the similar accuracy checking exercises but organises a group activity as follows:

### Excerpt 2 with Teacher B

- [...]
- 1 → T: Now I want you to work in group. I have many pictures here with different  
2 types of transport, and now your task is arrange the pictures in any kinds of chart.  
3 Do you know charts? Yeah. Flow chart, yeah. Maybe the flow chart to express  
4 the time of appearance, for example, the time of appearance, yeah, alright or any  
5 type. You can also base on the kind of power etc., in any in any kinds of charts  
6 that you know, flow charts, you know flow charts  
7 So let's work in... So two of you move here. ((Delivering more papers to the  
8 group)).  
9 And two of you move here ((T: arranging group))  
10 → ((T: Going around observing group work, SS: working in group discussing))  
11 (01:23)  
12 → ...Ok have you finished already the pictures?  
13 → SS ((keeping working in groups))  
14 T: Now think of the reason why why you arrange your pictures like that in that  
15 order.  
16 (35)  
17 T: Ok have you finished?  
18 S4: yeah  
19 T: yes;  
20 (3)  
21 T: now who volunteer ah who volunteer to come here and ah put your chart on  
22 the board?  
23 SS: ((talking in Vietnamese to each other: Lên đi kia [please go up there]))...  
24 T: now who volunteer first? (1) Hurry up hurry up  
25 ((One student goes to the board arranging the pictures; others keep talking in  
26 Vietnamese but on task and then observing the one on the board))  
27 T: Ok can you say can you say something about the charts  
28 SS: ((Talking to each other)) say something, explain  
29 T: Ok come here and say something about the chart. (1) Why do you put the  
30 pictures in this order?  
31 ((one students goes to the board))  
32 S4: I think first when human appeared on the earth we walked, walked. We tried  
33 to improve the way we moved that is we moved by  
34 S5: horse  
35 S4: horse, and then because of the development of the of ... ((pointing to her  
36 head))...the...  
37 → SS: brain  
38 → S4: when our brain develop, we find different way, when we can, we can  
39 ((extended talk on the reasons by students)) [...]  
40 T: so the other two, do you agree with the way they arrange the pictures  
41 → So so what do they base on, what do they base on to arrange the pictures  
42 SS: the development of technology  
43 → T: yeah the development of technology  
44 → T: Do you have another way of arranging the pictures?  
S6: yes  
T: yes;  
T: ok come here

45 S6: I will arrange different from Phuong's group. First, I think that first people  
 46 go by rocket. But because of rocket erh flies too fast and go for a long distance  
 47 so we cannot stop in the shortest distance. So that some scientists develop invent  
 48 invent planes. But planes have the same disadvantage of rocket  
 49 → S7: With  
 50 S6: they fly too fast and they waste of energy and waste of energy to fly from  
 51 street to other streets so that they continue invented inventing the cars. But the  
 52 cars maybe too big and cause many accidents. So they invent the train. But the  
 53 train has a big disadvantage is they carry a lot of people, so (someone goes alone)  
 54 cannot go by train. There is a lot of smoke here and it destroys the environment.  
 55 So the scientists develop the bicycle  
 56 SS: ((laughing))  
 57 S6: The bicycle is good for environment, but the big (dis)advantage is we cannot  
 58 go erh with many people; we only go alone, and it is very tired, so that the  
 59 scientists invented the ..wagon horse wagon  
 60 SS: ((laughing))  
 61 S6: ((pause thinking)) Erh the wagon is too big. If you want to show off yourself  
 62 by running horse, you cannot go by wagon, so that some people leave this and  
 63 only go by horse. And... then... arh..  
 64 → S8: freedom  
 65 → S9: freedom yeah  
 66 → S6: erh for the freedom we go. But we go by the horse, it is also too fast, and we  
 67 have to depend on horse, so that erh. Sometimes you cannot control the horse. So  
 68 we don't use any transportation, we use our feet  
 69 SS: ((laughing and clapping hands))  
 70 → T: What do you think about their arrangement;  
 71 SS; Creative  
 72 T: very interesting and creative right  
 73 T; yes, ok  
 74 T: This (group) for the advancement of science and technology but this one is  
 75 the.. ((preempt))  
 76 SS:((answer unintelligible))  
 77 → T: the the backwards of technology. What do you think, if you go like this one  
 78 what will happen  
 SS: ((laughing))

In this episode, the teacher asks students to work in groups and arrange the pictures of the means of transport in some kinds of order of their choice. She also suggests the time of appearance or any other types of arrangement. She allows students some time to discuss in groups. Then students are called on to the board to display their flow chart and explain the reasons behind their arrangement of the chart. When one group finishes, the teacher asks if any other groups have different ways of

arrangement. Another group with the opposite way of arrangement compared to the first group presents their chart with explanation. The explanation is collaboratively contributed by other members of the class. We now first analyse the students' extended responses and then discuss how the teachers' moves facilitate such responses.

The "task" is a meaning-focused output activity where students make full use of their language resources to describe their sequence

of the pictures. In this communicative activity, the students' language use is diverse and also includes several evidence of relative clauses. Such a pushed output task, according to Swain (2005), provides opportunities for students to notice gaps in their target language and directs their attention to relevant lexis or syntax in their upcoming exposure to language input. This often leads to moments of incidental Focus-on-Form (Loewen, 2018), and incidental learning. Such an opportunity has been offered and taken up several times (lines 34-35, 49, 63-65) in the episode. The teacher also employs a combination of visual aids, teamwork, preparation time and especially free turn-taking as a scaffolding to boost students' fluency in their speech delivery.

Cognitively, students are consistently required to exercise an orchestra of high-order thinking activities such as sequencing a list of transport modes (e.g., lines 1-2) (i.e., Analyze), explaining the logic behind such a sequence (lines 24, 26-27) (i.e., Evaluate) or improvising another sequence (line 41) (i.e., Create). The teacher requires students' higher order thinking when asking them to 'arrange' in a 'flow chart.' Arranging involves comparing and contrasting and organizing information - high level in the Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001). She adds suggestions of the criteria for arrangement as a form of scaffolding as "time of appearance," "kind of power," and encourages divergent thinking by adding "or any types," in "any kinds of charts." This instruction prompts her learners to approach the task from various perspectives and come up with different results. This lays the foundation for their contrast of the logics behind this picture arrangement. Additionally, wait-time is allowed for students to think and discuss with their peers. The detailed instructions requiring higher order thinking skills, the group work and the wait-time create enabling conditions

for the students' extended and collaborative contributions that follow.

This interaction pattern also fosters their creativity. The teacher requires students to transfer information using multi-modal presentation of the same information such as the visual presentation of flowcharts (lines 1-6) and explaining their arrangement using verbal presentation (lines 13, 24, 26-27). Not stopping at the 'right' answer known and expected by the teacher, when student finishes one arrangement, she asks for alternatives and welcomes students' 'deviant' answers, promoting synthesizing/creating skills (Anderson et al., 2001). Then, students arrange the picture in the reverse order. This idea is new to all students and even to our common perception, an example of mini-c creativity, "the novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions and events" (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007, p. 73). Besides, the explanation demonstrates students' critical thinking when they bring in different issues like transport practicality, environment, and sense of freedom as the base for their picture arrangement.

The teacher also promotes higher-order thinking and creativity through the process of facilitating conceptualisation. The teacher asks further questions for students to select an appropriate concept that defines their sequence of pictures. After the first arrangement of the pictures, she asks: "what do they base on to arrange the pictures" (line 38) to prompt her learners to conceptualise their way of arrangement. This is successfully followed by students' response with a concept "the development of technology" (line 39). The teacher's prompt pushes students' thinking from description, arrangement of details to conceptualization, the act of moving up and down different levels of generality. After the students' second

surprising and creative arrangement, the teacher asks “What do you think about their arrangement?” and scaffolding with “This (group) for the advancement of science and technology and this one is the...” to prompt conceptualization. This was followed by students’ answers, but the answers are inaudible for transcription. She then takes up the students’ answer by either paraphrasing or repeating “the backwards of technology”. The teacher’s expanding questions in the F moves stimulates her learners’ logical explanation, conceptualization, comparison and contrast of different logical patterns.

Communicatively, students in this episode also show their co-construction of knowledge. For example, when the representative speaker of the first group cannot explain why human beings changed from using horses to using bicycles or trains, other members gave “brain” as a prompt, and she successfully picks it up and incorporates it in the next sentence “when our brain develop, we find different way, when we can...” (lines 34-35). Similarly, in explaining the second arrangement, when the second group speaker is talking about “riding horse” (line 62), she seems to get stuck through her long pause and hesitation. Then, another student just jumps in with ‘freedom’ as a hint (line 63). The student on the board quickly uptakes the suggestion and develops it into a whole reason why people choose to change from riding horse to walking (lines 65-67), which is followed by all students’ laughter. These are examples of creative collaboration (Sawyer, 2008). One of the conditions that the teachers create to facilitate such co-construction knowledge above might lie in teachers’ assignment of speakership. When the teacher expands the close-ended F move by adding further questions, she often assigns the speakership to one or several groups at a time rather than to a particular learner (lines 21, 26-27, 34-35, 38, 41, 69 and 76). This type

of speakership assignment is found to allow learners to freely scaffold their group member who is currently taking the floor whenever needed. These can be clear examples illustrating Vygotsky’s (1978) claim that most human learning starts from our interaction with others, and this speakership assignment obviously benefits learning in this regard.

It should be also noted that learners in this excerpt burst out laughing several times and even clapped hands as a compliment to their peers’ responses. These laughters are, in turn, found to create a pleasant classroom atmosphere and thus engage learners in their learning processes. This goes in line with Liao et al. (2018)’s argument that playfulness is a form of creative pedagogy that both motivates students learning and sustains the learning process.

Seen together, the interaction pattern Teacher B designates indeed gives more affordances for both thinking and language learning than that by Teacher A. While teacher A provides input but gives little chance for students’ practice, teacher B uses high-order thinking questions, wait-time, appreciative response to create enabling conditions for students’ active collaborative participation and creativity. Students’ planning, voluntary attention and rational thinking, according to Negueruela-Azarola et al. (2015), creates potential for development in a language classroom. The collaborative interaction pattern created can lead to conceptual transformation through mindful engagement of the students as the students here actively appropriate new ideas and frames for thinking. Students in class B take ownership of the floor and construct their own discourse. Linguistically, students use multiple sentence structures including simple, compound and complex sentences with various linking devices, forming the whole discourse of an argument. Despite some inaccuracy which does not hinder communication, the language

use to explain complex ideas resembles real life discourse. While students in class A are constructed as recipients of knowledge, students in class B are active users of the language, independent, creative and critical thinkers, and creative and collaborative partners in communication and knowledge construction.

The findings in this study echo findings by Li (2011) and Walsh (2006) that certain teachers' move can obstruct or construct learners' thinking. In addition, it advances the literature by adding nuances to the picture. For example, the study describes specific types of instructions and of questioning techniques that can scaffold and facilitate critical, divergent thinking, conceptualizing process, effective use of class time for students' thinking and incubation, speakership assignment to facilitate ownership of floor and collaboration. The findings also confirm that language classroom is not only an environment for language development, but also for fostering higher order thinking.

## 5. Conclusions and Implications

Different classroom language uses can create different interaction patterns with differing learning potentials. Specifically, when a teacher only asks students to form sentences from given language and ideas, students' language practice is observed to be restricted. Even when the teacher explicitly uses higher order thinking verbs in the question, but without further enabling conditions such as wait time or group work and without expectation of a full creative answer from students, creative and critical thinking of students is not observed in the interaction. Extended teachers' talk can be a source of input for students, but without further activities created and when the concern about covering all the materials assigned gets in the way, little language and cognitive development from the students can be observed.

On the other hand, teachers' proper question types that require different levels and types of thinking, wait-time with group work, appropriate assignment of speakership and appreciative responses and questions that probe conceptualisation can give ownership of the interaction to the students and foster higher level thinking skills. This can empower them to actively use complex language and ideas to independently express and justify their own opinions, decide the purpose, structure, language patterns, and relationship with other interlocutors in their own L2 discourse. By using talks that scaffold and facilitate critical, divergent thinking, conceptualising process and effectively using class time for students' thinking incubation and collaboration, teachers can create enabling conditions for students' learning and thinking to develop.

Video-tapes of different types of classroom interactions can be used in English language teacher education courses to compare and contrast the effects of different ways of teachers' talk and designation of classroom interaction. This finding also provides strong empirical evidence to support the use of authentic classroom interaction analysis in research of useful English for specific purposes (ESP) in classrooms as suggested by Freeman et al. (2015). It also strongly supports the argument proposed by Walsh (2002, 2011) that working with classroom interaction data and analysing transcripts can significantly enhance teachers' understanding of their own practice and can help modify their classroom behaviours to enhance learning opportunities for students. This understanding of the micro-context in relation to thinking development can form the foundation for language education and teacher professional development (Li, 2011) so as to improve learning opportunities for learners.

Cautions, however, should be taken into consideration in interpretation and application of this study. First, though students' levels are around pre-intermediate, they passed the entrance exam to a university majoring in English, their learning motivation might be higher than other groups of students. Thus, the findings might not be generalisable to other teaching contexts. Second, the study only concludes that such teachers' actions can create enabling conditions to foster students' language and thinking development, rather than causing such development.

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## APPENDIX

### Transcription conventions

- (.) A tiny pause of less than a second.
- (1) Numbers in parentheses indicate silence or wait-time rounded by seconds.
- ? A rising intonation.
- ˆ A rise to mid-high tone
- OR Loud sounds.
- (( )) Transcriber's descriptions.
- Parts of an extract discussed in the text.

# PHÁT TRIỂN NGÔN NGỮ VÀ TƯ DUY THÔNG QUATƯƠNG TÁC TRONG LỚP HỌC TIẾNG ANH

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**Tóm tắt:** Nghiên cứu này xem xét tác động của các chiến lược lời nói khác nhau của giáo viên đối với việc kiến tạo các điều kiện hướng đến sự phát triển ngôn ngữ và tư duy của người học trong lớp học tiếng Anh. Sử dụng lý thuyết văn hóa xã hội học, chúng tôi nghiên cứu cách thức tám giảng viên đại học tạo ra cơ hội cũng như cản trở việc phát triển năng lực tư duy và ngôn ngữ của người học thông qua các tương tác trong lớp học. Báo cáo này phân tích hai loại hình tương tác chính được tìm thấy. Trong loại hình thứ nhất, việc giáo viên đưa ra những lời giải thích dài và chi tiết có thể cung cấp thêm nguồn ngôn ngữ và kiến thức đầu vào cho người học, nhưng lại ảnh hưởng đến thời gian và cơ hội thực hành ngôn ngữ và sử dụng tư duy ở bậc cao hơn. Ở loại hình thứ hai, giáo viên phối kết hợp giữa việc sử dụng câu hỏi thực, tổ chức làm việc nhóm, kéo dài thời gian chờ đợi câu trả lời, để mở cho người học tham gia tương tác và hồi đáp gợi mở. Sự phối kết hợp này đã kiến tạo cơ hội cho người học chủ động sử dụng ngôn ngữ và phát triển tư duy sáng tạo và tư duy phản biện. Như vậy, bằng việc sử dụng ngôn từ có tính gợi mở và hỗ trợ tư duy, phân bổ thời gian cho người học suy nghĩ, áp ú các ý tưởng và trao đổi, phối hợp với nhau, giáo viên đã góp phần kiến tạo các điều kiện thuận lợi cho sự phát triển cả ngôn ngữ và tư duy của người học.

**Từ khóa:** chiến lược lời nói của giáo viên, tương tác trong lớp học, cơ hội học tập, kỹ năng tư duy, sáng tạo học tập.

# REASONS FOR USING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION TRANSFERS AS PERCEIVED BY SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETERS

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**Abstract:** This research aimed to understand the possible reasons for the use of intercultural communication (ICC) transfers from the perspective of professional simultaneous interpreters. Based on the ICC transfers suggested by Nguyen Quang (2014), the researcher conducted a focus group interview (FGI) to collect data and analysed it inductively. Seven reasons were found for the use of ICC transfers, categorized into two themes: Enhancing Audience's Comfortability (Theme 1) and Enhancing Interpreter's Comfortability (Theme 2). In general, this means using ICC transfers in particular, having intercultural competence (IC) in general, is beneficial not only to the audience, but also to the interpreters themselves.

*Keywords:* ICC, simultaneous interpreting, competence, FGI.

## 1. Introduction

As a service industry, interpreting is becoming increasingly important in Vietnam in parallel to the country's integration into the global economy. To be competitive in the industry, beside other qualities, an interpreter shall also possess IC. Constituting a part of a doctoral dissertation to explore the IC performed by English - Vietnamese simultaneous interpreters (SIRs) via ICC transfers during their real-life conferences, this article is to answer the research question: "What are the possible reasons for the use of ICC transfers as perceived by SIRs?".

## 2. Literature Review - Intercultural Communication Transfers

This research relied on the list of ICC transfers that Nguyen (2014) recommended to investigate the IC performed by SIRs. Accordingly, four types of ICC transfers were

put forward, including (i) absolute linguistic transfer, (ii) relative linguistic transfer, (iii) communicative transfer, and (iv) cross-cultural transfer. The priority of all these transfers is to make sure the impact brought to a language A speaker by the source (spoken) text is equally perceived by a language B audience through the target (spoken) text<sup>1</sup>.

In (i), linguistic factors of language A is rendered in a one-to-one manner to language B, for example (Nguyen, 2014):

Source text: "We'll talk about it later."

Target text: "Chúng ta sẽ nói về chuyện đó sau." (English back translation: "We will talk about it later.")

Regarding (ii), the source text is manipulated as it is rendered to language B.

<sup>1</sup> From this point, "text" is implicitly understood as "spoken text" for convenience. Text (including written and spoken texts) is a more conventional term in translation and interpreting studies. That is why in this research, it is used instead of "discourse" or "utterance".

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The manipulations could be restructuring, rearrangement of text components, addition and/or omission of text components, and relative alternation. One example of (ii) is:

Source text: “He was reading when I came yesterday”.

Target text: “Hôm qua khi tôi đến thì nó đang đọc sách”. (English back translation: “Yesterday when I came, he was reading.”)

In (iii), the meaning is preserved from the source text while most linguistic factors are changed. Thanks to this change, the target text becomes more acceptable to target audience of language B. Example of (iii):

Source text: “Search me”.

Target text: “Hỏi tôi thì hỏi cái đầu gối còn hơn”. (English back translation: “If you asked

me, it could be better if you asked your knees.”)

Finally, the use of (iv) requires a large exposure to both source language (SL) and target language (TL) cultures. It is often deployed for the culture-specific source texts either reflecting cultural practices, being influenced by cultural hiddens, or representing cultural preferences. One example of (iv) is as follows:

Source text: “Honey, it’s time for tea”.

Target text: “Em ơi, cơm nước thế nào nhỉ? Muộn rồi đây”. (English back translation: “Honey, how is our meal? It’s late already.”)

For data analysis, the four transfers were coded from S1 to S4. Table 1 below summarizes the description of these strategies.

Table 1: Nguyen’s transfers in ICC (2014)

Type of transfer	Method of transfer	Priority	Pragmatic force
Linguistic transfer S1: Absolute linguistic transfer	Language A components transferred one-to-one to language B components	Lexical components	Pragmatic force on native speaker of language A is equivalent to that of language B
Linguistic transfer S2: Relative linguistic transfer	+ Text restructuring + Rearrangement of text components + Addition and/or omission of text components + Relative alternation	Text and pragmatic components	Pragmatic force on native speaker of language A is equivalent to that of language B
S3: Communicative transfer	+ Replacement of linguistic components + Reservation of message meaning	Discourse and pragmatic components	Pragmatic force on native speaker of language A is more or less equivalent to that of language B
S4: Cross-cultural transfer	+ Transference and reflection of cultural practices + Transference and reflection of cultural hiddens + Transference and reflection of preferences in categorical dimensions	Cultural and pragmatic components	Pragmatic force on native speaker of language A is more or less equivalent to that of language B

### 3. Research Method - Focus Group Interview

Interview, according to Kvale (1996) and Cohen, Manion and Morison (2007), is an activity where at least two people exchange opinions about a topic that they are all interested in. For the purpose of collecting data, interview is a flexible tool that helps the researcher to make use of different sensory channels and codes: verbal and non-verbal, vocal and non-vocal.

Among others, FGI is one type of interview that typically involves five to ten participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The interaction among participants is what makes FGI special and different from one-to-one interview, enabling rich data generation. Participants in an FGI do not need to reach consensus with one another. The views collected are more collective than individual (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 376).

As the whole group focuses on a specific topic, FGI often generates in-depth information that may not be collected in other forms of interview (Cohen et al., 2007). Beside other purposes, FGI is particularly helpful in generating qualitative data quickly and inexpensively. It can be used to complement other methods (Bloor, 2001, p. 17) and triangulate with data collected by other tools, such as other types of interviewing, questionnaire, and observation (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 377).

Naturally, like any other method, FGI owns certain pitfalls. For example, the data collected is often of limited quantification or generalizability, the number of interviewees is often small and therefore may yield less insights than a survey. The interview may be dominated by some people while others do not contribute as much as expected (Cohen, 2007 et al., p. 377).

### 4. Research Data

This research is to supplement the findings of Nguyen (2020), which used a survey to reveal the reactions of the target audience to ICC

transfers. In Nguyen (2020), some situations that were inter-culturally difficult to be rendered did not show really clear trends in the audience's reaction. Therefore, FGI was deployed to discover the insights of senior professional SIs on these points. With this research, ICC transfers are investigated thoroughly from the perspectives of not only the audience but also the interpreters, who are another integral player in an interpreter-mediated event.

In total, eight interpreters were interviewed (coded as I1 to I8 in alphabetical order). While seven are based in Hanoi, one interpreter (I2) is based in Ho Chi Minh City. These interpreters have had from 12 to over 20 years of experience, working in a large variety of areas (diplomatic, education, industry, information technology, health, agriculture, etc.) and settings (small technical seminars, large symposiums, bilateral/multilateral negotiations, escort events, state head summits, etc.). Seven of them joined the FGI whereas I1 was interviewed individually (for half an hour) due to a last-minute change in his work schedule. Their insightful knowledge of SI was expected to answer the research question.

The group interview lasted for one and a half hours. After considerations, the researcher decided to conduct the FGI online (on Zoom platform at [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)) for its many advantages, including convenience, connectivity, and user-friendliness (Archibald et al., 2019). With participants' permission, the whole discussion was video and audio recorded for transcription and analysis later using Zoom's record function. Besides, the researcher also used an external voice recorder (Sony P440) as a backup in case there were network interruptions. To ensure that the expected data could be collected while enabling insightful side-discussions, semi-structured interview technique was deployed. A detailed agenda with six question items was carefully prepared and piloted before use.

For convenience, the language used in

the FGI was Vietnamese. When quotes from interviewees are inserted into the analysis below, English translations are provided by the researcher.

**5. Findings and Discussion**

**5.1. Overall Findings.**

Based on the data provided by focus group interviewees (including interviewee I1 who was engaged one-on-one), three major findings were harvested. First, it was demonstrated by all professional interpreters in the interview that they did use ICC transfers, particularly S3 (communicative transfer) and S4 (cross-cultural transfer). Even when they do not use ICC transfers, all S1rs explicitly considered intercultural aspects before making the final decision in how to render the source text (e.g. I4, I7, I1 in question 1; I4, I1 in question 2; I4, I6, I7 in question 3; I6, I7, I1 in question 4; I2, I7, I4 in question 5; and I3, I6, I4 in question 6). In other words, IC was important to them

and indeed performed by them in authentic workshop situations. This finding reinforces the results of previous works to a certain extent (Hurtado & Olalla-Soler, 2016; Yarosh, 2015; Kaczmarek, 2010; Eyckmans, 2017; Fenyo, 2005; Dinçkan, 2010; Bahumaid, 2010; and Solovyeva, 2015) on the ownership of cultural/IC by interpreters and translators.

Second, to directly respond to the research question, seven reasons (coded as R1 to R7) under two themes were found and listed in Table 2. In overall, most reasons were recognized by more than one interviewee and/or in more than one FGI question (workshop situation). Three of them gained attention from at least five out of eight FGI participants (R1, R2, R7). The list of these reasons, by all means, is neither exhaustive nor representative due to the limited number of FGI participants and situations. Its meaning is to suggest some reasons that professional practitioners considered when using ICC transfers in real-life.

Table 2: Summary of FGI Results

Interviewee	Question	Code	Reason	Theme
I4, I4	1	1.1 - Conformity to speaker's intention	R1 - Accurate comprehension	Theme 1 - Enhancing audience' comfortability
I8	6			
I1	2	1.2 - Easy comprehension		
I1, I6, I7	1			
I2, I5	1	2.1 - Avoidance of tension due to political/cultural differences	R2 - Lower sensitivity	
I1, I2, I4, I6, I7	3	2.2 - Neutrality/Lower sensitivity		
I2	3	2.3 - Higher acceptability		
I1, I4	1	3.1 - Suitability to Westerners	R3 - Higher universality	
I1, I7	4	3.2 - Universal addressing method		
I1	4	4.1 - Higher respect	R4 - Higher respect	
I6	6	5.1 - Higher equality	R5 - Higher equality	

I6, I7, I8	2	6.1 - Unimportant details removal	R6 - Higher efficiency	Theme 2 - Enhancing interpreter's comfortability
I1, I2, I7, I8	5			
I1, I3, I6, I8	6			
I2	5	6.2 - Saving of time and resources		
I7	6			
I1	3	7.1 - Authentic Vietnamese preservation	R7 - Authentic Vietnamese preservation	

Third, as seen in Table 2, the seven reasons recommended by SIs are categorized into two themes, including Enhancing Audience's Comfortability (Theme 1) and Enhancing Interpreter's Comfortability (Theme 2). This means the interpreters used ICC transfers to benefit both their audience and themselves.

Compared with Theme 2, Theme 1 was more commonly observed. It showed up in 22 quotes which were mentioned by all eight interviewees in five out of six questions. Among the seven reasons for SIs to use ICC transfers, five of them were under this theme. Meanwhile, Theme 2 appeared in 14 quotes, by six interviewees in three questions, and consisted of two reasons. As can be seen, that Theme 1 is more popular shows that though professional interpreters could think for themselves, they always give the highest priority to the audience's benefit. In other words, it is by default that an interpreter has to guarantee that her<sup>1</sup> audience is happy with the target texts she produced. At certain moments, she could apply certain ICC transfers for her own benefit (mostly to save time and attention resources). This strategic decision and its associated benefits were also enabled by her IC.

## 5.2. Specific Findings

In the FGI, reasons for using ICC transfers are the main level of data analysis. As a

consequence, the discussion in this part focuses on the seven reasons identified from the FGI. As mentioned in the previous section, the seven reasons for using ICC transfers are categorized into two themes. Under the first theme "Enhancing Audience's Comfortability", there are five reasons. The common point of these reasons is that they all aim to bring positive experience to the audience. Besides, the underlying basis for these reasons are directly related to the interpreter's IC. In other words, the SIs make use of their IC to render an optimal target text, in their opinion, to serve the workshop participants who need their interpretation service.

The first reason, **R1 - "Accurate comprehension"** - was acknowledged by many interpreters (I1, I4, I6, I7, I8) and in different situations (questions 1, 2, 6). This means SIs always try to make sure the source text messages are conveyed accurately to the audience. Detailed explanations can be found in the following remarks from FGI participants.

*- If we don't understand the intention and translate word-for-word 'vấn đề' into 'problem', it's not correct. For example, in "nhưng mà chúng ta cũng hết sức quan tâm đến vấn đề là chúng ta phải kết hợp giữa chiếu sáng tự nhiên", it refers to "matter" or "point of this", not "problem". (I1, question 2 - "Vấn đề")*

<sup>1</sup> The convention in interpreting studies is that interpreters are called "she", while speakers are referred to as "he".

- *In case I need to translate that phrase, I tend to use “ladies and gentlemen” or add “so” in the front. I think that phrase is a way of addressing and attracting attention, rather than to “report” or “inform”. (I8, question 6 - “Báo cáo”)*

- *If the situation is not relevant to “comrades” but the interpreter still uses “comrades”, it is not correct. That interpreter has not worked correctly... To correctly render “đồng chí”, we must have a specific situation and identify the speaker’s intention first. (I4, question 1 - “Đồng chí”)*

R1 rooted from some unique features of Vietnamese culture that may not exist in others. The closely rendered versions of the source texts in many cases possibly do not reflect what the speakers really intend to say. A worse case is that these interpretations may even make the audience feel awkward or confused as the equivalent understanding is missed in the cultures outside Vietnam. For examples, “vấn đề” and “báo cáo” in Vietnamese are often used with meanings far different from “problems” and “report”. As pointed out by I1 and echoed by other participants, when it comes to the English version, these source words should be translated by other options that may not look like their dictionary equivalents. Similarly, in a lot of situations, using ICC transfers and translating “đồng chí” into “ladies and gentlemen”, “mister”, or “madame” would better match the speaker’s intention and be more understandable to the audience than using “comrade”.

The next reason, **R2 - “Lower sensitivity”**, was also relatively popular. It was suggested by six interviewees (I1, I2, I4, I5, I6, I7) in two situations (question 1 and 3). This reason emerged in relation to the words that are associated with some political meanings.

*I will use a neutral word to the audience... To neutralize cultural words or concepts that may sound a bit uncomfortable in some situations and may make the two sides difficult to understand each other... Not to cause unnecessary tension. (I2, question 1 - “Đồng chí”)*

In this case, “đồng chí” is used quite commonly in a communist society like Vietnam. However, as communism may sometimes be associated with negative meanings in other parts of the world, this way of addressing may sound politically unpleasant to foreigners. Replacing “comrade” by other common addressing devices, or even skipping this word in certain cases could be a better choice.

- *The one that is more neutral is “quyền con người”... When mentioning the general, the neutral, people often use “quyền con người”. (I1, question 3 - “Human rights”)*

- *We were also warned not to use “xã hội dân sự” but “tổ chức chính trị xã hội” or things like that because it is sensitive... This and “human rights” may be similar as they are related to some intercultural or inter-political differences between the two sides. (I7, question 3 - “Human rights”)*

Politically, “human rights” translated as “nhân quyền” is also a sensitive topic in the context of Vietnam. This was explicitly mentioned by most FGI participants. “In Vietnam, when mentioning ‘nhân quyền’, there are some political implications” (I6). “The connotation of ‘nhân quyền’ in Vietnamese is a bit negative and particularly sensitive in terms of politics” (I2). “Vietnam is too sensitive to this word (nhân quyền)” (I4). That is why many practitioners, often unconsciously using ICC transfers, tend to use “quyền con người” as a safer alternative. Though “nhân quyền” and “quyền con người” mean denotatively the same, the

later has been more widely accepted on the official media. Using it could prevent any unnecessary irritation to the ears of the target audience due to “intercultural or inter-political differences” (I7).

For the next reason of using ICC transfers, interviewees claimed that these strategies may give their interpretation a sense of “**Higher universality**” (R3). This reason was specifically mentioned in relation to rendering addressing forms.

*- In an ordinary conference or workshop about science or a project, there are different groups of participants. It is not necessary to use “comrade” but to use “Mister” or “Miss” or “Mistress”. (I1, question 1 - “Đồng chí”)*

*- When we know who the audience is and I see only Westerners, all instances of “đồng chí” will not be interpreted. For example: if “đồng chí đại sứ” is rendered as “comrade ambassador”, it is extremely inappropriate. (I7, question 1 - “Đồng chí”)*

With regards to “đồng chí”, sometimes it is used by Vietnamese speakers simply as a way of addressing other people in general - a common practice originated from a communist lifestyle. In many cases, not all the addressees are in the same political party as the speaker. When it comes to the situation of an international workshop, the target users of interpretation service are, of course, foreigners. Few of them are communists.

Under the influence of ICC transfers, using “Mister”, “Miss”, or “Madame” - English common addressing devices - is suitable to more foreign audience.

*Whether “chị” or “bạn” is more appropriate depends on the relation between the “speaker” and the “audience”: Do they know each other? Are they so close that “bạn” should be used? (I7, question 4 - “You”)*

The above quote from I7 is another evidence for R3. Addressing the audience as “chị” may be more general regardless of the level of acquaintance between the speaker and the audience.

**R4 - “Higher respect”** was recognized by two interviewees, relevant to the discussion on addressing devices. Despite its limited prevalence, this reason is inter-culturally important. Accordingly, if the interpreter is more mindful of the intercultural differences between the speaker and the audience, her renditions will show a higher level of respect to the addressee and, hence, be more appreciated.

*The word “chị” shows higher respect. Vietnamese and some languages have a principle “xung khiêm hô tôn” (lit. using an inferior term to call oneself and a more respectful term to address others)... So “chị” is neutral, but has a higher level of respect. (I1, question 4 - “You”)*

I1 is a senior researcher in linguistics, beside his job as a professional interpreter. Therefore, his explanation was both practical and academic. As seen in the quote, interpreting “you” into “chị” was better because it fitted the addressing principle in Vietnamese, providing the addressee a higher status in a discursive encounter.

*In some cases, we were reminded absolutely not to use “you”, but have to use “Your Royal Highness” or “Your Majesty”. (I7, question 4 - “You”)*

The above quote from I7 was extended from the main FGI topic. When discussing how to deal with the situation given by the researcher, he remembered a similar and interesting case. He was interpreting for a reception dinner hosted by the Government of Vietnam to welcome the Swedish Royal Family.

In that encounter, the interpreter was constantly reminded to refrain from rendering “ông”, “bà” in Vietnamese into “you” in English. Instead, “Your Royal Highness” and “Your Majesty” - special forms of addressing must be used to be suitable to the special guests.

Although like the previous one, the fifth reason of **R5 - “higher equality”** - did not gain the attention of many interviewees, it is explicitly related to intercultural differences. The explanations provided were also extensive and interesting.

*Sometimes in Vietnam, the power distance or hierarchy gap is so clear. The inferior wants to show respect and they lower themselves by saying “báo cáo”. Meanwhile, equality is more upheld for Westerners. So I think when interpreting into English, we don't need to express that (power distance). It is only important in Vietnamese. (I6, question 6 - “Báo cáo”)*

In Vietnamese culture, like some other Asian neighbors, social hierarchy is very important. The power distance is materialized in different aspects of the society, including in the way people talk to each other. “Báo cáo” is usually used to mark a conversation between an inferior and a superior. However, Westerners may not care too much for this gap, at least in the way of addressing each other. With ICC transfers, skipping “báo cáo” or replacing it by other more neutral expressions could create a better sense of equality and attain naturalness to English listeners.

The second theme of reasons for using ICC transfers (Enhancing Interpreter's Comfortability) include two items: R6 and R7. These reasons base themselves on the SIr's IC and aim to ‘make life easier’ for the interpreters without compromising the audience's experience. It should be noted

that though ‘Efficiency’ and ‘Authentic Vietnamese preservation’ are not directly related to the SIr's intercultural competence, the application of ICC transfers in these situations indeed requires very good knowledge and skills of the involved languages and cultures. For example, to firmly remove unimportant details while doing no harm to the audience's understanding, the interpreters must very quickly consider the intercultural differences between the speaker and the target audience. Only when knowing that the details to be removed do not contribute to the overall source text message can the SIrs proceed with this intended solution. That is why R6 and R7 are counted as reasons for using ICC transfers.

The sixth reason, **R6 - “Higher efficiency”**, was actually the most popular among all the seven reasons recorded in the FGI. It was mentioned by six out of eight interviewees (I1, I2, I3, I6, I7, I8) and was relevant to three situations in the FGI (questions 2, 5, 6). Some of the interpreters' quotes were as follows:

*- His word indeed is not very meaningful so when providing simultaneous interpretation, if the speaker is too fast and we may have challenges in catching up and assuring accuracy, these words can be omitted... If some words are surely fillers, we can skip them and save time to focus more on the main points. (I2, question 5 - “As you know”).*

*- It is not a phrase with important meanings. If we have time, like the speaker is not too fast, we can render it. But if the speaker is too fast or the information is not too sophisticated or important, we can skip it to save time. (I8, question 5 - “As you know”).*

*- There are two cases for this phrase. In one case, it has a meaning; in another case, it is just a filler. Like in sentence 1, we absolutely neither have to translate nor compensate. We*

*can save time and effort and focus on other contents.* (I7, question 6 - “Báo cáo”).

All of these comments explicitly referred to R6 and provided the logic underlying the reason. Accordingly, most interpreters considered the source texts in these situations only habitual fillers. They did not contain any material meaning or they had some meanings but only recognizable to the SL audience. An effort to fully render them into the TL would not contribute to the understanding of those listening to that language. Therefore, the decision made was to omit these words. This decision, applying an ICC transfer (S4 - cross-cultural transfer), gave the interpreters more time and mental resources to spend on the more important details coming from the speaker. The usefulness and practicality of R6 partly explain why it is so popular among the interpreters.

**R7 - “Authentic Vietnamese preservation”** is the last reason identified from the FGI regarding why ICC transfers were used (I1 in question 3).

*In laws, “quyền con người” is also used more commonly than “nhân quyền”. This is the result of an effort to reserve authentic Vietnamese language: to use purely Vietnamese or highly Vietnamized words.* (I1, question 3 - “Human rights”)

Again, I1 provided an academic point from his research background. “Quyền con người” is only one third Sino, compared to “nhân quyền” - a purely borrowed word. Using the former would have a positive contribution to Vietnamese culture and language sovereignty. This effort, which is under the impact of ICC transfers, should be appreciated when so many words are borrowed, sometimes carelessly, into Vietnamese.

## 6. Conclusion

From the perspective of professional interpreters, there were seven reasons why ICC transfers were used. Most of these reasons were mentioned by different interpreters and in different situations, which, to some extent, demonstrated their validity. The seven reasons identified are under two themes: Enhancing Audience’s Comfortability (Theme 1) and Enhancing Interpreter’s Comfortability (Theme 2). This means having IC in general, using ICC transfers in particular, is beneficial not only to the audience, but also to the interpreters themselves. As a matter of fact, the audience’s benefits are more frequently observed, meaning they are always the top priority to SIs.

Another important finding from the FGI is that IC is very important to interpreters. Based on the data collected, it can be seen that all interpreters used ICC transfers in different situations. They considered intercultural differences between the speaker and the target audience even when they decided not to use an ICC transfer or when their decisions were not directly related to IC.

Methodologically, FGI has proved itself as a useful tool for qualitative data collection. The interaction among interviewees provides invaluable information, sometimes even broader than the intended topic.

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## Appendix

Appendix title	Link 1	Link 2 (backup)
Appendix 1: FGI Invitation	<a href="http://bom.to/6gpmjB">bom.to/6gpmjB</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/33mSUxB">bit.ly/33mSUxB</a>
Appendix 2: FGI Agenda	<a href="http://bom.to/9fmaHh">bom.to/9fmaHh</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/2Ga6EDa">bit.ly/2Ga6EDa</a>
Appendix 3: FGI Participant Information	<a href="http://bom.to/6hCFFX4">bom.to/6hCFFX4</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/30rtpcG">bit.ly/30rtpcG</a>
Appendix 4: FGI Questions (ppt file)	<a href="http://bom.to/ArZUDm">bom.to/ArZUDm</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/34dfiIS">bit.ly/34dfiIS</a>
Appendix 5: FGI Key Quotes	<a href="http://bom.to/JH3gpf">bom.to/JH3gpf</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/36xuKII">bit.ly/36xuKII</a>
Appendix 6: FGI Summary with Quotes	<a href="http://bom.to/qG1IoD">bom.to/qG1IoD</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/34oIxZw">bit.ly/34oIxZw</a>
Appendix 7: FGI Audio Recordings	<a href="http://bom.to/NrSW0x">bom.to/NrSW0x</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/3joORq6">bit.ly/3joORq6</a>

# LÝ DO SỬ DỤNG CÁC CHIẾN LƯỢC CHUYỂN GIAO LIÊN VĂN HÓA TỪ GÓC NHÌN CỦA PHIÊN DỊCH CHUYÊN NGHIỆP

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**Tóm tắt:** Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu lý do sử dụng các chiến lược chuyển giao liên văn hóa (ICC) từ góc nhìn của các phiên dịch chuyên nghiệp. Dựa trên các chiến lược chuyển giao ICC của Nguyễn Quang, nghiên cứu tiến hành một cuộc phỏng vấn nhóm tập trung để thu thập dữ liệu trước khi phân tích dữ liệu theo hướng quy nạp. Có tổng cộng bảy lý do sử dụng các chiến lược chuyển giao ICC, thuộc 2 chủ điểm: Giúp khán giả thoải mái hơn (Chủ điểm 1) và Giúp phiên dịch thoải mái hơn (Chủ điểm 2). Các phát hiện này cho thấy việc sử dụng các chuyển giao ICC nói riêng, việc có năng lực liên văn hóa (IC) nói chung không chỉ mang lại lợi ích cho khán giả, mà còn cho chính phiên dịch viên.

*Từ khóa:* chuyển giao liên văn hóa, phiên dịch song song, phỏng vấn nhóm tập trung.

# CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR A FAMILY IS A HOUSE IN VIETNAMESE

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**Abstract:** The article analyzes the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE in Vietnamese to explore the ways Vietnamese people conceptualize family via the domain of HOUSE. To fulfill the research objectives, the article uses the theory of *conceptual metaphors* and other fundamental concepts of *Cognitive linguistics* to establish and analyze the mappings from the source domain HOUSE to the target domain FAMILY. The research findings show that Vietnamese people use the house to conceptualize the family as a place to shelter and protect each member. Besides, different parts of the house including the *roof, rooftop, pillar, space* and the activities of *building, destroying* the house are also used to express the ways Vietnamese people perceive the roles of the father, husband, family relationships, establishment and breakup and protection of the family. The use of the house to express views of the family demonstrates distinctive cultural features of the Vietnamese people.

*Keywords:* conceptual metaphor, mapping, family, house, Vietnamese.

## 1. Introduction

1.1. Conceptual metaphor is the way to express people's thought. It shows the ways people see things in their life based on their embodiment experiences. Therefore, exploring conceptual metaphors enables us to discover the uniqueness in the thought and cognition mechanism of humans.

1.2. In *Vietnamese Dictionary*, family is defined as “tập hợp người cùng sống chung thành một đơn vị nhỏ nhất trong xã hội, gắn bó với nhau bằng quan hệ hôn nhân và dòng máu, thường gồm có vợ chồng, cha mẹ và con cái” (Hoàng Phê, 2010, p. 496) (a gathering of people living together in the smallest unit in the society, bonding with each other by marriage and blood ties, often including husband and wife, parents and children). Similarly, in *Cambridge dictionary* (n.d.), the

family is defined as “a group of people who are related to each other, such as a mother, a father, and their children”. Our family is where we were born and brought up both physically and sentimentally. Our family consists of our beloved people with close relationships; it is the place where we can share and get our life difficulties shared by others. For these reasons, any one of us highly values our own families; whenever possible, we try to gather with our families to enjoy emotional warmth.

The conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE is one of many conceptual metaphors about the family of Vietnamese people. Investigating these metaphors gives us an interesting insight into the concept of the family based on the embodiment experiences of the houses; it also helps us to discover distinctive cultural features of Vietnamese people via their thought of the family.

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## 2. Literature review

The application of conceptual metaphor theories into the research of linguistics in literature and life has brought about considerable achievements, as can be seen in the gigantic number of journal articles and research projects in the world since the conceptual metaphor theory was introduced by Lakoff and John in 1980. However, in a narrower scale, researchers in the world as well as in Vietnam have not paid adequate attention to the study of metaphors of families in different languages.

According to the author's review, as the target domain in conceptual metaphors, FAMILY has been used in just some political discourses in presidential elections in the US; for example in several conceptual metaphorical expressions about family as shown in *Conceptual Metaphors of Family in Political Debates in the USA* (Adams, 2009). Upon surveying 104 debates in different forums between candidates in their races to political agencies, the article found some conceptual metaphors about the roles of the family (nuclear family and family in general), which are used in the election campaigns of the candidates, for instance, A NUCLEAR FAMILY IS MASTERY or NUCLEAR FAMILIES ARE CANDIDATES.

In Vietnam, up to now, there has been no journal article nor research project on conceptual metaphors of the family.

## 3. Research methods

The research sample was collected and analyzed to answer the following research questions: (1) In the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE, which aspects of the source domain HOUSE are mapped to the target domain FAMILY? (2) What do these mappings show about the thought and

cognitive ways of Vietnamese people about the family?

The sample used in this article includes idioms, proverbs and extracts from some Vietnamese literature works which portray the family. The linguistic forms in the sample are translated literally into English to provide a genuine view of the mappings from the aspects of the source domain HOUSE to the target domain FAMILY.

The conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE is analyzed on the basis of conceptual metaphor theory, including the definition, features and grounding of conceptual metaphor. These concepts are summarized in the following parts.

## 4. Theoretical grounds

Conceptual metaphor is defined as "understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain" (Kövecses, 2010, p. 4). Each conceptual metaphor consists of two domains: *source domain* and *target domain*. The latter is understood in terms of the former. The source domain is usually concrete, specific or physical while the target domain tends to be abstract and less delineated. The two domains are related to each other in the mode of TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN. According to cognitive linguistics, there is a one-way mapping from the source domain to the target domain; the reverse mapping from the target domain to the source domain does not exist. The source domain includes many aspects, but not all of them are mapped to the target domain. It is common that just some aspects are mapped to the target domain. In other words, mappings are only partial from the source to the target domain.

Each conceptual domain in conceptual metaphors is a systematic organization of

human experiences (Kövecses, 2010). These experiences are referred to as embodiment. “In its broadest definition, the embodiment hypothesis is the claim that human physical, cognitive, and social embodiment ground our conceptual and linguistic system” (Rohrer, 2007, pp. 25-47). Human experiences are not just the experiences about features and processes of objects and events in the natural world; not just experiences about social relationships and their characteristics but experiences about our own physiobiological, psychological, intellectual activities as well. Experiences arising from human interactions with nature, society and our own bodies are the ingredients for humans to establish concepts which build up conceptual metaphors. In other words, “the structure of our spatial concepts emerges from our constant spatial experience, that is, our interaction with the physical environment” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, pp. 56-57). As such, the interactions of human bodies with our living environment have provided us with experiences which, in their turn, become “materials” for us to create concepts to structure and interpret things in our life, then to deliver them in metaphorical expressions.

So on what grounding do people use their own experiences to conceptualize objects in their life? The answers are: *Correlations in Experience* and *Perceived Structural Similarity* are the biggest motivations of conceptual metaphors (Kövecses, 2010).

*Correlations in Experience* is one of the motivations of conceptual metaphors. It is important to note that correlations are not similarities. Correlations refer to the shared features between the two elements while similarities involve the co-occurrence of the two elements. In other words, correlations refer to two events that accompany each other

constantly and repeatedly in experiences of humans. It is the correlations that motivate people to create some conceptual metaphors.

Kövecses (2010) explains this motivation as follows:

If event E1 is accompanied by event E2 (either all the time or just habitually), E1 and E2 will not be similar events; they will be events that are correlated in experience. For example, if the event of adding more fluid to a container is accompanied by the event of the level of the fluid rising, we will not say that the two events (adding more to a fluid and the level rising) are similar to each other. Rather, we will say that the occurrence of one event is correlated with the occurrence of another. This is exactly the kind of correlation that accounts for the conceptual metaphor MORE IS UP. (pp. 79-80)

Besides *Correlations in Experience*, *Perceived Structural Similarity* is another foundation for the establishment of conceptual metaphors. Perceived structural similarity is not the objective pre-existing similarities between the two events. Rather, they are nonobjective similarity that speakers of a language perceive of the two events (Kövecses, 2010). For example, the perceived structural similarity of Vietnamese people about life and river is the grounding for the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A RIVER in Vietnamese. Vietnamese see life as a river with flows, waterfalls, waves; activities taking place in life are like activities people take in a river, for instance, *lênh đênh giữa cuộc đời* (floating in life), *cuộc đời của nó lắm thác ghềnh* (his life has gone through many waterfalls), *cầu cho mọi chuyện xuôi chèo mát mái* (wishing everything a smooth sail), *sóng gió cuộc đời* (life waves), *ngụp lặn giữa dòng đời* (swimming against life waves), *chới với giữa dòng đời* (drowning in life waves) and so on.

The above theoretical grounds are used in our study, which yields the following findings.

### 5. Research findings

The conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE is a typical conceptual metaphor of the family in Vietnamese (in comparison with other conceptual metaphors of the family in Vietnamese such as A FAMILY IS A BIRD'S NEST, A FAMILY IS A TREE, A FAMILY IS A COHESIVE UNIT). It reflects the distinctive cognition of Vietnamese people about the structure, durability and functions of the family.

So which experiential basis and embodiment experiences are the motivations for Vietnamese people to use the conceptual domain HOUSE to express their thought of the family?

Just like eating and drinking to maintain subsistence, accommodation is among the fundamental needs of a person. Houses therefore play an essential role to each person. A house not only serves as a shelter to protect us from external adverse impacts but also creates a space for us to live and rest. For these reasons, houses and their features have become a popular source domain in conceptual metaphors. "Both the static object of a house or its parts and the act of building it serve as common metaphorical source domain" (Kövecses, 2010, p. 19). We use our understanding of houses, their parts and features, the acts of building and preserving our houses to conceptualize many objects in the world we are living in.

That Vietnamese people use the target domain HOUSE to conceptualize the family is grounded by this common fact. However, there is another motivation for this conceptual metaphor. Shelters are very important in a

water-rice cultivating culture as people can only grow rice and other vegetables once they settle in a location. Therefore, Vietnamese people have a saying "an cư lạc nghiệp" (settle down and thrive), which means only by settling in a specific location can they feel secure to make a living and develop their work. As an inevitable result, to settle in a location, shelters - or houses - are the first factor to care for. People need a house to settle down. Therefore, houses keep a crucial hold in the mind of Vietnamese people. Under the conceptual metaphor theory, an object is chosen as the source domain to conceptualize another domain only when it satisfies the following conditions: appearing first, or having strongest influences, or appearing constantly, or meeting two or three above conditions. With people in an agricultural society, houses satisfy all these three conditions.

In the perception of Vietnamese people, a house has lots of similarities to a family. The similarities appear in various elements, from structure to the process of building and preservation. These are the foundations for the establishment of the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE.

In the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE, the source domain HOUSE provides knowledge of a house's features such as: *having a design; being constructed carefully; having different parts such as ridge, roof, wall, ground, foundation, door, window, stairs, doorstep, paint, lime; having space: inside the house, outside the house, upstairs, downstairs; having different styles: high houses, low houses, 1-storey houses, multi-storey houses, Thai-roof houses, etc.* However, not all these aspects are mapped to the target domain of

FAMILY. As one feature of the conceptual metaphor is highlighting and hiding, when a source domain is mapped to a target domain, only some aspects of the target domain are

highlighted (Kövecses, 2010). Only some sub-regions in the conceptual domain of “a house” are utilized to structure concepts related to family.

Source domain (House)		Target domain (Family)
House	>>>>>	Family
House roof	>>>>>	Father
House pillar	>>>>>	Husband / father
House space (inside, outside, corner, etc.)	>>>>>	Family relationships, lifestyles
Building	>>>>>	Establishing and keeping family
Being damaged (break down / collapse / wreckage, etc.)	>>>>>	Breakup

Figure 1. Set of mappings of the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE

Seeing the family as a house, Vietnamese people usually use many linguistic forms belonging to the semantic field of houses such as *house, roof, foundation, rooftop, pillar, wall, design, construction, leaking, cracks, damage, collapse, etc.* to talk about the family:

(1). Việc lớn nhỏ trong **nhà** đều do cô quyết... **Cô mới là rường cột ngôi nhà, chú chỉ là thành phần trang trí.** (Nguyễn Quỳnh Hương, 2017, p. 84).

(Every big or small chore in her **house** has been decided by her. She is the **pillar of the house** while her husband is just a kind of **ornament.**)

(2). Chị đã là bà vua trong **nhà** của mình. Mà vua thì luôn cô độc và... Đã quá xa với **thiết kế** ban đầu về hạnh phúc của chính chị. (Dạ Ngân, 2015, p. 74)

(She is the female king in **her house**. The king is always lonely and... It is away from her original **design** of happiness.)

(3). Đàn bà sống một mình khó lắm... không ra một gia đình. **Đàn ông** họ có đui què mẽ sứt gì cũng **là trụ cột, cái nóc của nhà mình.** (Dona Đỗ Ngọc, 2017, p. 63)

(It is difficult for a woman to live alone...

not to be a family. **A man** who is even disabled **is the pillar, the roof of her house.**)

(4). Vợ tôi bảo: **nhà mình** nói năng như điên khùng cả. (Nguyễn Huy Thiệp, 2007, p. 107)

(“**Our house** all talk nonsense”, said my wife.)

(5). Chị bất thần lật úp xuống, lúc đó chỉ muốn nhấn chìm mình đi để rửa hết nỗi tủ nhục của người đàn bà mang tiếng giựt chồng. Nghèn nghẹn nước, chị ôm một bên mạn xuống từ từ chìm lìm, chợt nhớ lại **cái nhà mình** từ lâu đã không có **nóc**, chẳng lẽ chị để nó mất luôn **phên**, dù **mái phên** có tòi tàn ứ dột. (Many authors, 2011, p. 128)

(She suddenly turned her boat upside down, just wanting to sink herself to wash away all the shames that she has to suffer from flirting with another woman’s husband. Full of tears, she held one side of the boat which was slowly sinking, suddenly thinking about **her house whose rooftop** had been damaged a long time ago, now she doesn’t want to lose its ridge, though the ridge had already torn out.)

(6). Cả **nhà** mình thu xếp về thăm mẹ một chuyến đi em. (Đỗ Thị Minh Nguyệt, 2013, p. 7)

(**Our house** should pay a visit to our mom.)

(7). **Nhà vắng người đàn ông trụ cột.**  
(Many authors, 2014, p. 248)

(**The house** lacks a **pillar man**.)

(8). Vậy mà hai mảnh đời tã tui đó chấp lại, **mái gia đình** chúng tôi đang **đột** te tua chốt lạnh bon. (Võ Diệu Thanh, 2016, p. 496)

(When the two weary lives are joined, our seriously **leaking roof** suddenly gets fixed.)

(9). Dường như bằng cách này bạn giành lấy tình thương của má, khi trót sinh ra dưới **một mái nhà đông anh chị em**. (Nguyễn Ngọc Tư, 2017, p. 13)

(In that way, you can gain the love from your mom when you are born into a **roof** with lots of siblings.)

(10). Mày chỉ muốn **gia đình chị mày tan nát** mới chịu im mồm phải không? (Phạm Thị Ngọc Liên, 2007, p. 141)

(You aren't going to shut your mouth until **your sister's family is damaged**, are you?)

(11). Những thay đổi trong cuộc sống sôi động ngoài kia từ lâu trở thành **vết rạn** âm ỉ trong **nền tảng của một gia đình**. (Nguyễn Hương, Trang Hạ & Nguyễn Thị Thanh Mận, 2014, p. 131)

(The changes in the hustle life outside have caused a permanent **crack** to the **foundation of a family**.)

(12). Anh biên kịch tuồng chèo kể vừa mới trong trại tù ra, **cả nhà tan nát**, vợ bỏ rời con để đi theo tay thám phán. (Nguyễn Ngọc Tư, 2017, p. 129)

(The editor said that when he was released from jail, **his house was damaged**, his wife had left his children to follow the judge.)

Conceptualizing A FAMILY IS A HOUSE,

first of all, Vietnamese people express the views that a family is where people find a shelter which shields and protects them, just like a house which protects people from harmful impacts of their habitats. Besides, we also see that many aspects of the source domain HOUSE are used by Vietnamese people to discuss other aspects of the family. Each aspect of the source domain HOUSE corresponds to another aspect of the family as shown in the set of mappings to create lower-level metaphors of the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE. They are FATHER IS THE ROOF OF THE HOUSE, HUSBAND/FATHER IS THE PILLAR OF THE HOUSE, RELATIONSHIPS AND LIFESTYLES OF THE FAMILY ARE THE SPACE OF THE HOUSE, ESTABLISHING AND KEEPING THE FAMILY IS BUILDING A HOUSE, FAMILY BREAKUP IS A DAMAGED HOUSE.

What are the cognitive foundations of lower-level metaphors of the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE?

Why is the father conceptualized as a *house's roof*? Firstly, the roof of the house is considered equally important to its ground by Vietnamese people. When building a house, in addition to organizing a ground-breaking ceremony to ask the God of the Soil for permission, Vietnamese people also hold a roof-building ceremony before they build the roof. This ceremony aims to pray for safety, luck and blessings that will come to the family when they live in that house. As such, in the thought of Vietnamese people, the *roof* of the house represents the spiritual protection for the family. Secondly, in the house design, the *roof* is at the top of the house - its highest position. It shields the house from the sunrays and the rain. If the *roof* is damaged, the inner parts of the house will be gradually damaged under

the impacts of adverse weather conditions from the environment.

In the meantime, in Vietnamese culture, the father is regarded as the one who has the top power to make important decisions in the family, the one who keeps the family's lifestyles and rules, the one who guides, instructs and educates children. The father is always stricter than the mother. Besides, the father is always the one who protects and shoulders all the difficulties that the family is facing, both physically and spiritually.

Based on the cognitive similarities between the features of the house roof and the characteristics of the father in the family as stated above, Vietnamese people construct the conceptual metaphor FATHER IS THE ROOF OF THE HOUSE.

(13). **Không có đàn ông** trong nhà rõ ràng là **nhà không có nóc** ấy chứ. (Phan Ngọc Diễm Hân, 2012, p. 131)

(Without a man in the house, **the house doesn't have its roof.**)

(14). **Anh là cái nóc nhà** như quy ước, như định nghĩa nhưng em vẫn nhiều lần cảm thấy mình bị phơi ra một mình với sinh kế và mọi thứ không tên giữa đất trời giông gió nắng mưa. (Dạ Ngân, 2010, p. 145)

(**You are the roof of the house** as usually defined, but for most of the time I feel that I am exposed to livelihoods and many unnamed tasks amid the stormy and rainy weather.)

(15). Không cha **nhà dột, cột xiêu**. (Idiom)

(Without father, **the house roof is leaking, the pillar is sloping.**)

(16). Con có cha như **nhà có nóc**.

Con không cha như nòng nọc đứt đuôi. (Folk verses)

(A child with father is like a **house with a roof**.)

A child without father is like a tadpole without a tail.)

If a house does not have a *roof* for protection, its inner parts will be damaged; as a consequence, the house will collapse. Similarly, if a family does not have a father, it will not survive difficulties (example (15)).

Children without father are often referred to as children of *a house without a roof* with critical implications:

(17). Con không cha như **nhà không nóc**. (Idiom)

(A child without father is like a **house without a roof.**)

(18). Tình yêu sâu sắc đầu tiên của anh chuẩn bị đi đến hôn nhân thì người ta bĩu môi ngăn cản: “Nó là thằng **nhà không nóc**” (Quang Trinh, 2011, p. 252)

(His first deep love almost led him to a marriage until people prevented it for a critical reason: “He’s a guy from a **house without a roof**”).

This conceptualization may stem from the experiential similarities between the two events: a house without a roof and children without a father. A house without a roof may result in the damages to other inner parts; likewise, children without a father may not receive good education (as mentioned above, Vietnamese people believe that in the family the father takes main responsibilities for teaching children). In the traditional Vietnamese society, people tend to think that children with fathers are those who are well educated (like in example (16)). Vice versa, children without father - children of single moms - are often regarded as those who do not receive good education, even those who

lack proper education; consequently, they often suffer from critical looks from other community members as “children without father”.

Children are taught by their father, so if the father does not have good ethics, his children may take after. Vietnamese people often use a saying of “*Nhà dột từ nóc dột xuống*”, which literally means a house which leaks from its roof.

Besides the roof, the pillars of a house are also used by Vietnamese people to describe the roles of the man in the family. In the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE, the aspects of the pillar of the source domain HOUSE are mapped to the target domain FAMILY to conceptualize the characteristics of the husband/father, thus creating the conceptual metaphor HUSBAND/FATHER IS THE PILLAR OF THE HOUSE. It is apparent that a *pillar* is made of concrete and firm materials in a cylindrical or square form, erected and fixed in one position to bear the weight of the house, making the house stable. The *pillar* is said to be one of the most important parts of the house. These aspects correspond to the roles of the husband/father in the family. In their daily life, Vietnamese people always describe the husband/father as the *pillar* of the family.

(19). **Nhà vắng người đàn ông trụ cột.**  
(Many authors, 2014, p. 248)

(The house lacks a **pillar man**.)

(20). Chị bẽn lẽn bên **người chồng trụ cột.** (Dạ Ngân, 2015, p. 72)

(She looks shy when sitting next to **her pillar husband**.)

(21). Có lẽ bà muốn nhường việc trả lời cho người giữ **vai trò trụ cột gia đình**, điều mà bất kỳ người vợ nào cũng kỳ vọng nơi

**chồng.** (Bích Ngân, 2010, p. 162)

(She may want to give the rights to answer to the person with **the pillar role** in the family - a thing which any wife expects from their **husband**.)

(22). **Chàng** không và sẽ không bao giờ có sức **làm trụ cột gia đình** mà nàng thì lại ngại những người đàn ông như thế. (Nguyễn Thị Thu Huệ, 2004, p. 141)

(**He** does not and will never have sufficient strength to become **the family pillar** while she is afraid of such men.)

(23). Không biết tới chừng nào chị mới làm được như má, khiến cho **người đàn ông của gia đình** trong cùng khổ vẫn **thấy mình là trụ cột.** (Nguyễn Hương, 2014, p. 302)

(She doesn't know when she can do like her mom - a person who can make the man in the family still feel like they are a pillar even in extreme difficulties.)

In a Vietnamese family, the husband is always thought of as the one who takes financial responsibility, who makes a living to raise the entire family, who at the same time serves as a spiritual support to his wife and children amid all life challenges. If a husband cannot fulfill these expectations, he is often looked down on by others and considered as not deserving to be called a man.

Besides the *roof* and *pillar*, a house space is also used by Vietnamese people to conceptualize the family. In the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE, the aspects of “a house space (inside, outside, at the corner, etc.)” of the source domain HOUSE are mapped to the aspects of “relationships and lifestyles of a family” in the target domain FAMILY to create the conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIPS AND LIFESTYLES OF THE FAMILY ARE THE SPACE OF THE

HOUSE. Vietnamese people believe that the relationships and lifestyles of a family create a (spiritual) space that embraces all family members, just like the way a house accommodates people. Therefore, a family has the space “inside”, “outside” and “at the corner”; light and dark corners; as well as high and power places.

(24). Thế cho nên mới **trong ấm ngoài êm. Nhà người ta** như thế thì chú Nam cứ để như thế. (Phạm Thị Ngọc Liên, 2015, p. 42)

(That’s why it’s **warm inside, harmonious outside**. Their **house** is going that way; Nam should keep it that way.)

(25). Bố cô qua đời, sự mất mát **lan tỏa trong gia đình** cô. (Trần Thị Ngọc Lan, 2008, p. 217)

(When her mom passed away, the loss feelings **spread across her family**.)

(26). **Không khí trong gia đình** hôm nay thật là vui. (Hồng Thủy, 2010, p. 102)

(The **atmosphere inside the family** is joyful today.)

(27). Một người con gái sinh ra và lớn lên **trong một gia đình** trí thức Hà Nội. (Nguyễn Duy Năng, 2012, p. 13)

(She was born and grows up **in a well-educated family** in Hanoi.)

(28). Tự dưng tôi thấy mình ân hận ghê gớm. Ân hận vì đã **bước vào gia đình** nó, đã giành mất tình thương của ba nó. (Nhiều tác giả, 2011, p. 155)

(I suddenly feel regretful. I am regretful of **entering his family** and gaining his father’s affection.)

(29). Bạn đã chẳng hề biết gì về họ cả. Bạn làm sao có thể **bước chân vào gia đình** ấy. (Trang Hạ, 2014, p. 143)

(You didn’t know anything about them. How could you **enter their family**?)

(30). Mẹ tôi đã van xin ông rất nhiều nhưng ông vẫn một mực từ tôi **ra khỏi gia đình**. (Trần Đức Tĩnh, 2014, p. 248)

(My mom begged him a lot but he insisted on drawing me **out of the family**.)

(31). Tôi không thích cái lối kể về **những góc ngách tối tăm của gia đình** một cách lạnh lùng như Hà. (Phan Thị Vàng Anh, 1994, p. 107)

(I don’t like the cold way Ha talks about **dark corners of her family**.)

(32). Thằng út bị dồn vào chân tường, rơi vào **hố ghề lạnh của chính gia đình mình**. (Vũ Đình Giang, 2014, p. 278)

(The youngest child is driven into the corner, falling into **the estrangement hole in his own family**.)

(33). Tôi phải quen với **những vị trí mới trong gia đình**. (Nguyễn Hương, Trang Hạ & Nguyễn Thị Thanh Mận, 2014, p. 128)

(I have to get accustomed to the **new places in the family**.)

Family relationships and lifestyles are of great significance. They represent the spiritual life of a family. They are like a space that embraces all the family members. People can *enter, get out of, stay inside, stay outside, see the corners* or stay in a certain place in the family. When someone *enters* a family, he or she is starting a relationship and getting accustomed to the lifestyle of that family (examples (28), (29)). When someone *gets out of* a family, he or she has quit the relationships with that family’s members and is no longer considered its member (example (30)). Staying *inside/outside* a family means keeping/quitting the family relationships

(examples (24), (25), (26), (27)). These relationships have light and dark corners, high and low places like in a house space (examples (31), (32)). In the family relationships, every member has different *places* like the *places* of different parts in a house's structure (example (33)). Describing the family relationships and lifestyles like the spatial structure of a house shows the close emotional ties between family members as well as the lifestyles of the family.

Among various activities related to the house, Vietnamese people only use *building* and *damaging* to conceptualize the family. *Building* is utilized to talk about the establishment while *damaging* is used to mention family breakup.

In the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE, the aspect “building” of the source domain HOUSE is mapped to the aspect “establishing and keeping the family” of the target domain FAMILY to create the conceptual metaphor ESTABLISHING AND KEEPING A FAMILY IS BUILDING A HOUSE. Vietnamese people use the words referring to the building of houses to talk about the establishment and preservation of the family: *building, constructing*.

(34). Ông **xây** nên **một mái gia đình**. (Ka Bình Phong, 2017, p. 285)

(He **builds** a family's roof.)

(35). Chồng nàng đã không biết quý trọng công sức mà nàng **xây đắp cho gia đình**. (Nhiều tác giả, 2011, p. 118)

(Her husband doesn't value the efforts she has made to **build the family**.)

(36). Chúc cháu sớm tìm được người thích hợp để **xây dựng gia đình**. (Phạm Thị Ngọc Liên, 2015, p. 193)

(I hope that you will soon find a suitable partner to **build your family**.)

(37). Có những người phụ nữ lấy ai cũng **dựng nên một gia đình hạnh phúc**. (Trang Hạ, 2014, p. 98).

(There are some women who can **construct a happy family** with whoever men they get married to.)

(38). Gia đình của mình mình trân trọng **vun đắp**. (Phan Ý Yên, 2016, p. 6)

(We treasure our family by **building it**.)

Building is by no means a simple task. As defined in Vietnamese dictionary (Hoàng Phê, 2010), building is “creating an architectural work according to a specific plan” (p. 1463). It requires careful and long-lasting work. By conceptualizing the establishment of a family as building a house, Vietnamese people wish to emphasize the hard and energy-consuming work that is needed to establish a family.

The aspect “being damaged” of the source domain HOUSE corresponds to the aspect “breakup” in the target domain FAMILY to create the conceptual metaphor FAMILY BREAKUP IS A DAMAGED HOUSE. Words referring to the “damages” to the house such as swaying, cracking, collapse, damages, destruction, wreckages, etc. are used to talk about the breakup of a family.

(39). **Gia đình** tôi bắt đầu **ngiêneng** ngã, hay nó đã **rạn nứt** từ lâu rồi mà bộ óc u mê của tôi chẳng nhận thấy. (Nguyễn Xuân Khánh, 2019, p. 68)

(My family starts to sway, or it has cracked for a long time but my deaf mind does not realize.)

(40). Ba má bỏ nhau, **gia đình tan nát**. (Many authors, 2014, p. 114)

(When my parents divorce, my **family is damaged**.)

(41). Tui sẽ làm **tan nát gia đình** họ. (Võ Thị Xuân Hà, 2006, p. 229)

(I will **destroy their family**.)

(42). Một tình bạn phản bội, một **gia đình đổ nát**... đều là bất hạnh cá nhân. (Phan Ý Yên, 2016, p. 13)

(A friendship betrayal, a **family destruction**... all are personal mishaps.)

(43). Anh cũng yêu em nhưng anh không thể **phá vỡ cuộc sống gia đình** được. (Nguyễn Thị Thu Huệ, 2004, p. 484)

(I love you too but I cannot **destroy my family life**.)

(44). Tại sao **gia đình** đang tốt đẹp như thế, đang đầm ấm như thế mà ba nữ **phá hỏng**? (Phạm Thị Ngọc Liên, 2007, p. 31)

(Why can you **destroy a family** which is so beautiful and cozy, dad?)

(45). Lý do gì đã dẫn đến sự **đổ vỡ của gia đình** cô? (Từ Thiết Linh, 2004, p. 9)

(What caused her **family's collapse**?)

(46). Sự **tan vỡ của gia đình** đã làm bà suy nhược thần kinh. (Many authors, 2014, p. 122)

(Her **family's collapse** has resulted in her neurasthenia?)

A house is a solid object with many parts, when it is damaged, there will be a massive collapse, its parts will fall apart and be destroyed. The force that causes the damages to the house must be immensely strong. Therefore, the expressions the family **collapses / is damaged / is destroyed**, etc. not only depict the breakup of the family but also show the spiritual injuries that family members have to suffer. When a family breaks up, its members are hurt, as each part the house is broken into pieces. At the same time, these linguistic expressions also imply that the causes of family breakup have put heavy pressure on each member, hurting them

emotionally; moreover, when a family is destroyed, its builders must feel very sad and regretful because just like building a house, it takes a long time and lots of efforts to build up a family. Most importantly, the message that Vietnamese people want to convey when conceptualizing **FAMILY BREAKUP IS A DAMAGED HOUSE** is the affirmation about the roles of the family as a shelter to each member. Losing family is like losing a house, losing a shelter to each person. The collapse of a family due to marriage failure really has negative impacts on each member.

Based on the metaphor **A FAMILY IS A HOUSE**, we can find the derivative metaphor **A HAPPY FAMILY IS A WARM HOUSE**.

(47). Người ta sinh ra đâu ai chọn bố, chọn mẹ, chọn **mái ấm** hay **mái rách** cho mình được. (Võ Thu Hương, 2012, p. 159)

(A person cannot choose his father, mother, **warm house or cold house** for himself.)

(48). Mỹ đã coi đây là **mái ấm gia đình**. (Hồng Thủy, 2010, p. 96)

(Mỹ has considered this place **her warm house**.)

(49). Anh từng hứa cho chị **mái ấm** nhưng đến cả mái nhà còn lo chưa xong. (Thái Cường, 2018, p. 36)

(He promised to bring her **a warm house** but now cannot even create a roof.)

(50). Em hỏi anh, anh định kéo dài quan hệ giữa em và anh đến bao giờ? Người đàn ông nhún vai: điều này em tự biết. Cô bảo: Em cần một **mái ấm**. (Võ Thị Xuân Hà, 2009, p. 6)

(“Tell me, you plan to maintain our relationship for how long?” The man shakes his shoulder: “You know it by yourself.” She answers: “I need **a warm roof**”.)

The conceptual metaphor A HAPPY FAMILY IS A WARM HOUSE is a complex metaphor with the presence of metonymy. It has the combination of the conceptual metonymy THE HOUSE ROOF IS A HOUSE (where part stands for the whole) and the conceptual metaphor HAPPINESS IS WARMTH. In its turn, HAPPINESS IS WARMTH is the lower-level metaphor of the conceptual metaphor POSITIVE EMOTIONS ARE WARMTH. The conceptual metaphor POSITIVE EMOTIONS ARE WARM TEMPERATURES stems from people's physiologic embodiment about warm temperatures. Warmth is different from heat. Heat may be unbearable while warmth brings us comfort and relaxation. Food will taste better when it is kept warm, a warm hand will make holders feel intimate and peaceful, a warm house will help us stay healthy, etc. From experiences of the impacts that warm temperatures place on our bodies, we usually use warm feelings to describe things that bring us comfort: *Ăn vào thấy ấm bụng* (feel warmer after eating), *nghe ấm trong dạ* (feel warm in our soul), *nghe ấm lòng* (feel warm in our heart), *cuộc sống ấm no* (a warm full life), *cuộc sống ấm êm* (a warm life), *no cơm ấm cất* (full stomach, warm feeling), etc. Among different emotions of humans, love, like, affection, happiness, delight, enjoyment, etc. are those which bring comfortable feelings to recipients. It is similar to the feelings that warm temperatures bring to us. These similarities motivate the conceptual metaphor POSITIVE EMOTIONS ARE WARM TEMPERATURES. Vietnamese people have common saying: *sự ấm áp của tình người* (the warmth of human's ties); *những tình cảm ấm nồng* (warm sentiments); *tình cảm của họ đang ấm dần lên* (their emotions are warming up); *sự quan tâm khiến người ta ấm lòng* (cares that warm people's hearts), etc. By conceptualizing A HAPPY FAMILY IS A WARM HOUSE, Vietnamese people express

the view that family is their beloved shelter, a place where people feel safe and can come back to feel comfortable, sentimental and loved.

## 6. Conclusion

In summary, based on the similar feelings of a house and a family, Vietnamese people use the cognition and experiences that are formed by their experiences of their houses to describe their family via the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE. Some aspects of the house, including *the roof, pillar, space, building, being damaged*, are mapped to family members, relationships, the establishment and breakup of the family to create lower-level metaphors of the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE, including: FATHER IS THE ROOF OF THE HOUSE, HUSBAND/FATHER IS THE PILLAR OF THE HOUSE, RELATIONSHIPS AND LIFESTYLES OF THE FAMILY ARE THE SPACE OF THE HOUSE, ESTABLISHING AND KEEPING A FAMILY IS BUILDING A HOUSE, FAMILY BREAKUP IS A DAMAGED HOUSE. Besides, the *house roof* is also used to conceptualize family in the metaphor A HAPPY FAMILY IS A WARM HOUSE - a complex metaphor created by the combination of the conceptual metonymy THE HOUSE ROOF IS A HOUSE and the conceptual metaphor HAPPINESS IS WARMTH. The conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE and its lower-level metaphors, derivative metaphors demonstrate the distinctive conceptualization of Vietnamese people about the family: A family is a place that shelters and protects people; a family is built up via a hard and time-consuming process; family breakup causes lots of injuries to its members; in a family, the father holds the top position who leads the family and educates children; the father/husband is considered the strongest person who provides physical and spiritual supports to his wife and

children; the relationships and lifestyles are the space embracing all family members; a happy family is a shelter full of warmth and love. As such, the conceptual metaphor A FAMILY IS A HOUSE and its lower-level metaphors illustrate the cares of Vietnamese people of their family including its establishment, structures, durability and functions.

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## ẨN DỤ Ý NIỆM GIA ĐÌNH LÀ NGÔI NHÀ TRONG TIẾNG VIỆT

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**Tóm tắt:** Bài viết phân tích ẩn dụ ý niệm GIA ĐÌNH LÀ NGÔI NHÀ trong tiếng Việt nhằm tìm hiểu cách tri nhận của người Việt Nam về gia đình thông qua miền ý niệm NGÔI NHÀ. Để tiến hành việc nghiên cứu, bài viết sử dụng lý thuyết *ẩn dụ ý niệm* và các khái niệm cơ bản khác của *Ngôn ngữ học tri nhận* để xác lập và phân tích sự ánh xạ từ miền nguồn NGÔI NHÀ đến miền đích GIA ĐÌNH. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy rằng, người Việt Nam đã dùng ngôi nhà để khắc họa gia đình như là nơi che chở và bảo vệ mỗi thành viên. Bên cạnh đó, các bộ phận *nóc nhà, mái nhà, trụ (cột), không gian* và hoạt động *xây dựng, phá hủy* ngôi nhà cũng được dùng để biểu hiện cách tư duy, nhận thức về vai trò của người cha, người chồng, mối quan hệ trong gia đình, sự hình thành và ly tán, sự che chở của gia đình. Việc dùng ngôi nhà để bày tỏ quan niệm về gia đình thể hiện đặc trưng văn hóa rất độc đáo trong cách tư duy của người Việt Nam.

*Từ khóa:* ẩn dụ ý niệm, ánh xạ, gia đình, ngôi nhà, tiếng Việt.

# THE INTERPLAY OF READING ANXIETY, READING STRATEGY USE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF NON-ENGLISH MAJORED STUDENTS AT A UNIVERSITY IN THE NORTH OF VIETNAM

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**Abstract:** A quantitative research was carried out at the International School, Thai Nguyen University to measure the levels of reading anxiety among non-English majored students who had just finished one year of intensive English. These students were supposed to take a simulation IELTS exam with an expected result of 5.5 overall bands (B2-CEFR). The finding showed that the level of anxiety measured was at medium level ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ,  $SEM = 0.09$ ,  $Min = 2.05$ ,  $Max = 4.30$ ,  $Skewness = -0.46$ ,  $Kurtosis = -0.54$ ). The second research question focuses on the correlation between reading anxiety and the use of reading strategies. The results showed that there was no significant difference between reading anxiety and the uses of reading strategies. The third research finding indicated that there was a significant difference between the levels of reading anxiety and academic reading achievement. Students with high level of anxiety attain low achievement. Low anxiety ( $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) was significantly larger for High anxiety ( $M = 1.40$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ).

*Keywords:* interplay, reading anxiety, reading strategies, high anxiety, low achievement.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background to the study

Reading academic texts at universities poses great challenges to most students. Firstly, it requires the involvement of many strategies simultaneously to understand what has been written by authors. The effective use of strategies assists students in accomplishing certain language tasks more successfully. Learners with a large repertoire of reading strategies perform better (Anderson, 2005; Nagy & Habók, 2018). Secondly, the readers must be able to control themselves from psychological problems such as anxiety or apprehension while reading, especially during reading tests.

Undoubtedly, reading is one of the most crucial language skills serving as the foundation for other language skills to develop, especially for academic writing at tertiary level. It is thought to be the primary means for gaining access to various sources of information, providing the basis for “synthesis and critical evaluation skills” (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 187).

Reading academic texts is far beyond the for-pleasure readings. It is the process of extracting meaning from written texts. Carrell (1998) refers to reading comprehension as the interaction between knowledge existing in a learner’s mind (prior knowledge) and the new knowledge from the information being read in the text; it takes the use of strategies in reading, and the readers’ awareness in monitoring their

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comprehension and in using appropriate strategies to deal with their problems in comprehending texts. Crème (2008, p. 55) shares an idea that readers are required to have great efforts and strategies to comprehend because ideas are embedded in the text and it can take a lot of re-reading to unravel them so that they appear clear and understandable. In the same view, Yukselir (2014) considers reading comprehension as a result of a complicated process between a number of elements such as text, setting, reader background, and reading strategies.

Numerous studies have been done to investigate the importance of reading strategies. However, a psychological factor that is believed to hamper readers from successfully comprehending a written text, especially in a reading examination, has likely been left out, which is the foreign language reading anxiety, especially in Vietnamese foreign language teaching context. That is the reason why the present study attempts to investigate the interplay between reading strategy uses, reading anxiety and reading achievement among foreign language students at Thai Nguyen University. The reading anxiety, reading strategy use are treated as factors (independent variables) that affect the reading achievement outcomes which are referred to as a dependent variable.

### ***1.2. Aims of the study***

The present study was conducted with the following aims; (1) to investigate the levels of anxiety that English learners may experience during a reading examination, (2) to examine the relationship between reading anxiety and the uses of reading strategies for better comprehension, finally (3) to explore the correlation between students' reading anxiety and reading achievements.

### ***1.3. Research questions***

In responding to the above mentioned aims, the study is supposed to answer the following research questions:

- What is the level of reading anxiety among non-English majored students at Thai Nguyen University?
- What is the correlation between reading anxiety and reading strategy use?
- What is the relationship between reading anxiety and reading achievement?

### ***1.4. Significance of the study***

The findings from the study firstly fill in the gaps of literature in terms of language anxiety, the uses of reading strategies and the academic reading achievements of the non-English majored students in the context of teaching and learning English in Vietnam. Besides, teachers who teach academic reading might use the findings as references to develop activities to lower negative impacts of language anxiety as well as better comprehend teaching practices.

## **2. Literature review**

### ***2.1. Language anxiety (LA)***

The science of language learning and teaching is closely connected to studies of psychology. In other words, psychologists have defined many phenomena in language teaching and learning practices. Psychologically, anxiety is defined as the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry that are experienced by an individual, and the heightened activity of the autonomic nervous system that accompanies these feelings (Spielberger, 1976, p. 5). The more

recent definition of anxiety by Zeidner states that anxiety refers to a psychological state in which the person's sense of uneasy suspense and worry is triggered by ambiguous circumstances (Zeidner, 2010, p. 5). Zeidner distinguishes the confusing term "anxiety" from "fear" which refers to an intense biologically adaptive physiological and behavioural response to the occurrence of a specific, identifiable stimulus. In other words, fear is objective, clear, and in the present, while anxiety is subjective, ambiguous and relates to future danger (p. 6).

Language anxiety can be defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 128). *Longman Dictionary* defines language anxiety as subjective feelings of apprehension and fear associated with language learning and use (Richards, 1985, p. 313).

Explicitly, anxiety is the automatic reaction of the nerve system when confronting unfamiliar situations or events. Naturally, the feeling seriously affects language performance of language users. The relationship between anxiety and performance can best be illustrated with an inverted "U", that is, "when anxiety is low, performance is also low. When anxiety is optimal, performance is high, but beyond an optimal level of anxiety, performance deteriorates" (Walker, 1997, p. 17). Numerous studies have found that anxiety has debilitating effects on the language learner and was said to be one of the strongest predictors of success in language learning (McIntyre, 1999). Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) shared a definition of foreign language anxiety (FLA) as a fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in a second or foreign

language. Horwitz et al. (1986) concluded that foreign language anxiety frequently shows up in listening and speaking activities, testing situations, over-studying, and so on. Anxiety has also been a major concern in many other spheres, as shown in such phrases as computer anxiety, sport anxiety, social anxiety... In terms of language learning and teaching, the concept of 'reading anxiety' was first introduced by Saito and her colleagues. She developed the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) which has been used to measure foreign language anxiety levels in reading comprehension (Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999).

## ***2.2. Reading anxiety and reading achievement***

The concepts of LA and FLA had been the basis for many related inventories such as Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA), Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA), Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (SLWAT). Reading skill has long been seen as less interpersonal interaction in comparison with other skills like speaking and listening which contain more anxiety provoking factors. However, research confirms that reading anxiety does exist when second or foreign language learners have to cope with reading passages (Saito et al., 1999). Saito highlighted the reading anxiety which emerges from text processing rather than reading difficulty. The primary focus of the study was on the cognate of the languages. Basing on the findings from levels of anxiety of learners whose native language was French which has many cognates to English (both languages use the Roman alphabet), Russian which has few cognates and Japanese which is completely non-cognate to English, Saito et al. developed an instrument (FLRAS) that is claimed capable of measuring levels

of reading anxiety in both unfamiliar orthographic and cultural diversities, i.e. both different writing system and content (Zoghi, 2012). The introduction of the FLRAS was seen as the compensation for the paucity in the literature of language anxiety. Despite many arguments around Saito et al.'s (1999) hypotheses about foreign language reading anxiety (Spark, Ganschow, & Javorsky, 2000), FLRAS has been utilized in various studies in several countries, especially in China. Chen (2005) investigated foreign language reading anxiety among 46 Year-1 non-English majors and concluded that these participants demonstrated a high level of reading anxiety which was negatively correlated to an indicator of their English achievement, especially for the females. Shi and Liu (2006) studied 211 Year-2 non-English majors. The findings showed that Chinese university students' FL reading anxiety was negatively correlated to both their College English Test Band-4 (CET-4) overall grades and their reading comprehension grades. The findings also indicated that male students demonstrated remarkably higher reading anxiety but lower English achievements than female students. Qiu and Liao (2007) carried out a study with 153 non-English majors and found that foreign language reading anxiety was caused by exam-oriented reading practice. The findings also revealed that reading anxiety was negatively correlated to foreign language proficiency. More than that, reading anxiety could predict male students' English proficiency much better than it did that of females. Wang and Fang's (2008) findings indicated that reading anxiety was significantly negatively correlated to both reading performance and reading strategy use while the latter two were significantly positively correlated to each other. Capan and Karaca (2012) examined the relationships among gender, education level and language

anxiety, associated with two major language skills: listening and reading. The subject was 159 EFL students at a Turkish University. The results revealed moderate correlations between education level and reading anxiety.

### ***2.3. Reading strategy and academic achievement***

Reading strategies are defined as 'the mental operations or comprehension processes that readers select and apply in order to make sense of what they read' (Abbott, 2006, p. 637). Readers' strategy use while reading demonstrates their interaction with written texts, and effective use of strategies can improve their reading efficiency and text comprehension (Carrell, 1989). Anderson (1991) posits that reading strategies are deliberate, cognitive steps that readers can take to assist in acquiring, storing and retrieving new information. Williams and Burden (1997) further classifies reading strategies as cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies which deal with (a) efficient retrieval, storage, and acquisition of information for readers to extract and construct meaning from texts, (b) readers' knowledge of cognitive resources, awareness of cognitive processing, and the ability to adjust utilized strategies and (c) "asking for clarification or verification," "cooperating with peers and proficient users of the new language," "developing cultural understanding," and "becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings respectively".

According to Long and Crookes (1992, p. 42) formal instruction on strategies has a positive effect on students' use of strategies and improves the rate of learning. However, strategies should be contextualized for the purpose of the formal training. Decontextualized teaching of individual strategies for a short time will not have a long

term effect on students nor will it help them to develop as strategic readers. Strategy use develops over a long term, perhaps several years. In this regard, Janzen (2002, p. 288) introduces the following factors in the formal instruction of strategies to help develop learners into strategic readers:

- Inserting strategies in the content area of students' regular course;
- Teaching strategies through direct explanation, teacher modeling, and feedback;
- Recycling the strategies over new texts and tasks.

Teaching strategies become more useful if it is related to the reading task at hand, if it fits the particular student's learning style preferences to one degree or another and if students employ the strategy effectively and link it with other relevant strategies (Oxford, 2001, p. 362). Strategies that fulfill these conditions make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. Application of learning strategies can facilitate internalization, storage, or retrieval of new information. The ability to employ strategies during reading distinguishes good readers from poor ones. Good readers use strategies in a systematic way whereas poor ones use them in a random, unconnected, and uncontrolled manner. Good readers are also able to shift between alternative strategies, as needed, so that they can progress in reading as efficiently as possible (Vann & Abraham, 1990). Strategy training can be generally included in academic courses. Therefore, by creating proper situations, students can have opportunities to use, adapt, evaluate, and transfer a strategy to new situations and in reading tasks. Besides, providing suitable contexts for strategy instruction can encourage

teachers to model reading skills and strategies overtly, facilitating students' performances of these abilities. However, strategies should be learned in an organized way. The organized, reasoned use of learning strategies is more important than the sheer frequent use of them. Successful application of strategies helps readers to process a text actively, to monitor their comprehension, and to connect what they are reading to their own existing knowledge and to other parts of the text.

Reading is the primary source for getting different information. It is important for learning as it gives learners independent access to a vast world of information as well as fulfillment and enjoyment (Gunning, 2007, p. 3). To Schmidt, Rozendal & Green (2002, p. 131), the ability to read is a critical component of school success and a strong correlation exists between poor reading ability and school failure. Reading is essential for learning and if learners have not properly mastered the skill their potential for success in the learning context is hampered (Bohlman & Pretorius, 2002, p. 205; Martin & Carvalho, 2008, p. 114).

The success or failure in reading depends greatly on the strategies used by readers. In other words, readers are required to manipulate various tasks in order to comprehend a written text. Johnston (1983) asserts that

Reading comprehension is considered to be a complex behavior which involves conscious and unconscious use of various strategies, including problem-solving strategies, to build a model of the meaning which the writer is assumed to have intended. The model is constructed using schematic knowledge structures and the various cue systems which the writer has given (e.g., words, syntax macrostructures, social information) to generate hypotheses which are tested using

various logical and pragmatic strategies. Most of this model must be inferred, since text can never be fully explicit and, in general, very little of it is explicit because even the appropriate intentional and extensional meanings of words must be inferred from their context. (p. 17)

Gunderson (2014) provides explanations for the three levels of comprehension: literal-level comprehension requires little more than simple memory work and the remembering of details from the text; inferential-level comprehension involves “readers in thinking about what they’ve read and coming to conclusions that go beyond the information given in the text”; at critical and evaluative-level comprehension, readers are able to “evaluate whether a text is valid and expresses opinion rather than fact, as well as apply the knowledge gained from the text in other situations” (p. 28).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The participants were 48 second year students of English as a foreign language at Thai Nguyen University of Education. These students have just finished one year of intensive English. In the second year, they will be required to take an IELTS exam and score an overall band of 5.5 (B2-CEFR) to be accepted in the second phase of their 4 year program.

#### 3.2. Data collection instruments

In order to measure the levels of reading anxiety, the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) developed by Saito et al. (1999) was used to assess students’ reading anxiety. The FLRAS consists of 20 items which consists of five-points Likert Scale, ranging from five points “strongly agree” to one point “strongly disagree.” To score each item in a

questionnaire depends on the negative wording or positive wording. The internal consistency of FLRAS was 0.982 (N = 20).

The Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) designed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) was used to investigate learners’ choice of strategies while reading English. SORS consists of 30 items on a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from one point (I never or almost never do this) to five points (I always or almost always do this). The internal consistency of SORS was 0.768 (N = 30) (see appendices).

The academic achievement of the participants is measured by their results of the IELTS-simulation test. The researcher extracted the results of the reading module of the participants to use as a variable in the study. The participants were graded as high achievers (7.0-8.0); medium achievers (5.0-6.5) and low achievers (3.0-4.5).

#### 3.3. Data analysis instruments

The SPSS version 20 was used to analyse the data for the present study.

### 4. Findings

#### 4.1.1. RQ1: What is the level of reading anxiety among EFL students at Thai Nguyen University?

The observations for FLRAS had an average of 3.31 (SD = 0.59, SEM = 0.09, Min = 2.05, Max = 4.30, Skewness = -0.46, Kurtosis = -0.54). When the skewness is greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable is considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. When the kurtosis is greater than or equal to 3, then the variable’s distribution is markedly different from a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics can be found in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE<sub>M</sub></i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
FLRAS	3.31	0.59	48	0.09	2.05	4.30	-0.46	-0.54

4.1.2. RQ2. What is the correlation between reading anxiety and reading strategy use?

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between FLRAS and SORS. Cohen’s standard was used to evaluate the strength of the relationship, where coefficients between .10 and .29 represent a small effect size, coefficients between .30 and .49 represent a moderate effect size, and coefficients above .50 indicate a large effect size (Cohen, 1988).

**Assumptions**

**Linearity.** A Pearson correlation requires that the relationship between each pair of variables is linear (Conover & Iman, 1981). This assumption is violated if there is curvature among the points on the scatterplot between any pair of variables. Figure 1 presents the scatterplot of the correlation. A regression line has been added to assist the interpretation.

Table 2.1 Pearson Correlation Results between FLRAS and SORS

Combination	<i>r<sub>p</sub></i>	95% CI	<i>p</i>
FLRAS-SORS	0.18	[-0.11, 0.44]	.229

Note. *n* = 48

4.1.3. RQ3. What is the relationship between reading anxiety and reading achievement?

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in Reading Achievement (RA) by FLRAS.

**Assumptions**

**Normality.** The assumption of normality was assessed by plotting the quantiles of the model residuals against the quantiles

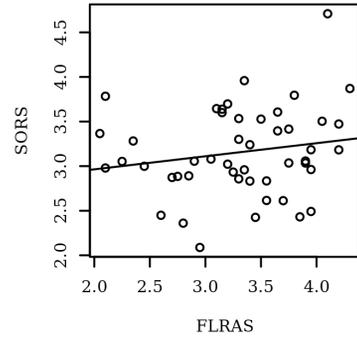


Figure 2.1 Scatterplots between each variable with the regression line added

**Results**

The result of the correlation was examined based on an alpha value of 0.05. There were no significant correlations between any pairs of variables. Table 3 presents the results of the correlation.

of a Chi-square distribution, also called a Q-Q scatterplot (DeCarlo, 1997). For the assumption of normality to be met, the quantiles of the residuals must not strongly deviate from the theoretical quantiles. Strong deviations could indicate that the parameter estimates are unreliable. Figure 3.1 presents a Q-Q scatterplot of model residuals.

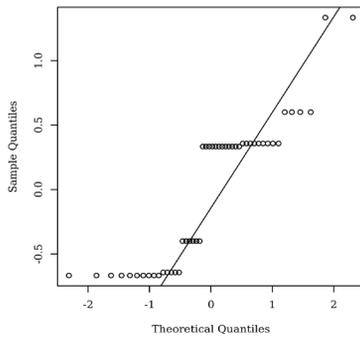


Figure 3.1 Q-Q scatterplot for normality of the residuals for the regression model.

**Homoscedasticity.** Homoscedasticity was evaluated by plotting the residuals against the predicted values (Bates et al., 2014; Field, 2013; Osborne & Walters, 2002). The assumption of homoscedasticity is met if the points appear randomly distributed with a mean of zero and no apparent curvature. Figure 3.2 presents a scatterplot of predicted values and model residuals.

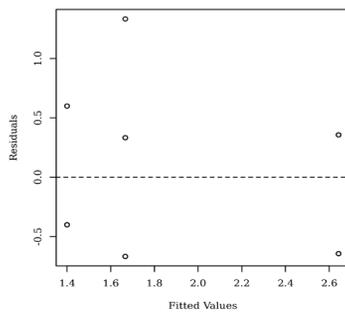


Figure 3.2 Residuals scatterplot testing homoscedasticity

**Outliers.** To identify influential points, Studentized residuals were calculated and the absolute values were plotted against the

observation numbers (Field, 2013; Stevens, 2009). Studentized residuals are calculated by dividing the model residuals by the estimated residual standard deviation. An observation with a Studentized residual greater than 3.27 in absolute value, the 0.999 quartile of a *t* distribution with 47 degrees of freedom, was considered to have significant influence on the results of the model. Figure 3.3 presents the Studentized residuals plot of the observations. Observation numbers are specified next to each point with a Studentized residual greater than 3.27.

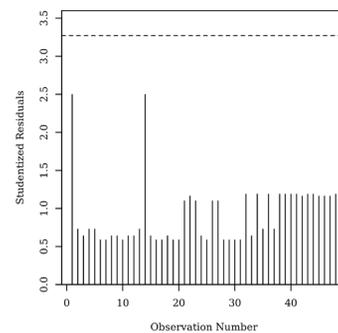


Figure 3.3 Studentized residuals plot for outlier detection

**Results**

The ANOVA was examined based on an alpha value of 0.05. The results of the ANOVA were significant,  $F(2, 45) = 17.36, p < .001$ , indicating there were significant differences in RA among the levels of FLRAS (Table 3.1). The eta squared was 0.44 indicating FLRAS explains approximately 44% of the variance in RA. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1 Analysis of Variance Table for RA by FLRAS

Term	SS	df	F	p	$\eta_p^2$
FLRASR	11.53	2	17.36	< .001	0.44
Residuals	14.95	45			

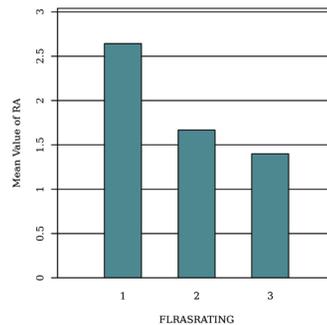


Figure 3.4 RA Means by factors levels of FLRAS

Table 3.2 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Sample Size for RA by FLRAS

Combination	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Low anxiety	2.64	0.50	14
Medium anxiety	1.67	0.64	24
High anxiety	1.40	0.52	10

**Post-hoc**

Paired t-tests were calculated between each pair of measurements to further examine the differences among the variables. Tukey pairwise comparisons were conducted for all significant effects based on an alpha of 0.05. For the main effect of FLRAS, the mean of RA for 1 ( $M = 2.64, SD = 0.50$ ) was significantly larger than for 2 ( $M = 1.67, SD = 0.64$ ),  $p < .001$ . For the main effect of FLRAS, the mean of RA for Low anxiety ( $M = 2.64, SD = 0.50$ ) was significantly larger than for High anxiety ( $M = 1.40, SD = 0.52$ ),  $p < .001$ . No other significant effects were found.

**5. Discussions**

The first objective of the present study was to examine the levels of reading anxiety experienced by 48 non-English majored students at Thai Nguyen University. These students had been intensively studying for the IELTS examination to be placed in their major studies. It is assumed that the reading module is the most challenging paper in the exam. Many students even have phobia as they come

across the reading module. Research into the factors that contribute to reading performance decrement in second language reading among university students has shown that anxiety can hinder comprehension by interfering with the readers’ cognitive systems which are responsible for processing the information in the reading texts. It appears that anxious readers are most likely to experience interference with their cognitive ability resulting in deficits in their comprehension performance. As has been defined, foreign language reading anxiety can be the feelings of frustration and apprehension one experiences when he fails comprehending a text in the target language. Although it may be true that at first glance, reading is perceived as a less anxiety-provoking activity in that it is fundamentally an individual task and allows for reconsideration (Saito et. al., 1999, p. 202), there is still a sense of threat, which triggers anxiety in learners of any foreign language. More specifically, reading anxiety is aggravated in foreign language contexts as it requires readers to activate certain cognitive

processes including attention, perception, memory and comprehension (Sellers, 2000). Hence, anxiety is seen to play a role in influencing comprehension performance among the non-English majored learners. For the present study, in responding to the first research question “*What is the level of reading anxiety among EFL students at Thai Nguyen University?*” The result of the study showed that the participants experienced reading anxiety at medium level ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ). This is partly because they did not have chances to read academic passages at schools. The reading tasks that they have to deal with at universities are too much beyond their ability in both length and academic issues, especially when they must do the IELTS reading module with three reading passages under time pressure. Those who came up to the IELTS for the first time would find the reading module challenging. A minority of the participants who showed a low level of reading anxiety are those who have been familiar with long reading passages before entering universities. These results coincide with those from a number of previous studies about language reading anxiety (e.g. Sari, 2017; Wu, 2015, Ghonsooly, 2012; Murad et al., 2013).

The second objective of the study was to explore the relationship between reading anxiety and the use of reading strategy. It is believed that successful language learners are described in terms of the acquisition of rules and principles. However, acquiring the rules and principles is insufficient and there are other possible factors besides linguistic acquisition that could contribute to the success of language learning such as affective factors which some psychologists and linguists have attributed to (Schumann, 1987). Language learning strategies are referred to as tactics that readers use deliberately when routine techniques are inadequate to resolve

a given interpretation (Anderson, 1991; Carrell, 1998; Paris et al., 1991). Strategies are, thus, employed differently because the unique nature of each text requires readers to modify strategies to fit the demands of the text (Duffy, 1993). If strategies are conscious actions that can be controlled by readers, they are used selectively and in combination (Carrell, 1998; Paris et al., 1991). It is worth considering impacts of reading anxiety over the uses of reading strategies when dealing with reading texts. For the present study, in responding to the second research question “*What is the correlation between reading anxiety and reading strategy uses?*” The result of the study indicated that there was no correlation between foreign language reading anxiety level and the uses of a variety of reading strategies as a whole or with reading strategies separately. This can be explained as the uses of reading strategies in the reading practice might be different from those in the examination. Many students reported that they use a variety of strategies while doing reading practice, however, during a real examination they cannot use any of the learnt strategies. Many studies have been conducted to examine the possible relationship between reading anxiety, reading strategies and its interference on second language learning and language performance (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Sellers, 2000; Scovel, 1978; Young, 1986). The finding from this study is similar to the situations of some Asian countries such as Indonesian and Filipino EFL learners in the studies conducted by Wardah and Jerryk (2018) and Wilta (2017).

The final objective of the study was to examine the relationship between reading anxiety and reading achievement. Anxiety reactions, characterized by worrisome thoughts about the impending reading tests,

will most likely lead to the occurrence of self-preoccupation and other task irrelevant thoughts which interfere with their cognitive systems required for processing the information in the text. Anxious individuals usually experience division in their attention between the demand of the task and the pre-occupation of negative thoughts (Tobias, 1979). Hence, comprehension performance is likely to suffer whenever the subjects' attention interferes with the reading anxiety reactions which in turn tax the functions of the working memory (Downing & Leong, 1982). Text level processes make a greater demand on these two components, i.e. attention and working memory (Haberlandt & Graesser, 1985). Any interference among these components may hinder the readers from processing and retrieving the information in the text (Bell & Perfetti, 1994; Just & Carpenter, 1992). For the present study, in responding to the third research question "*What is the relationship between reading anxiety and reading achievement?*", the findings of the study showed that there is a significant difference between the levels of reading anxiety and the reading academic achievement among the participants of the study. The higher level of reading anxiety, the lower points in reading achievement they can attain. This is because the overanxious feeling hampered the comprehension process. The results were congruent with some studies conducted in Asian countries and in the world (Murad et al., 2013; Manoochehr, 2012; Abbas, 2014; Farveh et al., 2014).

## 6. Conclusions and pedagogical implications

In conclusion, the present study examines levels of anxiety experienced by non-English majored students at Thai Nguyen University. The students are required to attain 5.5 in the IELTS examination. Most of the students

reported that the reading paper is the most difficult part. They even get phobia of the length and difficulty of the paper. The findings reveal that the participants experienced reading anxiety at medium level ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ). There were no significant correlations between reading anxiety and the use of reading strategies. However, there is a significant difference between the levels of reading anxiety and the reading academic achievement among the participants. For the main effect of reading anxiety, the mean of reading achievement Low anxiety ( $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) was significantly larger than for High anxiety ( $M = 1.40$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ),  $p < .001$ . From the findings of the study, it is suggested that teachers who prepared students for the test such as IELTS should provide more simulation tests so that students get familiar with the test-type questions. That would lower their level of anxiety for higher scores.

## 7. Limitations of the study

Firstly, the study was conducted at the International School of Thai Nguyen University, the sampling size is quite small ( $N = 48$ ). The findings, therefore, may not be well-generalized for all Vietnamese English language learners until other triangulation is made by further studies.

Secondly, the finding for research question 1 (RQ1) cannot be further analysed because the researcher adapted the questionnaire from another research.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: SURVEY OF READING STRATEGIES (SORS) (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002)

The purpose of this survey is to collect information about the various strategies you use when you read school-related academic materials in ENGLISH (e.g., reading textbooks for homework or examinations; reading journal articles, etc.). Each statement is followed by five numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and each number means the following:

means that ‘I never or almost never do this’

means that ‘I do this only occasionally’.

means that ‘I sometimes do this’ (about 50% of the time.)

means that ‘I usually do this’.

means that ‘I always or almost always do this’.

After reading each statement, circle the number (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) which applies to you. Note that there are no right or wrong responses to any of the items on this survey.

#	STATEMENTS	RATING				
1.	I have a purpose in mind when I read.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I take an overall view of the text to see what it is about before reading it.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I use reference materials (e.g. a dictionary) to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I check my understanding when I come across new information.	1	2	3	4	5

24.	I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	When text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	When reading, I translate from English into my native language.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	When reading, I think about information in both English and my mother tongue.	1	2	3	4	5

**SCORING GUIDELINES FOR THE SURVEY OF READING STRATEGIES**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Write the number you circled for each statement (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) in the appropriate blanks below.

Add up the scores under each column and place the result on the line under each column.

Divide the subscale score by the number of statements in each column to get the average for each subscale.

Calculate the average for the whole inventory by adding up the subscale scores and dividing by 30.

Use the interpretation guidelines below to understand your averages.

GLOBAL READING STRATEGIES (GLOB Subscale)	PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGIES (PROB Subscale)	SUPPORT READING STRATEGIES (SUP Subscale)	OVERALL READING STRATEGIES (ORS)
1	7	2	GLOB _____
3	9	5	
4	11	10	PROB _____
6	14	13	
8	16	18	SUP _____
12	19	22	
15	25	26	
17	28	29	
20		30	
21			
23			
24			
27			
GLOB Score _____/13 GLOB Average _____	PROB Score _____/8 PROB Average _____	SUP Score _____/9 SUP Average _____	Overall Score _____/30 Overall Average _____

**KEY TO AVERAGES:** 3.5 or higher = High 2.5 - 3.4 = Medium 2.4 or lower = Low

### INTERPRETING YOUR SCORES:

The overall average indicates how often you use reading strategies when reading academic materials. The average for each subscale shows which group of strategies (i.e., Global, Problem Solving, or Support strategies) you use most often when reading. It is important to note, however, that the best possible use of these strategies depends on your reading ability in English, the type of material read, and your reading purpose. A low score on any of the subscales or parts of the inventory indicates that there may be some strategies in these parts that you might want to learn about and consider using when reading (adapted from Oxford, 1990, pp. 297-300).

Mokhtari, K., & Sheorey, R. (2002). Measuring ESL students reading strategies. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 25(3), 2-10.

### APPENDIX B: FOREIGN LANGUAGE READING ANXIETY SCALE (FLRAS)

(Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999)

1: Strongly disagree    2: Disagree    3: Neutral    4: Agree    5: Strongly agree

#	STATEMENTS	RATING				
1.	I get upset when I am not sure whether I understand what I am reading in English	1	2	3	4	5
2.	When reading English, I often understand the words, but still can't quite understand what the author is saying.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	When I am reading English, I get so confused that I can't remember what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English when I am not familiar with the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading English.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	When reading English, I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	It bothers me to encounter words I can't pronounce while reading English.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I usually end up translating word by word when I am reading English.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	By the time I get past the funny letters and symbols in English, it is hard to remember what I've read about.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I am worried about all the new symbols I have to learn in order to read in English.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I enjoy reading English	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I feel confident when I am reading in English	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Once I get used to it, reading English is not so difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	The hardest part of learning English is learning to read.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I would be happy just to learn to speak English rather than having to learn to read as well.	1	2	3	4	5

17.	I don't mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read in English.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I am satisfied with the level of reading ability in English that I have achieved so far.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	English culture and ideas seem very foreign to me.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I have to know so much about English history and culture in order to read English.	1	2	3	4	5

**KEY TO AVERAGES:**

3.5 or higher = High anxiety level; 2.5 - 3.4 = Medium anxiety level; 2.4 or lower = Low anxiety level

## **MỐI QUAN HỆ GIỮA NỖ LO LẮNG TRONG KHI ĐỌC, VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CÁC CHIẾN LƯỢC VÀ KẾT QUẢ MÔN ĐỌC HỌC THUẬT CỦA SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở PHÍA BẮC VIỆT NAM**

Lê Quang Dũng

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**Tóm tắt:** Nghiên cứu định lượng này được tiến hành tại Khoa Quốc tế, Đại học Thái Nguyên nhằm tìm ra mức độ lo lắng khi làm bài đọc học thuật của sinh viên không chuyên ngữ. Những sinh viên này vừa kết thúc một khóa tiếng Anh tăng cường và sẽ phải thi một bài thi mô phỏng theo dạng thức bài thi IELTS (bài thi học thuật). Các sinh viên này bắt buộc phải đạt trình độ B2 chuẩn Châu Âu (5.5) để được xét vào học chuyên ngành. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy, mức độ lo lắng trong khi làm bài đọc ở mức trung bình ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ). Nghiên cứu cho thấy không tồn tại mối tương quan giữa mức độ lo lắng và việc sử dụng các chiến lược trong khi làm bài đọc. Kết quả nghiên cứu cũng chỉ ra mối quan hệ tỷ lệ nghịch giữa mức độ lo lắng cao với kết quả bài thi môn đọc (Low ( $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = .49$ ) and High ( $M = 1.40$ ,  $SD = .52$ )). Càng lo lắng thì kết quả càng thấp.

*Từ khóa:* mối quan hệ, nỗi lo lắng khi đọc, chiến lược đọc, lo lắng ở mức cao, kết quả thấp.

# A STUDY ON MODALITY IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM RESEARCH ARTICLES

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**Abstract:** The present paper contributes to the increasing investigation into the lexico-grammatical features of the English-medium research articles (RAs). The study investigated the use of modality in the RAs both as a whole and across the sections, and compared these features between two subsets - RAs from an internationally established journal and those from a non-indexed journal published in Vietnam. Data for the study was 30 RAs over a three-year time span from 2017 to 2019 from *English for Specific Purposes* and *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*. The findings indicate a small disproportion in the frequency between these two groups of authors, with the international subset having a slightly higher normalized frequency. Modality distribution across sections suggests the same decreasing order for both subsets, which starts from *Conclusion* to *Results and Discussion*, *Literature review*, *Introduction* and ends with *Method*, with *Conclusion* being the section with the highest frequency, and *Method* with the lowest. Additionally, the international subset consistently has a slightly higher normalized frequency in all sections than that in the Vietnamese subset. It is expected that the issues unfolded from this study could theoretically contribute to a better understanding of modality in research papers in general and in those in the discipline of Applied Linguistics in particular; practically, the thesis is also hoped to promote the Vietnamese researchers in their endeavor to join the international academic community.

*Keywords:* modality, research article, research article structure, genre analysis

## 1. Introduction

Modality, which is concerned with the speakers'/writers' opinion and attitude towards the propositional content, has become the centrality of innumerable research for decades. Regarding academic written discourse, the skillful manipulation of modality markers has been explicitly acknowledged as a means to convey authors' stance, affection or judgment to both the propositions they make and the readers, as well as to modify their statements and avoid the risk of face-threatening communicative activity on the potential addressees (Almeida & Pastor, 2017,

p. 281). The proper use of modality would substantially support the pragmatic aspect in academic writing (Hyland, 1994; Myers, 1989), assist scholars in accurately expressing their research findings (Yang, 2018), and also reflect an advanced level of both linguistic and pragmatic proficiency in the written mode (Chen, 2010).

Of the various genres of academic writing, the RA, an essential vehicle for disseminating new knowledge, has become a frequent subject of various studies, of which a large number focus on modality. Yang et al. (2015) analyze a wide range of epistemic modality (EpM) markers in medical RAs and reach the conclusion that medical RA writers have a tendency to make tentative, reserved and

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objective claims throughout their work. From a contrastive perspective, Orta (2010) and Pastor (2012) investigate the use of modal verbs denoting epistemic modality (EpM) in RAs by non-native and native English speakers. The findings of these two investigations suggest a deviant handling of EpM markers on the part of non-native authors, which would make it more challenging to establish a proper tenor in their RAs. Others look at the distribution of EpM across different disciplines. Vázquez and Giner (2008) investigates RAs in the field of Marketing, Biology and Mechanical Engineering. The results indicate that the sociological features of each discipline have an effect on the way academic authors utilize EpM in their RAs. Vold (2006) examines EpM markers in RAs of two disciplines, Linguistics and Medicine, in three different languages, namely English, French and Norwegian. It is found that French-speaking researchers employ significantly less EpM expressions than their Norwegian and English-speaking colleagues. The disciplinary affiliation is reported to barely affect the number of markers used and the types of markers preferred. As regards the syntactic features, the previous studies unfold a general interest in the modal verbs. Yamazaki (2001) examines how *must*, *may* and *might* are used in chemical research reports as well as the level of certainty assigned to each verb. Bonilla (2017) reports on how different native and non-native English speakers employ *can(not)* and *could(not)* in both academic and informal texts. His work concludes that non-natives seem to overuse modal verbs in academic texts. The tendency of English learners to overuse modal verbs is also revealed in Hykes' (2000) and Yang's (2018) studies, both of which look at modal verbs in academic writing produced by students and professionals. Especially, the research by Almeida and Pastor (2017) examine the use of nine central modal verbs

in the RAs by native speakers in relation to discipline. The paper focuses on the differences between Linguistics and Engineering RAs, which belong to the soft and hard sciences respectively. The findings indicate that modal markers appear the most in the Introduction and Conclusion sections of the Linguistics RAs whereas the Background and Method sections of the Engineering RAs contain the largest number of modal verbs. Semantically, EpM is also found to be most frequently used, especially in the Introduction, Background and Method sections of Engineering RAs and in the Discussion and Conclusion parts of Linguistics RAs.

Within the Vietnamese scholarly community, modality has received increasing attention during two recent decades. The underlying theories revolving around modality, its categories and realizations have been investigated, summarized and presented by a good number of authors (Luu Quý Khương & Trần Thị Minh Giang, 2012; Ngũ Thiện Hùng, 2003, 2011, 2015; Nguyễn Văn Hiệp, 2007; Võ Đại Quang, 2007, etc.). Experimentally, the employment of both English and Vietnamese modality means in different spoken and written genres such as literature (Bùi Thị Đào, 2014; Nguyễn Thị Nhung, 2016; Phạm Thị Nhung, 2016; Trần Thị Kim Chi, 2003), news stories (Nguyễn Thị Thu Hiền, 2008), social science articles (Nguyễn Thị Thu Thủy, 2012a, 2012b), TED talks (Bùi Thị Mỹ Lợi, 2018; Tôn Nữ Mỹ Nhật & Nguyễn Thị Diệu Minh, 2019), ambassadors' speeches (Trần Hữu Phúc, 2014) has been thoroughly explored. However, to our best knowledge, none has focused on the expression of modality in RAs in general and those by Vietnamese scholars in particular.

On the whole, an extensive review of the works on modality in RAs indicates

that although this domain has been well-researched, it is noticeable that most studies have exclusively focused on the modal verbs, leaving the other devices to denote this strand of meaning unexplored. In addition, there have also been few studies of RAs in the discipline of Linguistics as well as those by Vietnamese authors. This study is hoped to extend the previous studies and bridge this gap by comparing and contrasting the manipulation of modality in two sets of RAs in the discipline of Applied Linguistics - articles from an internationally established journal and articles from an English-medium journal written by Vietnamese scholars. The main questions this study is aimed to answer are: (1) To what extent is modality used in RAs in Applied Linguistics as a whole? (2) To what extent does the distribution of modality in the RAs in Applied Linguistics vary across sections? (3) What are the similarities and differences regarding these features between the two groups of subjects investigated?

This article is organized as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of modality and its subtypes. Section 3 describes the research methodology. Section 4 is to answer the research questions. The article closes with a brief consideration of the pedagogical implications of the findings and directions for future research.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. Definition

Stamatović (2016) claims that modality remains “one of the few slippery notions employed in linguistics that resists any satisfactory formal definition” (p. 132). Various scholars relate the term ‘*modality*’ to speaker’s/writer’s subjective stance. It has been widely argued that language is not merely used to convey factual information about the truth

of the proposition contained in an utterance but also to express one’s attitudes, opinions, ideas and ideologies about the events. To Lyons (1977), modality realizes the speaker’s “opinion or attitude towards the proposition that the sentence expresses or the situation that the proposition describes” (p. 452). This definition is also embraced by Palmer (2013, p. 2), an advocate of a semantically-oriented approach to modality. Modality can also be defined as the linguistic encoding (Biber et al., 1999, p. 966) or grammaticization (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 176) of the beliefs, subjective attitudes and opinions of speaker/writer towards the proposition manifested. Simpson (1993) refers to modality as a speaker’s/writer’s attitude toward or opinion about the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence as well as the attitude toward the situation or event described by that sentence. Along the same line, Quirk et al. (1985, p. 219) propose that at its most general, modality may be considered as “the manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker’s judgment of the likelihood of the proposition it expresses being true”.

In general, it is noted that with each scholar having their own way to approach the fuzzy notion of modality, a clear-cut definition of the term has not yet been determined. This paper, however, will strictly follow the one proposed by Palmer (2013), considering modality as the realization of the speaker’s/writer’s opinion or attitude towards the situation of the proposition, or the proposition itself.

### 2.2. Modality Markers

It has been commonly agreed that the most pervasive and principal means of modality expressions is modal verbs, which serve to give more information about the function of

the main verbs that follow them. Biber et al. (1999, p. 483) propose nine **central modals** used to express modality, namely *can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would* and *must*. Biber et al. (ibid., p. 483) list *need, dare, used to* and *ought to* under the category of **marginal modals**. Another widely recognized subtype is that of **quasi modals**, a periphrastic modal form that are “formally distinguishable from, but semantically similar to the modal auxiliaries” (Collins, 2009, p. 15). Within the set of quasi modals, Quirk et al. (1985, pp. 137-146) distinguish between modal idioms and semi-auxiliaries as follows:

- Modal idioms (those that have an auxiliary as their first element): *had better, would rather, be to, have got to, had best, would sooner/ would (just) as soon, may/might (just) as well;*
- Semi-auxiliaries (those that do not contain an auxiliary as their first element, but in most cases involve *be* and a lexical item): *have to, be (un)able to, be about to, be bound to, be going to, be obliged*

*to, be supposed to, be (un)willing to, be apt to, be due to, be likely to, be meant to.*

Unlike modal verbs, lexical devices - lexical verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and nouns - have received a disproportionate amount of attention from linguists as there exists a long tradition to solely or predominantly concentrate on the modal verbs and exclude other expressions (Dirven, 1989, p. 60, as cited in Khosravi, 2016, p. 4). However, having studied modality in large amounts of discourse, Hermerén (1978) and Holmes (1983) (as cited in McCarthy, 1991, p. 85) show a wide range of lexical items carrying modal meanings. The analyses show that, put together, other word classes may express modality more frequently than modal verbs, and that lexical verbs and adverbs appear considerably more often than nouns and adjectives.

Drawn heavily on the results of the previous studies on this domain (Biber et al., 1999; Ngula, 2015; Quirk et al., 1985), the potential lexical items to denote modality are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Lexical modality markers

Word class	Lexical markers
Verbs	advise, allow, allege, appear, argue, ask, assume, attest, authorize, believe, bet, calculate, claim, conclude, consider, constrain, convince, doubt, estimate, expect, fear, feel (like), figure, find, force, gather, guess, hope, imagine, imply, indicate, infer, know, look (like)/(as if), menace, oblige, order, permit, presume, promise, propose, reckon, recommend, request, require, (would) say, seem (like), sound (like), speculate, suggest, suppose, suspect, tend, think; threaten, undertake, urge, warn
Adverbs/ Prepositional phrases	actually, allegedly, apparently, arguably, assuredly, certainly, clearly, compulsorily, conceivably, doubtlessly, decidedly, definitely, evidently, incontestably, for me, in my mind, in my opinion, in my view, in truth, incontrovertibly, indeed, indisputably, indubitably, inevitably, likely, mandatorily, manifestly, maybe, naturally, necessarily, needless to say, obviously, obligatorily; of course, ostensibly, patently, perhaps, plainly, possibly, presumably, probably, purportedly, reputedly, seemingly, so far as appeared, supposedly, sure, surely, to me, to my mind, unarguably, unavoidably, undeniably, undoubtedly, unquestionably

Adjectives	(im)probable, (un)likely, advisable, apparent, appropriate, certain, clear, compulsory, confident, convinced, critical, crucial, desirable, doubtful, doubtless, essential, evident, expedient, fitting, good, important, indispensable, mandatory, necessary, needful, obligatory, obvious, positive, possible, possible, proper, sure, true, vital
Nouns	assumption, belief, certainty, chance, claim, danger, (beyond/ no/ without) doubt, estimate, estimation, evidence, fear, guess, hope, indication, likelihood, necessity, odds, opinion, order, permission, possibility, potential, probability, proposal, question, requirement, speculation, suggestion, tendency, theory

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### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1. Data description

The data includes an international subset of 15 RAs and a Vietnamese subset of 15 RAs. RAs in the international subset were selected from *English for Specific Purposes*, a well-established journal in the discipline of applied linguistics which takes a worldwide interest in all branches of the subject. The journal is included in the Social Science Citation Index, an indicator of quality research publication, which marks its reputation and credibility. RAs in the Vietnamese subset were taken from *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, a serial publication launched as part of the *VNU Journal of Science*. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies* is an official and independent publication of the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) under Vietnam National University (VNU). The journal mainly concerns linguistics, foreign language education, international studies and related social sciences and humanities.

Traditionally, *English for Specific Purposes* publishes four volumes a year. On the other hand, *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies* releases bimonthly four English editions and two Vietnamese ones. The RAs collected for this study are from the former. The RAs in this research were compiled from the latest issues in the three most recent years since the data collection process began, which

was in June 2019.

Between 2017 and June 2019, *English for Specific Purposes* contains 71 RAs whereas *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies* includes 73 English-medium RAs in total. The examination of the RAs collected reveals that while all RAs in *English for Specific Purposes* concern Applied Linguistics, 13 out of 73 RAs in *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies* are those of Pure/Theoretical Linguistics. To ensure consistency, 13 RAs of the Pure/Theoretical Linguistics discipline were excluded. Additionally, three RAs in the Vietnamese journal which were found to be written by foreigners, not native Vietnamese writers, were also discarded. The criteria for the RAs to have been included as data were: they concern applied linguistics, not pure/theoretical linguistics; they consist of five sections - *Introduction, Literature review, Method, Results and Discussion, and Conclusion*. There were a total of 53 RAs in the international journal and 38 RAs in the Vietnamese one meeting the requirements, from which 30 RAs were randomly chosen.

The 30 English-medium RAs which had been chosen based on the abovementioned criteria and steps were compiled and downloaded as PDF files. Then the files were converted into text documents. Redundant details were also excluded to prepare the texts for later full-scale investigation. These details involve (1) information about author(s), volume and issue of the journal; (2) sections

of abstract, acknowledgement, references, appendices; and (3) endnotes, page number, and all figures, tables, charts, and diagrams. The total word count of RAs chosen varies

from texts to texts, but RAs by international writers would generally be of longer length than those by Vietnamese ones. The word count of each subset is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Word count of two subsets

	Minimum length (words)	Maximum length (words)	Mean length (words)	Total word count (words)
International subset	5551	10,985	7,898.4	118,476
Vietnamese subset	2746	7912	5,088.0	76,320
Total			6,493.2	194,796

3.2. Data Analysis

**Identification and categorization of markers:** For each RA in the corpus, a manual verification was carried out in order to identify and categorize the modality markers into: Modal verbs, Verbs (lexical verbs), Adverbs (including adverbs and prepositional phrases functioning as adverbs), Adjectives, and Nouns. As mentioned above, the notion of modal verbs covers central modals, marginal modals and quasi modals. However, for the sake of simplicity, in this study *modal verb* serves as an umbrella term, subsuming all these categories. In addition, as Gustová (2011, p. 7) points out, semi-auxiliaries/lexico-modals, a subtype of quasi modals, lie closer to main verbs than other subcategories, so items belonging to this subclass or those that are closely related to lexical items would be treated as such. For instance, *be (un)able to*, or *be likely to* would be classified as adjectives, and *be obliged to* or *be supposed to* will be considered as lexical verbs. To serve the purpose of this investigation, the items categorized as modal verbs in this study are as follows: *be about to, be going to, be to, can, could, dare, had best, had better, have got to, have to, may, might, must, need, ought to, shall, should, used to, will, would, would rather, would sooner, would (just) as soon.*

**Calculation of Occurrence Frequencies:**

Since the texts in the corpus are not of the same length, the comparison of raw frequencies might lead to biased and unreliable results. A normed frequency allows users to know how many times an item occurs per X words of running texts, which represents the base of normalization. Thus, to gain normed frequencies, researchers need to take the raw frequency of an item appearing in one section, divide it by the size of that section, and then multiply the result by the base of normalization. The base of normalization would depend on the size of the corpus: it could be set to per 1 million words of running texts if the corpus is of approximately 100 million words, or per 10,000 words of running texts if the corpus is of 1 million words (Ngula, 2015, p. 124). As the overall size of the present corpus is nearly 200,000 words, it is justifiable to set the base of normalization at per 1000 words of running texts. The formula to convert each frequency into a value per a thousand words is as follows:  $F_N = F_O * 1000 / C$ , with  $F_N$ : the normalized frequency;  $F_O$ : the observed frequency; C: the corpus size. It was these normed frequencies that were based on to describe findings concerning the distribution of modality markers between two subsets of data.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Results

#### 4.1.1. The Use of Modality in the Entire RAs

The analysis unfolds a noticeable fact

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of modality markers in the corpus.

	Max. (tokens)	Min. (tokens)	Mean (tokens)
International subset	253	61	127.2
Vietnamese subset	161	27	76.3

The highest number of modality tokens per RA in the international group is 253, which is about 1.5 times higher than that in the Vietnamese. Meanwhile, the minimum number of modality markers in the international set is 61, which is nearly 2.3 times higher than that in the Vietnamese. Consequently, it can be seen that the RAs in the international subset generally employ more modality tokens than those in the Vietnamese as a typical RA in the international group would consist of about 127 modality markers on average whereas a RA in the Vietnamese group would comprise roughly 76 items.

This disproportion in the mean of modality markers between the two groups undoubtedly results from the marked difference in the size of each subset. As can be seen from Table 4,

Table 4. Distribution of modality markers in the entire RAs

	C	F <sub>O</sub>	F <sub>N</sub>
International subset	118,476	1,908	16.10
Vietnamese subset	76,320	1,145	15.00
Total	194,796	3,053	15.67

Note. C = corpus size (words); F<sub>O</sub> = observed frequency (occurrences); F<sub>N</sub> = normalized frequency

#### 4.1.2. The Distribution of Modality across Sections

that modality expressions appear in every RA of both the subsets of the data set. Table 3 presents the maximum and minimum numbers of occurrences of modality devices, as well as the estimated average number of tokens occurring in one RA in each subset.

the 30-text corpus consists of a total of 194,796 words, 3,053 of which are markers denoting modality. In detail, regarding RAs by the international researchers, it is found that the 118,476-word subset includes 1,908 tokens of modality markers. Meanwhile, the RAs by Vietnamese authors, which are approximately 1.5 times shorter in length (76,320 vs. 118,476), contain 1,145 cases of modality realization in total. The raw tokens show a much larger number of modality devices in the RAs by the international writers than in those by the Vietnamese writers; however, by the normalized values, we can see that the overall frequency of modality markers employed by the international authors is only slightly higher than that by the Vietnamese researchers, with the distribution per 1000 words being 16.10 and 15.00 respectively.

Table 5 features the occurrence of modality markers in five distinct sections of the RA by two groups of authors.

Table 5. Numbers of occurrences of modality markers across sections

	International subset		Vietnamese subset	
	Length	Tokens	Length	Tokens
Introduction	10,348	117	4,338	42
Literature review	18,893	297	17,023	242
Methodology	22,652	246	8,696	55
Results and Discussion	55,534	976	40,042	685
Conclusion	11,049	272	6,222	118
Total	118,476	1,908	76,320	1,145

From the raw frequencies, it is apparent that international researchers utilize more modality markers than their Vietnamese counterparts in every RA. However, due to

the different lengths of each segment, in order to compare the two subsets, it is essential to rely on the normalized frequencies, which are represented in Figure 1 below.

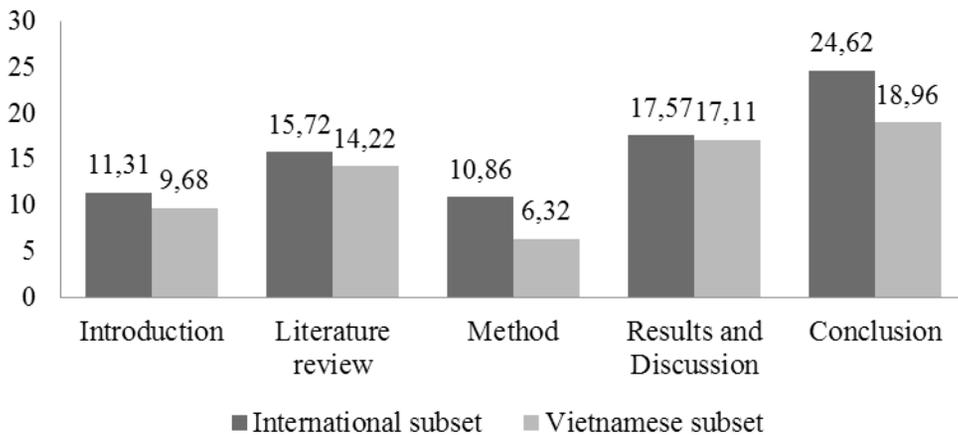


Figure 1. Normalized frequencies of markers across sections (per 1,000 words).

Mention first should be made of the fact that modality markers in the international subset occur more frequently than those in the Vietnamese within every RA section. The figures also reveal that the ranking of each section based on the modality density is identical in both groups, with *Conclusion* being the segment with the highest marker frequency and the *Method* section with the lowest.

In detail, the *Conclusion* section is found to have the highest normalized frequency among all, with the density of modality markers per 1,000 words in the international and Vietnamese subset being 24.62 and 18.96 respectively. The employment of modality in

the segment helps outline an overview of the findings (as in 4.1 and 4.2) and tentatively claims the achievements of the study as well as its contributions to the Linguistics field, as in (4.3) and (4.4).

(4.1) *The context is a practical trades training environment, with trades specialists, who though they may have completed initial teaching training, have not been trained as language and literacy specialists. However, these tutors appear to be integrating language and literacy into carpentry training, and both tutors and learners appear to be drawing on a range of ways to support*

*the learning of specialised terms, primarily through tutor and learner talk around the practical work. In New Zealand, programmes at this level need to be visibly integrating language and literacy within vocational training (Tertiary Education Commission, 2014). This study shows that such integration of language and literacy and vocational training appears to be taking place. [I1802]*

- (4.2) *The present study reinforces the findings of previous studies. Training can increase quantity of ideas and the order of brainstorming sessions solitary to group brainstorming is effective (Baruah & Paulus, 2008). [...] Furthermore, brainstorming could enhance learning motivation and improve learning performance as well as other soft skills for students (Blatchford et al, 2003; Gillies, 2003; Dooly, 2008; Saed, 2011). [V1705]*
- (4.3) *This paper offers several contributions. It combines the work done in ESP and corpus linguistics with that being done in disciplinary literacy, drawing on the technical advances of the former to produce a resource that can enhance the teaching of disciplinary literacy in the secondary school context. The resulting Secondary Phrase Lists fill an important gap between discipline-specific lemma lists that represent the language of disciplinary content, and phrase lists which tend to be combinations of lexical and grammatical words that represent discourse moves and functions. [...] Finally, the paper makes a theoretical contribution by showing the extent of a core lexical academic vocabulary at the content word phrase level appears*

*to be limited, more so than lexical bundle phraseology, supporting the need for the pedagogical approach of disciplinary literacy. [I1901]*

- (4.4) *It contributed a model of idea generation training for writing which could be implemented in similar situations. [V1705]*

Modality in *Conclusion* also functions to reflect the limitations (as in 4.5 and 4.6) and put forward viable implications (as in 4.7) as well as suggestions for further research (as in 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10).

- (4.5) *Firstly, the research had no control over the genres and levels of difficulty of the assignments. These factors, obviously, could influence the students' writing performance. Secondly, [...]. Therefore, further research should be carried out using more data [...]. [V1903]*

- (4.6) *Clearly having more participants in this aspect of the study might have raised, or not, the level of analysis allowed and possibly the level of agreement between participants. [I1804]*

- (4.7) *Firstly, the results have demonstrated that ability grouping can be effective in some contexts for lower level ESP language learners, and it would be useful to continue with this practice. For more proficient learners, however, it would seem that some changes to the current practices are required. [I1801]*

- (4.8) *[...] and future research needs to procure content teacher ratings from STEM. In the end no ratings can represent all possible teaching and learning contexts, and [...]. [I1901]*

- (4.9) *It would be interesting to further explore whether [...]. Proposal reviewers would be a highly informative source for such*

research. [I1904]

- (4.10) [...] further studies should be conducted. Since this study only focused on high school English teachers' perceptions of in-class speaking assessment, further research can explore the high school teachers' practice of [...]. Future studies can also [...]. [V1804]

The section with the second highest frequency of modality devices is *Results and Discussion*. The data suggest that in every 1,000 words in this segment, there is an average of 17.57 markers employed in the international subset and 17.11 items in the Vietnamese one. Modality enables researchers to present their findings and their personal interpretations of the results (as in 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13). It also serves to connect the present study to previous works, pointing out how it contrasts or resonates with them (as in 4.14 and 4.15).

- (4.11) In Table 2, it can be seen that [...]. In brief, pragmatic features based on Speech Act theory of the structure "I + CNFV and EA collocations" can be employed effectively in communication; therefore, learners of English and native speakers of English should master them to get better conversations. [V1805]
- (4.12) It is evident in Figure 4c that [...]. Most of the disciplines seem to balance [...]; others tend to rely more either on [...]. [I1703]
- (4.13) In addition, the description denotes that flower is always attractive though its smell is fragrant or malodorous. With smelly, the lines seem to send a message to the couples that love should always be respected at all costs. It may not be as perfect as expected but it is fruitful and acceptable. Following is another instance of using extending

technique for love conventional metaphor. [V1702]

- (4.14) In contrast to these studies, the present study was in a context where the tutors and learners could rely on [...]. [I1802]
- (4.15) Applying findings by Pellicer-Sánchez and Schmitt (2010), Pigada and Schmitt (2006), and Waring and Takaki (2003) to the present study revealed that after reading 500,000 words of SFF, L2 learners might be able to recognize the forms of between 27% and 43% of the science word list, and recall the forms of as much as 53% of the list. Learners would likely experience similar gains in terms of meaning recognition, with a potential increase of between 28% and 34% of the word list; however, ability to recall meanings could vary considerably, with possible gains as low as 9% or as high as 38% of the word list. In addition, learners could also be able to recall the grammatical functions of as much as 49% of the word list. In sum, learners could experience the following technical vocabulary gains given a 500,000-word SFF reading commitment. [I1705]

Literature review ranks third on the list of sections with high frequency of modality, with the normalized figures in the international and Vietnamese groups being 15.72 and 14.22 markers per 1,000 words respectively. The presence of modality in this section allows authors to highlight seminal works on the topic, their possible limitations as well as contributions to the field (as in 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18). Modality may also express authors' perspective or approach to the subject (as in 4.19).

- (4.16) Baker (1998) reasoned that providing learning environments and supporting

*infrastructures that are conducive to successful learning activities can encourage students' motivation [...]. Kim (2012) found that the practice of ability grouping can lead to more work for teachers, as they are required to adjust materials for different levels. [I1801]*

(4.17) *[...] a study by Ceylan (2015) shows that the more strategies the students employ, the more autonomous they might become as [...]. [V1905]*

(4.18) *Existing needs analyses suggest [...]. However, these findings must be treated with caution for the purposes of program design since [...]. [I1702]*

(4.19) *Wong (2000, p. 61) states that this use of yeah in native speakers is rare and seems to "mark failure of the search" for an appropriate linguistic item to use in a certain circumstance. However, it appears that there is something that [...]. [V1904]*

The Introduction section is found to have a relatively low modality density. Specifically, international writers employ a total of 11.31 markers per 1,000 running words while the figure for Vietnamese authors is only 9.68. Modality in this segment is used to sketch out the current situation regarding the subject of the study as well as to emphasize the gap left to be filled (as in 4.20 and 4.21).

(4.20) *It is important to take a holistic view that accounts for academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, and cultural integration (Belcher & Lukkarila, 2011; Mamiseishvili, 2012). Therefore, as part of a review of the institute's EAP program, a comprehensive needs analysis was undertaken. This paper reports on [...]. [I1702]*

(4.21) *Along with the implementation of the English pilot program, it is required by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) that English testing and assessment be comprehensively conducted in terms of four skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening (Dispatch No 5333/ BGDĐT-GDTrH) so that students, upon their completion of high school education, will have achieved [...]. In the light of MOET document, high school students should be able to communicate in English in both spoken and written forms. [V1804]*

Ranking last on the list, Method is the section with the lowest frequency of modality since per 1,000 words there are only around 10.86 and 6.32 markers deployed in the international and Vietnamese subset respectively. Modality realization in this part contributes to the description of data as well as the analysis procedure. For example,

(4.22) *Although a more accurate assessment of threshold levels may be reached by a random sampling of texts (e.g. Sajid, 2013) from the LtSC to create the sub-corpora, the Top 10 corpus was collected and organized due to the intuitive organization scheme which would likely be applied within a classroom setting. In other words, the Top 10 corpus was organized in this manner due to the expectation that a classroom instructor would more likely ask students to collect the top 10 letters rather than compiling a random sampling of letters from the top 100; the Top 50 was compiled to serve as an additional benchmark in the analysis. [I1704]*

(4.23) *These films discuss current social issues in official contexts such as*

*working environments of businessmen, politicians, congressmen, and police. Similar features of these films can enhance the validity and reliability of data collected from them. From the chosen films, conversations are gathered. Selected conversations must have opening sections and be between two participants - a staff and a manager aged from 20 to 60. [V1703]*

## **4.2. Discussion**

### **4.2.1. Modality Use in the Entire RAs**

Findings obtained from the data analysis of 30 RAs in the field of Linguistics written by both international and Vietnamese authors disclose the occurrence of 3,053 modality markers out of the 194,796-word corpus, which means that there is an average of 15.67 markers per 1,000 running words. Modality is also found to appear in every RA examined, with approximately 127 and 76 items used in each RA in the international and Vietnamese group respectively. The large number of modality markers employed as well as their presence in every single RA within the corpus evidences the undeniable prevalence and central importance of this phenomenon in academic written genre in general and in RAs in particular.

The analysis indicates a minor difference in the frequency of modality markers between the international and Vietnamese subsets, which likely suggests that the Vietnamese researchers are as proficient in the employment of modality as the international ones. The present findings are in contradiction with the previous results obtained from the other studies on the modality-related performance of non-native high school or college students (Chen, 2010; Hyland & Milton, 1997; Milton & Hyland, 1999; Yang, 2018), graduates

(Hykes, 2000), or postgraduates (Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2005) who tend to underuse, overuse or misuse modality expressions. The explanation for this distinction might lie in the different levels of language proficiency of the subjects involved; the writers in this study are mostly researchers, teachers and university lecturers with undoubtedly a high command of English, who would be able to produce language more accurately and skillfully. This claim aligns with the statements of Milton and Hyland (1999), which advance that non-native students would approximate native-like usage in tentative expressions as their proficiency improves, and of Chen (2010), which contend that the increase in language proficiency of non-native learners would result in a progress in intercultural pragmatic competence.

### **4.2.2. Modality Distribution across Sections**

The investigation of modality distribution at sectional level reveals that concentrations of modality are found most often in the *Conclusion* section. The number of modality markers decreases in descending order from *Results and Discussion* to *Literature review*, *Introduction* and finally *Method*. This order of high frequency of modality distribution across RA sections is quite distinct from the one which has uniformly been reported by other linguists such as Adams-Smith (1984), Butler (1990), Salager-Meyer (1994), and Varttala (1998) in previous works on this genre, which is *Discussion - Introduction - Results - Method*. The discrepancy might be attributed to the nature of the RAs in the data set. It is noticed that RAs in those studies mentioned above follow the IMRD macrostructure structure (Introduction - Method - Results - Discussion) whereas the RAs selected as data for the present research are of the Introduction - Literature review - Method - Results and Discussion - Conclusion pattern.

With the appearance of the *Literature review* and *Conclusion* section, the function and the content of each segment in RAs vary greatly; as a result, the frequency of modality use in the corpus of this study is likely to differ.

Traditionally, within the IMRD structure, the *Introduction* section is mainly used to discuss the research of others, thus the need to deploy a great number of modality markers in order to mitigate claims. Within the pattern of the RAs in the corpus of the present analysis, the function of *Introduction* is just to briefly introduce and address the necessity to conduct a study by outlining facts about the current situation in the world and in the existing literature; therefore, it seems justifiable that this section does not include many modality markers. *Literature review* now takes on the major function of the conventional *Introduction* in the IMRD structure, which is to offer a general overview of previous works, point out the gap to bridge and highlight the adopted theoretical framework, thus providing more room for a high frequency of modality actualization. Modality in this RA segment, especially EpM, serves as a politeness strategy for scholars to cautiously criticize fellow researchers as they remark upon other others' theories and former works (Vold, 2006, p. 82).

Within the traditional IMRD structure, *Results* and *Discussion* are two separate segments, the former of which contains a small number of modality markers as it is dedicated to the presentation of concrete numbers and statistics whereas the latter has a high frequency of modality means as it is to relate to non-evidential claims and judgments of truth and doubt or certainty (Hykes, 2000, p. 14). On the contrary, in the RAs selected as data for this study, the combination of the two sections of *Results* and *Discussion* results in the use of modality which allows

academic writers to report new findings with an appropriate degree of tentativeness so as to acknowledge the possibility that they could be proven wrong, thus creating a scientific foundation as well as enhancing the credibility of the writings (Hykes, 2000, p. 12).

The presence of the *Conclusion* section in the corpus of this study marks a key difference between two RA structures. Since *Conclusion* is entirely devoted to summarizing the study, providing suggestions and implications, the need to employ modality markers to tone down statements and present claims with precision and caution is clear. Additionally, it is noteworthy that although the *Results and Discussion* section includes far more modality markers than *Conclusion* (1,661 vs. 390), its frequency per 1,000 words ranks after that of *Conclusion* (17.57 vs. 24.62, in the international subset; 17.11 vs. 18.96, in the Vietnamese group). The explanation for these figures seems to be the length of the two sections. The *Results and Discussion* section contains a total of 95,576 words, much longer than the length of *Conclusion*, which is only 17,271 words in total; consequently, *Conclusion*, with a high number of modality tokens distributing over a relatively short segment, becomes the section with the highest frequency of markers.

In line with the previous studies which analyzed the RAs of the traditional IMRD structure, the present study reveals that *Method* is the segment with the lowest frequency of modality tokens. This feature is probably because its function in the two structures is the same. The *Method* section in both patterns is set out to account for the actual process of data collection and data analysis; therefore, the heavy use of modality means in this segment would be inappropriate.

## 5. Conclusions

This paper has presented relatively detailed descriptions and explanations of the use of modality in Applied Linguistics RAs from a comparative perspective, drawing on a corpus of 30 Applied Linguistics RAs published in *English for Specific Purposes* and *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies* between 2017 and 2019. Overall, modality expressions are found to be present in every RA in both the international and Vietnamese subsets; the overall occurrences of modality markers used by international writers are only slightly higher than those of Vietnamese researchers, suggesting that the Vietnamese authors' proficiency in the employment of modality is not vastly different from their international fellows'. As far as the modality distribution across RA sections is concerned, though each section in the international and Vietnamese subsets presents different normalized frequencies, the order of each section regarding modality density is identical between the two groups, with *Conclusion* being the section with the highest frequency.

The authors hope that this study has contributed to the genre analysis literature with relation to modality. Theoretically, it extends and refines previous studies with a focus on only the modal verbs as a means of denoting modality. The overall picture of the modality employment in Linguistics RAs drawn from this analysis confirms the prevalence and significance of modality in RAs in particular and in scholarly written genre in general, thus pointing out the need for further studies on this notion in the future. In addition, based on the results of the study, pedagogical implications can be drawn. Modality presents a considerable challenge to learners of English, which might be due to their imperfect language proficiency,

native language transfer, and cultural transfer (Letica, 2009, p. 131). Another explanation might be the underestimation and partial presentation of this phenomenon in the teacher and student textbooks, as well as in language teaching classrooms (Efstathiadi, 2010, p. 13; Yang, 2018, p. 126). Therefore, it is expected that the findings will to some extent assist the Vietnamese scholars to generate their RAs to the expectations of their academic discourse community with regard to modality expression. For example, in the academic writing courses for undergraduates and post-graduates, students need to be made aware of the range of linguistic means to convey modality and instructed to see the functions of this area of language in RAs, as well as in different sections of the genre.

The findings obtained from this study may provide a foundation for further inquiries. Although the research has reached its aims, there remain some unavoidable limitations which need to be acknowledged and addressed in future research. Firstly, the present paper applies the term '*international*' as a reference to authors whose works are published in the *English for Specific Purposes* journal; there is no uniformity regarding their nationalities. In other words, these writers may be native and non-native English speakers. Future analyses could therefore focus on only those written by English native speakers. Secondly, as this study only focuses on RAs written in English, RAs in Vietnamese are left unexplored. As a result, investigations in the future could compare and contrast the employment of modality in Vietnamese-medium and English-medium RAs within the academic community in Vietnam. Finally, the sole focus of this research is on RAs concerning the field of Applied Linguistics; consequently, it would be instructive to explore the modality distribution in RAs in other subfields within Linguistics.

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#### Online resources

The Grammar Lab: <http://www.thegrammarlab.com/?p=160>

**Appendix: Data sources**

Table A.1. RAs in the international subset

Code	Articles
I1701	The student laboratory report genre: A genre analysis. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (45), 1-13.
I1702	“Step Out of the Cycle”: Needs, challenges, and successes of international undergraduates at a U.S. University. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (46), 15-28.
I1703	A move/step model for methods sections: Demonstrating rigour and credibility. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (46), 90-106.
I1704	“New opportunities” and “Strong performance”: Evaluative adjectives in letters to shareholders and potential for pedagogically-downsized specialized corpora. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (47), 40-51.
I1705	Science-specific technical vocabulary in science fiction-fantasy texts: A case for ‘language through literature’. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (48), 44-56.
I1801	Is ability grouping beneficial or detrimental to Japanese ESP students’ English language proficiency development? <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (49), 39-48.
I1802	‘We learn as we go’: How acquisition of a technical vocabulary is supported during vocational training. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (50), 14-27.
I1803	Multilingual and multimodal practices at a global startup: Toward a spatial approach to language and literacy in professional contexts. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (51), 55-68.
I1804	Investigating the technical vocabulary of plumbing. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (51), 84-97.
I1805	Bringing reality to the classroom: Exercises in intertextuality. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (52), 1-12.
I1901	Position vectors, homologous chromosomes and gamma rays: Promoting disciplinary literacy through Secondary Phrase Lists. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (53), 1-12.
I1902	Using corpus-based discourse analysis for curriculum development: Creating and evaluating a pronunciation course for internationally educated nurses. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (53), 13-29.
I1903	A prosodic profile of American Aviation English. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (53), 30-46.
I1904	Articulating societal benefits in grant proposals: Move analysis of Broader Impacts. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (54), 15-34.
I1905	If you can defend your own point of view, you’re good: Norms of voice construction in student writing on an international Master’s programme. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i> , (54), 110-126.

Table A.2. RAs in the Vietnamese subset

Code	Articles
V1701	World Englishes from a holistic view and considerations on English education in Vietnam. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 33(6), 41-55.
V1702	Poetic metaphors of love in English and Vietnamese. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 33(6), 56-64.

V1703	Verbal strategies used in opening a conversation in office settings by English and Vietnamese staff and managers. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 33(6), 65-77.
V1704	Speech act types in conversations in the “New interchange” series. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 33(6), 78-92.
V1705	The effectiveness of collaborative brainstorming training procedures at pre-writing stage in intermediate English classes. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 33(6), 123-141.
V1801	EFL students’ voices on learner autonomy at a university in the Mekong delta. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 34(2), 26-38.
V1802	Translating proper names in a literary text: A case of Harry Potter novel in Vietnam. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 34(2), 39-50.
V1803	The application of strategy-based instructions to teach writing to first-year English majored students. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 34(2), 51-61.
V1804	An investigation into EFL teachers’ perceptions of in-class English speaking assessment. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 34(2), 125-139.
V1805	Pragmatic features of the structure “I + cognitive non-factive verb and epistemic adverb collocations”. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 34(4), 59-70.
V1901	Integrating culture into EFL teaching behind classroom doors: A case study of upper secondary teachers in Vietnam. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 35(1), 55-67.
V1902	Primary English language teachers’ engagement in professional development. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 35(1), 131-142.
V1903	The use of nominalization in EMI student writing - A longitudinal perspective. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 35(3), 73-82.
V1904	A relevance-theoretic analysis of <i>yeah</i> as a discourse marker. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 35(3), 176-186.
V1905	Language learner autonomy and language learning opportunities inside and outside classroom. <i>VNU Journal of Foreign Studies</i> , 35(3), 187-200.

# NGHIÊN CỨU VỀ TÌNH THÁI TRONG CÁC BÀI BÁO KHOA HỌC TIẾNG ANH

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**Tóm tắt:** Bài viết đóng góp vào thực tiễn nghiên cứu các đặc trưng từ vựng-ngữ pháp của thể loại bài báo khoa học tiếng Anh. Công trình nghiên cứu cách diễn đạt tình thái trong toàn bài báo cũng như trong từng mục của bài báo, và so sánh những đặc trưng này giữa hai nhóm bài báo - những bài báo quốc tế và những bài báo chưa thuộc danh mục quốc tế được viết bởi người Việt Nam. Cú liệu phân tích là 30 bài báo Ngôn ngữ học ứng dụng xuất bản trong khoảng thời gian 2017-2019 từ 2 tạp chí *English for Specific Purposes* và *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies* (tạp chí *Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài*). Kết quả cho thấy có sự khác biệt, nhưng không đáng kể, về tần suất sử dụng các phương tiện biểu đạt tình thái giữa hai nhóm tác giả, với nhóm bài báo của các tác giả quốc tế có tần suất cao hơn. Về tình thái trong mỗi mục của bài báo, kết quả cho thấy cả hai nhóm tác giả có xu hướng sử dụng giống nhau: theo tần suất từ cao nhất đến thấp nhất là *Phần kết luận, Kết quả và thảo luận, Tổng quan, Mở đầu, Phương pháp nghiên cứu*. Trong tất cả các mục, tần suất sử dụng ở nhóm tác giả quốc tế luôn cao hơn so với nhóm tác giả người Việt. Công trình nghiên cứu hy vọng là một đóng góp nhỏ vào việc phát triển thực tiễn viết bài báo khoa học bằng tiếng Anh của những học giả người Việt.

*Từ khóa:* tình thái, bài báo khoa học, cấu trúc bài báo khoa học, phân tích thể loại.

# KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNERS' ORAL FLUENCY IN ENGLISH SPEAKING CLASSES: A CASE AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN VIET NAM

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**Abstract:** In the field of English language learning, speaking is regarded as one of the most important skills to be developed and enhanced continually as means of effective communication. In most English classes at universities, many students find it difficult to express themselves in spoken English. So this research aims to investigate prominent factors affecting fluency of second-year students in speaking skill. The study uses mixed research methods with two data collection instruments namely survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The participants joining the survey questionnaire include 98 English non-majored students who were taking the English speaking course in their second semester at a university. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 teachers and 15 students. The findings reveal that the group of affective factors is the prominent one, and then followed by automation, error correction and performance factors influencing their oral fluency. Therefore, some useful recommendations focusing on interactive strategies to minimize learners' difficulties in oral fluency as well as develop their fluency in English speaking performance in this study could be taken into account for EFL teachers in English speaking classes.

*Keywords:* Oral fluency, prominent factors, fluency, fluency focus, fluency-based activities.

## 1. Introduction

“Why are students at universities quite hesitant in speaking even though they have been learning English since they were at secondary school?”

This question has usually obsessed two of us as education researchers during the time teaching speaking English language and this is also the reason that motivates us to implement this study about fluency in speaking.

Oral fluency has different levels: elementary, intermediate and advanced but it is truly not easy to reach each of these levels

if learners follow the wrong way in learning English speaking. Achieving fluency in English language or any other languages is a goal of any serious learner at universities who desires to have better career opportunities. A quick survey by a group of teachers at a university for second-year English non-majored students shows that the majority of students (99%) agreed that speaking English fluently was absolutely necessary for their jobs in the future. However, when being asked about how much they liked speaking English in class, only a small number of students (14,4%) preferred to speak English in class and more than half of them (67%) thought that they had speaking difficulties such as a lot of

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pauses, a lot of hesitation, lack of confidence. Shumin (2002) reveals that knowing language grammatical and semantic rules are not enough to learn to speak a foreign language. Therefore, some of the key factors influencing students' oral fluency in English speaking performance should be taken into consideration and if these factors can solve the fluency problems in speaking, learners will improve their ability of speaking fluently. To speak fluently is not simply a matter of developing speaking skills and strategies, but it involves a number of factors including affective factors, cognitive factors, performance factors, linguistic factors (Thornbury, 2005). However, there are very few studies covering all factors influencing learners' fluency in speaking and realizing key factors as well. It is questionable whether only accuracy focus is enough in speaking classes or not and what key factors affect the restriction of oral fluency in language learners. This research is absolutely necessary to investigate fluency and accuracy balance in speaking class and key factors affecting learners' oral fluency in speaking classes.

The aim of the study is to find out prominent factors affecting learners' oral fluency in English speaking classes. In addition, some significant guidance is included to help minimize the problems and develop oral fluency in learners based on prominent factors examined in this study. More detailed, there is a research question of the study listed as follows:

What are the key factors that influence learners' oral fluency?

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Definition of fluency

There are a certain number of definitions of fluency in speaking. Fluency could be defined as the ability to have the intention to communicate without too much hesitation

and too many pauses to cause barriers or incidents in communication (Nation, 1991). Bailey (2005, p. 5) states that fluency is "the capacity to speak fluidly, confidently, and at a rate consistent with the norms of the relevant native speech community." In other words, fluency is "the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions" (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1995, p. 108). In Hedge's view (1993), fluency is attributed to "the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness or undue hesitation". These definitions mainly focus on the fluidness and confidence of producing speech without too much hesitations and pauses. From all the review above, it is ultimately said that fluency in speaking emphasizes more on meaning and natural requirement of the utterances rather than form or grammatical structures. In this research, the authors show that fluency plays a key point in learners' speaking skill compared to accuracy in the way that focuses learners on less hesitation, fewer pauses and the speed increase in speaking in order to reinforce learners' confidence in speaking.

### 2.2. Fluency-based activities

According to Bailey (2003), fluency-based activities include:

- Information -gap
- Jigsaw activities
- Roleplays
- Simulation

According to other researchers, fluency-based activities consist of:

- Consciousness-raising tasks (Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers, &

Demecheleer, 2006).

- Rehearsal or repetition tasks (Bygate, 2002).
- The use of formulaic sequences (Wood, 2009).
- The use of lexical fillers or discourse markers (Guillot, 1999)
- Communicative free-production activities

### 2.3. Fluency and accuracy in speaking class

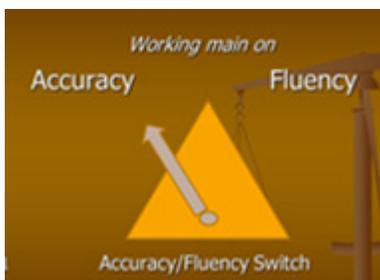


Figure 1: Accuracy/ Fluency Switch

(Adapted from Learning Teaching: A guidebook for English language teachers by Scrivener, 2005)

In speaking classes, many lesson stages emphasize both fluency and accuracy, accuracy than fluency or vice versa. The most important thing is that the teachers should be clear about the fact that they aim to focus on fluency-based work or accuracy-based work to promote learners' speaking (Scrivener, 2005). According to Figure 1 of accuracy/fluency switch, it is true that it will be the key skill if each language teacher can control fluency and accuracy-based activities in speaking class (Scrivener, 2005). In order to develop fluency in English speaking, fluency-based activities should account for one quarter of class time (Nation, 1997). Brumfit (1985) recommends a third of the total time for fluency activities from the beginning of the course and it should be increased during the course. However, there are very few classrooms in the world

where fluency-based speaking activities are spent that amount of time (Mowlai & Rahimi, 2010). Teachers traditionally tend to orient heavily to accuracy-based activities (Folse, 2010) because it is initially pressurized for teachers when examinations focus more on language knowledge than communicative competence (Gorsuch, 2000). Furthermore, focusing much on fluency can enhance more accuracy in speaking language because better speaking fluency helps improve grammar accuracy and meaning control (Nation, 1997). Making clear about what is involved in accuracy-focused work or fluency-focused work and distinguishing the different aims of the work and classroom procedures are especially important (Scrivener, 2005).

### 3. Factors influencing fluency in speaking skill

#### 3.1. Affective factors

According to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), the significant influence on the learner's language learning process is their affective side. The affective factors relate to moods, feeling, and attitudes towards language learning (Meng & Wang, 2006) especially towards learning speaking which is researched in this study. In this study, the affective factors are considered as anxiety, shyness, self-consciousness or confidence, fear of making mistakes, which are the key influences on fluency in speaking. These affective factors are closely related to each other as aspects of negative sides in speaking skill. Anxiety obstructs pervasively to the learning process because they worry about being "wrong, stupid, or incomprehensible" (Brown, 2001, p. 9), which will devalue their speaking performance. Additionally, too much anxiety leads to low willingness to communicate (Wu & Lin, 2014). And in the long run it will have bad effects on learners' achievement in second language classrooms.

### 3.2. *Performance factors*

With regards to factors influencing fluency, performance conditions in speaking class also affect the degree of fluency in learners. According to some researchers, there are different types of performance factors which include planning time, time pressure, (Thornbury, 2005), the amount of support (Nation & Newton, 2009). “It has been suggested that providing learners with more planning time prior to conducting the task helps learners produce more fluent and complex language” (Patanasorn, 2010). Planning time also helps learners increase not only fluency but also grammatical complexity (Yuan & Ellis, 2003). In contrast, time pressure refers to the urgency of the speaking tasks that learners need to finish their performance which could increase the difficulty for it (Thornbury, 2005). Nguyen and Tran (2015) states that time pressure causes poor performance in speaking. Furthermore, the amount of peer and teacher support also makes things less difficult because it is easier to present a topic with others than doing it by themselves (Thornbury, 2005).

### 3.3. *Automation*

In Schmidt’s viewpoint (1992) cited by Derwing (2017, p. 360), “oral fluency, interpreted here is as an automatic procedural skill on the part of the speaker”. It is like a speed process that if it is repeated automatically by English learners, their fluency in speaking will be achieved. Levelt (1989) describes a speech process which produces speech in daily life including three stages: conceptualization, formulation and articulation. This logically mental process means that all the vague notions are made clear or conceptualized, then the speaker chooses the conveyed information based on their background information in formulation stage where grammar and lexis are arranged in the correct syntax order along

with formulaic sequences and chunk language, to the last stage - articulation where the speaker uses the organs of speech to produce sounds (Thornbury, 2005). But whether speech fluency is successful, or in other words this process is formed or not depends much on learner’s automation, “to some extent in conceptualization, to a considerable degree in formulation and almost entirely in articulation” (Bygate, 2001, p. 16). If the language beginners lack automation, it will be challenging for them to pay attention and produce fluent speech (Bohlke, 2014). And this is also supported by Nguyen (2015, p. 52) who points out that “fluency also derives from the automation. If students are exposed to English environment such as teachers speaking English all the time, English tapes, English books and newspapers for them to use, they can pick up language naturally and unconsciously”. Good atmosphere and suitable environment can also well-support students to speak actively, correctly and fluently. If teachers regularly put students under increased time pressure, students can definitely automatize to acquire fluency in their speaking (Nguyen, 2015).

### 3.4. *Teacher’s error corrections in speaking class*

According to Scrivener (2005), it might be less appropriate for the language teacher to use instant correction in fluency-focused tasks in a language lesson. Al-Haj and Mielke (2007) states that there is positive or negative influence on the language learning process during a correction process which occurs between teachers and learners. Correcting learners very often will demotivate them and make them afraid of speaking. In other words, “learners cannot develop fluency if the teacher is constantly interrupting them to correct their oral errors. Teachers must provide students with fluency-building practice and realize that making mistakes is a natural part of learning a new language (Bailey, 2003, p. 55).

### 3.5. *Previous studies*

There are numerous studies about factors influencing learners' speaking skill in language learning in Vietnam and in the world but there are few studies about factors affecting learners' oral fluency in speaking lessons. Some are reviewed below:

In the context of China, Zhang et al. (2004) carried out a study on factors influencing Chinese college students' oral fluency in English. The results represented that the prominent factors influencing the Chinese students' oral fluency are chances of speaking English and the environment and listening and understanding of the target culture are the secondary factors. Yurong and Nan (2008) investigated how affective factors affect College English students on oral English fluency. The results of the study indicated that four affective factors determined the production of oral English. However, the limitation of the study was that these factors were studied separately. In reality, they often cooperate together to influence oral production.

In another context of Iran, Rezail and Okhovat (2016) performed a study towards how preparation and task complexity can affect L2 learners' oral fluency in speech production with respect to individual differences in working memory capacity. The findings revealed that working memory as a cognitive factor played a very important part in second language fluency and the variables Complexity and Preparation also affected second language oral performance.

And in Vietnam, Khong (2019) carried a study on the internal and external factors that affect students' fluency development at a secondary school. The results showed that there were many problems in improving students' fluency in which many factors from both students and teachers were listed such as learning styles, students' habit of using mother tongue, students' low motivation and low

English level accounting for poor vocabulary, structure, and poor pronunciation.

In fact, the previous studies only focus on single factors or groups of factors influencing learners' oral fluency. In other words, they were carried out separately or together, and in different contexts. However, these have not carried deeply in context of speaking classes and have not investigated which factors are key factors among groups of factors affecting learners' oral fluency in speaking classes. Additionally, in these studies, there was one side of the participants as learners but without the participation of teachers which played a significant role in the objective judgment about learners' fluency problems in speaking classes in order to bring reliable result. Specially, in Vietnam, there is a lack of studies on oral fluency in speaking classes. This study could solve these gaps and could help educators to know which the key factors are in order to improve learners' oral fluency.

## 4. *Methodology*

### 4.1. *Research participants*

The research participants were 98 students, including 32 males and 66 females, randomly selected from the second-year English non-majored students of a university in Hanoi. Most of them have been learning English for about 5 to 10 years. They are taking an English course in the second semester of the academic year. This course applies blended learning method in which the students follow 35-period online and 40-period offline lessons. In each unit of the course, they self-study online five parts - vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading and writing skills. In the offline lessons at school, they just focus on speaking skill part with both accuracy-based and fluency-based activities. Before each offline lesson with their teacher in class, the students need to complete their online lesson at home.

Besides, fifteen teachers who have been teaching English for the second-year students were also invited to take part in the interview in the study. There are two males and 13 females in this group of teachers and they have from 5 to 10 year experience in teaching English for second year university students.

#### 4.2. Research instruments and procedures

This study used a mixed methods design which is the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to understand and explain the research problem. The researchers chose survey questionnaires as the main instrument to gather quantitative data and then conducted interviews to get in-depth qualitative data for the study.

The survey questionnaire for students which consists of 8 questions was mostly adapted from the survey questionnaires conducted by Marriam, Muhammad and Ashiq (2011) and Nguyen and Tran (2015) because the questions in their surveys were suitable to collect data for our study. Besides, some questions in our survey were designed based on the theoretical knowledge related to the research topic covered in the literature review. First, the questionnaire was piloted and administered to ten second-year non-English majored students of the university who were not included in the study in order to get feedback whether the instructions and the wording questions can be understood by the research participants. After tryout and piloting, the questionnaire was reviewed by two research experts. Next, the questionnaire was delivered to the research participants. Oral instructions and explanations were given in detail to the students face-to-face by the researchers before they answered the questionnaires to avoid any misunderstandings.

Then, semi-structured one-on-one interviews for both students and teachers were carried out by the researchers. The researchers chose randomly 15 out of 98 students to

conduct the individual interviews consisting of 2 questions. All 15 teachers were also included in the semi-structured one-on-one interviews composing of 4 questions. The questions of the interviews served the purpose of obtaining detailed information about the respondents' feelings in speaking classes and their opinions on some strategies used to improve oral fluency in English speaking. To get reliable data, the researchers transcribed the answers of the interviewees as immediately as possible, no more than one day after the interviews.

#### 4.3. Data analysis and interpretations

The procedure of data analysis is as follows. The results of the survey questionnaire were analyzed with the help of the Google docs application and displayed in the form of statistics. Then, the data collected from the interviews were analyzed and presented parallel with the results collected from the questionnaire. In this case, the researchers compared the data taken from the questionnaire with the in-depth data from the interviews.

### 5. Findings and discussion

The major results of the study are summarized as follows:

Figure 2 illustrates the results of some problems in oral fluency activities the students were facing from the perspectives of the students.

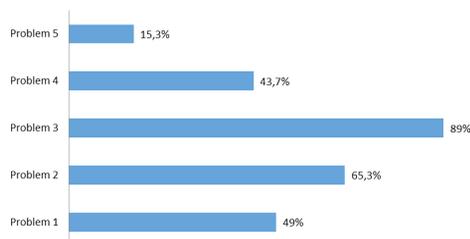


Figure 2: Students' problems in English oral fluency

It can be seen from Figure 2 that most of the students (89%) felt hesitant to speak English in their English classes. They hesitated to speak English because they were not sure whether they used English appropriately or not. More than a half (65.3%) stated that they did not know whether their pauses in their English speaking chunks were suitable or not. Meanwhile, just a little under a half (49% and 43.7%) revealed that they could not think of anything to say or could not express the ideas in their minds in English speaking lessons, and only a small number of the students (15.3%) chose the problem resulting from their partner’s reactions.

As described in Part 4.1 above, in the English courses the students are required to complete the online lesson before each offline lesson to prepare input knowledge for their speaking activities in class. However, the results collected in Figure 2 made the researchers desire to find the causes of the students’ problems. Therefore, they asked the students in their first interview question. Above two third of them (12 out of 15) shared that they prepared their online lessons before attending the offline lessons with their teachers

to meet the requirements of their course. Nevertheless, they still felt nervous and afraid of making mistakes, which resulting in their hesitation and inappropriate pauses when they speak in class.

In brief, the data from Figure 2 obviously shows that hesitation is the most problematic matter among five listed problems to the students. In the study about students’ speaking problems Nguyen and Tran (2015) confirms that when students want to say something in English they are sometimes inhibited. They are worried about making mistakes and fearful of criticism. Rivers (1968) thinks that learners often have nothing to say probably because their teachers select a topic that is not appropriate for them or they do not have enough information about it. Baker and Westrup (2003) also supports the results shown in Figure 1 and states that it is very difficult for learners to speak something fluently in English when they have few ideas about what to say, which vocabulary to apply, or how to use grammar accurately.

The results in Table 1 below demonstrate the factors leading to the referred problems the students faced in their oral fluency above.

Table 1: Factors affecting students’ English oral fluency

No	Factors	Students (%)	
1	Affective factor	Fear of making mistakes	85.1
		Confidence	82
		Anxiety	61.8
2	Automation	Lack of speaking practice	72.3
3	Error correction factor	Teachers’ feedback on speaking activity	70
4	Performance factor	Time for preparation	42
		Time allowed to perform a speaking task	10
		Listeners’ support	17.6

It can be seen that the largest proportion of the students’ choices fell into the group of affective factors consisting of 85.1% for “fear of making mistakes”, 82% for “confidence” and 61.8% for “anxiety”.

In order to make clearer about the affective factors, the question was raised in the students’ interview. Answer for this second interview question, the majority of

the students (13 out of 15) said that they felt anxious in most of their English speaking classes, which supported and confirmed the collected results in Table 1. Therefore, now the hidden reasons for the students' big problem might be revealed. In other words, the group of affective factors, especially "fear of making mistakes", was found out as the main cause of making the students hesitate to produce language in conversations. Similar to this finding, Yurong and Nan (2008) confirmed that four affective factors determined the production of oral English in their study about the effects of affective factors on students' English oral fluency. Tanveer (2007) also pointed out that students' feeling of anxiety or nervousness may impede their language learning and performance abilities. Additionally, Wu and Lin (2014) agreed with the result that too much anxiety led to low willingness to communicate. In the long run it would have bad effects on learners' achievement in a second language classroom.

Around three quarters of the students viewed automation factor - lack of speaking practice - as an influential factor to their oral fluency. This factor can be easily inferred to

be the cause leading to the second problem the students suffered in Figure 2. Schmidt (1992) pointed out that if the speed process was repeated automatically by English learners daily, their fluency in speaking would achieve. Nguyen (2015, p. 52) also defended that "fluency derives from automation". Chances of speaking English and the English environment were presented as the prominent factors influencing the Chinese students' oral fluency in the study carried out by Zhang et al. (2004). Therefore, if the students do not practice speaking English regularly, they definitely cannot express themselves fluently. They might pause inappropriately in their speaking sequences or chunks of language. Besides, Bohlke (2014) ever indicated that whether the students could produce language fluently in communication or not depended much on their automation which resulted from their exposure to English environment. Students could gradually use language naturally and unconsciously thanks to diving in English speaking environment frequently. The students' exposure to English speaking environment can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' exposure to English speaking environment

	Always %	Usually %	Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %
1. How often do you respond in English?	1.2	23.3	43	32.5	0
2. How often does your teacher use English as a medium of instruction for teaching English in your class?	0.5	28.2	66.7	4.6	0
3. How often does your teacher translate the instructions from English into Vietnamese in speaking class?	5.1	88.7	4.2	2	0
4. How often do you join these English clubs, tutorial groups, etc. outside the classroom?	8.1	15.3	35.2	20.4	11

Firstly, the data in Table 2 indicates that the frequency of students' responses in English was not high with the percentage of "43%, 32.5%, 23.3%, 1.2%" for the options of "sometimes, rarely, usually, always" respectively. Secondly, in terms of giving instructions, 66.7% of the participants shows that their teachers sometimes used English to give instructions in class, while 28.2% chose the option of "usually" and a very small number of them (4.6% and 0.5%) chose the categories of "rarely" and "always" respectively. Thirdly, it can be seen from Table 2 that the large number of the students (88.7%) agreed on the high frequency of teachers' translating instructions from English to Vietnamese in speaking class.

In the first interview question for teachers, the researchers asked them about the reasons for these dominant statistics. They explained that most of the time the students asked for the translation because they could not fully understand the instructions in English. Besides, in order to know whether the amount of time in the English classes supports the students' oral fluency or not, the teachers were interviewed about the percentage of fluency activities in each lesson in the second question. To make sure that all the teachers were clear about the features of fluency-based and accuracy based activities, the researchers explained to them briefly beforehand. All of the teachers claimed that about 50-75% of the speaking tasks in their textbook were fluency-based activities. Moreover, these tasks were always repeated in every lesson in their textbooks. Besides, they shared that all the textbooks used in their English courses were specifically designed for their own students' majors and for internal circulation only. In other words, the board of qualified English teachers of the university designed the textbooks for their own students based on their need analysis.

The data revealed that the current distribution of speaking activities in the English lessons are appropriate or even advantageous for promoting students' speaking fluency because it is much beyond the total time for fluency-based activities recommended by Brumfit (1985) as mentioned earlier in this study.

Lastly, referring to participation in some extra English activities outside the classroom, it is noticeable that the proportion of the students' frequent attendance was low with 8.1% for "always" and 15.3% for "usually". Meanwhile, the majority of them (55.6%) sometimes and rarely joined some outside-class English activities; even 11% never attended any English clubs or tutorial groups. Apparently, the data in Table 2 showed that the students were currently in a limited English speaking environment outside the classroom. This fact might explain the students' difficulties in willingness to express their ideas in English without hesitation or inappropriate pauses.

Again, as can be seen from Table 1, nearly three quarters of the students thought it was the factor of error correction causing fluency problems. This factor seemed to be closely related to some affective factors presented beforehand. This meant that the students might feel shy if their speaking mistakes were mentioned by the teachers. Then, they had anxiety or fear of making mistakes in speaking class. Nguyen and Tran (2015) also reported teachers' feedback as one of the factors affecting students' speaking performance in their study. Besides, the data in Table 1 infer that the students paid much attention to the feedback or error correction on their speaking. Figure 3 showed the frequency of the teachers' error correction for their students' speaking performance.

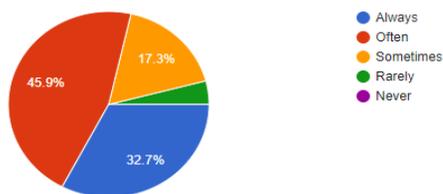


Figure 3: Frequency of the teachers' error correction

In Figure 3, over 80% of the participants stated that they were given feedback or error correction very often. Therefore, how the teachers expressed their opinions on their students' oral work was also a matter of concern and questioned in the survey. The result of this was shown in Figure 4.

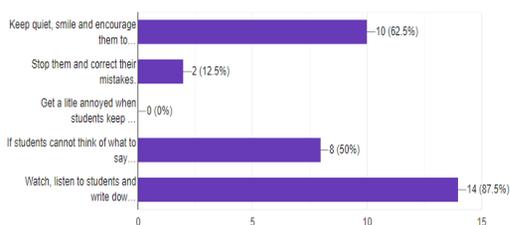


Figure 4: Teachers' reactions to students' mistakes during oral work

It can be seen from Figure 4 that most of the teachers (87.5%) kept writing down the students' mistakes and waited until the students finished their speaking, and then gave feedback. They encouraged their students to keep speaking with their smile (62.5%) and prompt the students forwards (50%).

The data in Figure 4 was similar to the results the researchers obtained later from the interviews with the teachers in the third question. Most of the teachers saved their noted comments and delivered them after the students' performance. They explained that this strategy of correcting mistakes could help to maintain students' speaking without disturbing their performance or even making

them lose face, etc. In addition, in return to the teachers' error correction, 14 out of 15 students answered in their last interview question that they enhanced their speaking fluency thanks to positive ways of giving feedback for their oral work from the teachers.

The last group of factors shown in Table 1 including time for preparation, time allowed to perform a speaking task and listeners' supports belonged to the category of performance factors. The small number of the students (17.6%), under a half (42%) and a small minority (10%) chose the listeners' supports, the time for preparation, time allowed to perform a speaking task respectively as the factors affecting their fluency. Preparation for the task was also mentioned as a factor affecting L2 learners' oral fluency in speech production in the study performed by Rezail and Okhovat (2016).

Figure 5 revealed more detailed information about this performance factor category.

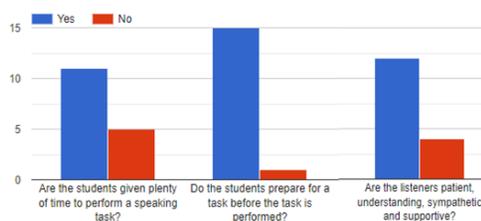


Figure 5: Performance conditions in English speaking class

Generally, students' performances were supported by both their teachers and their classmates as shown in Figure 5. They were given time to prepare as well as perform their speaking tasks. Furthermore, in the last interview question, the teachers said that they usually set a flexible time limit, ranging from 5 minutes to 12 minutes, for students' speaking performances. Besides, they also

explained that the time limit set actually depended on the aims of each speaking task, but they always tried to help students boost their speaking fluency. The minor impacts of the performance factors on the students' speaking fluency in their current situation showed us the suitable link to the last problem the students had in table 1.

In short, the findings from the questionnaire and interviews for the research question demonstrated that among five listed problems in English speaking classes, hesitation was recognized as the students' biggest one. Also, the group of affective factors, especially fear of making mistakes, was found out as the key factor influencing the students' oral fluency. Then, it is followed by three other factors in sequence of decreasing numbers of the students affected namely automation, error correction and performance.

To compare with some previous studies in the past, some distinctive differences in our study are shown. Specifically, research on factors affecting learners' fluency in speaking skill in language learning has been mostly limited especially about finding the key factors on speaking fluency. Zhang et al. (2004) studied factors influencing Chinese college students' oral fluency and the results were to represent the prominent factors - chances of speaking English and the secondary factors - the environment of the target culture. However, in the Yurong and Nan' study (2008), the two researchers focused on how affective factors influencing College English students on oral English fluency and concluded that affective factors firmly control the process of oral output. Rezail and Okhovat's study (2016) only focus on cognitive factors in second language fluency and the variables Complexity and Preparation affecting second language oral performance. Especially in

Vietnam, Khong's study (2019) only showed some problems in improving students' fluency in which learning styles, students' habit of using mother tongue, students' low motivation and low English level accounting for poor vocabulary, structure, and poor pronunciation are listed but which key factors were not mentioned as the main problems among those in oral fluency. Additionally, the studies have some limitation of the fact that the study only focused on single factors - affective factors, cognitive factors or ranked into the prominent factors and secondary factors but there is the close relationship between factors affecting learners' oral fluency, which were the clues for researchers to compare and contrast the results. If the studies only assess single factors to come to the conclusion about the influence on learners' oral fluency, those might not be deep enough in context of speaking classes and have not indicated which factors are key factors among groups of factors influencing learners' oral fluency in speaking classes. Moreover, in these studies, there was a lack of participation in teacher interviews which played a significant role in the objective evaluation of learners' fluency problems in speaking classes in order to get reliable results. Specially, in Vietnam, there is a serious lack of studies on oral fluency in speaking classes. Our study could solve these gaps and give some suggestions for educators to indicate which the key factors in learners' oral fluency are in order to make progress to learners' oral fluency.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **6.1. Conclusion**

Achieving fluency in speaking English is an important goal for any English language learners. Accordingly, comprehending the problems related to fluency and factors causing

these problems would contribute to assisting learners to reach this goal. In order to achieve the aim of the study, the researchers conducted the questionnaire and the interviews with the participants to answer the research question. The results for the research question displayed the students' five problems in oral fluency, namely hesitation to speak, inappropriate pauses, nothing to say, limited expressions and difficulty in replying to partners, which ranged from the biggest to the smallest one. More importantly, based on the results of data analysis, the factors leading to these problems were also revealed. The group of affective factors, especially the fear of making mistakes, was recognized as the key one to most of the participants. Then, a little fewer numbers of them were affected by automation and error correction factors. The performance factors had certain effects on a quite small number of the students in their English speaking.

## 6.2. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, some recommendations were made for both the teachers and the students.

As for the teachers, they should first help their students overcome inhibition and shyness by providing helpful and positive feedback. The teachers should carefully decide when and how to correct the students' mistakes so that the students are not fearful of making mistakes and the flow of the students' conversation is not destroyed. Moreover, the teachers' friendly and cooperative behaviors can help make the students feel willing and comfortable to speak in the class. Secondly, it is necessary to create an English speaking environment in which both teachers and students have a habit of using English mostly inside and outside class. If the teachers give clear instructions and sufficient guidance, students can gradually get used to

understanding instructions in English without translating into Vietnamese. Besides, the teachers can give students more opportunities to practice English in class by using speaking activities that require students to speak more. Especially, some fluency-based activities such as "picture description, find someone who, problem solving, information gaps, etc." which were shared by the teachers in the interviews and in the literature review as well would definitely help promote the students' oral fluency.

As for the students, they should practice speaking English as much as possible both inside and outside the classroom. Being willing to respond in English, to actively participate in speaking activities in class regularly can help to avoid the fear of making mistakes as well as to boost the confidence in speaking. Moreover, students should join speaking clubs where they can use English to communicate, which is not only helpful for their English speaking fluency but also their communication skills in general.

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## APPENDIX 1

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This survey questionnaire is designed for the study namely “*Key factors influencing learners’ oral fluency in English speaking class: A case study at a public university in Vietnam*”. Your assistance in completing the following questions is greatly appreciated. Please put a tick (v) in the box beside the option(s) you choose.

#### Part I: Demographic Information

##### 1. Gender:

- Male
- Female

##### 2. How long have you been learning English?

Less than 5 years

- 5 - 10 years
- Over 10 years

#### Part II: Factors affecting students’ fluency in speaking performance

1. What problems do you encounter in English speaking? (You can choose more than one option)

- Problem 1: I cannot think of anything to say
- Problem 2: I pause suddenly and inappropriately while speaking English.
- Problem 3: I hesitate to speak English because I am not sure whether I use English appropriately or not.
- Problem 4: I don’t know how to express the ideas in my mind.
- Problem 5: I can’t reply because I don’t understand what my partner is saying in the conversation.

2. What factors affect you the most in English speaking performance? (You can choose more than one option)

- Fear of making mistakes
- Confidence
- Anxiety
- Teachers’ feedback on speaking activity
- Time for preparation
- Time allowed to perform a speaking task
- Listeners’ support
- Lack of background information
- Lack of grammar and lexis

3. How are the performance conditions in English speaking class? (You can put as many ticks as you want)

	Yes	No
1. Are you given plenty of time to perform a speaking task?		
2. Do you prepare for a task before the task is performed?		
3. Do you have the pressure to perform well?		
4. Are the listeners supportive?		

4. How often do the teachers correct your mistakes in speaking class?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

5. What is your teacher’s reaction when you make mistakes during oral work? (You can choose more than one option)

- Keep quiet, smile and encourage you to go on your task.
- Stop you and correct your mistakes.
- Get a little annoyed when you keep making mistakes.
- If you cannot think of what to say, they may prompt you forwards.
- Watch, listen to you and write down points to give feedback afterwards.
- Others: .....

6. Conditions of English speaking environment

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. How often do you speak English in classrooms?					
2. How often does your teacher use English as a medium of instruction in your class?					
3. How often does your teacher translate the instructions from English into Vietnamese in speaking class?					
4. How often does your teacher speak Vietnamese while teaching speaking English in the class					
5. How often do you join these English clubs, tutorial groups, etc. outside the classroom?					

Thank you very much for taking your valuable time to complete this survey. Your opinions are greatly appreciated.

**APPENDIX 2**

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW**

**For teachers**

1. How often do you translate the instructions from English to Vietnamese in speaking classes? Why?

2. How much percentage of fluency activities (small talk, picture description, find someone who, problem solving, information-gap activities, etc.) are there in each English speaking lesson? Please answer as detailed as possible.

3. When do you often correct your students’ mistakes: during or after their English speaking? Why?

4. How often do you set time pressure for your students' speaking performance or let them speak all the things they've prepared for their talk? Why?

**For students**

1. Do you prepare your online lessons before attending the offline lessons? Why are you still not sure whether you use English appropriately or not?

2. How do you generally feel when practicing speaking in each English speaking lesson?

3. Does your teachers' error correction help to improve your English speaking fluency? Why/Why not?

## **CÁC NHÂN TỐ QUAN TRỌNG ẢNH HƯỞNG ĐẾN MỨC ĐỘ NÓI TRÔI CHẢY CỦA NGƯỜI HỌC TRONG LỚP HỌC NÓI TIẾNG ANH: MỘT TRƯỜNG HỢP CỤ THỂ TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC CÔNG LẬP Ở VIỆT NAM**

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**Tóm tắt:** Trong lĩnh vực học ngoại ngữ, kỹ năng nói được coi là một trong những kỹ năng quan trọng nhất cần được phát triển và nâng cao liên tục để đảm bảo giao tiếp hiệu quả. Trong hầu hết các lớp học tiếng Anh ở bậc đại học, sinh viên thường gặp khó khăn trong việc diễn đạt ý tưởng bằng tiếng Anh. Vì vậy, nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm tìm ra yếu tố quan trọng ảnh hưởng đến việc nói tiếng Anh trôi chảy của sinh viên năm thứ hai. Nghiên cứu này sử dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu hỗn hợp, trong đó bảng điều tra và phỏng vấn được áp dụng làm công cụ để thu thập dữ liệu định lượng và định tính cho nghiên cứu. Có 98 sinh viên năm thứ hai thuộc hệ không chuyên tiếng Anh tham gia trả lời câu hỏi trong bảng điều tra. Thêm vào đó, các tác giả thực hiện các cuộc phỏng vấn cá nhân với 15 giáo viên và 15 sinh viên trong nhóm trên. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy các nhân tố về cảm xúc chính là yếu tố nổi bật nhất ảnh hưởng đến việc nói tiếng Anh trôi chảy của sinh viên; sau đó là nhân tố về sự chủ động, việc sửa lỗi của người dạy và việc trình bày bài nói. Từ đó, các tác giả đưa ra một số đề xuất nhằm giảm thiểu những khó khăn trong việc nói tiếng Anh trôi chảy và cải thiện mức độ nói tiếng Anh trôi chảy của sinh viên. Đồng thời, đây cũng là những đề xuất hữu ích cho các giáo viên ngoại ngữ trong việc dạy kỹ năng nói cho người học.

**Từ khóa:** nói trôi chảy, yếu tố nổi bật, sự trôi chảy, sự tập trung vào mức độ trôi chảy, các hoạt động tập trung vào mức độ trôi chảy.

# APPLYING CORPUS LINGUISTICS TO ENGLISH TEXTBOOK EVALUATION: A CASE IN VIET NAM

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**Abstract:** Looking at textbook evaluation from a corpus linguistics perspective, this paper compares two sets of textbooks used at senior high school in Vietnam and evaluate the effectiveness of the new one, centering on lexical resources at word level, particularly individual words and phrasal verbs. As for the comparison of the wordlist in general, the two corpora, taken from the two sets of textbooks, were analysed by Antconc software to extract the wordlist, then the two wordlists are compared by Venny 2.1.0 to see the similarities and differences. The research reveals a quantifiable evaluation of the lexical resources, tapping into the mutual and exclusive words, as well as examining lexical complexity of the two sets of textbooks. Unlike conventional textbook reviews focusing on grammar, this study is one of the first attempts to evaluate textbooks efficiency from corpus linguistics perspective, which in turn contributes to the improvement of the current English textbooks in Viet Nam, as well as a source of consideration for curriculum design worldwide.

*Keywords:* Corpus linguistics, textbook evaluation, lexical resource, phrasal verb, word complexity.

## 1. Introduction

In the era of educational reform since 2000, the National Foreign Languages Project 2020 was enforced from 2008 in order to enhance English competence of Vietnamese. It provides comprehensive actions to obtain its goals, such as establishing new benchmarks for teachers' language proficiency, training and retraining teachers, applying new teaching methodologies, introducing a new set of English textbooks (Prime Minister, 2008). The effectiveness of this project is still insignificant as there have been numerous shortcomings in planning and implementation. Therefore, the

government must adjust the plan and extend it to 2025 (Prime Minister, 2017).

In the light of this Project, since the school year 2019, the new set of textbooks has been officially used in general education to replace the old one after five years of pilot implementation. Textbooks play a vital role in classrooms as they provide input into lessons in the form of texts, activities, explanations, etc., which are beneficial to both teachers and students in teaching and learning process (Harmer, 2007; Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). While there have been numerous studies evaluating textbooks used in general education from various perspectives in other countries (Kornellie, 2014; Litz, 2005; Quero,

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2017), this field of research is still in its infancy in Viet Nam. Although the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has called for feedback from both experts and practitioners on the use of textbooks, the comments are quite subjective which are mostly limited to discussion in newspapers or at workshops. Similarly, research on book review in Viet Nam just pays attention to grammar or tasks (Ngo & Luu, 2018) instead of lexical resources. Given that Corpus linguistics is quite novel in Vietnamese context, and the need for an evidence-based evaluation of the new English textbooks, this small-scale study is conducted to compare the two sets of textbooks and evaluate the efficacy of the new one by employing corpus linguistics' approach, focusing on lexical resources at word level, particularly individual words and phrasal verbs. The goal of this study is to provide a quantitative evaluation of the lexical resources, which can contribute to the improvement of the current English textbooks.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. A Corpus-based approach to Language Planning Policy (LPP)

Language planning today mainly focuses on three major aspects, which are status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. The earliest reference to status and corpus planning was made by Heinz Kloss in 1969 while acquisition planning was introduced by Cooper in 1989 (as cited in Hornberger, 2006). Hornberger (2006) refers to these major aspects of language planning:

We may think of status planning as those efforts directed toward the allocation of functions of language/literacies in a given speech community, corpus planning as those efforts related to the adequacy of the form or structure of languages/ literacies; and acquisition planning as efforts to influence the allocation of users or the distribution of languages/literacies, by means of creating or improving opportunity or incentive to learn them or both. (p. 28)

Types	Policy planning approach (on form)	Cultivation planning approach (on function)
Status planning (about uses of language)	Officialization Nationalization Standardization of status Proscription	Revival Maintenance Spread Interlingual communication – international, intranational
Acquisition planning (about users of language)	Group Education/School Literary Religious Mass media Work	Reacquisition Maintenance Shift Foreign language/second language/literacy
	<b>Selection</b> Language's formal role in society Extra-linguistic aims	<b>Implementation</b> Language's functional role in society Extra-linguistic aims
Corpus planning (about language)	Standardization of corpus Standardization of auxiliary code  Graphization	Modernization (new functions) Lexical Stylistic  Renovation (new forms, old functions) Purification Reform Stylistic simplification Terminology unification
	<b>Codification</b> Language's form Linguistic aims	<b>Elaboration</b> Language's functions Semi-linguistic aims

Figure 1: Language Policy and Planning Goals: An Integrative Framework (Hornberger, 2006)

Corpus linguistics data is generally defined as a body of naturally occurring texts that is (a) representative of a specified type of language; (b) relatively large in terms of word count; and (c) machine-readable (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2015, p. 107). Corpus linguistics studies are those that ‘analyze corpus linguistics data by applying both quantitative and qualitative techniques to the analysis of textual patterns using computers’ (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2015, p. 107). Though corpus linguistic approaches are being applied to an increasing number of areas of linguistic study at an escalating pace (Baker, 2009, 2010), exceptionally few Language Planning Policy studies have employed corpus linguistics approaches. In Vietnam, corpus linguistics is still in its infancy, and its application in foreign language planning policy is not academically documented.

## ***2.2. National Foreign Languages Project 2020 and Textbooks innovation***

The National Foreign Languages Project 2020 (NFLP), which has been recently renamed just as The National Foreign Languages Project, was enacted by Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008, whose goals are:

by 2020 most Vietnamese students graduating from secondary, vocational schools, colleges and universities will be able to use a foreign language confidently in their daily communication, their study and work in an integrated, multi-cultural and multilingual environment, making foreign languages a comparative advantage of development for Vietnamese people in the cause of industrialization and modernization for the country. (Prime Minister, 2008)

The general goals of the Project include to thoroughly renovate the tasks of teaching and learning foreign languages within the national education system, and to apply a new program on teaching and learning foreign languages at every school, level and training degree, which aims to achieve by the year 2025 a vivid progress on professional skills, language competency for human resources, especially at some prioritized sectors (Nguyen, 2013). This will enable them to be more confident in communication, further their chance to study and work in an integrated and multi-cultural environment with a variety of languages. The goals also make using foreign languages as an advantage for Vietnamese people, serving the cause of industrialization and modernization for the country (Nguyen & Ngo, 2018). According to Nguyen and Ngo (2018), the decision is the basis for comprehensively reforming basic education, improving the structure of the national education system; consolidating the teacher training system, innovating comprehensive contents and training methods, implementing preferential policies for the physical and spiritual motivation for teachers and education managers; innovating content, teaching methods, examinations; investigating and evaluating the quality of education; expanding and improving the efficiency of international cooperation in education, developing and application of educational methods of some advanced education systems.

In the framework of NFLP, high school students, upon their completion of general education, must achieve level 3 of English, which is relevant to level B1 of CEFR, and acquire approximately 2500 English words. To achieve the goals, MOET applied a systematic change in the general curriculum. English is taught from grade 3 to grade 12, accompanied by a new set of textbooks.

It follows the systematic and theme-based curriculum approved by the Minister of Education and Training (MOET, 2012). The aim of this set of textbooks is to develop students' communicative competence, therefore it leaves more room for speaking and listening skills than the old set published in 1992. Instead of offering only one volume for each grade as the old set, each grade of the new set consists of two volumes. There are 24 reading texts per level in the new set of textbooks, while the old English textbooks just offer only 16 reading texts for each grade.

In general, textbooks play an important role in the process of education because it is the main source of medium of instruction. Tollefson and Tsui (2018) intensified the importance of resources in language education and the necessity of state intervention in textbook design to support the ongoing programs for linguistic minority communities. They also put the choice of language of instruction in the central position amongst other pedagogical questions. In foreign language learning and teaching, textbooks also play a crucial part. In many instructional contexts, they constitute the syllabus teachers are inclined (or expected) to follow. Furthermore, exams are often based on textbook content (Harwood, 2010). In addition, in Vietnam, English textbooks used in the general education system are designed, evaluated and implemented homogeneously across the nation. Besides, Vietnamese teachers' traditional and linear conceptualization of literacy and language learning is shaped by the national ideologies of literacy teaching (Nguyen & Bui, 2016). These ideologies often convince teachers that teaching resources and strategies (in this case, for teaching English) may only be drawn from textbooks. Another guidance for teachers published in 2017 by MOET

also emphasized that teachers must follow textbooks' contents (MOET, 2017). Therefore, the linguistic resources provided by textbooks are especially important in the Vietnamese context. Notwithstanding its importance, there have been very few academic evaluations of the new set of textbooks after five years of implementation. Dang and Seals (2018) evaluated English textbooks in Vietnam from a sociolinguistic perspective, focusing on four main sociolinguistic aspects: teaching approach, bilingualism, language variations, and intercultural communication reflected in the primary English textbooks. However, they just examined English textbooks for primary schools. There have been no synthesis evaluations of the whole set, and an approach from a corpus linguistics perspective is still missing in the process.

### **2.3. Phrasal Verbs**

Phrasal verb, like collocation or n-gram, is a type of formulaic language. It is a multi-word verb which consists of a verb and a particle and/or a preposition to form a single semantic unit. It is considered to be problematic because the meaning of this unit cannot be understood based on the meanings of the constituents. Instead, learners must take the whole unit to understand. Therefore, the meanings of PVs are quite unpredictable (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 273) and they have to be 'acquired, stored and retrieved from memory as a holistic unit' (Wray & Michael, 2000). Moreover, some phrasal verbs carry more than one meaning. Gardner and Davies (2007) found that each of the most frequent English PVs had 5.6 meaning senses on average. Phrasal Verbs are important to learners of English because they appear quite frequently in the English texts. The results from a corpus search of the British National Corpus (BNC) showed that learners will encounter one PV in every 150 words of

English they are exposed to (Gardner & Davies, 2007). Vilkaitė (2016) study investigated the frequency of occurrence of four categories of formulaic sequences: collocations, phrasal verbs, idiomatic phrases, and lexical bundles. Together the four categories made up about 41% of English, with lexical bundles being by far the most common, followed by collocations, idiomatic phrases, and phrasal verbs.

The complexity of formulaic language and the barriers it causes which prevent learners from achieving native-like level are well documented. Ellis, Simpson-Vlach, and Maynard (2008) investigated how the corpus-linguistics metrics of frequency and mutual information (MI) are represented implicitly in native and non-native speakers of English, and how it affects their accuracy and fluency of processing of the formulas of the Academic Formulas List (AFL). Durrant and Schmitt (2009) extracted adjacent English adjective-noun collocations from two learner corpora and two comparable corpora of native student writing and calculated the t-score and MI score in the British National Corpus (BNC) for each combination extracted. Hinkel (2002) showed that L2 writers' texts had fewer collocations than those from L1 writers. Verspoor and Smiskova (2012) provided a typology for chunk use in L2 language and show that the more L2 input learners receive, the more, and longer, chunks they use. Similarly, a study by Verspoor, Schmid, and Xu (2012) showed that more advanced learners will use more words with targets like collocations. As for phrasal verb itself, Schmitt and Redwood (2011) examined whether English-Language Learners' knowledge of phrasal verbs is related to the verbs' frequency in the BNC. The results revealed a significant positive correlation: on the whole, the more frequent the phrasal verb, the higher the performance of learners. Hundt and Mair (1999) explored

text frequencies of phrasal verbs with 'up'. The results turned out that in press writing, both the type and token frequency of phrasal verbs have increased between the 1960s and the 1990s. By contrast, in academic writing, type and token frequencies were rather stable or even decreasing.

The difficulties of phrasal verbs seem to be intensified to Vietnamese learners of English as they do not appear in this language. Therefore, to Vietnamese learners, there is a need to induce their attention to this crucial part of speech in the teaching process. Given the lack of a corpus-based evaluation of textbook in Viet Nam, the absence of phrasal verbs in Vietnamese, this study focuses on comparing the two sets of textbooks at the lexical level, and pay much attention to phrasal verbs to evaluate the differences as well as the improvement of the new textbooks at the word level. Therefore, the research question for this research is:

What are the differences regarding the lexical profile in the two sets of textbooks?

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***3.1. Compiled Corpora***

There are two compiled corpora, which comprise reading texts taken from the two sets of textbooks. Compared with the new version, the textbook for elementary school is absent in the old set, the junior textbook (from grade 6) is just an introduction to English with some simple dialogues. Regarding the high-school level (grade 10 to grade 12), both of them include four English skills. Therefore, the researcher only focused on high-school textbooks as they are more comparable. The old textbooks, which was published in 1991, are composed of 12744 tokens with 2661 types, while the new ones, which was

first introduced in 2014, have 16812 tokens altogether with 3273 types. The researcher did not include dialogues as they are spoken languages.

### 3.2. Method

As for the comparison of the wordlist in general, the two corpora were analysed by Antconc software (Anthony, 2019) to extract the wordlist, then the two wordlists are compared by Venny 2.1.0 (Oliveros, 2015) to see the similarities and differences. Next, the profiles of the two wordlists are compared with the New General Service List (NGSL), using lextutor.ca, to see the coverage of the vocabulary because 2800 words in the NGSL provides more than 92% coverage for learners to read most general texts of English (Browne, Culligan, & Phillips, 2013). The combination of NGSL and New Academic Word List (NAWL) also comes out with the same coverage (Browne, Culligan, & Phillips, 2013). In addition, research showed that high-frequent words should be given priority to teach first. (N. C. Ellis, Simpson-Vlach, Römer, O'Donnell, & Wulff, 2015; N. Ellis et al., 2008).

As the new English textbooks were designed so that upon completion of the general education programme, students can meet the B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the researcher also applied this framework to analyse the vocabulary profile. There are two bands in this corpus. The Waystage List is indeed the Key English Test (KET) Vocabulary List, which drew on vocabulary from the Council of Europe's Waystage (1990) specification. Its covers vocabulary appropriate to the A2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The Threshold list is the Preliminary English Test (PET) Vocabulary List which covers

vocabulary relevant to the B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), with reference to vocabulary from the Council of Europe's Threshold (1990) specification and other vocabulary which corpus evidence shows is high frequency.

As for phrasal verbs, the corpora were analysed by Sketchengine website with the code [tag="V.\*+"] [] {0,4} [tag="RP"] to look for phrasal verbs in the compiled corpora. The extracted phrasal verbs were compared together to see the similarities and differences in terms of frequency and complexity. Regarding the frequency of PVs, the researcher referred to the PHaVe list (Garnier & Schmitt, 2014) which comprises 150 most frequent phrasal verbs and their most common meanings. These PVs cover more than 75% of the occurrences in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) so it is quite reliable to check the frequency of phrasal verbs. Concerning the complexity of the two lists, the researcher categorized them into 6 levels, ranging from A1 to C2 (CEFR) based on their classification in the English Vocabulary Profile (EVP) published by Cambridge University Press. The meaning of the Phrasal verbs varied between classes; therefore, the researcher had to look at the whole concordances to determine which level of proficiency they belong to.

## 4. Results

By using Venny 2.1.0, the quantitative results showed that the two sets of textbooks have 1435 mutual words, 1237 included exclusively in the old textbooks, and 1843 exclusive words of the new ones.

### 4.1. Word profiler

The lexical complexity of the two sets of textbooks were compared by the lexical profile

measures. When word lists were imported to *lextutor*, words were counted as *tokens*, an individual occurrence of a linguistic unit in speech or writing. Similar tokens were counted as one *type*, an abstract category, class, or category of linguistic item or unit. Therefore, the number of types analysed in *lextutor* was fewer than the number of tokens we had got from Venny programme. The mutual word list and exclusive word list were classified into frequency bands of the New General Service List (2800 words) and New Academic Word List, using *lextutor.ca*. On the system, the

NGSL consists of 3 bands, with 1000 highest frequent words for the first band (NGSL 1), 1000 less frequent words in the second bank (NGSL 2), and 800 lowest frequent words in the third band (NGSL 3). The results are presented in Table 1. Looking at the two sets in general, it seems that although the new set has more low-frequency words and academic words than the old one, this difference is not very remarkable. The percentages of tokens included in the NGSL and NAWL are almost the same for the old and new set (95.5% and 95.2% respectively).

Table 1: Lexical profile of the old textbooks and new textbooks

NGSL+NAWL	Old textbooks		New textbooks	
Frequency band	Types	Text coverage (Tokens)	Types	Text coverage (Tokens)
NGSL 1	1524	85.6%	1708	82.9%
NGSL 2	470	5.7%	610	7.7%
NGSL 3	243	3%	254	3.2%
NAWL	98	1.2%	154	1.4%
Total NGSL + NAWL		95.5%		95.2%
OFF-List	326	4.5%	547	4.84%

However, when analyzing mutual words and exclusive words separately, the figures are slightly different. Regarding the words that two sets share in common, they account for 68.2% in the first 1000 words, 25.8% in the next 1000 words, and 6.6% in the last 800 words. Looking at the exclusive wordlists, the old textbooks cover 56.1% in the NGSL, while the new one covers 57.7%. As for the academic wordlist, the new textbooks

have more academic vocabulary, and the proportion of academic words in the list is also higher than the old one (7.2% and 5.3% respectively). Therefore, it seems that the lexical sophistication in the new set is higher than the old one, although it is not considerable. Interestingly, the old textbook has fewer words, but the proportion of off-list words is higher than the new one (Table 2).

Table 2: Lexical similarities and differences of the old textbooks and new textbooks

Frequency band	Mutual Words		Old textbook		New textbook	
	Types	Text coverage (Tokens)	Types	Text coverage (Tokens)	Types	Text coverage (Tokens)
NGSL 1	973	68.2%	299	24.2%	463	25.2%
NGSL 2	226	25.8%	244	19.8%	418	22.7%
NGSL 3	94	6.6%	149	12.1%	180	9.8%
NAWL	32	2.2%	66	5.3%	133	7.2%
OFF-List	102	7.14%	477	38.59%	646	35.09%

Concerning their coverage in the CEFR list framework, the reading texts in the old English textbooks seem to have a higher proportion of vocabulary covered in the list, with 84.7% although they have fewer word counts. The new set offers longer texts in total, but the coverage is slightly lower (80.2%). More importantly, the new textbooks have a higher percentage of off-list words compared with the old ones (19.82% and 15.25% respectively) (Table 3). There might be a question about the complexity of the off-list

words. In other words, there is a chance for the off-list words in one set of textbooks to be more advanced than the other. Nevertheless, even when the researcher analysed the off-list vocabulary with reference to NGSL and NAWL, the complexity of the two unclassified wordlists are almost the same across levels (Table 4). Therefore, it can be said that the new set does not make significant progress in providing learners with appropriate vocabulary in response to CEFR benchmarks.

Table 3: Lexical profile of the old textbooks and new textbooks with reference to CEFR list

CEFR	Old textbooks		New textbooks	
Frequency band	Types	Text coverage (Tokens)	Types	Text coverage (Tokens)
List 1 (waystage)	1140	77.2%	1204	71.7%
List 2 (Threshold)	405	7.5%	492	8.5%
Total List 1 + List 2		84.7%		80.2%
OFF-List	1116	15.25%	1576	19.82%

Table 4: Lexical profile of the off-list words from CEFR framework in the two sets with reference to NGSL + NAWL list

OFF-list	Old textbooks		New textbooks	
Frequency band	Types	Text coverage (Tokens)	Types	Text coverage (Tokens)
NGSL 1	307	27.4%	428	27.1%
NGSL 2	249	22.2%	359	22.7%
NGSL 3	156	13.9%	196	12.5%
NAWL	74	6.6%	135	8.5%
Total NGSL + NAWL		70.1%		70.8%
OFF-List	334	29.82%	461	29.20%

#### 4.2. Phrasal verbs

As a whole, there are 34 types of phrasal verbs (PVs) in the old set of textbooks, occurring 41 times in the entire texts because some of them occur more than once in the reading texts, such as: *pick up, go out, carry out, take up, open up, clean up, get up*. 19 of them are included in the PHaVE list (Garnier & Schmitt, 2014) as the most frequent phrasal verbs, the remaining ones are classified as

off-list PVs (Table 5). In most cases, the PVs reserve the consistent meanings when they reoccur, except for the verb ‘open up’. This verb is presented with two different meanings: It means ‘open’ in the concordance ‘... During a maths lesson, she raised both arms and **opened up** her fingers one by one until all ten stood up...’; while it carries the meaning ‘Make *STH* become available or possible’ in the concordance ‘...They know a new world is **opening up** for them...’

Looking at the sophistication of the PVs list in the old English textbooks, 25 out of 34 of the total PVs are classified by EVP. Specifically, there is 1 PV in A1 level (*go out*), 4 PVs in A2 level (*pick up, find out, get off, turn on*), 7 PVs in B1 level (*carry out, take up, put down, throw away, take out, go down*), 9 PVs in B2 level (*go on, set up, make up, stand*

*up, open up, go off, cut down, live on, get up*), 2 PVs in C1 level (*build up, come up*) and 2 PVs in C2 level (*wipe out, lead up*). There are 9 unclassified PVs, which are: *jump up, lift off, jot down, wash away, speed up, carry along, run off, clean up, lay down*. In general, from the result, it seems that most PVs fall in the intermediate level (B1 and B2 levels).

Table 5: List of PVs in the old English textbooks

On-list PVs				Off-list PVs	
Order of frequency	PVs (occurrence times)	Order of frequency	PVs (occurrence times)		
1	go on	36	carry out (x2)	get up (x2)	throw away
2	pick up (x2)	41	take up (x2)	turn on	jump up
4	come up	48	open up (x2)	speed up	lift off
6	find out	56	get off	live on	jot down
8	go out (x2)	58	put down	carry along	wipe out
11	set up	60	go off	run off	lead up
17	make up	65	clean up (x2)	take away	wash away
24	take out	84	build up	cut down	
26	go down	109	lay down		
30	stand up				

In the new set of English textbooks, there are also 34 types of phrasal verbs, but they occur 44 times in the texts. 5 out of 7 of the re-occurred PVs are included in the PHaVE list, which means they are high frequent verbs and should be paid attention to (Table 6). However, less than half (16/34) of the PVs in the new textbooks appear in the PHaVE list. In other words, most of them are infrequent PVs. Regarding their classification in the CEFR levels, there is one PV in A1 level (*wake up*), 1 PV in A2 level (*grow up*), 10 PVs in B1 level (*give up, look up, set out,*

*fill up, set up, move out, carry out, bring up, hand out, go up*), 10 PVs in B2 level (*make up, try out, help out, read out, cut down, slow down, pay off, heat up, come up (with), keep up (with)*), 2 PVs in C1 level (*move on, build up*), and no PV in C2 level. There are up to 10 unclassified PVs, which are *go along, sweep out, start up, drop out, save up, wash away, dress up, emerge out, move around, get out*. In short, the PVs introduced in the new textbook also focus on intermediate levels (B1 and B2 levels), but their distribution between levels is not as equitable as the old list.

Table 6: List of PVs in the new English textbooks

On-list PVs				Off-list PVs	
Order of frequency	PVs (occurrence times)	Order of frequency	PVs (occurrence times)		
4	come up (with)	35	wake up	try out	wash away
10	grow up (x2)	36	carry out (x2)	sweep out	set out (start)
11	set up (x3)	45	bring up	start up (x2)	fill up

13	get out	50	move on	help out	drop out (x2)
16	give up	68	slow down (x4)	save up	dress up
17	make up	78	pay off	read out	cut down
20	look up	131	move out (x2)	emerge out	heat up
33	go up	144	go along	hand out	move around
				keep up (with)	build up

Comparing the frequency of the two lists, there are only 14/34 PVs in the new textbooks appearing in the top 100 most frequent PVs, which account for 51.4% of all PV occurrences in BNC corpus (Gardner & Davies, 2007), whilst this number in the old one is 18/34 (Table 5 and Table 6). Therefore, it can be said that in terms of level of frequency, the quality of the Phrasal verbs in the old textbooks outweighs the new ones, although the new set

has a greater number of PV occurrences.

When it comes to mutual Phrasal Verbs, the two lists have 7 mutual PVs altogether, however, 3 of them are infrequent PVs. Most mutual PVs share similar meanings in two sets, except the verb ‘come up’. In the old textbook, it carries a C1 level’s meaning, while in the new set, it comes with a B2 level’s meaning. The phrasal verbs and their relevant concordances are presented in Table 7 as follows:

Table 7: Meanings of mutual PVs in two sets of English textbooks

PVs	Old textbooks	New textbooks
come up	<b>to happen, usually unexpectedly (C1 level)</b> [...We often share our feelings, and whenever problems <b>come up</b> , we discuss them frankly and find solutions quickly...]	<b>(+with) Bring forth or produce (B2 level)</b> [...They may work somewhere abroad, or speak to career advisers who can help them <b>come up</b> with a plan...]
carry out	<b>Put into execution</b> [...One of the most important measures to be taken to promote the development of a country is to constantly <b>carry out</b> economic reforms...] [...Vietnam <b>carried out</b> an intensive programme for its athletes...]	<b>Put into execution</b> [...they design and <b>carry out</b> project aim to reduce fossil fuel consumption, find renewable fuel for public transport, and promote other clean air efforts...] [...Many sea turtle natural reserves have been set up in Terengganu, Pahang, Sabah and other places to <b>carry out</b> different projects to save the species]
set up	<b>Establish or create STH</b> [...Many organizations have been <b>set up</b> and funds have been raised...]	<b>Establish or create STH</b> [It was <b>set up</b> in 1961, and had its operations in areas such as the preservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of natural resources, the reduction of pollution, and climate change...] [...After graduation, he <b>set up</b> his own medical practice...] [...Many sea turtle natural reserves <b>have been set up</b> in Terengganu, Pahang, Sabah and other places to carry out different projects to save the species.]

make up	<b>Form the whole of an amount or entity</b> [...It is <b>made up</b> of the following subjects...]	<b>Form the whole of an amount or entity</b> [...women <b>make up</b> 47 per cent of the British workforce]
cut down	<b>Use a sharp tool such as a knife to break the surface of something</b> [...They are changing weather conditions by <b>cutting down</b> trees in the forests...]	<b>Use a sharp tool such as a knife to break the surface of something</b> [...Another reason for the temperature rise is <b>the cutting down</b> of forests for wood, paper or farming...]
build up	Increase or cause STH to increase [...A great deal of excitement still <b>builds up</b> well before Tet...]	<b>Increase or cause STH to increase</b> [...it brings individuals knowledge, enhances their existing skills, stimulates learning experiences, and <b>builds up</b> systems of values...]
wash away	<b>Remove or carry STH away</b> [...the Indonesian Red Cross Headquarter in Banda Aceh was <b>washed away</b> , but a temporary office was in place within hours...]	<b>Remove or carry STH away</b> [...The self-cleaning glass window and the fabric used to make umbrellas are both inspired by the smooth leaves of a lotus plant, with their ability to <b>wash away</b> dirt in the rain...]

### 5. Discussion

The study analysed, compared and contrasted the lexical resources of the two sets of textbooks in Viet Nam. In general, although the quantity features of the new set are greater than the old one, it does not guarantee a remarkable improvement in the lexical resources. With regards to lexical complexity, it does not considerably surpass the lexical resources provided by the old set published more than 20 years ago. As for formulaic language, or Phrasal verbs in particular, the new set has not paid much attention to their complexity and diversity. One possibility is that the new set focuses more on communicative competences in the light of communicative language teaching, rather than grammar-translation methods. Thus, its content has more improvement in speaking and listening activities, which results in the maintained, or even worse, quality of lexical resources.

With reference to the CEFR list framework, the new set of English textbooks fails to improve the opportunities for learners to learn

target words and phrases which they may have to encounter in examinations at A2 or B1 levels. This is a considerable shortcoming as research showed that the more words being exposed in the learning process, the more likely they are acquired (Cobb & Boulton, 2015).

### 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides an evaluation of the current high school English textbooks in Vietnam from Corpus linguistics perspective, an uncommon approach to Language Planning Policy, and also a especially new approach in the Vietnamese context. It can shed light on the improvement and considerations in regard to lexical resources included in the reading texts. The results of this study are just limited to the comparison of the two sets at word level. Nonetheless, to some extent, it still provides an insight into the alliance of quantity and quality of the newly implemented textbooks. The results from this study can serve as evidence for the shortage of target words and a necessity to update the textbooks with more advanced and appropriate

vocabulary, which can help enhance learners' success in English proficiency tests. However, the efficacy of learning material is a combination of different factors. In this regard, there is an urgent need to conduct a more academically comprehensive evaluation of the new set in all levels of education as well as from different linguistic perspectives, so as to improve it punctually.

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## ỨNG DỤNG NGÔN NGỮ HỌC KHỐI LIỆU VÀO VIỆC ĐÁNH GIÁ SÁCH GIÁO KHOA TIẾNG ANH Ở VIỆT NAM

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**Tóm tắt:** Nghiên cứu sử dụng ngôn ngữ học khối liệu vào việc so sánh hai bộ sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh trung học phổ thông ở Việt Nam. Khác với những nghiên cứu đánh giá sách giáo khoa truyền thống vốn tập trung chủ yếu vào ngữ pháp, nghiên cứu này tập trung đánh giá mức độ hiệu quả của bộ sách mới ở cấp độ từ vựng, cụ thể là từ và cụm động từ đặc ngữ (phrasal verb). Kho ngữ liệu lấy từ bài đọc của hai bộ sách được xử lý bằng phần mềm Antcont để tạo danh sách từ vựng, sau đó hai danh sách này được so sánh bằng phần mềm Venny 2.1.0. Kết quả phân tích dữ liệu có thể dùng để đánh giá chất lượng từ vựng của hai bộ sách, cụ thể là những từ vựng giống và khác nhau, cũng như phân tích so sánh độ khó của từ. Có thể xem đây là một trong những thử nghiệm đầu tiên trong việc sử dụng ngôn ngữ học khối liệu vào việc đánh giá sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam. Kết quả nghiên cứu hy vọng góp phần vào việc cải thiện chất lượng sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh, cũng như cung cấp thêm dẫn chứng khoa học cho nghiên cứu trong lĩnh vực thiết kế giáo trình.

*Từ khóa:* ngôn ngữ học khối liệu, đánh giá sách giáo khoa, từ vựng, cụm động từ đặc ngữ, độ khó của từ.

# THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH TENSES AND ASPECTS IN NARRATIVE MODE INTO VIETNAMESE

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**Abstract:** Confusion due to ambiguity in tenses and aspects while translating from English into Vietnamese is still a common problem to translators. There are several causes to this problem, but the main cause is the difference in viewing tense and aspect notions in the two languages by researchers or scholars. The existence of tense and aspect identities in English clauses or sentences is a matter of fact whereas in Vietnamese they are the topic of controversy among linguists and educators. This article investigates some of the linguistic means that were employed to translate English tenses and aspects in narrative mode into Vietnamese by three well-known translators, namely Mặc Đỗ, Hoàng Cường and Trịnh Lữ. The results of the study prove the fact that though tenses and aspects are not always recognized in the Vietnamese language, they can be translated from the English language via the use of temporal adverbials, aspectual markers or situation types of Vietnamese verbs.

*Keywords:* aspects, aspectual markers, narrative mode, situation types of verbs, temporal adverbials, tenses, translation.

## 1. Introduction

Normally, in any English expressions in the form of sentences, the use of correct tenses and aspects is the matter of fact that every English user should be aware of. This implies that tenses and aspects are compulsory in all English sentences, whereas the notions of tenses and aspects in Vietnamese are so vague that they are even suspected of their existence as a grammatical identity. The vagueness can be seen from the controversial views of linguists. Some state that Vietnamese has tenses and aspects (Nguyen, 1963; Diep, 1992; Nguyen, 1980), while the others affirm that Vietnamese has no tense but aspect categories (Hoang, 1962; Nguyen, 1977; Xuan, 1984). Hence, in translation, finding equivalence with regard to tenses and aspects between the two languages like English and Vietnamese,

however, has not always been a simple task. This kind of equivalence belongs to grammar level as Bell (1993, p. 6) states that “Texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees (fully or partially equivalent), in respect of different levels of presentation (equivalent in respect of context, of semantics, of grammar, of lexis, etc.)”.

With the main aim to find out what equivalent means were used to translate English tenses and aspects into Vietnamese, the researcher carried out the current study. To achieve that aim, selected data of 149 sentences in the English source language (SL) were taken from the novel “The Great Gatsby” (hereafter referred to as TG) by Francis Scott Fitzgerald. Basically, sentences in a novel may fall into two modes, namely deictic mode and narrative one; however, due to the scope of the present study, the former mode was not considered, the later mode was examined

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instead. Of these data, 58 sentences are in simple present tense, 46 sentences belong to simple past tense and 45 sentences are in past progressive tense. The data in Vietnamese were equivalent translated sentences taken from three translated novels. Furthermore, the researcher employed the traditional theories stating that English has a system of 12 tenses and aspects, the combination of using adverbials in expressing time in the Vietnamese language, aspectual markers and theories of situation types of verbs and equivalence in translation. The study is expected to obtain useful results serving as a good reference for those who are interested in translation.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. *The notions of tense and aspect*

Vietnamese learners when first studying English may confuse between tense and aspect categories. These two categories seem simple, but differentiating them requires extensive understanding, given their various definitions. Tense, for example, has been variably interpreted under dissimilar linguistic perspectives. Jespersen (1931) regards tenses as the relations of time through the indications of verb forms. Sharing the view of tenses through forms of verbs, Finch (2005) believes tenses make changes to the form of a verb. Likewise, Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 545) remark the connection of the verb form and time as affirming tense as “the relationship between the form of the verb and the time of the action or state it describes”. Apart from the above definitions, tense is deemed to bear the relation with grammar as Comrie (1985) believes that tense is the location in time and it is grammaticalized. Similarly, considering tense as a category of grammar, Trask (2008) says that tense is “the grammatical category

which relates to time”. Specially, in judging the deictic state of the action, i.e., the time of the action with other related time, Salaberry and Shirai (2002) hypothesize tense to be a deictic category situating in time concerning some other time, normally the speech moment.

The term “aspect” originated from Russian word “vid” to become popular in English in the mid-18th century. In fact, aspect category has been studied since ancient times. Since then, quite many definitions of aspect have been proposed. Compared to the definitions of tense, aspect is observed differently. According to Comrie (1976, p. 3), aspect refers to the internal time of a situation, while tense cares about how a situation is related to a time-point. His popular aspect definition is “aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation”. Likewise, in showing the concern about the time point of the action, Jarvie (1993) stresses the starting point of the action then comes to view it as aspect. Besides, under grammatical view, Greenbaum and Quirk (2003, p. 51) state “aspect is a grammatical category that reflects the way in which the action of a verb is viewed with respect to time”. Then, taking the metaphorical comparison of aspect with a camera, Smith (1997) views aspect under the angle like the lens of a camera as it helps the receiver see objects that are situations. In general, both tense and aspect are concerned about time of the action, the former is pertained to other time points while the later deals with the time within the situation itself. As a result, the forms of the verbs vary in pursuance to different tenses and aspects they bear. Nonetheless, meanings of the verbs are justified not only by the forms of the verbs but also by situation types of verbs. Thus, Vendler (as cited in Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2007) divided English verbs into four types. They are states, activities, accomplishments

and achievements. According to Vendler (1967), state verbs are verb phrases that express stative, durative and atelic situations, such as *sit, hold, like, stand, think, know, live, love*. Activities are those verbs expressing dynamic and durative situations such as *look for, run, talk, speak, walk, push, read, write, eat, beat, dance*. Accomplishments are verb phrases stating dynamic and telic situations such as *read a book, eat a bowl of rice, write a letter, wash the face, go to school, stand up*. Achievements consist of verb phrases that indicate punctual or instantaneous telic situations, such as *die, explode, find, break, nod the head, blow out*.

Besides, along with the different views towards the notions of tense and aspect the classification of them does not seem to be less various. In categorizing types of tense and aspect, linguists perceive different opinions towards the number of tenses and aspects in English. Even, one linguist may have dissimilar viewpoints towards tenses and aspects himself. That is the case of Davidsen (1990) who affirms that he gets influence from Bach (1947) and Comrie (1985), by whom tense is described as ‘grammaticalised location in time’. As a result, he states “in my book from 1990 I operate with eight tenses in English: present, present perfect, past, past perfect, future, future perfect, future past and future perfect of the past” (Davidsen, 1990, p. 148). Then after analyzing other linguists’ views with respect to tense and aspect, he concludes that “English has two tenses (present and past) and two aspectual distinctions (perfect: non-perfect and progressive: non-progressive)” (Davidsen, 1990, p. 154). Viewing tenses under morphological angle, according to Downing and Locke (2006), “English has just two tenses: the Present and the Past, as in goes/went, respectively”. Besides, Declerck et al. (2006) state that English traditionally has

seven tenses namely present tense, past tense or ‘preterite’, future tense, present perfect, past perfect or ‘pluperfect’, conditional tense and conditional perfect.

While mentioning verb tenses, Alexander (1998) divides English tenses into the simple present, present progressive tenses, the simple past tense, the past progressive tenses, the simple present perfect, present perfect progressive, the simple past perfect, past perfect progressive tenses, the simple future tense, the future progressive, the future perfect and going to and other ways of expressing the future. This division of tenses and aspects by Alexander (1998) seems to conform with the researcher’s expectation in later analyses, thus it will be taken as a theoretical base for the current study.

In general, Vietnamese scholars of other fields rather than languages are not aware of the notions of tenses and aspects. Even among linguistic researchers, there exist different trends in arguing if tenses and aspects are present in the Vietnamese grammar. The arguments not only captivate Vietnamese linguistic researchers but also linguistic researchers abroad. The first trend claims that Vietnamese has tenses as expressed in *đã, đang, sẽ* in Vietnamese which are the indicators of past tense, present tense and future tense respectively (Nguyen, 2009; Bui, 1952; Nguyen, 1988; Diep, 1992; Nguyen & Nguyen, 1998). The second trend states that Vietnamese has no tenses (Tran, Bui & Pham, 1940; Emeneau, 1951; Hoang, 1962; Nguyen, 1996). Besides, Cao (1998) claims that Vietnamese has no category to show tense though it has the category of aspect.

Practically, the expression of the time of an action in Vietnamese, according to Tran (1940), can be relied on various adverbials like *hôm qua, bữa ấy, tháng trước, ngày xưa*

and so forth to show the action happened in the past. Such adverbs as *bây giờ, lúc này, nay, hôm nay, tuần này* and so on can be used to indicate action happening at present. To express the action happening in the future, Vietnamese people may use adverbs like *chốc nữa, lát nữa, mai này, về sau, ngày mai, tuần tới, hai tháng nữa* and so on. Besides, in telling if the action has finished or not or it is still in progress, Vietnamese has different adverbs like *đã, rồi, còn, vẫn, đang* and *sẽ*.

Furthermore, Dinh (2012) states that such expletives like *đã, đang, sẽ, từng còn, vừa, mới*, etc. have been considered as indicators referring to past tense, present tense and future tense for a long time by Vietnamese linguists. He affirms that the tense-aspect relationship in the Vietnamese language is integrated as a grammar-state relationship. Such words as *đã, đang, sẽ* on one hand are to express the state meaning of the whole sentence, and on the other hand are to maintain the tight relationship between tense and aspect meaning of the predicate. In the below examples, he points out those words indicate the relationship but not kind of tense and aspect meaning. Firstly, *đã* in the subsequent sentence is not used as an indicator for past tense:

(1) **Đã** viết tiểu thuyết **lại còn** làm thơ.

**Not only** writing novels **but also** composing poems.

Or *đang* is not the expression of present tense in:

(2) **Đang** giữa trưa hè, không một ngọn gió.

It **was** in a summer noon, there was not any wind.

And *sẽ* does not refer to future tense in:

(3) Cái áo này **chắc chắn sẽ** không dưới ba trăm ngàn.

This shirt **is surely** not under 300,000 VND.

As can be seen from the above stated parts and examples, the equivalents of tense and aspect in English can be found in the Vietnamese language under the forms of adverbials, aspectual markers or expletives, though they are not always completely satisfied and correct choices. However, this issue in practice may become even more difficult as how a translator can deal with sentences in English that have no adverbs of time. Then, the issue is supposed to be solved counting on the use of situation types of verbs as Nguyen (2006) provides a more detailed description of Vietnamese types of situation based on the descriptions provided by Vendler (1967) and Smith (1997). He differentiates five types of situations: activities, accomplishments, achievements, states and semelfactives. This classification is the same as Vendler and especially as Smith's classification. Thus, it is hypothesized that the three Vietnamese translators of the novel "the Great Gatsby" would have been aware of and come to employ a number of different adverbs and situation types of verbs in Vietnamese to translate tenses and aspects into Vietnamese.

Translation is normally, in reality, the process of finding an appropriate translation approach to identify equivalent items. Therefore, the following part will be discussions of translation approaches and equivalence.

## 2.2. *Notions of translation and translation equivalence*

### Notions of translation

Translation practice dates back to thousands of years. Translation theories, however, have just been developed in recent decades. Noteworthy, since the emergence of theories in translation, there have been

numerous viewpoints towards the notions of translation. Jakobson (1959) was regarded as one of the first researchers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to propose a concept of translation. Translation, according to Jakobson (1959), is the substitution of the whole messages rather than the separate code-units only. Nida states, “definitions of ... translating are almost as numerous and varied as the persons who have undertaken to discuss the subject” (Nida, 1964, p. 161). While observing the translation process, Catford (1965) simply believes that translation is the alternative of meaning of a language with another one. He states “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)” (Catford, 1965, p. 20). In defining the notion of translation, Newmark (1988) is concerned more about the author of the text as he thinks that the translator should understand the intention of the author in transferring the meaning of the text into another language.

#### Translation equivalence

Translation can be regarded as a process of finding equivalents from the target language for the source language. Thus, equivalence has an adjacent correlation with semantic entity. Jakobson (1959) believes that “equivalence in meaning” emphasizes more on “differences in the structure and terminology of languages” than on the non-equivalent items between the two languages.

When discussing equivalence in translation Venuti (2000, p. 5) believes “equivalence has been understood as ‘accuracy’, ‘adequacy’, ‘correctness’, ‘correspondence’, ‘fidelity’, or ‘identity’; it is a variable notion about how the translation is connected to the foreign text”. Munday (2001) takes equivalence in translation as the central focus in his studies. Kenny (1998) states that translation

equivalence a core notion; therefore, it can be also a topic of controversy.

The theories about translation equivalence proposed by Nida (1964) pointed out two equivalence types, namely dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence. Dynamic equivalence puts more emphasis on context and the adaptation of sense whereas formal equivalence is aware of the method of translating word for word and the faithfulness towards the content. Besides, Baker (1992) seems to provide the most detailed condition index for the definition of equivalence concept. Equivalence concept is then viewed at various levels of translation equivalence namely equivalence of word, equivalence of grammar, equivalence of text and equivalence of pragmatics. In the grammatical level, number, voice, tense and aspect, person and gender receive more attention. As the present study is aimed at finding out how to translate temporal items and aspectual items, thus the study is targeted at identifying equivalence of grammatical expressions.

### 3. Methodology

Due to the small scope of the study, the present study merely explored the means that the translators had employed to translate some selected tense and aspect sentences from English in a narrative manner. The sentences selected as data for analysis are expressed in the simple present tense, the past progressive tense and the simple past tense in the Vietnamese version via the use of adverbs of time, especially via the use of situation types of verbs. The data of 149 sentences were taken from “The Great Gatsby” novel written in 1925 by American author Francis Scott Fitzgerald as the source language (SL). Bearing in mind that there would be no differences in the use of a particular English tense or aspect in different cases, hence these sentence data

were only randomly selected from the whole nine chapters of the novel. The corresponding Vietnamese translated sentences are from “Anh chàng hào hoa” by Mặc Đỗ (hereafter called T1), “Gatsby vĩ đại” by Hoàng Cường (hereafter called T2) and “Đại gia Gatsby” by Trịnh Lữ (hereafter called T3). Notably, within the extent of this study, only narrative sentences of present simple tense, past progressive tense and simple past tense from the English novel (TG) are taken into account. The study aimed at investigating possible linguistic means applied by T1, T2, and T3 to translating tenses and aspects from English into Vietnamese. Therefore, the following questions are proposed to be answered so as to obtain the objectives of the study:

1. How can English tenses be translated into Vietnamese?
2. How can English aspects be translated

into Vietnamese?

Basing on the afore-mentioned literature review, the researcher created himself a theoretical framework in the form of a table to analyze equivalents and non-equivalents as regards tense and aspect of the two languages English and Vietnamese. The three selected tenses were evaluated concerning the means of translations used by the three translators T1, T2 and T3. The used means were temporal adverbials referring to present, past or future. They can also be aspectual markers like progressive or perfective. Unless those two sorts of means were used, the means could belong to situation types of verbs such as state, activity, accomplishment or achievement. The proposed table below serves as a framework to collect data for the study.

Table 1: Framework for translating of tense and aspect from English into Vietnamese

Source sentences	Fre	Trans	Target texts									
			Adverbs of Time			Markers of Aspect		Situation Types of Verbs				
			Pre LA	Pas LA	Fu LA	Pro	Per	Stat	Acti	Acco	Achi	
Simple Present		T1										
		T2										
		T3										
Simple past		T1										
		T2										
		T3										
Past Progressive		T1										
		T2										
		T3										

**Legend:** Fre: frequency; Acti: activity; Acco: accomplishment; Achi: achievement; Stat: state; Trans: Translators; Pre: Present; Fu: Future; Pro: progressive; Per: perfect; LA: Locating adverbials

The author employed descriptive, comparative and contrastive methods to form a theoretical framework for the present study. Moreover these methods were also employed to analyze the data, These methods helped to analyze and synthesize the similarities and

differences in expressing tenses and aspects between English and Vietnamese.

#### 4. Results and discussion

The aims of the current study are to find out the answers to the questions of how English tenses

and aspects can be translated into Vietnamese. The results of the study show that tenses and aspects present in the sentence data of the present simple tense, the past tense and the past

progressive tense were translated via different means by the three Vietnamese translators. These means of translation would serve as answers to the questions of the present study.

Table 2: Translation of English tenses and aspects into Vietnamese

Source sentences	Fre	Trans	Target texts								
			Adverbs of Time			Markers of Aspect		Situation Types of Verbs			
			Pre LA	Pas LA	Fu LA	Pro	Per	Stat	Acti	Acco	Achi
Simple Present	58	T1	3			1	2	35	8	3	6
		T2	4				1	42	3	3	5
		T3	5			3	4	37	5	1	3
Simple past	46	T1					3	21	11	7	4
		T2	1	4			2	24	10	3	2
		T3				2	3	20	9	7	5
Past Progressive	45	T1				12	1	22	2	6	2
		T2	3			8	5	16	2	8	3
		T3	1		1	26	1	2	7	6	1

**Legend:** Fre: frequency; Acti: activity; Acco: accomplishment; Achi: achievement; Stat: state; Trans: Translators; Pre: Present; Fu: Future; Pro: progressive; Per: perfect; LA: Locating adverbials

4.1 The result analysis

4.1.1 The translation of tenses and aspects from English into Vietnamese translation by T1.

A number of 149 sentences in (TG) were taken as corpus. The selected tenses are simple present tense, past progressive tense and simple past tense. The number of sentences of

simple past tense are 58, thus accounting for 39 percent of the total sentences and becomes the biggest. Coming next are the sentences of simple past tense rated the second as they constitute 31 percent i.e. 46 sentences while 45 sentences of the past progressive tense are smallest as they account for 30 percent. The contrast of tense and aspect translation will be clearly seen in the following illustrations:

Table 3: Means applied to translating tenses and aspects by T1

Total sentences 149			
Direct adverbs 22 (14.7%)		Situation types of verbs 127 (85.3%)	
PerAM	6 (27.3%)	Stat	78 (61.4%)
AoT	3 (13.6%)	Acti	21 (16.5%)
ProAM	13 (59.1%)	Acco	16 (12.6%)
		Achi	12 (9.5%)

**Legend:** Acti: activity; Acco: accomplishment; Achi: achievement; Stat: state; PerAM: Perfect Aspectual Markers; AoT: Adverbs of Time; ProAM: Progressive Aspectual Markers

Only 22 (14.7%) out of the 149 sentences were found to be explicitly transferred into Vietnamese via a direct adverb indicating

tense or aspect. Progressive aspectual markers were found the most frequently used in 13 sentences (59.1%). Followed by perfect

aspectual markers indicating tense detected in 6 sentences (27.3%). Then adverbs of time were utilized the least frequent, noticed in 3 sentences (13.6%). The rest of 127 sentences (85.3%) were found to be conveyed by means of the situation types of verbs. Among them state verbs were identified to be the most frequently used, observed in 78 sentences making up 61.4 percent. Then 21 sentences

of activity verbs (16.5%), followed by accomplishment verbs found in 16 sentences (12.6%) are also located. The achievement verbs belonged to the least often used group, discovered in 12 sentences (9.5%).

**4.1.2 The translation of tenses and aspects from English into Vietnamese translation by T2.**

Table 4: Means applied to translating tenses and aspects by T2

<b>Total sentences 149</b>			
<b>Direct adverbs 28 (18.8%)</b>		<b>Situation types of verbs 121 (81.2%)</b>	
PerAM	8 (28.6%)	Stat	82 (67.8%)
AoT	12 (42.8%)	Acti	15 (12.4%)
ProAM	8 (28.6%)	Acco	14 (11.6%)
		Achi	10 (8.2%)

**Legend:** Acti: activity; Acco: accomplishment; Achi: achievement; Stat: state; PerAM: Perfect Aspectual Markers; AIT: Adverbs of time; ProAM: Progressive Aspectual Markers

Taking the same data of (SL) sentences to contrast with the equivalent translation by T2, however, the results are somehow different from the means of translation applied by T1. The difference can be reflected from the illustrations below:

The 28 (18.8%) out of the 149 sentences in narrative manner, were recognized to be directly translated into Vietnamese via a direct adverb indicating tense or aspect. Different from the result by T1 as adverbs of time showing tense and aspect were the most frequently used by T2 found in 12 sentences (42.8%). Surprisingly, perfect aspectual markers and progressive

aspectual markers were equally employed in 8 sentences (28.6%). The remainder of 121 sentences (81.2%) was discovered to be translated via the use of the situation types of verbs. Interestingly, state verbs once more were found out to be the most regularly used, present in 82 sentences making up 67.8 percent. Following was activity verbs found in 15 sentences (12.4%). Accomplishment verbs were found in 14 sentences (11.6%) whereas the achievement verbs were the least frequently applied, seen in 10 sentences (8.2%).

**4.1.3 The translation of tenses and aspects from English into Vietnamese translation by T3.**

Table 5: Means applied to translating tenses and aspects by T3

<b>Total sentences 149</b>			
<b>Direct adverbs 46 (30.9%)</b>		<b>Situation types of verbs 103 (69.1%)</b>	
PerAM	8 (17.4%)	Stat	59 (57.3%)
AoT	7 (15.2%)	Acti	21 (20.4%)
ProAM	31 (67.4%)	Acco	14 (13.6%)
		Achi	9 (8.7%)

**Legend:** Acti: activity; Acco: accomplishment; Achi: achievement; Stat: state; PerAM: Perfect Aspectual Markers; AIT: Adverbs of time; ProAM: Progressive Aspectual Markers

Likewise, data of English sentences keep unchanged, however, the employment of tense and aspect equivalents by T3 are a bit different from the other two translators. The difference seems to be unavoidable yet if the difference would distort the plot of the novel or not, a detailed analysis would be able to make it clearer.

Table 4 above shows that 46 (30.9%) out of the 149 sentences in narrative manner were directly translated into Vietnamese via a direct adverb indicating tense or aspect. Correspondingly, progressive aspectual markers were observed the most frequently used in 31 sentences (67.4%). Then the frequency of perfect aspectual markers ranked the second as being noted in 8 sentences (17.4%). Besides, adverbs of time indicating tense and aspect were observed to be used the least often, found in 7 sentences (15.2%). The leftover of 103 sentences (69.1%) was identified to be translated through the use of the situation types of verbs. Surprisingly, state verbs were repeatedly found out to be the most regularly used, exhibited in 59 sentences making up 57.3 percent. This was then followed by activity verbs found in 21 sentences (20.4%). Besides, the achievement verbs were used the least often, found in 9 sentences (8.7%) whereas accomplishment verbs were found in 14 sentences (13.6%) which are in contrast to the analysis results of the afore translated versions.

#### 4.2 Discussion

As can be seen from the above data analyses, English tenses and aspects were translated into Vietnamese via different means, such as direct adverbs and situation types of verbs. While different types of Vietnamese adverbs were utilized, various verbs of different situation types were the most frequently employed.

These types of adverbs and verbs were all mentioned in the literature review. Following are some detailed illustrations. Firstly, adverbs indicating a finished action in Vietnamese are so-called perfect aspectual markers like *rồi*, *đã*, etc. For example:

(4) I **knew** his whole family history before he left. (TG, p. 136)

T2: Trước khi hắn đi em **đã biết** hết lai lịch nhà hắn.

Looking at the Vietnamese translation of the above example, the adverb or aspectual marker “*đã*” successfully conveys the meaning of a completed action of the verb “knew”. However, “*đã*” in the following example does not imply the finished action of the verb “give”

(5) Only Gatsby, the man who **gives** his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction (TG, p. 4)

T3: Chỉ có Gatsby, người mà tôi **đã lấy** tên đặt cho quyển sách này...

Or “*rồi*” in the following sentence does not mean the action of getting married is finished; instead, it is used for emphasizing.

(6) ‘When they do **get married**,’ (TG, p. 37)

T1: Khi lấy được nhau **rồi**.

But “*rồi*” in the translation below really does express a completed action of the verb “came”

(7) I enjoyed the counter-raid so thoroughly that I **came back** restless. (TG, p. 5)

T3: Tôi khoái cuộc phản công ấy đến nỗi **đã về rồi** mà vẫn bồn chồn không yên.

Secondly, adverbs of time like *tuần trước*, *tháng trước*, *hôm qua*, etc. were used. The use of adverbs of time is the same in English and Vietnamese and this was mentioned in the literature review. Illustration for this can be seen in the translation below.

(8) but we met you here about **a month ago**. (TG, p. 47)

T1: Nhưng **tháng trước** chúng tôi đã gặp chị ở đây một lần.

Thirdly, adverbs indicating the action in progress like *đang, sẽ* etc. as an example:

(9) I had that familiar conviction that life was **beginning over again** ... (TG, p. 6)

T3: Tôi lại tin rằng cuộc sống **đang khởi** sự lại từ đầu..

The use of adverb “*đang*” was used by the author to express action in progress but in this situation, the progress was in the past not at present.

Or “*sẽ*” was used to indicate the action in present perfect tense but not in the progressive aspect.

It is invariably saddening to look through new eyes at things upon which you **have expended your own powers** of adjustment. (TG, p. 112)

T1: Không tài tránh khỏi đau buồn khi ta nhìn bằng cặp mắt mới những thứ gì mà chính ta **sẽ bỏ công sức** điều chỉnh

Fourthly, situation types of verbs carrying tenses and aspects in English are translated into equivalent verbs in Vietnamese. An illustration is as follows:

(11) God, how I **hated** that town! (TG, p. 38)

T2: Trời ạ, tôi **ghét** thành phố ấy đến thế.

The verb “*hate*” is a state verb and it was discussed in the literature review, thus in the above-said example the verb “*hated*” was translated into “*ghét*”

Or sentences in which no adverbial is recognized and their verbs may fall into activity, accomplishment or achievement types according to Vendler (1967) theory of

situation types of verbs as stated in the above section. Hence, the first example of this type is the use of an activity verb for tense and aspect translation.

(12) He **walked around** the room quickly, ringing bells. (TG, p. 109)

T1: Anh nhanh nhẹn **đi lại** trong phòng, rung chuông

Then coming next is the case of using accomplishment verb for translation.

He **reads deep books** with long words in them. (TG, p. 16)

T3: Anh ấy **đọc những sách thâm thúy** có những chữ rất dài.

Finally, an achievement verb in Vietnamese is used to convey the meaning of similar achievement verb type containing tense and aspect meaning in English.

Making a short deft movement Tom Buchanan **broke her nose** with his open hand. (TG, p. 41)

T2: Bằng 1 động tác gọn và chính xác, Tom Buchanan xò tay **đánh chảy máu mũi người tình của mình**.

## 5. Conclusion and implications

With the aims set out to seek for methods or ways to translate English tenses and aspects into Vietnamese, the author applied descriptive, comparative and contrastive methods for his study to find out the results for the stated aims. The study found that with the use of the resources of adverbs indicating tenses and aspects and especially the use of situation types of verbs in Vietnamese, the three Vietnamese translators could render sentences as regards tenses and aspects from a richly tensed language like English into a non-tense language. It is noteworthy that in this research, only sentences of the three

selected tenses are analyzed. Hence, based on the above result analysis it can be concluded that tense or aspect in English can be translated into Vietnamese by using different adverbs indicating temporal and aspectual elements. Specifically, a sentence in simple present tense in English can be translated into Vietnamese via the use of not only present adverbs indicating tense but also aspectual markers expressing the action in progress or in perfective state or even it can be translated by means of situation types of verbs. Another conclusion is for the sentences in simple past tense. These sentences can be conveyed into Vietnamese through the use of perfective aspectual markers in Vietnamese. Besides, they can be converted into Vietnamese by means of situation types of verbs. Even they can be translated by means of present adverbs expressing tense. Then, another conclusion can be also made is that sentences in present progressive tense can have even more choices of being translated via the use of present adverbs expressing tense, progressive, perfective aspectual markers and situation types of verbs. Lastly, it can be concluded that situation types of verbs can be employed to translate sentences of all the three English tenses namely the simple present tense, the present progressive tense and the simple past tense.

Although this study has succeeded in finding the answers to the questions, it has some limitations. Such limitations as the study focused on only three English tenses and aspects. One more restriction is the number of data was not many. Therefore, future studies are expected to investigate how to translate other English tenses and aspects into Vietnamese or even how to use English tenses and aspects to translate equivalent information from Vietnamese.

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## VIỆC DỊCH THÌ VÀ THỂ TỪ TIẾNG ANH SANG TIẾNG VIỆT

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**Tóm tắt:** Nhầm lẫn hoặc tối nghĩa trong việc dịch thì và thể từ tiếng Anh sang tiếng Việt vẫn còn khá phổ biến ở nhiều bản dịch, nguyên nhân chủ yếu là do sự khác biệt trong quan niệm về khái niệm thì và thể của các nhà nghiên cứu và học giả của hai ngôn ngữ. Trong khi thì và thể tồn tại trong các mệnh đề hoặc câu tiếng Anh như một điều hiển nhiên thì trong tiếng Việt lại là chủ đề gây tranh cãi trong giới các nhà ngôn ngữ và nhà giáo dục. Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm ra một số phương tiện ngôn ngữ được ba dịch giả nổi tiếng Việt Nam là Mặc Đỗ, Hoàng Cường và Trịnh Lữ sử dụng để dịch thì và thể trong câu thức trần thuật từ tiếng Anh sang tiếng Việt. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy mặc dù thì và thể không luôn được công nhận trong tiếng Việt, chúng vẫn có thể dịch được từ tiếng Anh qua cách sử dụng trạng ngữ chỉ thời gian, chỉ dấu thể hoặc động từ cảnh huống trong tiếng Việt.

*Từ khóa:* thể, chỉ dấu thể, thức trần thuật, động từ cảnh huống, trạng ngữ chỉ thời gian, thì, dịch thuật.

# THE REALIZATION OF THEMATIC PROGRESSION IN ONLINE IELTS WRITING TASK 2 SAMPLES IN AN ENGLISH-LEARNING WEBSITE: A CASE STUDY

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**Abstract:** This research aims at investigating the realization of thematic progression (TP) patterns, which is defined as “the way in which the theme of a clause may pick up, or repeat a meaning from a preceding theme or rheme” (Paltridge, 2006, p. 148), and their effects on text quality of online IELTS Writing Task 2 samples. Investigated in the light of systemic functional approach, TP is classified into five patterns, namely Simple Linear Progression (SLP), Constant Progression (CP), Split Rheme Progression (SRP), Split Theme Progression (STP) and Derived Hypertheme Progression (DHP) (McCabe, 1999). In this study, the corpus consisting of 24 sample essays derived from an English-learning website was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The results of this study highlight that SLP is the most frequently employed pattern in the corpus, followed by CP, SRP, STP and DHP patterns respectively. The analysis also shows that proper employment of TP overall is a contributing factor to the coherence and cohesion of the text, with each pattern exerting different effects. SLP, with its cross-referential links, yields a constantly developing and cohesive text whilst CP keeps a strong thematic focus. Meanwhile, SRP and STP patterns are both found to offer a planned text development and DHP creates cohesion with hypernym-hyponym relation. Problems related to the lack of TP, inappropriate theme positioning and the overuse of the theme “It” and “There” are also reported in the corpus.

*Keywords:* thematic progression, sample IELTS Writing Task 2, text quality

## 1. Introduction

Since the second half of the previous century, writing as a main skill in language has received increasing attention as an emerging topic of research, according to Soleymanzadeh and Gholami (2014). Among many aspects of this skill, the notion of cohesion, theme-rheme, and thematic progression (hereafter called TP) has been a matter of great concern for language researchers and educators alike (Belmonte & McCabe, 2001; Bloor & Bloor, 2003; Brown & Yule, 1983; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013; McCabe, 1999).

## 2. Thematic progression

### 2.1. Theme and thematic progression

First put forward by Mathesius of Prague School in 1939, theme-rheme is a major component in the textual metafunction of Systemic Functional Grammar. According to McCabe (1999), theme is defined in a variety of ways, for example, as “conveying the old or given information” (Babby, 1980, p. 3) or “what the sentence is about” (Witte, 1983, p. 338). However, this study adopts the definition of Halliday and Matthiessen (2013), which posits that theme is “the point

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of departure of the message” (p. 89). While this definition seems to be strictly positional, it is chosen because the point of departure indeed means more than just occupying the first position as it provides the context for the rest of the message (Halliday, 1994; Martin, 1992) and initiates “the semantic journey” (McCabe, 1999, p. 62). Rheme, meanwhile, is the “remainder of the message, the part in which the theme is developed” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 89) and typically contains unfamiliar or new information (Eggins, 2004).

Concerning TP, the definition put forward by Paltridge (2006) is chosen as the working definition in the present study. In accordance with this definition, TP is “the way in which the theme of a clause may pick up, or repeat a meaning from a preceding theme or rheme” (Paltridge, 2006, p. 148).

## 2.2. *Categorisation of thematic progression*

McCabe’s (1999) model of TP, which is a revised version of the model by Daneš (1974), is preferred in this study. The rationale for this choice is that this classification scheme is “more plausible, attestable, and complete than the other categorizations used for analyzing theme and TP patterns in texts” (Martínez, 2003, p. 108).

Below is the definition of 5 patterns of TP proposed by McCabe (1999):

**(i) Simple Linear Progression (SLP):** The rheme of the previous clause becomes the theme of the following clause.

**(ii) Constant Progression (CP):** The theme of the previous clause is the same as the theme of the following clause.

**(iii) Split Rheme Progression (SRP):** The rheme of a clause contains two or more

ideas that are picked up in following clauses.

**(iv) Split Theme Progression (STP):** The theme of a clause is composed of two or more items, each of which is considered a theme in the following clause.

**(v) Derived Hypertheme Progression (DHP):** The themes in following clauses are derived from a hypertheme in the previous clause.

## 3. **Thematic progression and text quality**

The majority of studies in the current body of research concur regarding the significant role of TP in text quality, particularly in terms of cohesion and coherence. In fact, TP is a major aspect of “how speakers construct their messages in a way which makes them fit smoothly into the unfolding language event” (Thompson, 2013, p. 145) and it “propels the text to develop forward and provide continuity in discourse” (Kang, 2016, p. 1). As a result, writings that employ TP patterns appropriately are likely to be marked higher. For example, Wang (2007), which researches the use of TP in low-, middle- and high-scoring essays of students, finds out that the two latter groups employ more TP patterns than the former. It is also highlighted in the current literature that each pattern is realized at different frequencies and exerts different effects on text quality.

SLP is realized with a high proportion, according to Hawes and Thomas (1997), Jalilifar (2010), Nwogu and Bloor (1991), Soleymanzadeh and Gholami (2014). This pattern is also the dominant one in argumentative essays (Ebrahimi & Khedri, 2012; Yang, 2015). In IELTS Writing Task 2 particularly, SLP is mostly realized in the body section to develop the topic presented in the topic sentence (Jalilifar, 2010; McCabe, 1999). Such a high proportion of SLP can be

attributed to its cross-referential links from the rheme of a clause to the theme of the next one, which yields a cohesive text flow (Hawes, 2015; Eggins, 2004; McCabe, 1999). Besides, since the theme is constantly derived from the previous rheme, this pattern gives the text “a sense of cumulative development” (Eggins, 2004, p. 325). This, in turn, ensures easier tracking of idea development because readers are more aware of the source of information as well as its projected trajectory (Ebrahimi & Khedri, 2012).

The proportion of CP is lower in comparison to SLP, according to the majority of research. One particular point reiterated by many studies is the ratio between SLP and CP. Generally, it is agreed that the bigger this ratio is, the better an essay will be “according to argumentative essay writing norms” (Soleymanzadeh & Gholami, 2014, p. 3). This pattern offers a strong thematic focus and avoids going off-topic, according to Eggins (2004), McCabe (1999) and Nwogu (1991). In addition, Nwogu (1991) claims that with a fixed point of departure, readers are able to pay more attention to the new information in the rheme. However, a number of studies also caution against the overuse of CP (McCabe, 1999; Mellos, 2011; Wei, 2016), which may create a repetitive and stagnant text flow.

Meanwhile, the majority of findings highlight that SRP receives little attention and is not realized frequently in texts. For example, Jalilifar (2010) finds that SRP only accounts for 1% to 2% in the surveyed writing of university students while according to Soleymanzadeh and Gholami (2014), in argumentative IELTS essays, 3.02% of TP occurrences is found in this pattern. SRP is stated to outline a list of ideas for further development in the texts. In other words, this

pattern provides the “underlying organizing principle for a text” (Eggins, 2004, p. 326). This pattern is also noted to be beneficial for the readers in that it provides a clear layout for them to expect and catch what the passage is about (Jalilifar, 2010).

STP, similarly, is found to be much less common than the others, with frequencies in essays recorded to range from less than 1% in Wei (2016) to approximately 4% in Babaii et al. (2016), Jalilifar (2010), Ebrahimi and Khedri (2011). The reason for such low frequency is that this pattern positions new information in the theme, which does not follow the conventional Given-to-New approach preferred by writers, as highlighted by many studies, for example Yang (2015). Regarding its contribution to text quality, Wei (2016, p. 41) notes that STP in general is “expository in character” as it offers a list of related information to expand on the main point. Given this function, it is regarded as a means of content organization to “scaffold the content of longer stretch of texts” (Wei, 2016, p. 82).

Lastly, DHP is generally found to be of limited frequency (Hawes, 2015; Soleymanzadeh & Gholami, 2014; Yang, 2015). These studies attribute such a low frequency to the entailed academic and specialized knowledge. However, Zhang and Li (2009) discover that DHP can be found regularly in expository and argumentative essays while Nwogu and Bloor (1991) claim that academic writings are also reported to contain a high proportion of this pattern. DHP contributes to text coherence and cohesion on the grounds that it reminds the readers of the main overarching topic and therefore keeps them focused as they need to make a connection between the hypertheme and the derived themes that follow (Hawes, 2015).

This study also highlights that this pattern creates an academic nature given the relatively high level of shared specialized knowledge. However, many researchers have noted the difficulties in identifying this pattern due to the requirement for common specialist knowledge (McCabe, 1999; Nwogu, 1991).

#### **4. Thematic progression and writing performance**

As mentioned above, TP plays an important role in text cohesion and coherence as it first “enhances connectivity between ideas” and second “guides the readers through the logical paths constructed by the writers” (Ebrahimi & Ebrahimi, 2014). In the same vein, in IELTS Writing Task 2, Soleymanzadeh and Gholami (2014) find that besides morphological, lexical and syntactic aspects, progression is one requirement of cohesion and coherence, which are two elements constituting text quality (Pitler & Nenkova, 2008). Given such essential roles, the study of theme and TP is worthwhile as it analyses the contributing factors to the making of a text (Rørvik, 2003). Besides, writing samples are an intriguing source for analysis since they are considered references for students. Accordingly, the analysis of TP in writing samples can highlight certain features related to TP choices that can influence and be adopted in students’ writings.

Despite their significance, much research has alluded to the lack of attention to TP in writing generally and in IELTS Task 2 particularly. Soleymanzadeh and Gholami (2014), Wei (2016) and Yang (2015) clearly state that too much emphasis is placed on errors below sentence level such as spelling, vocabulary or subject-verb agreement while coherent discourse organization, including TP, has been largely neglected. For example,

Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2014) note that the majority of IELTS examiners tend to focus on the former, while only about 30% of them pay attention to logical progression when marking. Such insufficient focus on TP is considered as a contributing factor to problems related to text organization, particularly the “loosely related events or facts, lack of a focus or central idea” (Wei, 2016, p. 1).

One further point accounting for the necessity of conducting this study is that this aspect in IELTS Task 2 is under-researched. In the current literature, the first line of study into this aspect focuses on the analysis of TP in students’ writing, some of which also investigate the correlation between TP and the marking (Ebrahimi & Khedri, 2012; Rakhman, 2013; Yang, 2015). Another field of interest is the instruction of TP for better application in writing, which has been carried out by Nurdianingsih and Purnama (2017), Purnomo (2014) and Yang (2008). Other studies also investigate the use of TP in other genres apart from students’ writings, most commonly articles (Babaii et al., 2016; Jalilifar, 2010; Martínez, 2003). However, TP-related studies into IELTS Writing Task 2 are limited. According to Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2014), most research to date has been conducted into the role of argument in IELTS writing and the washback effects of IELTS tests on the education systems and societies in which they operate while the linguistic feature in the writing section has been largely overlooked, except for the research by Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2014), Nguyen and Nguyen (2018), Soleymanzadeh and Gholami (2014). Nevertheless, the former is concerned with the correlation between the scoring of IELTS Writing Task 2 and TP patterns while the corpora of the latter two

studies consist of samples from published books rather than online sources.

Such gaps in the current body of research well justify the necessity of investigating TP in online IELTS Writing Task 2 samples.

## **5. The present study**

### **5.1. Scope of research**

The corpus in this study consists of 24 IELTS Writing Task 2 Samples taken from an IELTS Website with 407.000 followers on Facebook Fanpage and 217.000 followers in its group as of September 2019.

IELTS, which stands for International English Language Testing System, is among the few English language proficiency tests that measure four main language skills, namely speaking, reading, listening, and writing (Soleymanzadeh & Gholami, 2014). In the scope of this research, Writing Task 2 (Academic Module) is studied given that TP is an important sub-criterion in coherence and cohesion, which contributes to the making and band score of a composition. Furthermore, this task receives heavier weighting compared to Task 1 and greater attention from teachers as well as learners (Ebrahimi & Ebrahimi, 2014).

The chosen writings are stated to be samples of the actual tests from January 2019 to September 2019. There are some genres of IELTS Writing Task 2; however, given the time constraint, the scope of this study is limited to three, namely Argumentative, Discussion and Cause - Problem - Solution.

The total number of sample essays available on the website is 28, consisting of (1) Argumentative essays - 12 samples, (2) Discussion essays - 8 samples and (3) Cause - Effect - Solution - 8 samples. In order to

achieve the same number for Argumentative genre, systematic sampling was applied. Firstly, all essays of this genre were randomly numbered from 1 to 12. Subsequently, the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> essays were removed, leaving 8 essays for the corpus.

### **5.2. Research aims and research questions**

To realize the overarching aim of investigating the realization of TP of Online IELTS Writing Task 2 Samples, two research objectives are set out, namely (i) exploring the realization of Themes and TP in Online IELTS Writing Task 2 Samples and (ii) investigating the potential impacts of such realization on text quality.

In accordance with these aim and objectives, the two research questions of this study are:

- What is the realization of TP in Online IELTS Writing Task 2 Samples?
- What are the potential impacts that such realization has on the texts?

### **5.3. Research methods**

In order to answer the two research questions, both quantitative and qualitative methods are employed. First, the percentage of different patterns of TP was calculated using quantitative method. Subsequently, a more in-depth textual analysis was conducted to find out the effects of different TP patterns on essay organization with the consideration of genre.

### **5.4. Analytical framework**

This study employs McCabe's (1999) model of TP, which proposes five patterns. This model is illustrated by the following figure:

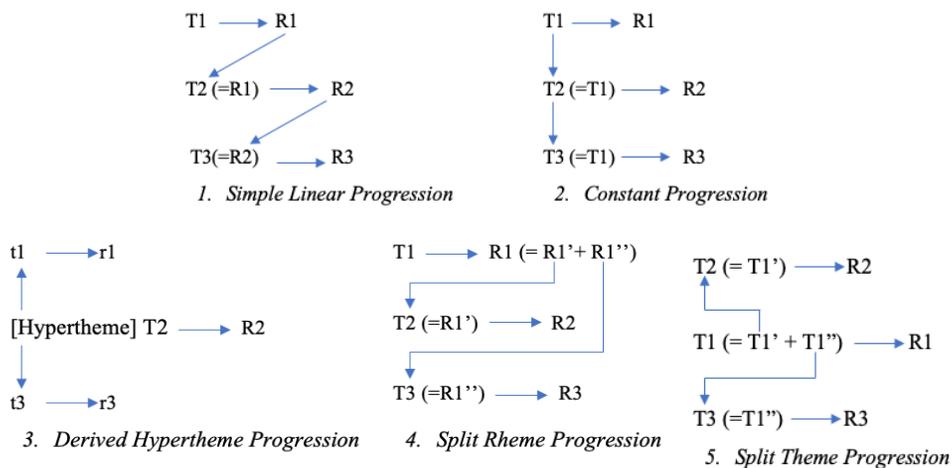


Figure 1: Analytical Framework of TP patterns

The analysis unit in this study is “T-unit”, which consists of “an independent clause together with all hypotactically related clauses and words that are dependent on that independent clause” (Fries, 1995, p. 49). If a dependent clause precedes an independent one, the former is taken as the theme while the latter functions as the rheme. Meanwhile, when the independent clause comes first, the theme of that clause functions as the theme for the whole clause complex. Lastly, if a sentence has more than one independent clause, it follows that there will be two T-units consisting of theme and rheme of their own. T-unit analysis, according to many studies, is viewed as the most useful unit for analyzing themes in a text (Jalilifar, 2010; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018).

**5.5. Data analysis procedure**

Data analysis, which is based on two analytical frameworks, including model of thematicity of Halliday and Matthiessen (2013) and McCabe’s (1999) model of TP patterns, consists of two major phases as follows:

*a. Phase 1: Theme and TP identification and categorization*

In this phase, the analysis of data went

through the following steps:

- 1) In each essay, “T-units” were identified.
- 2) Within each T-unit, the boundary between theme and rheme was drawn in accordance with Halliday’s (2014) model of thematicity.
- 3) A diagram illustrating TP patterns of each essay was drawn.
- 4) From this diagram, the total numbers of all TP and each pattern were counted.
- 5) These numbers were also converted into percentage terms.
- 6) The statistics were subsequently tabulated.

*b. Phase 2: Effects of TP choice on texts*

In this phase, two more steps, the data analysis process was continued further with two more steps, which were:

- 7) Based on the diagrams from the previous stages, interpretation of the effects of TP on the coherence and cohesion of the texts was attempted along with the analysis of examples from the corpus.
- 8) The relation between the use of TP and genres was then drawn, followed by the comparison with other studies to examine

the similarity and deviation compared to the existing literature.

## 6. Findings and discussion

### 6.1. Answer to research question 1

Table 1: Occurrence of TP patterns in the corpus

Pattern	SLP	CP	SRP	STP	DHP	Sum
Total	64	40	36	5	5	150
%	42.7	26.7	24.0	3.3	3.3	100

Concerning the figures for separate TP patterns, it is found that SLP makes up the most significant proportion at 42.7% with 64 patterns. The second position is occupied by CP whose percentage is reported to be 26.7%, followed closely by that of SRP (24.0%). Meanwhile, DHP and STP share comparable figures with merely 3.3% each. This order of frequency is similar to many studies in the existing body of literature (Babaii et al., 2016; Jalilifar, 2010; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018; Wei, 2016). However, one notable finding emerging from the analysis is that the frequency of SRP is found in this study much surpasses other studies (Ebrahimi & Khedri, 2012; Jalilifar, 2010; Soleymanzadeh & Gholami, 2014; Wei, 2016).

In terms of the realization of specific patterns, SLP has the highest frequency in most of the texts except for texts 7, 19 and 20. It is significant that in certain texts such as 1, 2 and 6, its proportion far exceeds others, for example 71.4% in text 6, which is roughly five times as high as the figures for CP and SRP. Such a high proportion accords with the findings of most studies, for example Babaii et al. (2016), Hawes (2015) and Wei (2016). Intriguingly, the analysis of sample IELTS essays in Nguyen and Nguyen (2018) shows a strikingly similar proportion of this pattern (46.6%), possibly due to the similarity in the corpus. The analysis also demonstrates that this pattern is mostly realized in the

There are a total of 150 TP occurrences out of 3054 T-units in the 24 surveyed texts. Specific proportions of each TP pattern's realization are summarized in the following table.

body part of the essays, which is coherent with the claim by Jalilifar (2010) that the writer uses SLP to unfold and develop the central ideas presented in the topic sentence of each paragraph. Concerning genre-based frequency, Argumentative texts employ SLP the most at 51.9%. This dominant frequency in Argumentative is similar to the findings of other studies, for example, Ebrahimi and Khedri (2012), Rakhman (2013), Soleymanzadeh and Gholami (2014). SLP is also popular in the genre of Cause - Problem - Solution with the mean frequency of 35% since its realization is claimed to establish chains of relationship effective in implying causality (Jalilifar, 2010; McCabe, 1999).

CP is the second most frequently used pattern at over one-fourth of the total and the majority of texts employ this pattern in at least two different parts. Similar results can also be found in the studies by Babaii et al. (2016), Jalilifar (2010), and Ebrahimi and Khedri (2011). One notable finding that conforms to the existing literature is related to the ratio between SLP and CP in Argumentative essays. On average, the ratio between these two patterns is over 2:1 (48.45:21.1%). Some argumentative texts, in particular texts 1 and 6 are found to have significantly higher ratios, which are 4:0 and 5:1, respectively. Contrary to many studies such as Mellos (2011), Wei (2016) and McCabe (1999), the problem of overusing CP that produces repetitive and development-lacking discourse does not emerge from data

analysis. Instead, most of the texts employ CP as the one and only TP pattern for the purpose of highlighting the themes and offering a central focus without necessarily rendering them simplistic and monotonous.

The frequency of SRP mostly ranges from 14% to 33%, which is quite stable compared to others. Notably, statistical analysis shows that its frequency in this study far exceeds those in other studies (Ebrahimi & Khedri, 2012; Jalilifar, 2010; Soleymanzadeh & Gholami, 2014; Wei, 2016). Concerning genre-based frequency, this pattern is most frequently in the genre of Cause - Problem - Solution texts, averaging at 34.2% and nearly doubling the Argumentative genre at 18.4%. These predominant figures in Cause - Problem - Solution texts can be justified by the fact that this pattern lends itself to the listing of ideas in the topic sentence, in this case the list of causes, problems or solutions.

The frequency of STP is reported to be insignificant and it is absent from virtually all texts, except for texts 18, 20, 21 and 22, in which this pattern only appears once. Such low frequency does not deviate from the findings of other studies in the current body of literature (Wei, 2016; Babaii et al., 2016; Jalilifar, 2010). This is because this pattern introduces the new information at the beginning, which goes against the conventional “Given-to-New” approach and

thus is not preferred despite having a similar role in idea presentation and organization compared to SRP (Yang, 2015). Interestingly, this progression pattern is only found in Cause - Problem - Solution genre in order to list the causes, effects and solutions related to a certain phenomenon discussed in the essay, as corroborated by Nurdianingsih and Purnama (2017) and Rosa and Padang (2007).

Similar to the low frequency of STP, DHP progression is only realized in 3.3% of all clauses in the corpus. Only four texts 8, 15, 16 and 22 are reported to use this pattern, whose numbers only narrowly range from 1 to 2 patterns. This low frequency of DHP can be corroborated by the results of Soleymanzadeh and Gholami (2014) whose aim is to explore the relationship between the employment of TP in IELTS Writing Task 2 and the score. Such similarity is owing to the closer resemblance in the corpora of two studies, which are both sample IELTS Task 2 writings.

**6.2. Answer to research question 2**

The analysis highlights that each TP pattern yields different effects on text quality.

*6.2.1. Simple linear progression*

It emerges from textual analysis that this TP pattern is conducive to a closely linked and progressively developing paragraph, as in the following extract from text 10.

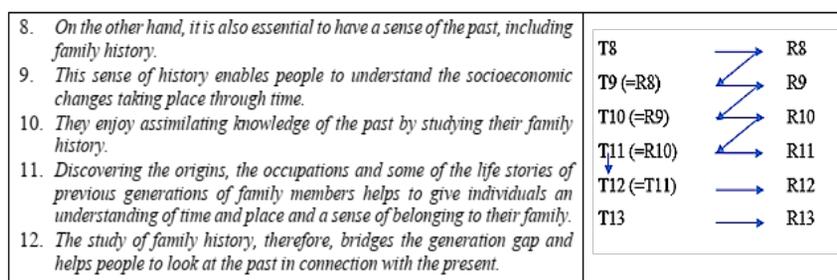


Figure 2: The mapping of SLP pattern in Text 10 (T-units 8-12)

R8 “*family history*” is picked up on by the following T9 “*this sense of history*” with an anaphoric referent “*this*”, forming a

close connection between the two sentences and making the flow of ideas smoother and more cohesive. T10 “*they*” then follows the

R9 “people” from the previous sentence, and similarly, R10 “studying their family history” is continued by “discovering the origins, the occupations and some of the life stories of previous generations of family members”. It is clear that such continuous concatenation of themes and rhemes yields a continuous thread of ideas and propels the text forward, from “socioeconomic changes” (R9) to “understanding of time and place” and “a sense of belonging to their family” (R11).

The above analysis demonstrates that thanks to the cross-referential links between the rheme of one clause to the theme of the following one, SLP lends an “aura of sequence” (Hawes, 2015, p. 97) to text development, possibly rendering it more coherent (Christie & Dreyfus, 2007; Eggins, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2004; Wang, 2007). This feature also makes it easier for the readers to trace back the points

of departure as well as the course that the text is taking. Furthermore, this pattern also offers a dynamic effect in which the ideas in the text are constantly expanded so that the argument is constantly built on, thus consolidating its conviction. Notably, despite offering a constantly developing theme-rheme system, the text’s main topic does not digress in that all the clauses in the texts revolve around the main theme stated in the topic sentence. All these factors related to the use of SLP may improve the text’s quality. Indeed, the existing literature unanimously agrees that the high frequency of this pattern is often used by skilled writers and is indicative of higher score in the texts (Rakhman, 2013) and particularly in IELTS Writing Task 2 (Jalilifar, 2010).

6.2.2. Constant progression

The following analysis illustrates the realization of CP in text 7.

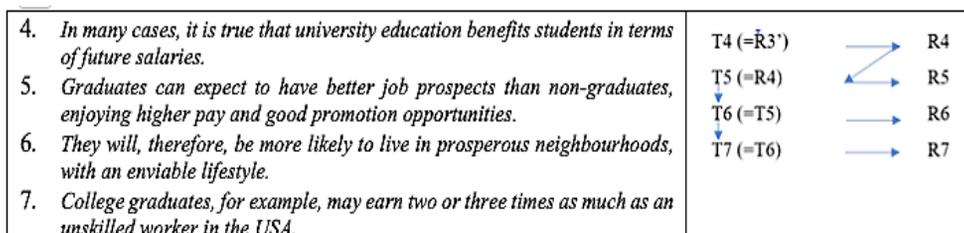


Figure 3: The mapping of CP pattern in Text 7 (T-units 4-7)

As can be seen from the extract, T5, T6 and T7 all refer to the subject “Graduates” while the following rhemes underline the positive effects of tertiary education, for example, “higher pay and good promotion opportunities” (R5), “to live in prosperous neighbourhoods, with an enviable lifestyle” (R6) or “earn two or three times as much as an unskilled worker in the USA” (R7). With “Graduates” and the anaphoric reference “they” positioned at the beginning of three sentences, it offers a clear and strong thematic focus to avoid topic digression. More importantly, as the themes remain static,

readers’ attention is also more likely to be paid to the newly introduced information in the rhemes (Nwogu, 1991), in this case the benefits of tertiary education. Since these pieces of information are central to the argument, the writer has achieved his/her aim in cementing the presented argument, thereby improving text quality.

6.2.3. Split rheme progression

Textual analysis of the corpus shows that the employment of SRP in topic sentences plays a vital role in the logical and coherent organization of the text, for example in text 19.

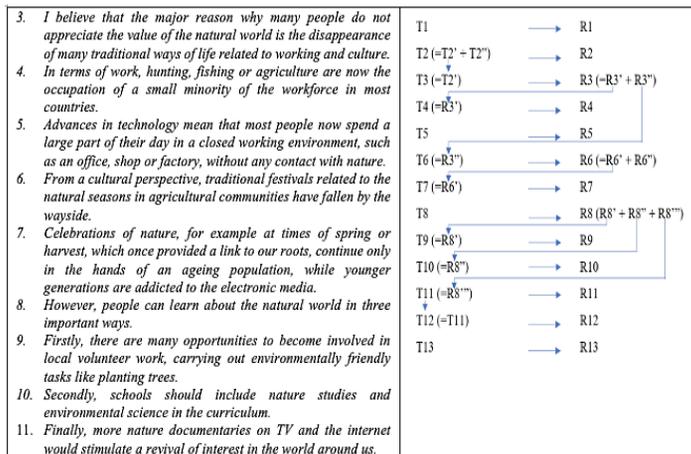


Figure 4: The mapping of SRP pattern in Text 19 (T-units 3-13)

As can be seen from T-units 3-13 of text 19, R3, which introduces the reasons for the disregard of the natural world, refers to the “disappearance of many ways of life related to working and culture”. The use of phrases “related to working and culture” prepares the readers for T4 and T6, which then elaborate on these two sub-ideas. Furthermore, R8 once again uses this pattern to outline the ways in which people can gain a deeper understanding of the natural world, divided into “three important ways”. This idea is then discussed in detail in the following smaller consecutive theme-rheme systems, accompanied by conjunctive adjuncts, namely “Firstly”, “Secondly” and “Finally”. Such a combination of appropriate textual theme

choice and TP, which is frequently found in the corpus, makes the text appear to the readers as well-organized and easy to follow since the controlling ideas are scaffolded into smaller ones that continuously follow each other. Also, this way of organizing ideas adds conviction to the argument because the three following themes all support the idea presented in the topic sentence. This finding lends support to the claim by Eggins (2004) that this pattern provides the “underlying organizing principle of a text” (p. 326).

6.2.4. Split theme progression

STP is shown to have the same effects on text quality as SRP, as is illustrated by T-units 9-15 of text 9:

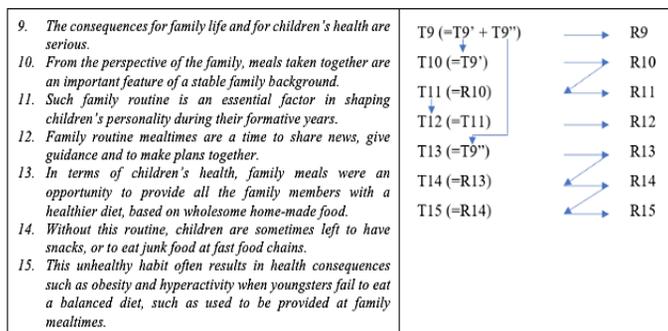


Figure 5: The mapping of STP pattern in Text 9 (T-units 9-15)

T9 “*The consequences for family life and for children’s health*” in the topic sentence of paragraph 2 belongs to STP pattern with two smaller themes - the effects on family and children’s well-being. This theme is then expounded upon in T10 “*From the perspective of the family*” and T13 “*In terms of children’s health*” along with the use of CP and SLP in order to clearly and coherently present the main arguments. Following these themes are the rhemes expounding on the important role of family meals in “*shaping children’s personality during their formative years*” (R11) and the negative ramifications hypothe relationship as in text 8.

due to the absence thereof such as “*obesity and hyperactivity*” (R15). Indeed, similar to SRP, the employment of STP in this topic sentence, accompanied by the use of SLP and CP, “*scaffolds the content of longer stretch of texts*” (Wei, 2016, p. 82) in that it offers a planned development of ideas and thus effectively assists the readers in grasping an overview of the paragraph. Accordingly, text coherence and cohesion are enhanced.

#### 6.2.5. Derived hypertheme progression

The analysis shows that DHT contributes to text quality thanks to the hypertheme-

12. <i>Secondly, when individuals can put up buildings to any design which they want, the result is that the city simply becomes an eyesore.</i>	T12 (=R8")	→	R12
13. <i>Buildings may simply not blend in with each other.</i>	T13 (T13' + T13")	→	R13
14. <i>For instance, towering skyscrapers may be constructed next to famous landmarks, completely overshadowing them.</i>	T14 (=T13')	→	R14

Figure 6: The mapping of DHP pattern in Text 8 (T-units 12-14)

As can be seen, T13 is “*buildings*”, which in its own definition, encompasses a wide range of types. This overriding theme is then followed by a subordinate T14 “*towering skyscrapers*” and even in R14 “*famous landmarks*”. Despite a lack of reiteration or anaphoric referent as in CP, this DHP progression facilitates cohesion and coherence in that there exists a hierarchical relation between the two themes. The use of DHP in the texts, despite its limited number, is a factor in enhancing text quality. Firstly, due to the close relationship between the hyperthemes and hypothes, the connection drawing on hierarchical order between the clauses are strengthened. Furthermore, as Eggins (2004) and Emilia (2005) have noted, this pattern provides a planned method of text development in the sense that the ideas come from a broader definition to more specific ones in the following sentences. On the part of the

readers, according to Eggins (2004), Emilia (2005) and Hawes (2015), this pattern can remind them of the main topic, thus sustaining their focus on the ideas. Furthermore, as specialized knowledge is characteristic of this DHP, an academic sense is added to the texts, partially fulfilling the requirements of the Academic Module, as reiterated by Hawes (2015) and Zhang and Li (2009).

#### 4.2.7. Problems related to thematic progressions

Data analysis also reveals three emerging issues related to the use of TP in the corpus. Firstly, in some texts, the lack of TP proves problematic, for instance in the extract from text 10:

6. <i>Firstly, prison is popularly regarded as an institution whose purpose is to punish wrongdoers.</i>	T6 → R6
7. <i>There is a public outcry against the current operation of prisons,</i>	T7 → R7
8. <i>and many argue that only the full weight of the law will act as a deterrent, even though this is obviously not working.</i>	T8 → R8

Figure 7: The mapping of TP pattern in Text 10 (T-units 6-8)

The previous extract comes from paragraph 1 of text 20. As can be seen from the extract, there exists no link between either T6 “*prison*” or R6 “*is popularly regarded as an institution whose purpose is to punish wrongdoers*” and T7 “*There*”. Such dearth of thematically-related connection may give the readers a feeling of incoherence and even digression. The same mismatch applies to the following themes and rhemes, for example between T7 “*There*”, R7 “*the current operation of prisons*” and T8 “*the full weight of the law*”. Obviously, such lack of TP potentially leads to problematic text development in which the

ideas do not follow and are incoherently linked to each other, lowering its argumentation quality. Moreover, readers might encounter difficulties in following the thread of ideas put forward in the texts and identifying the points of departure in each sentence, thus being left with perplexity.

Another issue related to TP is the inappropriate theme choice and positioning, leading to a loosely developed text flow. This problem is found in T-units 5-7 of text 14 and T-units 3-5 of text 9 and T-units 4-6 of text 12. This will be illustrated in the following analysis of text 9.

3. <i>On the one hand, there is an outcry in many countries over the cruel conditions in which animals are kept in some zoos.</i>	T3 → R3
4. <i>As a result, many people argue that the public must exert pressure on governments to shut down all zoos.</i>	T4 → R4
5. <i>For example, in some zoos the animals are still kept in cages, with little room in which to move around.</i>	T5 → R5

Figure 8: The mapping of TP pattern in Text 9 (T-units 3-5)

R3 from text 9 concerns the inhumane condition from which zoo animals have to suffer. In order to create cohesive text development, this rheme is supposed to be followed by a theme-rheme that elaborates on such conditions to add conviction to the argument. However, T4 and R4 mention the imperativeness for the government to “*exert pressure*” to close the zoos. In the meantime, T5 and R5 then incoherently delineate the specific circumstances of zoo animals, which should otherwise have taken the place of T4 and R4 to maintain a coherent thread of argument. As can be seen, the illogical

arrangement of theme-rheme system in the above-given part contributes to a loose and incoherent text flow, at the same time creating a sense of confusion among readers. This inappropriate TP employment may to some extent lower the argumentation quality of the text as well.

Lastly, two themes “*There*” and “*It*” are found to be overused in certain texts, for example, in text 20:

<p>2. <i>There are some important reasons for this return to a life of crime,</i>  3. <i>but there are solutions which could mitigate the problem.</i>  4. <i>I believe that there are two principal reasons why many criminals who have served their sentences, commit further crimes when they are released back into society.</i></p>	<p>T2 → R2  T3 → R3  T4 → R4 (=R4' + R4'')</p>
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Figure 9: The mapping of TP pattern in Text 20 (T-units 2-4)

As can be seen from the excerpt, all the Topical Themes are “*There*”. Despite having the same theme “*There*” in three consecutive clauses, text development in this part is problematic since this non-referential theme cannot serve as a focal point of departure for the readers to refer to when following text development while the central information is placed in the rheme (Mauranen, 1999). Since each theme is not related to either the theme or rheme of the previous sentence, it gives the readers a repetitive and incoherent sense. Such lack of coherent and cohesive flow progression due to the overuse of “*There*” and “*It*” as themes is also found by other studies, for example Wang (2007).

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1. Summary of the findings

With regard to the distribution of thematic progression patterns in texts, SLP is the most prevalent among the five. The second position belongs to CP, closely followed by SRP while DHP and STP are a mere minority. SLP is preferred, particularly in Argumentative and Cause - Problem - Solution genres, given its cross-referential links between clauses, hence a sense of text development and causality relation. The use of CP is ascribed to its strong thematic focus whereas SRP, which is found only in Cause - Problem - Solution genre, potentially offers a planned development of the text. Despite its minor proportion due to specialized nature, DHP can be a contributor to text cohesion of the text with its hyponym-hyponym relation. Meanwhile,

STP is not frequently realized as it contradicts the conventional “Given-to-New” principle in spite of its similar effects on text quality compared to SRP. From these aforementioned points, it can be claimed that the findings of this study corroborate the supposition of Fries (1983) that there are correlations between TP and genres as different TP patterns are frequent in different genres than others.

While the issue of overusing CP is not found as in other studies, such problems as lack of TP, inappropriate theme position as well as the overuse of themes “*There*” or “*It*” are reported from the corpus, which to a certain extent affects text cohesion and coherence.

### 7.2. Implications

The findings of this study on Thematic Progression in Online IELTS Writing Task 2 Samples may be of some assistance for pedagogical and research purposes. Specifically, teachers can draw on these findings to integrate this aspect into writing lessons and in comment sessions in order to raise students’ awareness about this linguistic tool. Equipped with the knowledge about TP’s employment, students are expected to be more conscious of applying this aspect into their own English writings to improve text quality, which may effectively address the issue of loosely related and incoherent texts partly caused by TP-related issues. Moreover, when properly imbedded with TP, the English writings of Vietnamese students and also other students who are nonnative to English can also appear to be more naturally

genre-appropriate given the fact that English is a theme-inclined language. Finally, despite its limited generalizability, this study can contribute to the field of Functional Grammar and its results may provide some useful background and starting point for linguists and researchers to delve further into this topic.

### 7.3. Limitations and suggestions for further studies

#### 7.3.1. Limitations

Despite the best efforts made by the researcher, some of the limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, due to time constraints, the corpus was rather limited in terms of both quantity of texts and range of genres covered, thus restricting the results' generalizability regarding the effects and correlation between TP patterns and genres. Furthermore, the analysis may bear some weaknesses as the process of analysis can be challenging. Indeed, Nwogu (1991) and McCabe (1999) have pointed out that DHP requires specialized knowledge in certain areas, hence potential oversights. Lastly, due to the limited word count, some of the aspects of the findings may not be deeply analyzed, leaving some of the points insufficiently discussed.

#### 7.3.2. Suggestions for further studies

In light of the restraints mentioned above, some following recommendations could be taken into consideration by the future researchers of this topic. Firstly, it is suggested that further research should be conducted on a larger scale with the full range of IELTS writing genres being the subject of investigation to enhance the generalizability of the results. Moreover, the results can also be analyzed to a deeper extent in order to explore other aspects yet to be sufficiently touched on in this study, for example the culturally related reasons or the influence of L1 behind TP choice.

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# TÍCH DIỄN TIẾN ĐỀ NGỮ TRONG CÁC BÀI MẪU IELTS TASK 2 TRỰC TUYẾN CỦA MỘT TRANG MẠNG HỌC TIẾNG ANH

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**Tóm tắt:** Diễn tiến đề ngữ được định nghĩa là cách mà đề ngữ của một mệnh đề nhắc lại hoặc phát triển nghĩa của đề ngữ hoặc phần thuyết của mệnh đề đi trước (Paltridge, 2006, p. 148). Dựa trên quan điểm chức năng hệ thống, McCabe (1999) đã phân chia diễn tiến đề ngữ thành năm loại, gồm có: mô hình diễn tiến tuyến tính (Simple Linear), diễn tiến cố định (Constant), diễn tiến phân đề ngữ (Split Theme), diễn tiến phân thuyết (Split Rheme), diễn tiến siêu đề phái sinh (Derived Hypertheme). Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu sự hiện thực hoá của các hình thức diễn tiến đề ngữ khác nhau và ảnh hưởng của chúng đến chất lượng của các bài viết IELTS Task 2. Được lấy từ một trang mạng trực tuyến, ngữ liệu bao gồm 24 bài luận đã được phân tích bằng cả phương pháp định lượng và định tính. Kết quả nghiên cứu chỉ ra rằng mô hình diễn tiến tuyến tính được sử dụng nhiều nhất, theo sau đó là mô hình diễn tiến cố định, diễn tiến phân thuyết, diễn tiến phân đề ngữ và diễn tiến siêu đề phái sinh. Quá trình phân tích ngữ liệu cũng cho thấy rằng mặc dù mỗi mô hình mang lại những hiệu quả khác nhau, việc sử dụng các mô hình diễn tiến đề ngữ nói chung đã góp phần tạo nên sự mạch lạc và tính liên kết cho bài viết. Mô hình diễn tiến tuyến tính với sự liên kết mang tính chất quy chiếu đã tạo nên một văn bản được phát triển liên tục và có tính liên kết chặt chẽ trong khi mô hình diễn tiến cố định thì giữ được trọng tâm về chủ đề giữa các câu. Trong khi đó, nghiên cứu thấy được rằng mô hình diễn tiến phân thuyết và diễn tiến phân đề ngữ mang lại tính có tổ chức cho sự phát triển của văn bản, còn mô hình diễn tiến siêu đề phái sinh tạo được sự liên kết qua mối quan hệ giữa từ cấp trên (thượng danh) và từ cấp dưới (hạ danh). Một số vấn đề như sự thiếu diễn tiến đề ngữ, sự đặt sai vị trí chủ đề và sự lạm dụng của “There” và “It” ở vị trí chủ đề cũng đã được tìm thấy trong ngữ liệu nghiên cứu.

*Từ khóa:* diễn tiến đề ngữ, bài mẫu IELTS Task 2, chất lượng bài viết.

# ASSESSMENT ON VIETNAMESE-ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF OBJECT LABELS AT VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S MUSEUM THROUGH FOREIGN TOURISTS' PERSPECTIVES

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**Abstract:** Translation of culture-specific items has posed many difficulties to translators as it requires thorough knowledge of both languages and cultures. This study aims to investigate the assessment of foreign tourists on the translation of object labels at Vietnamese Women's Museum and to shed light on tourist's preferences for cultural word translation procedures. In order to fulfil these objectives, a mixed-method research was conducted in which questionnaire and interview were used as the primary data collection instruments. The model proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) was applied to analyze the procedures of the cultural word translation. The findings showed that the translation at Vietnamese Women's Museum generally came up to tourists' expectation and successfully helped them understand the majority of Vietnamese culture exhibited at the museum. However, some contents relating to religion or Vietnamese customs such as Mother worshipping, consecration ritual, 13 celestial Mothers full-month ceremony and traditional outfits such as fabric-making or fabric-dyeing methods, names of traditional costumes caused some challenges to the readers. Suggestions from tourists were valuable for both translators and the museum to improve their translation and display at the museum.

*Keywords:* translation, tourists' assessment, culture-specific items

## 1. Introduction

Translated tourism texts like brochures, museum objects' descriptions or advertisements present as a bridge connecting local culture to foreign visitors (Muñoz, 2011, p. 45) and a necessary means to stimulate the tourism industry of the host country. Tourism text translation in Vietnam, however, has not been evaluated by any standardized quality assessment framework. The lack of adequate and proper translation quality assessment (TQA), to a certain extent, has led

to translators' failure in response to readers' expectations and cultural confusion among visitors. Although various studies on TQA on tourism-relating texts from the translator's point of view were conducted (Tourey, 1995; Pierini, 2007; Terestyényi, 2011; Narváez & Zambrana, 2014; Rezaei & Kuhi, 2014), there are limited still number of studies on TQA from readers' perspectives. Because readers are the end-users of the translating process, their evaluation would be a potential means to measure the quality of a translation. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the assessment of foreign tourists who are popular end-users of the process on the translation of culture-

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specific items at the Vietnamese Women's Museum (Hanoi).

Vietnamese-English translation of object labels in Vietnamese Women's Museum was chosen to be assessed in this study for two reasons. Firstly, the museum has a wide range of Vietnamese multi-cultural features including more than 1000 materials, photos and objects which are displayed in the permanent exhibition to show a significant role of Vietnamese women through separate yet connected sections. In other words, the museum can provide an equivalent source for the data collection and analysis stage. Secondly, due to its reputation as a tourist attraction in Hanoi, this place often welcomes a large number of foreign tourists, which would allow the researchers to access and conduct interviews with the tourists easily.

This study was conducted to answer the two following questions:

**Research question 1:** How did foreign tourists assess the translation quality of object labels at Vietnamese Women's Museum?

**Research question 2:** What are their preferences for the translated object labels at Vietnamese Women's Museum?

The first research question is to find out the tourists' assessment on how object labels at Vietnamese Women's Museum were translated. The findings can present the tourists' understanding of the conveyed message and to what extent the museum can express Vietnamese culture to the foreigners. Moreover, the research also sheds light on tourist's preferences for cultural word translation procedures and their suggestions for better translation if there are through the second question.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Translation assessment

Nida (1964) and Nida and Taber (1974) were well-known researchers who paid

attention to the quality of a text which was translated from one language to another. Their research focused on the question "what is a good translation?". Nida (1964) pointed out the closest natural equivalent in which the quality of translation can be evaluated by the maximum equivalent relationship between the forms and contents when language A translated into language B. Meanwhile, in *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Nida and Taber (1974) tested the translation based on the extent of verbal correspondence as well as the amount of dynamic equivalence. This means not only the verbal consistency in translation but also how the public possibly responds to it must be accounted for in TQA.

Differing from Nida and Taber's TQA approach, Steiner (1975) evaluated the translation from the opposite direction. By posing the question "what is a bad translation?", Steiner described "a bad translator" as the one that was inadequate to source text because the translator might misconstrue the origin, have limited linguistic ability in his language, or make the stylistic or psycholinguistic mistakes and inappropriate sensibility. Thanks to an overview of bad translation, translators can be aware of translation-related mistakes and avoid them to be good translators.

Unlike theories from Nida and Taber (1974) and Steiner (1975), Newmark (1988) did not focus merely on the equivalence of source text (ST) and target text (TT), but developed the evaluation of translation from various criteria, including both internal and external elements affecting assessment on translation. In *the Textbook of Translation*, Newmark (1988) indicated that translation criticism was a vital component of the translation process as it helped translators improve their competence, expand their knowledge and understanding as well as suggested various options for later

translation. Accordingly, he suggested that translation evaluation should cover:

1. Analysis of ST, focusing on intention and functional aspects;
2. Interpretation of ST's purpose, the translator's method, and the potential readership;
3. Selective but representative detail comparison of TT to the original;
4. Evaluation of translation from the translator or critic who can be a university teacher or an examiner;
5. Assessment of translation when it is placed in TT culture or discipline.

There are two new things in Newmark's approach. Firstly, readership was pointed out as one of the criteria for translation assessment. In other words, readers' perspectives could be applied in translation quality assessment. Secondly, Newmark also proposed that the assessment should be concerning culture and discipline in TT.

Steiner (1998) assessed a translation based on register theories and argued that not only metafunctional equivalences (i.e. experiential, logical, interpersonal, textual meaning, and understood pragmatic meanings by non-functional linguists) but also the register, the context that the text was put in, needs to be considered. Three register components that Steiner provided were: *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*. In the aspect of *field*, the assessment had to consider the subject matter, the goal orientation, and social activities. *Tenor* refers to agentive role, social role, social distance (level of formality and politeness), and effect were paid attention. Last but not least, in the aspect of *mode*, language role (constitutive and ancillary), the channel of discourse and medium of discourse need to be examined.

From all the approaches above, it could be seen that a translated text can be evaluated through several different criteria and no fixed model was sufficient to apply

in criticizing translation. The assessor should consider factors like translators' intentions, social contexts, translation's purpose and possible responses from readers to choose an appropriate model or a set of assessment criteria for the assessing process. In this research, readers' assessment on translation quality was the main focus. The readers who are foreign tourists visiting the Vietnamese Women's Museum have some knowledge of Vietnamese culture and expectations for understanding further. They, therefore, would be the objective examiners on how good the translation quality in the museum was.

## 2.2. Cultural translation

### 2.2.1. Definition of culture-specific items

There have been different definitions of culture-specific items in the history of translation studies. The definition of culture-specific items or cultural words was introduced by Newmark (1988) as "words that denote a specific material cultural object". Four years later, Baker (1992, p. 21) extended the concept and claimed that it could be "abstract or concrete... and may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food...". However, it is indisputable that one of the functions of culture-specific items is to reflect the culture within the language. Therefore, it can be defined as "elements of the text that are connected to certain concepts in the foreign culture (history, art, literature) which might be unknown to the readers of the target text" (Aixela, 1996, p. 14).

In terms of categorization of culture-specific items, Newmark (1988) divided them into five categories as follows:

- Ecology

This category comprises animals, plants, local winds, mountains, and plains among others. All these words can be translated

literally, with the additional culture-free explanation text where they cannot be understood denotatively or figuratively. Here are some examples of ecology terms found in Vietnamese Women's Museum: Cành cây Mây me-Tree branches, Lúa nước-Aquatic rice, Rễ cây Móc Mây-Root of the Moc May tree, etc.

- Material culture

Concepts like food, clothes, housing, transports, and communications all belong to the category "material culture". In Vietnamese-English translation, these words are often translated using transference procedure and descriptive equivalent for the purpose of both corresponding to the general readership and educating readers in case there is a new technology or knowledge. The following examples are taken from the translation at the Vietnamese Women's Museum: Cốm-Young sticky rice, nem-Vietnamese Springroll, Váy ống-Tubular skirt, Váy xếp ly-Pleated skirts, etc.

- Social Culture: This is a group of works and leisure terms like names of human labor, entertainment, hobbies, or sports.

- Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts

This category consists of political, social, legal, religious, and artistic aspects which may refer to the institutional terms of the political and social life of a country. Like others, this category has a variety of terms which cannot be easily translated into English. As a result, they are often translated as the two following examples: The title for the head of state like 'Quan Lớn Tuần Tranh' could be translated in two ways: being kept in its original version for educated readership or 'Great Mandarin Tuan Tranh' for a general one. Or religious activities 'Lễ cúng Mẹ' is known in translated document as 'The cult of the celestial mothers, Cung Mu'.

- Gestures and habits

There are usually non-linguistic features which can be found in the form of names of regular behaviors and movements. It should be noted that words in this category often create ambiguity due to differences between function and description in gestures and habits among cultures can create. For example, kissing fingertips for greeting or praising or spit for blessing occurs in one culture and not in others.

### 2.2.2. *The problem of untranslatability of culture-specific items*

Culture-specific items, in many cases, cannot be translated because there is no equivalence in terms of linguistic or cultural aspects or both in source language (SL) and target language (TL). According to Catford (1965), 'linguistic untranslatability' occurs when "the functionally relevant features include some which are formal features of the language of the SL text. If the TL has no formally corresponding feature, the text, or the item, is (relatively) untranslatable". However, the key often lies in the cultural-concept discrepancies between SL and TL or cultural untranslatability. "What appears to be a quite different problem arises, however, when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL text, is completely absent in the culture of which the TL is a part" (Catford, 1965, p. 99). Take the term 'áo bà ba' in Vietnamese as a typical example, it is nearly impossible to find an equivalent translation of it in English because of the cultural gap between Vietnamese and English cultures.

Because of that, Bhabha (2012) claimed that cultural translation could be defined as a process in which there were no restricted texts, and the focus was on general cultural processes rather than finite linguist products. This could give an overview of the translation at Vietnamese Women's Museum as the content of the displayed exhibition is

exclusively characterized for Vietnamese cultures including terms in cultivation and daily life activities, household tools related to agriculture identity, religious practices, national social features, customs and history.

### 2.2.3. *Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) translation procedures for translating culture-specific items*

According to Newmark (1988), translation procedures are regarded as methods applied by translators when they formulate an equivalence to transfer elements of meaning from the Source Text (ST) to the Target Text (TT). In contrast to translation strategies, which are usually understood as the translators' global approach or plan of action on a given text, based on their intention, translation procedures are used for sentences and smaller units of language within that text.

When it comes to cultural translation, Venuti (1995, 2008) proposed two major strategies: Domestication and Foreignization. Domestication relates to translation procedures in which a transparent and fluent style is

adopted to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for TL readers. As Domestication is applied, the translator has to risk imposing his or her voice, abolishing some messages in terms of culture, style and description of the original author (LaPlante, 2008). On the other hand, Foreignization refers to a target text produced in a way that deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997). Foreignization is suitable for target audiences who prefer a source-oriented translation. Those are somehow knowledgeable about the SL culture and want to understand cultural references and foreign traits of the text.

The two translation strategies have been used by various researchers, including Georges (1998), Laviosa-Braithwaite (1998) and Vinay and Darbelnet (2000). In their study, Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) proposed seven translation procedures which translators could apply when translating culture-specific items as following:

Table 1. Translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (2000)

<b>Domestication</b>	<b>Foreignization</b>
Transposition	Borrowing (Transference)
Modulation	Calque (Through-translation)
Equivalence	Literal translation
Adaptation	

Four procedures including Transposition, Modulation, Equivalence, and Adaptation were categorized into Domestication group. Transposition refers to the change of grammar from SL to TL. For example, it can be the change from singular to plural, the change when a specific SL structure does not exist in the TL, when literal translation is possible but not appropriate for the TL, and the replacement of a lexical gap with the grammatical structure.

Modulation is defined as the variation through a change of perspectives. This procedure can be (a) abstract for concrete ('golden heart', lòng tốt), (b) cause for effect ('he walked out of our sight', chúng tôi không nhìn thấy anh ta nữa), (c) one part for another ('I bought this shirt for an arm and a leg', tôi mua cái áo này với giá cắt cổ), (d) reversal of terms ('I lent him my bike', anh ta mượn xe tôi), (e) active for passive, (f) space for time ('at

primary school’, hồi còn đi học), (g) change of symbols (‘she is as lazy as a lizard’, cô ấy lười như hủi), (h) positive and negative. Equivalence is applied to different terms in the same situation. In a simple way, these terms refer to notices, familiar alternatives, phrases and idioms. The last procedure in this category is Adaptation, which is the use of recognized equivalent between two situations.

Borrowing or Transference, Calque or Through-translation and Literal translation belong to Foreignization group. Borrowing or Transference procedure is the process of

transferring a SL word into a TL text in order to give the sense of intimacy between cultures and readers. Literal translation of common collocations, names of organization, and components of compounds, or phrases is listed as Calque or Through-translation. Meanwhile, Literal translation means SL text is translated literally into TL as their meanings are corresponsive to other alternative procedures.

To make it more straightforward, here are some examples of the object label translation at Vietnamese Women’s Museum according to Vinay and Darbelnet (2000)’s procedures:

Table 2. Translation procedures applied to translate object labels at Vietnamese Women’s Museum

Strategies	Vietnamese translation	English translation	Object labels’ Image	
	Transposition	Mang thai	The pregnant woman	
	Modulation	None	None	
Domestication	Equivalence	Đòn gánh	Shoulder pole	
	Adaptation	Hệ thống thờ Mẫu	The Mother Goddess Pantheon	

	Transference	Ao dai	Ao dai	
Foreignization	Calque	None	None	
	Literal Translation	Thắt lưng	Belt	

In this study, the authors decided to choose Vinay and Darbelnet (2000)’s categorization for the reasons that the procedures proposed in this model are concise in the manner and the items are not overlapped with each other. As a result, it will be easy to comprehend, analyze, and apply. Moreover, the taxonomy of translation procedures provides a closer look to encourage one to look beyond simple structural alterations between SL and TL. The role of the translator, as a result, could be examined as a creative intermediary between the original author and his or her target audience in the process of translation-mediated communication.

2.3. Translation quality assessment through readers’ perspectives

The term “quality” is defined by European Organization for Quality Control as “the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy a given need” (Wenger, 1981). Agreed or not, a translation should be considered as a product or service which satisfies the needs of understanding and communication of its customers who, in this case, are readers in TL. In other words, readers are the end-users

of the process, and their role in translation quality assessment does matter. Nida (2001) in *Language and culture: Contexts in translating* pointed out that “What is important is the extent to which receptors correctly understand and appreciate the translated text”. This statement reemphasized Newmark’s (1988) view when he suggested using a communicative approach rather than a semantic approach in vocative text translation for the reason that the former “conveys the message and effect more effectively to the readers” (as cited in Lim & Loi, 2015, p. 8). Additionally, Pinto (2001) believes that “the quality of translation is a perception that depends directly on the degree of satisfaction reached by its readers” (Pinto, 2001, p. 297). He also attaches the importance of examining readers’ needs and expectations in formulating translation’s specific objectives. One of the most noteworthy studies should be mentioned here is the one by Hickey (2003) in which he compared lay readers’ assessment with that of translation experts. The findings of his research concluded that lay readers can point out “a large array of translation problems such as translationese, illogicality and contextual inappropriateness and that their judgments can provide revealing insights into

the quality of translation” (as cited in Lim & Loi, 2015, p. 10).

The readers always make inferences and create meaning when dealing with words of the translated texts; therefore, their evaluation should be taken into account. Nevertheless, level, as well as value of the potential assessment, may depend on the readers’ awareness of “culture, their perceptual abilities and their schemata, and the ability to reconstruct the text style according to their interests and tastes” (Yenkimaleki, 2016, p. 139). In his study, Yenkimaleki also pointed out that the readers usually experience two types of processing when encountering the text in general and translation in particular. One is “bottom-up processing” in which understanding of the text’s meaning is almost immediate as the readers are familiar with vocabulary and structures. In contrast, understanding the meaning associated with hypothesizing and delay is involved in top-down processing when the readers have to deal with unfamiliar vocabulary and structures. Obviously, the two processing might widely vary based on the age, educational level, familiarity with the subject content and other features of readers. However, one thing that can be highlighted here is understanding readers’ competence is critical for translators to choose the appropriate translation approach in order to achieve a good translation. For example, the choice of domestication or foreignization translation strategy (familiar or unfamiliar words) depends on the fact that who the readers are and what their assumptions about the context are. Xu (2016) claimed that the target of any translation is equivalent to the ST in terms of the reader’s reaction to the text as a result of interaction between the reader’s schematic knowledge and the textual realization. The criterion of translation quality is then how to construct the closest sets of

dynamic interactions among schemata in the TT reader’s mind via the textual form.

In short, the target-text readers who consume the end product should be considered as potential assessors to measure the success or failure of a translation. Their response may contribute to not only significant comments on the effectiveness of the translation process but also further recommendations to improve the translation version. In this study, as the primary source of visitors to the Vietnamese Women’s Museum, foreign tourists would be chosen to the readers for assessment.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Research Subject and Participants*

The main subject of the study was object labels displayed at Vietnamese Women’s Museum in its six major sections, namely women’s marriage, birth, family life, mother worshipping, women in history, and women’s fashion. The first part about marriage and birth includes the objects of wedding offerings, gifts, bride and groom clothes, invitation cards, or medications for mothers from different ethnic groups in Vietnam. The Vietnamese Mother-worshipping religion, war weapons, daily household goods, items, clothes or motif techniques are presented in other parts. All the contents are typically diverse in culture-specific items, which makes them the adequate subjects of this research.

The labels can be divided into two main types including the short titles in white bold with the name on the board indicating what the object was and the long description next to the short one indicating further information of the object, its usage, material, ownership, or related custom. The collected data was over 700 images of all object labels. A list of

477 Vietnamese-English translations, which were short titles in bold and some outstanding phrases related to sewing techniques of long titles, were then selected for further assessment.

Forty foreign visitors from English-speaking countries, including the USA, England, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were invited to be participants in this study. First, they were all tourists visiting the Vietnamese Women's Museum for the first time. This would assure the naturalness of participants' interest in the Vietnamese culture displayed at the museum. Second, as their Western cultural background would differentiate them from Vietnamese culture knowledge, this might result in significant findings in their evaluation of object labels' translation in the Vietnamese Women's Museum. It should be noted that these participants came from different working fields ranging from education (40%), business (25%), health care (15%) to art and entertainment (15%).

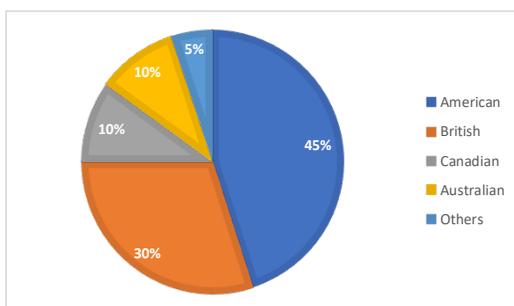


Chart 1. Tourists' nationality

Regarding tourists' self-evaluation on their understanding of Vietnamese culture, the majority (70%) rated their knowledge as "fair" while 30% thought they rarely knew about Vietnamese culture and no one rated "good".

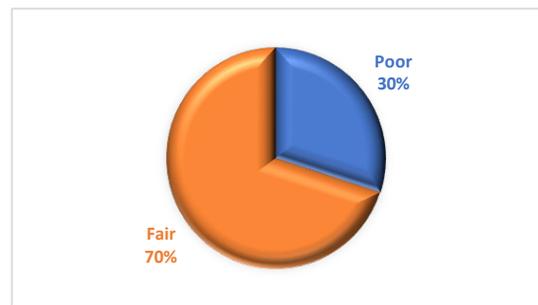


Chart 2. Tourists' self-evaluation on their understanding of Vietnamese culture

### 3.2. Data collection instruments

A questionnaire and follow-up interview were conducted to collect data in this study. The two-page questionnaire (see **Appendix 1** for a full version of the questionnaire) contained two parts. The first part was to collect participants' background information, including their nationalities, occupations, ages and genders. The second part had five questions: the first three questions investigating tourist's difficulties in understanding the translation and their explanation; the fourth asking about their overall evaluation for translation quality at the Vietnamese Women's Museum and the last re-checked their self-evaluation on the understanding of the translation. In order to answer it, the participants were asked to interpret five Vietnamese culture-related words which had no exact English equivalence.

The survey results, however, could not show cultural understanding of the respondents as well as stories behind their answers. Consequently, an in-depth interview was conducted as soon as the tourists finished answering the questionnaire. It was designed with short questions for the researchers to explain the meaning of translation that foreigners found it difficult to understand in the questionnaire and ask further details about their comments on the translation quality. Also, the respondents' references and recommendations (if there were) to improve the current translation quality of culture-specific items would be clarified.

### 3.3. Data collection procedures

#### *Stage 1: Pilot questionnaire and interview*

To ensure the effectiveness of collected information from the questionnaire and interview, pilot ones were carried out by sending test questionnaires to three native English speakers via email and giving a test questionnaire and interview to 2 actual foreigners visiting Vietnamese Women's Museum. Their answers were revised to complete the final version.

#### *Stage 2: Deliver the questionnaires and conduct the interviews*

Face-to-face questionnaires and interviews were carried out to collect data from the 40 foreign visitors from English-speaking countries visiting the Vietnamese Women's Museum. These interviews were conducted in English to guarantee the origin and preciseness of the study. The semi-structure allowed flexibility and naturalness for new questions to be probed in. Both recording and note-taking were used to record data (with agreement and permission from respondents).

This was the procedure to conduct questionnaires and interviews

#### **Step 1:** Participant invitation

The researcher guided a private tour for one or two English native speakers at Vietnamese Women's Museum. At the end of the tour, the researcher asked participants for permission to collect data for the study.

#### **Step 2:** Questionnaire instructions

The researcher instructed respondents to complete the questionnaire.

#### **Step 3:** Completing the questionnaire and interview

The researcher asked respondents to complete the questionnaire and went on with further interview questions.

### 3.4. Data analysis procedures

Quantitative and qualitative analysis (for survey and interview) was employed to analyze the collected data for this study. After collecting the data from the questionnaire, the tourists' background information and their answers were classified in similar groups of common trends. These data were converted to percentages and presented in graphs. The note from the interview was written down in order to find out the dominant tourists' assessment on translation quality at the Vietnamese Women's Museum.

## 4. Findings and discussion

### 4.1. Research question 1

#### 4.1.1. Tourists' difficulties in understanding

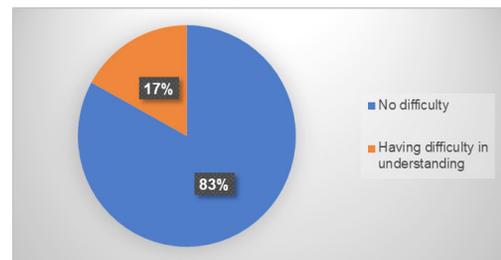


Chart 3. Difficulty in understanding

Chart 3 shows that the majority of the participants found no difficulty in understanding the translation of object labels at the Vietnamese Women's Museum. Several tourists used words like "well-presented translation", "easy to understand", "very clear", "all good" and "well-done translation" to comment on the translation.

However, 17% (7 people) responded that they found it difficult to understand some parts of the translation. The ambiguous and confusing content is often related to marriage, cultivation tools, Mother worshipping, and traditional clothes. In particular, the participants said they hardly understood and were unfamiliar with specialized terms about cloth-making techniques (i.e. 'motif art', 'batik', 'applique', 'ikat'); kinds of society in Vietnamese culture (i.e. 'patrilineal',

‘matrilineal’); names of traditional Vietnamese clothes (i.e. ‘Tu than’, ‘ao dai’), and tools of cultivation (‘sickle’, ‘ploughing’). The other culture-specific items in religious practices like ‘Mother Goddess worshipping’ (‘thờ Mẫu’ in Vietnamese), ‘consecration ritual’ (‘lễ bán khoán’ in Vietnamese) were also on the list.

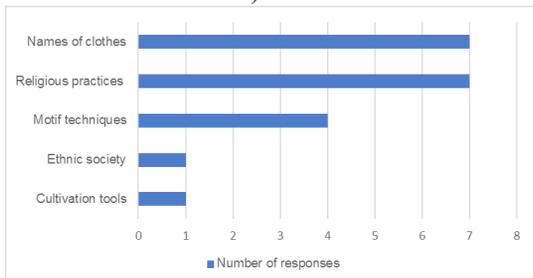


Chart 4. Responses in understanding difficulty

It can also be seen that Vietnamese culture-specific items such as names of clothes, religious practices and motif techniques were rated as the most challenging for the tourists in this study to understand. These words often had no equivalence in English or were not familiar with foreigners in their culture and background knowledge.

4.1.2. Tourists’ translation quality assessment

When being asked about translation quality at the Vietnamese Women’s Museum, almost all tourists showed a high level of satisfaction. To be more specific, 65% of visitors voted “completely satisfied” and 35% rated “quite satisfied”. There was no record of the votes for ‘satisfied’, ‘less satisfied’, or ‘dissatisfied’ (Chart 5).

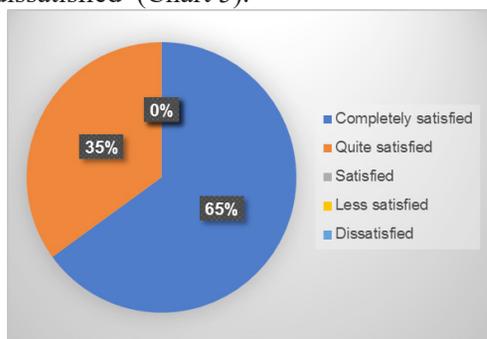


Chart 5. Translation quality satisfaction

The participants also evaluated the percentage of content at the Vietnamese Women Museum that they could understand with ease through the scale of 0 to 10. Half of them had no difficulties in understanding the culture-related content in translation at the museum. Noticeably, there were 20% of tourists who could get the whole meaning of all object labels. Meanwhile, the number of respondents understanding only half of the information was only 5%.

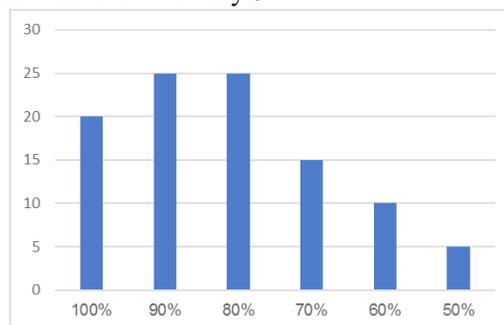


Chart 6. Level of content tourists can understand

4.1.3. Re-check reliability of tourists’ self-evaluation

Believing that all positiveness from the participants in the previous assessment was subjective, the researchers decided to re-check the reliability of tourist self-assessment. All the respondents were asked to explain their understanding of five culture-specific items taken from the museum’s exhibition. They were ‘Celestial Mother’ (‘bà mẹ’), ‘Consecration Ritual’ (‘lễ bán khoán’), ‘Mother Goddess’ (Mẫu), ‘Shoulder Pole’ (‘Quang gánh’), ‘Ao Dai’ (‘áo dài’). These Vietnamese culture-bound words were selected as the researchers noticed that they related to religion, clothes and street vendors, which often caused certain misunderstanding and ambiguity for visitors. To be more specific, the words were given to participants without showing pictures or any other visual aids of them. The result was shown in the table hereafter.

Table 3. Responses of tourists for interpreting cultural translation

No.	Culture-specific items	Definition	Translation Procedure	Translation Strategies	Number of correct responses	Percentages of right answer in 83% (33 people) participants with no difficulty in understanding
1	Celestial mother	13 mothers taking care of baby before birth	Equivalence	Domestication	2	6%
2	Consecration ritual	Ritual of putting the baby's soul in the temple for protection	Equivalence	Domestication	None	0%
3	Mother Goddess	System of four Mothers and Pantheon of Goddess protect/ care for everything	Equivalence	Domestication	18	54,5%
4	Shoulder Pole	The pole for carrying baskets of street vendor	Equivalence	Domestication	23	69,7%
5	Ao dai	Vietnamese traditional dress	Borrowing	Foreignization	1	3%

It can be seen that there was a small number of tourists who could recall the meaning of terms number 1, 2, 5 (only 0%-6% of visitors could interpret correctly). After being explained the meanings of 5 terms, 'ao dai' and 'shoulder pole' could be recalled by 100% tourists, while the percentage for 'Mother Goddess' was 93,9% (31 out of 33). Nevertheless, the percentage remained unchanged for 'celestial mother' and 'consecration ritual' as no tourist was able to remember the section related to the two terms above.

As the data revealed, 'celestial mother' and 'consecration ritual' were the two most poorly understood terms, while 'mother worshipping' along with 'ao dai' and 'shoulder pole' are the more noticeable

ones. The reasons given by tourists was that among five terms of different Vietnamese cultural activities above, 'Mother-Goddess Worshipping' and 'Street Vendor' were exhibited in separated rooms at Vietnamese Women's Museum, while the other three were just shown in small sections of each floor, so these terms are more noticeable and well-informed. Also, the images of street vendors and Vietnamese national dress imprinted in tourists' impression when they first came to Vietnam since they can be seen on the street, at shops, Vietnam Airlines flight attendants' uniforms, tourist handbooks, souvenirs.

In short, despite the fairly satisfactory level of self-evaluation from 83% of participants, the Vietnamese culture-specific words still

posed significant challenges for readers to understand and remember due to dissimilarity between the cultures and languages.

#### 4.2. Research question 2

##### 4.2.1. Tourists' preferences

To investigate the participants' preferences for translation at the museum, the researchers classified object labels' translation into procedures based on Vinay and Darbelbet's model (2000) and noted the tourists' choices of their favored procedures after showing them the classified table. The percentages of translation procedures and strategy used to translate the total of 477 selected object labels at the Vietnamese Women's Museum in this study were illustrated in Chart 7. As Calque and Modulation procedures were not used in translating object labels, the pie chart did not include these two procedures.

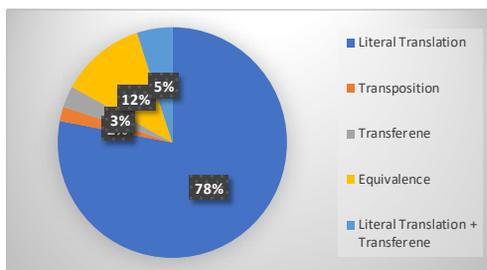


Chart 7. Percentages of translation procedures

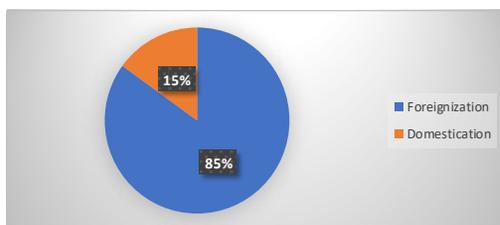


Chart 8. Percentages of translation strategies

As can be seen in the pie chart, literal translation accounted for 78% of translation while other procedures were rarely used

in translation at Vietnamese Women's Museum (only 2%-12% of object labels' translation used other procedures). Similarly, foreignization strategy is employed as much as 85% in translation. From the statistics, it can be seen that the translator(s) of the museum exhibits intended to keep the translation natural and close to readers by mostly using foreignization strategy.

After having been shown the table of classifying procedures and strategies of translation, the tourists' highest preferences of procedure were 'literal translation' at 90%, followed by 'transposition' and 'descriptive equivalence' at 70% and 57,5 % respectively. Other procedures were dismissed as 'hard to understand without explanation', or 'unfamiliar'. The tourists explained that the content whose meaning was conveyed by literal translation procedure was easy to understand no matter the different shape or structure of the object is. They also added that the familiarity with the words helped them visualize the usage or function of the displayed items. In terms of the culture-specific items, "descriptive equivalence was unavoidable" as descriptive translation could maintain the 'culture value' and help them visualize the object. Finally, the tourists did not recognize any differences between literal translation and transposition. As they did not know Vietnamese, grammar changes in transposition procedure could not be recognized from tourists' views.

Overall, literal translation and descriptive equivalence were the most favored procedures in translating at Vietnamese Women's Museum.

##### 4.2.2. Tourists' recommendations

When being asked for recommendations for better translation at Vietnamese Women's Museum (especially the culture-specific items

that are difficult to understand), all the tourists had no other way to translate. Their common explanations were that their familiarity with Vietnamese culture might not be wide enough to recognize without seeing models, pictures, or reading descriptions and explanations. Their suggestions, therefore, were to broaden Vietnamese culture through tourist brochures, booklets, guide books, or advertisements. For example, if ‘áo dài’ is one of the most traditional and typical dresses, so it was appropriate to keep its original Vietnamese name. But for ‘áo tứ thân’, the tourists said they had barely or never seen it before in Vietnamese tourist brochures or advertisements, hence, it should be translated in a descriptive way. For example, it is suggested that the term may be translated as ‘áo tứ thân’ - a traditional Vietnamese costume with four panels.

#### *4.3. Discussion and implication*

As can be seen from the results above, there are some suggestions the researchers have withdrawn from. First of all, in general, translation at Vietnamese Women’s Museum came up to tourists’ expectations and successfully delivered the majority content of the museum to help visitors visualize and make them find Vietnamese culture interesting. However, some contents relating to religion or Vietnamese customs (Mother worshipping, consecration ritual, 13 celestial Mothers full-month ceremony) and traditional outfits (fabric-making or fabric-dyeing methods, names of traditional costumes) caused some difficulties for readers. Hence, the Vietnamese Women’s Museum should pay more attention to the display sections of these contents. It is suggested that explanation texts or the introduction of some religious belief and concept, more information, or English description of Vietnamese names can be added in order to help visitors understand more about the Vietnamese culture.

Secondly, Vietnamese culture needs more recognition from foreign visitors. For instance, while most foreigners can recognize traditional costumes’ names from other countries like ‘Hanbok’ from Korean or ‘Kimono’ from Japan, ‘Ao dai’ from Vietnam is hardly retained by tourists unless they have come to Vietnam before. This highlighted that the Vietnamese government or travel agencies should consider spreading images of Vietnamese cultures, including diversity of ethnic minority groups, traditional ceremonies, costumes, cuisines, music, and local customs more internationally. Public media like magazines, advertisements, tourist brochures, handbooks, or social networks can be a useful means in this case. Besides, as these concepts are strange to foreigners from other cultures, they should be introduced informatively and thoroughly in the simple short text so that foreigners can absorb and remember with ease. Last but not least, when the translators want to keep the origin of Vietnamese names, added explanations in English should appear apart from Vietnamese version in order to make readers memorize the content.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The study revealed that most tourists (83%), despite their different gender, background, or nationality, found no difficulty in understanding translated terms and no tourists felt ‘dissatisfied’ with the translation. On top of that, the response rates were beyond expectation with only positive votes of ‘completely satisfied’ and ‘quite satisfied’. In contrast, when it comes to the negative side, most tourists still had difficulty in understanding some Vietnamese cultural translations relating to religion and national costumes.

Besides, tourists' preferences for translation were literal translation, transposition, and descriptive equivalent. They also recommended that literal translation should be mostly used because objects share similar features between cultures; therefore, this procedure is simple to understand with visual supports like models or pictures of objects. For Vietnamese culture-specific items that cannot be translated literally, the descriptive equivalent would be helpful for readers to visualize the object. Furthermore, the tourists suggested more detailed explanations for some Vietnamese culture-bound terms as well as wishes for Vietnamese culture to become more popular and advertised in public media. This, to some extent, helps foreigners assess Vietnamese culture easier so that the chance for them to understand cultural translation would be enhanced.

In terms of limitation, this study was conducted on a small scale (40 foreign visitors) at the Vietnamese Women's Museum. This can affect the diversity of tourists' assessment and the result of the study. In addition, the content of the museum covers many aspects and the sizeable exhibitions consist of four floors with smaller sections in various Vietnamese-related areas. Hence, the questionnaires and interviews conducted at the end of the visit can be less qualitative as most tourists cannot remember the difficult translations to understand and their tiredness also made the judgment less precise.

When it comes to recommendations for further studies, it should be noted that further study can be conducted on a larger scale with a larger group of tourists and research subjects in order to enhance the reliability and equality of the research. Additionally, the approach of the study can be explored from another point of view, not only the readers' assessment on

the translation of cultural object labels but also from the translators' perspectives. Last but not least, further research's subject can be different from object labels at Vietnamese's Women Museum. It can be another culture-specific translation at different museums.

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## ĐÁNH GIÁ VỀ BẢN DỊCH VIỆT-ANH CÁC MẪU VẬT Ở BẢO TÀNG PHỤ NỮ VIỆT NAM QUA GÓC NHÌN CỦA DU KHÁCH NƯỚC NGOÀI

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**Tóm tắt:** Dịch từ ngữ văn hóa gây ra nhiều khó khăn cho người dịch vì công việc này đòi hỏi kiến thức sâu rộng về cả ngôn ngữ và văn hóa. Nghiên cứu này nhằm nghiên cứu đánh giá của khách du lịch về bản dịch thuật các mẫu vật tại Bảo tàng Phụ nữ Việt Nam và làm sáng tỏ các ưu tiên của khách du lịch đối với các thủ pháp dịch từ văn hóa. Nhằm hoàn thành các mục tiêu này, một nghiên cứu hỗn hợp đã được thực hiện, trong đó phương pháp điều tra qua bảng hỏi và phỏng vấn đã được sử dụng làm công cụ thu thập dữ liệu chính. Mô hình đề xuất của Vinay và Darbelnet (2000) được sử dụng để phân tích các quy trình dịch thuật được áp dụng trong việc dịch các từ văn hóa. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy nhìn chung bản dịch tại Bảo tàng Phụ nữ Việt Nam đã đáp ứng kỳ vọng và truyền tải thành công phần lớn nội dung, giúp du khách hiểu đa phần nội dung văn hóa được trưng bày tại Bảo tàng. Tuy nhiên, một số nội dung liên quan đến tôn giáo hoặc phong tục ở Việt Nam bao gồm thờ Mẫu, lễ bán khoán, tục cúng Mụ (cúng đầy tháng) và trang phục truyền thống như phương thức may hoặc nhuộm vải, tên trang phục truyền thống) gây ra một số khó khăn cho độc giả. Các đề xuất từ khách du lịch có giá trị cho cả người dịch và Bảo tàng để cải thiện bản dịch và phần trưng bày tại Bảo tàng.

*Từ khóa:* dịch thuật, đánh giá của khách du lịch, thuật ngữ văn hóa.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

We are a research team from University of Languages and International Studies. We are carrying this survey to collect data for our research “ASSESSMENT ON VIETNAMESE-ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF OBJECT LABELS AT VIETNAMESE WOMEN’S MUSEUM THROUGH FOREIGN TOURISTS’ PERSPECTIVES”

We would be very grateful if you could complete this questionnaire. The information will be used for research purposes only. Thank you for your contribution!

A. Participant’s background

Nationality:..... Gender:.....
Occupation:..... Age:.....

B. Translation Assessment

1. In which area of VWM do you find difficult to understand the translating label? (You can choose more than one or none)

- a. Labels related to marriage custom
b. Labels related to birth custom
c. Labels related to women in history
d. Labels related to traditional clothes
e. Labels related to family items
f. Labels related to mother worshipping
g. Labels related to cultivation tools

2. Can you give examples of some translating labels at the museum that you do not understand?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. What do you think about translation quality at Vietnamese Women’s Museum?



4. What is your general understanding of Vietnamese culture?

- a. Good
- b. Fair
- c. Poor

5. How you interpret the phrases below:

- a. Celestial mother: .....
- b. Consecration ritual: .....
- c. Mother Goddess: .....
- d. Shoulder pole: .....
- e. Ao dai: .....

6. From the scale of 1 to 10, please indicate the level of content of the museum translation that you can understand with ease.



This is the end of the questionnaire!

If you are interested in my research or have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me via [tranphuonglinh1209@gmail.com](mailto:tranphuonglinh1209@gmail.com). Thank you for your time!

**Appendix 2: Interview**

**Part A: Tourists’ assessment**

1. Can you explain your answer to question 1? If there is difficulty, can you name the particular factors that make you feel difficult in understanding this field?
2. (Explain the meaning of difficult understanding items in question 2 and 5 for participants). After understanding the label(s), do you have any recommendations for better translation?
3. What is your general opinion about Vietnamese-English translation of object labels at VWM?

**Part B: Tourists’ preference**

1. What way of translating in the museum do you like best?  
(Given the table of classified labels based on different procedures and strategies)  
If you are not satisfied with the translation, do you have any suggestions or preference for better translation?

# THE UK'S REFERENDUMS DURING ITS INTEGRATION INTO THE EU (1973-2016)

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**Abstract:** Throughout the UK's integration into the EU (1973-2016), referendums were considered and used as an effective political tool for the Government to negotiate with the common people on important issues. During the period of 43 years, the Government called for their practices 12 times with an uneven frequency between the UK's leaders, namely the UK's Prime Ministers. One important notice is that among the 12 referendums, only two have direct links to the relationship between the UK and the EU. This article looks into the use of referendums in the UK in general and the two that are directly related to the EU in particular in the period of 1973-2016. Its conclusion and findings are expected to help outline the usage of this political tool in the contemporary and futuristic climax of the country.

*Keywords:* UK, EU, referendums, integration, political tool

## 1. The referendums during the UK's integration into the EU

Referendum is defined as “the principle or practice of submitting to popular vote a measure passed on or proposed by a legislative body or by popular initiative” or “a diplomatic agent’s note asking for government instructions” (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

Discussing the use of referendums in the kingdom, the UK's diplomats and elites comment: “Referendums, by which citizens

are given opportunity to express a view on specific issues, have antecedents in the Middle Ages and earlier... But in comparison with some other democracies, the referendum has been little used in the United Kingdom” (House of Lords, 2010, p. 7).

During the 43 years integrating the UK<sup>1</sup> into the EU<sup>2</sup>, referendum was used 12 times as listed in the table below, two of which are directly related to the country's presence in the EU.

Ordinal number	Date/year	Issue	Scale	UK Prime Minister's regime	Result
1	8 March 1973	whether Northern Ireland should remain part of the United Kingdom or join the Republic of Ireland	Local (Northern Ireland)	Ted Heath (The Conservative)	YES
2	5 June 1975	whether the UK should stay in the European Community	Nation-wide (the UK)	Harold Wilson (The Labour)	YES

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation of The European Union, a powerful regional institution of 27 countries and territories (the data updated to November, 2020) in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviation of The United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, a powerful country in Europe whose GDP ranks the fifth of the 196 global economies in 2019.

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3	1 March 1979	whether there should be a Scottish Assembly	Local (Scotland)	James Callaghan (The Labour)	YES but still not a VALID RESULT <sup>1</sup>
4	1 March 1979	whether there should be a Welsh Assembly	Local (Wales)	James Callaghan (The Labour)	NO
5	11 September 1997	whether there should be a Scottish Parliament and whether the Scottish Parliament should have tax varying powers	Local (Scotland)	Tony Blair (The Labour)	YES
6	18 September 1997	whether there should be a National Assembly for Wales	Local (Wales)	Tony Blair (The Labour)	YES
7	7 May 1998	whether there should be a Mayor of London and Greater London Authority	London - Greater London	Tony Blair (The Labour)	YES
8	22 May 1998	Belfast Agreement referendum on the Good Friday Agreement	Northern Ireland	Tony Blair (The Labour)	YES
9	3 March 2011	whether the National Assembly for Wales should gain the power to legislate on a wider range of matters	Local (Wales)	David Cameron (The Conservative)	YES
10	5 May 2011	whether to change the voting system for electing MPs to the House of Commons from first past the post to the alternative vote	Nation-wide (the UK)	David Cameron (The Conservative)	NO
11	18 September 2014	whether Scotland should become an independent country	Local (Scotland)	David Cameron (The Conservative)	NO
12	23 June 2016	whether the UK should remain in the EU	Nation-wide (the UK)	David Cameron (The Conservative)	NO

Tracing back to the origin of referendums in the UK's history, many authors agree that this tool has been created as a prominent example or illustration of the democracy (Atkinson & Blick, 2017). The court by Arthur King in the 11<sup>th</sup> century was well-known all over Europe as the most brilliantly democratic political system compared to those of the neighboring countries meanwhile (Staropoli, 2014). This country has been prestigiously famous as the land of democracy since then. Later, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the UK was also recognized as the cradle of the parliamentary governmental institution (history.com, 2019). The peaceful cohabitation between the monarchy institution and the parliamentary institution in Britain over the time has been

considered a symbol of highest democracy, where different political theorems and systems can live in harmony with each other. In the modern time, the use of referendums in this country once more proves the widespread democracy here - towards and inside each of its citizens, offering them a chance to raise their voice and participate in the nation's duties and welfare.

Generally the referendums used in the UK are aimed at the following targets:

<sup>1</sup> The regulations on valid results of a referendum requires at least 40 per cent of the electorate to vote yes, but here in this referendum a small majority, which was short of 40 per cent threshold, voted yes and made the result invalid. Therefore, after the referendum, the devolution was still not enacted.

(1) enhancing the democratic process; (2) being a “weapon of entrenchment”; (3) settling an issue; (4) being a “protective device”; (5) enhancing citizen engagement; (6) promoting voter education; (7) ensuring that voters are able to make sound judgments; (8) being popular with voters; (9) complementing representative democracy (House of Lords, 2010, pp. 13-16).

However, many politicians have pointed out the weaknesses of this political tool which are indiscernibly true to the nature of British context. The most widely approved drawbacks include: (1) referendums are just a tactical device; (2) they are dominated by elite groups; (3) they can have a damaging effect on minority groups; (4) referendums are a “conservative” device; (5) they do not effectively “settle” an issue; (6) they fail to deal with complex issues; (7) they tend not to be about the issue in question; (8) voters show little desire to participate in referendums; (9) they are costly; (10) referendums undermine representative democracy (House of Lords, 2010, pp. 16-20).

Due to the fact that the number of advantages of referendums does not completely outweigh the disadvantages, its usage can trigger serious controversy among related parties and individuals.

## **2. An analysis of the referendums during the UK’s integration into the EU**

In-depth investigation into the Table of Referendums in the UK during 1973-2016 has revealed important findings and indications on the health of the country’s politics, as well as its relationship with the EU.

On the issue of domestic politics, the table shows that of the twelve referendums carried out in the UK in the period of 1973-2016, there are only three at the nation-wide level.

Furthermore, of the nine local ones, three took place in Scotland, three in Wales, two in Northern Ireland and only one referendum in the territory of London-Greater London. These practices indicate the conflicts that run quietly among the four components of the nation, namely Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland. England with its capital city of London and most of the country’s headquarters of the political, cultural and economic life seems to maintain the most concrete stability for the territory during the given time. The situation also reflects a fact that the local authorities in the UK are dynamic and are asking for continuous devolution from the central government.

On the matter of leadership styles or leader charisma, Margaret Thatcher seems to be the most dominant. During her time in the office, there was no single referendum held in the UK, either at the local or national level. This situation may partly be attributed to the party division and domestic and international political stability, too. The most chaotic period presented in David Cameron’s government. Five years of his time witnessed four referendums, three of them came out with his dissatisfaction (three NO - results). While his peer in the Conservative, Margaret Thatcher was disinterested at the EU summit meetings because of her straightforward and dominant manners (Pilkington, 2001), Cameron maintained a more reasonable voice to ensure his respect and position at Brussels, which is also his weakness when the UK’s problematic politics asked him to be more attached to the country’s sovereignty and benefits (Chu Thanh Van, 2017, pp. 92-138). The ironic aspect of the last referendum on the position of the UK in the EU is that while the nation had assigned its government to deal with all negotiations with the EU on conditions for its further staying in the Union, it required the final

decision of leaving or remaining to be made by the common people, who had much less information and truths on what was genuinely going in the Union and who had been easily hijacked or kidnapped by the populists - those have ingrained inside the country so deeply that they understand clearly every pros and cons of the British nature. This fact has been criticized by scholars both inside and outside the country (Qvortrup, 2016; Saunders, 2016).

The four referendums carried out during Tony Blair's office time all brought out a YES answer. Tony, in fact, did actually the best of all the UK's Prime Ministers of the period 1973-2016. He balanced skillfully the role of mediate between the UK and the EU, leading the country into the heart of the Union as he ever promised (Berlaymon, 2007). Tony's harmonious and pleasant leadership lifestyle and the UK's gradual economic stability during his office time have been considered the two main reasons for this warm relationship (Chu Thanh Van, 2017).

On the international level, the two referendums that are directly related to the integration of the UK into the EU took place in 1975 and 2016 - a gap of 41 years when the two partners had grown up into different perspectives and positions. The 1973 referendum ensured the UK's attitudes and commitments into the EU while the 2016 opened wide the gate for the nation to exit from the Union. Together with the popularism and Euro-scepticism waken up in the continent, the Brexit in 2016 had created land-slide effects on the shaking and breaking down of regionalism and globalization not only in Europe but the whole world (Chu, 2018).

### **3. The UK's 1973 and 2016 referendums during the integration into the EU: a comparison and contrast**

Most referendums are used as a tool to stabilize the domestic problems to make

sure and sweep way for the whole nation entering into the EU. However, the two directly related to this regional institution bear different aspects and characteristics: the first strengthening the UK's commitments into the EU but the second opening the gate for a complete Brexit.

The 1975 referendum was carried out two years after its short-of-breath running into the European Economic Community - former version of European Community or European Union. The reason was partly "*After joining the Bloc in 1973, many Britons felt their island nation - a former imperial power with strong ties to the United States - was fundamentally different from its European neighbours.*" (Acharya, 2016). Gallup polls at that time immediately revealed a two-to-one proportion of the nation's population believing that "*the country had been wrong to join*" (Acharya, 2016). However, the question of the referendum of whether the UK should remain in the EEC was still answered YES by the majority.

The situation in 1975 seems to be critically different from that in 2016. In the former, immigration did not come to the surface of the political chessboard as a serious problem. Instead, the country witnessed its 41,000 people leaving their homeland, due to the economic stagnation in the UK (McDowall, 1992). On the contrary, the EEC meanwhile did make triumphant progress, gradually gaining its economic power and political respects in the world arena after the Second World War (Acharya, 2016).

Under the light of domestic politics, the competition among various parties in the UK in 1975 was far less fierce than in 2016. The UKIP (United Kingdom of Independent Party) had not come into existence. The newly-elected leader of the Conservative was then

Margaret Thatcher, who was more eager to push up the economic growth in the UK than anybody else, so she would ignore the conflicts and rivalry against the Labour Government to fight for just the prosperity of the whole nation for a while. The populist movement was still sleepy and the influence of the media had not been supported tremendously with the worldwide web and the Internet.

Outside in the region, the EEC did not reveal its ambitious plan of uniting the Europeans all together in the three most important “pillars” of economy (in the European Communities), common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs (JHI) (Europarl, 2020). The worries on loss of sovereignty did not come to the mind of the member country leaders yet as there seems to be nothing related to power and politics to concern. The economic crisis starting in 2008 had shaded gloomy prospects for most Eurozone countries and the EU was continuously urging the stable wealthy Britain to support the other desperate members. The immigrants rushing to the EU from Africa and poor Asian parts and the imposed quotas that asked the UK to receive them from Brussels had created fire among the Britons famous for being cold, calculating, and conservative.

In short, the scenarios domestically and internationally of the two referendums are completely different. In 1973, the poor miserable Britain was pledging the wealthy EEC for a permission into this institution, accepting to pay a higher price in the form of financial contributions than the other members for an opportunity to prosperity. In the 2016, a calculating Britain was witnessed to try to avoid the further the better the EU and its problems of weakening economies, immigration crisis and chaotic political

mess of uprising popularism. Besides, the UK’s reluctance during its integration into the EU, its burden of financial support for this regional institution, the Eurozone crisis, and the UK’s weakening effects on the EU compared to those by the French and the German etc. have all contributed to the emergence of the 2016 historic referendum in the UK. This referendum has been created not only from the “inside” any more. The outside factors and historic relationship of the UK-EU has been significantly attributed (Chu Thanh Van, 2017).

#### **4. The prospect of using the referendum in the UK’s political context**

At the present time of 2020, the UK has been led by a new Conservative Prime Minister, Boris Johnson to fulfill its wish of exiting from the EU. All the arrangements and negotiations have been made and the Brexit is certain to come true after numerous cancellations or reluctances. The question is whether referendum has any chance of being exploited in the UK’s contemporary context.

After so many heated conflicts and arguments on the use of the referendum in 2016 and the chaotic mess it has created, it is high time for different political parties to get together to try to reconcile the hostile atmosphere. The fact that the 2016 referendum has been severely criticized as it had given the common people too much power and a big mouth on the nation’s vital foreign policy without concrete wisdom and knowledge on the issue has forced all related parties and individuals to slow down the pushing up of their ambitions and self-expressions or self-esteem. Domestic political contradictions are going to be brought down to a stable, easily-controlled level. Boris Johnson has proven to be the next dominant leader of the

Conservative with certain firm decisions on domestic matters and international negotiations like the ones he did when discussing final conditions for the Brexit with the EU officials recently (Partington, 2020; Ellyatt, 2020). Therefore, the use of referendums in the near future, at least within Boris Johnson's office time, is going to be painstakingly calculated with more scrutiny.

Outside on the world arena and regional level, international pressures on the UK's politics are promised to be lessened when approximately all the countries on Earth are busy dealing with their domestic matters and the fighting against the Covid-19, or Sars-CoV-2 pandemic in the first half of the 2020. Also the war trade between China and the USA has not come to an end yet; and therefore most other countries, with the UK included, will wish to stand by to watch for coming signals before switching or steering to more fertile actions. The pressure, if there is any, on the use of referendums in the UK from the outside world is expected to go down or even disappear for the short term.

In short, considering all the pros and cons of the referendum, and taking into account the present Prime Minister Boris Johnson's leadership, the nation's contemporary political context as well as its relationship with other countries in the region and the world, it is possible to come to conclude that referendums in the UK will not be of much use within 3-5 years from now, especially the ones associated with significant foreign policies such as the relationship of the UK with a great power and regional cooperator - the EU.

## 5. Conclusions

The use of any political tool has always hidden both pros and cons. The referendum is at no time an exception. During 43 years

entering and integrating into the EU, the UK did carry out 12 referendums, most of which aimed at reconciling or facilitating its domestic political institutionalizations, making way for further influences outwards later. The two referendums closely associated with the EU keep different roles: the first to confirm the UK's commitment and determination into the Union whilst the second unlocking the door for the country to exit from it. Generally speaking, the use of referendum and its usefulness are up to a great number of factors, some of which are the leader's abilities, the government's capacities, domestic and international contexts, and characteristics, knowledge and thinking of the nation's people. In the very near future of at least this office term by the present UK's Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the practice of referendum as a political tool is expected to continue its use whenever there is any domestic controversy concerned. Outside in Europe, as the link between the UK and the EU has been cut off with the Brexit, the possibility for referendums related to this relationship being called for has become limited in the short term.

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## NHỮNG CUỘC TRUNG CẦU DÂN Ý CỦA NƯỚC ANH TRONG THỜI KỲ HỘI NHẬP EU (1973-2016)

Chu Thanh Vân

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**Tóm tắt:** Trong thời kỳ nước Anh hội nhập vào EU (1973-2016), các cuộc trưng cầu dân ý của nước này đã được sử dụng và được xem là công cụ chính trị hữu ích giúp Chính phủ đàm phán với người dân trong các vấn đề quan trọng. Suốt giai đoạn 43 năm hội nhập vào tổ chức khu vực lớn này, Chính phủ Anh đã thực hiện trưng cầu dân ý 12 lần, với tần suất không đều nếu so sánh theo các đời lãnh đạo Chính phủ (tức Thủ tướng). Một điểm nổi bật quan trọng nữa là trong số 12 cuộc trưng cầu dân ý kể trên, chỉ có hai cuộc trưng cầu liên quan trực tiếp đến mối quan hệ giữa Anh và EU. Bài báo này nghiên cứu 12 cuộc trưng cầu dân ý đã được thực hiện trong lãnh thổ nước Anh nói chung và hai cuộc trưng cầu dân ý liên quan trực tiếp đến EU nói riêng thuộc giai đoạn 1973-2016. Kết luận và kết quả của nghiên cứu được xem là có thể giúp vạch ra lộ trình sử dụng loại hình công cụ chính trị này ở nước Anh trong bối cảnh chính trị hiện tại và trong tương lai.

**Từ khóa:** UK, EU, trưng cầu dân ý, hội nhập, công cụ chính trị.

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## DISCUSSION

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# MIND MAPS IN EFL SPEAKING CLASSES: A CASE STUDY AT UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES THE UNIVERSITY OF DANANG

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**Abstract:** Speaking, one of the two productive skills, has been paid much attention to by first-year students at the Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies - The University of Danang (FE, UFLS - UD). There are a variety of strategies and techniques assisting EFL teachers and learners, and mind mapping technique is among these which could be implemented to improve teaching and learning performances in general and speaking skill in particular. Mind maps are being taken advantage of by EFL students in classes to improve their speaking skill. In this study, the researchers have assumed that mind maps have the facilitating impact on the oral speech performance of the first-year students at FE, UFLS - UD. We have conducted this research quantitatively and qualitatively whose data is from interview questions and a set of questionnaires for first-year students, and the researchers' classroom observation. This is a case study which aims to explore the reality of using mind maps including the frequency, speaking stages, and freshmen's attitudes when utilizing this technique to enhance this skill. Its suggestions could be applied in teaching and learning English speaking skill effectively.

*Keywords:* attitudes, first-year students, frequency, mind maps, speaking skill, stages.

### 1. Introduction

Being aware of the importance of English language skills consisting of reading comprehension, listening comprehension, writing, and speaking in the era of globalization and integration, students at FE, UFLS - UD are using different learning techniques to improve these four skills. Richard and Rodgers (2001) state that in the traditional methods, the speaking skill was ignored in the classrooms where the emphasis was on reading and writing skills. In Vietnam, since the national exam to graduate from high schools and entrance one to universities is being conducted in written

forms and focus on vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing; therefore, in a typical lesson on English, high school teachers tend to introduce vocabularies and explain grammatical rules that high school students have to learn by heart and do written exercises on textbooks, which means students spend most time studying these language components, and two language skills including writing and reading, except for speaking and listening. This teaching and learning method leans on Grammar-Translation method where reading and writing are the important skills, speaking and listening skills are not of great significance. Therefore, first-year students at FE, UFLS - UD encounter certain difficulties when acquiring these two skills. There is an

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assumption that speaking skill plays a vital role in seeking good job opportunities and is mostly needed to communicate within the international market. According to Baker and Westrup (2003), students with good English speaking skill would have better job opportunities, and get promoted, or even pursue their studies. The researchers have seen the difficulties in speaking that most first-year students confront with such as the lack of lexical resources, and idea generating skill. Furthermore, students also struggle to develop strong EFL speaking skill due to the complexity of the language, the differences between English and the mother tongue, and the shortage of chances to practice speaking English frequently and in different contexts according to Nunan (1999), Ellis (2008) and Shumin (2002), respectively.

To solve the problems, the researchers took advantage of mind maps. Based on the theory of mind-map, in the study of Nasution (2020), the result shows that mind mapping techniques better improve the students' speaking skill and this improvement is influenced by six factors namely interesting teaching media, interesting material, attractive classroom activities, enjoyable classroom management, attractive teacher's approach, and teacher strategy. Rachmawati, Nugrahaeni, and Mauludiyah (2020) also announce their findings that mind mapping strategy is effective in learning Arabic, especially in learning speaking skills, because this technique gives students the courage to bring out new vocabulary that they must master. The results were known from the difference between students' attitude and effectiveness of mind mapping before using this instructional strategy. Mirza (2017) and Anggraeni (2019) also take advantage of this method in teaching foreign languages, particularly in developing speaking skill for

high school and university students. After being guided the use of mind-map by these two language teachers, the test performance of the groups using mind-map in studying is significantly higher than the other ones. They said that using mind-map before their speaking performances is really effective since they are well-prepared for lexical resources and ideas related to the speaking topics. In summary, using mind maps in teaching and learning process has been researched in some articles. However, the investigation into the reality of using this technique including the frequency, speaking stages, and freshmen's attitudes in speaking of first-year students at FE, UFLS - UD has not been done so far. For the reasons above, the study entitled "*Mind Maps in EFL Speaking Classes: A Case Study at University of Foreign Language Studies*" was carried out.

## 2. Literature Review

Definitions of "speaking" in language teaching and learning have been stated by many researchers. Speaking is the process of making and sharing meanings which use verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts (Chaney & Burk, 1998). According to Burns and Joyce (1997), they define speaking as an interactive process of making meanings which consists of producing, receiving, and processing information. Howarth (2001) also regards speaking as a two-way process including a true communication of opinions, information, or emotions. The role of speaking skill in language learning has also been confirmed by researchers in this field. According to Richard (2008), speaking is a crucial skill in language learning which enables language learners to communicate by expressing their viewpoints and giving responses. Heaton (1988) proposes that in the teaching of speaking, learners must master

the three components of speaking, namely fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility. Therefore, language teachers and learners have to make efforts to select the suitable and effective methods facilitating the achievement of these three speaking components.

Techniques to facilitate the process of teaching and learning speaking skill are varied and mind mapping technique is one of them. Buzan (2006, p. 103) states that mind mapping technique is “a creative thinking instrument which reflects natural work brain. Mind map enables the brain to use all pictures and its association in radial design”. What could be

inferred from his definition of mind mapping technique is that the way of drawing a mind map is similar to the way the brain functions. Key word or topic will be in the center of the map and supporting ideas can spread outward on branches of the map. Buzan (2005) also advocates that mind mapping technique is an extremely effective tool of taking notes. Mind maps show not only facts but also the overall structure of a subject and the relative importance of the individual part of it. If students have their own mind maps, it will be easy for them to recall their memory and learn visual memory.



Image 1. A Model Mind Map Drawn by First-Year Students at Faculty of English

Mind mapping technique has also been considered to be an effective learning method when applied to written material. According to Buzan (2006), this technique is a visual tool that learners can use to generate and organize ideas, take notes, and develop concepts. It works by taking information from several sources and displaying this information as key words in a bright, colorful manner. De Porter, Reardon and Nourie (2008) also agree that this technique can help learners originate and extend ideas, and trigger the memory since both hemispheres of the brain are activated. In this way, mind mapping technique can help

EFL learners draw out their thinking naturally and form an association between ideas and vocabulary. Therefore, EFL students can benefit by making use of mind maps in speaking skill.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Aims of the Research

This study aimed not only to explore the frequency, speaking stages, and freshmen’s attitudes at FE, UFLS - UD when utilizing mind maps, but also to suggest a detailed procedure of using mind maps for students in EFL speaking classes.

### 3.2. Research Questions

This study was conducted to answer three main questions specified as follows:

- What is the frequency of using mind maps in EFL speaking classes of the first-year students at FE, UFLS - UD?
- At which speaking stages do the first-

year students at FE, UFLS - UD use mind maps in EFL speaking classes?

- What are the first-year students' attitudes towards using mind maps in EFL speaking classes at FE, UFLS - UD?

### 3.3. Textbooks and Participants

Table 1. Textbooks and participants

Time	Classes	Number of Students	Subjects	Textbooks
Semester II February 2018 - May 2018	18CNA07	40	GE 1.4	Unit 7 - Unit 14 PET Results
	18CNA08	39		
	18CNA11	41		
Semester I August 2018 - January 2019	19CNA05	42	GE 1.1	Unit 1 - Unit 5 Solution: Pre-Intermediate
	19CNA07	38		
	19CNA10	40		

A glance at Table 1 given above illustrates the detailed information about the participants of this research which includes the semesters, classes, subjects, and relevant textbooks. The 240 first-year students of the Faculty of English, whose major is English Translation and Interpreting, and whose ages range from 18 to 20 years old, participated in this research. Half of the respondents have been studying English for 10 years, 100 first-year students have been exposed to English since they were at the age of 5 or 6 years old, the rest have experienced this language for 7 years. The study involved 225 female and 15 male participants. These 240 first-year students studied in 6 classes among the classes that the researchers were in charge and these 6 classes were selected to participate in the study randomly.

Two official textbooks including *Solution - Pre Intermediate* and *PET Results* written by Tim Falla and Paul A Davies, and Jenny Quintana respectively are being used for first-year students at FE, UFLS - UD. Both are published by Oxford University Press. The

first book is for General English (GE) namely B1.1 and B1.3, whereas the second one is for GE consisting of B1.2 and B1.4. These four courses are exam-oriented courses which provide first-year students with language proficiency at CEFR B1 level.

They had finished their first academic school years including 2017 - 2018, and 2018 - 2019; and were supposed to attain level 3, equivalent to level B1 of the CEFR test. These students were in six separate classes namely 18CNA07, 18CNA08, 18CNA11, 19CNA05, 19CNA07, and 19CNA10. The first three classes in semester II from February to May 2018 studied GE 1.4 including the last seven units of *PET Results*. In semester I from August 2018 to January 2019, the last three classes took part in the research studying GE 1.1 including the first five units of *Solution: Pre-Intermediate*.

### 3.4. Research Methods

#### 3.4.1. Data Collection

There were three data collection instruments including questionnaires for freshman students

and an interview at the end of each academic semester, and classroom observation during the 15 weeks of each semester.

The questionnaire comprised 6 questions with the aim of answering the research questions related to frequency, stages, and attitudes of the first-year students towards mind mapping technique. It was designed to be both closed and open-ended. In order to provide students with more opportunities to share all their thoughts relevant to the items in the questionnaire, the use of open-ended questions was a necessity since they could not give more ideas on their own to the questions if there were only close-ended ones. The interview questions aimed to support what the researchers observed.

Interview was conducted at the end of the semester after first-year students submitted the questionnaires investigating the frequency, stages, and attitudes of the participants. After first-year students submitted the questionnaires, each of the students was interviewed. That there were 240 first-year students as the participants led to 240 interviews since the researchers had to interview a student at a time.

Classroom observation was designed for the researchers to have an overview about the first two research questions including the frequency and stages of utilizing mind maps in EFL speaking classrooms. The students' attitude was not found out by this type of the data instruments. Unlike the other two data collection instruments, the researchers carried out the classroom observation during the learning process of the students.

#### *3.4.2. Procedure*

Step 1: The researchers observed the use of mind mapping technique of 6 classes during two semesters of each academic year 2017 - 2018 and 2018 - 2019. The researchers

were in charge of 3 classes in semester II of the academic year 2017 - 2018 and of 3 classes for the semester I of the academic year 2018 - 2019.

Step 2: During the semesters, researchers observed all these 6 classes. At the end of semester I and semester II, the same set of questionnaire was delivered to 240 different first year students of the two different academic years. After they finished the questionnaires, 240 first-year students were interviewed.

Step 3: After collecting the data, the researchers identified, and grouped them into categories. Then, they are displayed in percentage and illustrated by graphs. The data collected from the interview and classroom observation were qualitatively analyzed, whereas data from questionnaires were both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed to answer the research questions.

Step 4: Based on the analysis of the data, the researchers came to conclusion about the use of mind maps in EFL speaking classes and then suggested a procedure where language teachers and learners could use mind maps to improve speaking skill.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### ***4.1. Frequency of Using Mind Maps in EFL Speaking Classes***

The research question related to the frequency of using mind maps in EFL speaking classes by first-year students at FE, UFLS - UD was clarified by classroom observation of the researchers, interview questions and a set of the questionnaires for students.

What could be observed was that after having been instructed how to draw mind maps, all students made use of this technique to improve speaking skill with different rates of frequency. Therefore, most of the participants often used this technique.

Table 2: Frequency of Using Mind Maps in EFL Speaking Classes

Frequency	Occurrence	Percentage (%)
Always	0	0%
Often	192	80%
Sometimes	34	14.17%
Rarely	14	5.83%
Never	0	0%
Total	240	100

Regarding the quantitative data from the questionnaire for students, it is evident from Table 2 that there was no student who always and never utilized mind maps in EFL speaking classes. The reasons why none of the students always used mind maps resulted from the difficulties they experienced when drawing mind maps as the researchers observed, namely limited ideas, inability to identify main and minor ones, lack of lexical resources, time constraint, and inability to brief ideas as key words. These obstacles collected from interviews contributed to the demotivation of the students to always use this method. Also, since students were aware of the benefits of mind maps in improving their speaking skill, there was no record of those who never used this technique. There were 192 students out of 240 accounting for 80% who revealed that they often took advantage of mind maps since mind maps could help them to brainstorm vocabulary, and extend speaking ideas by linking main ideas with supporting ones. Only 34 (14.17%) and 14 (5.83%) students sometimes and rarely used this technique respectively. The total proportion was exactly at 20% which was four times lower than those who often used mind maps accounting for 80% as mentioned above. This proved that using mind maps could reach first-year students' expectation to boost their speaking skill. The fact that a majority of them (80%) who often made use of mind mapping technique proved

its popularity with freshman students in EFL speaking classes.

#### ***4.2. Stages of Using Mind Maps in EFL Speaking Classes***

A speaking lesson consisted of three stages namely pre-speaking, while-speaking, and post-speaking. To investigate the speaking stages at which first-year students used mind maps, the researchers observed, interviewed, and collected data from questionnaires.

Thanks to the first two data collection instruments, the researchers found out that the students used this technique mostly at pre-speaking and post-speaking, whereas the frequency of using mind maps at the while-speaking stage ranked the least. The speaking task types in the two textbooks for freshmen concentrate on particular aspects of oral interaction such as turn-taking, topic management, or situation making for oral interaction by pair or group work. They had a tendency to draw mind maps for topic management where they were asked to work individually. To other speaking activities requiring them to work in pairs or groups, they tended to make use of mind maps less than the former activities.

Looking at the pie chart in detail, Figure 1 highlighted the stages of a speaking lesson at which first-year students used mind maps whose data was from questionnaires. It is

evident that 85% of students drew mind maps at the pre-speaking stage. Before answering a speaking question, they tended to draw a mind map of vocabulary related to the theme or topic of the speaking question. Post-speaking ranked the second at approximately 10.83% which was roughly eight times lower than the former. After having answered the speaking question, they added either more branches of ideas or more vocabulary to the original mind maps for later speaking practice. The bottom place belonged to the while-speaking stage at 4.17% which was about twenty times and three times lower than pre-speaking and post-speaking respectively. Even though a mind map could not be definitely drawn during their speaking performance, they tended to look at the mind maps in case they forgot the ideas. There was no shadow of doubt that mind mapping technique could be utilized at every stage of a speaking lesson with a different rate of frequency.

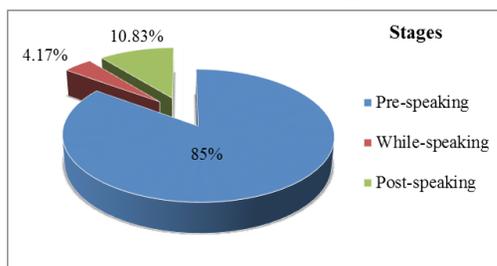


Figure 1. Stages of Using Mind Mapping Technique

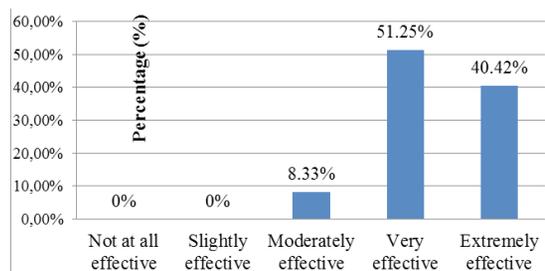
**4.3. Students’ Attitudes towards Effectiveness of Using Mind Maps in EFL Speaking Classes**

Students’ attitude towards the effectiveness of mind maps in EFL speaking classes was discovered by interview and questionnaires which was illustrated in Figure 2 below.

In the interview, most students advocated their interest in drawing mind maps for their oral speech performance since their speaking improvement was clearly seen by marks

given by lecturers for speaking assessment at the end of the semester. Furthermore, they could know more thematic vocabulary and develop a logical sequence of talk. None of them thought mind mapping technique was not beneficial.

According to the figures on the bar chart, 100% of EFL freshman students enjoyed utilizing this technique to improve their oral speech performance with 51.25% of the “very effective” voters, 40.42% and 8.33% of the “extremely effective” and “moderately effective” ones respectively. There were no participants denying the effectiveness of this technique and considering it as a slightly effective technique to develop their speaking skill. In general, such proportion analyzed revealed the effectiveness of using mind mapping technique to improve students’ speaking skill in EFL classes at FE, UFLS - UD.



Effectiveness

Figure 2. Students’ Attitudes towards Effectiveness of Mind Mapping Technique

**5. Suggestions and Conclusion**

**5.1. Suggestions**

*5.1.1. Simplified Mind Map Model*

An original mind map developed by Buzan should be drawn with different colors and images; however, students will find it difficult to change and modify the mind map if they make mistakes when drawing and the drawing

length is really time consuming. Therefore, the researchers suggested the simplified mind

map as in Figure 3 for students to apply in EFL speaking classes.

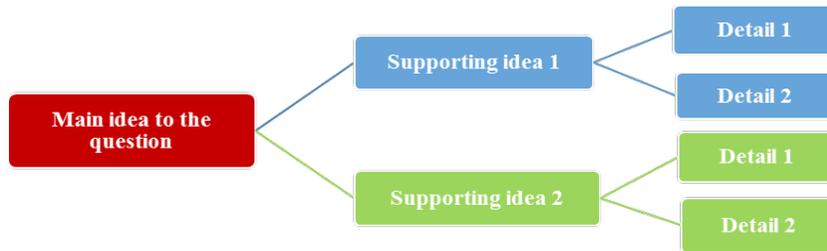


Figure 3. A Model Mind Map Suggested by Researchers

### 5.1.2. Procedure Using Mind Maps in EFL Speaking Classes

Together with the simplified mind map suggested in Figure 3, the researchers also designed a detailed procedure in which language teachers and learners draw mind maps to improve speaking skill.

Before performing the answer to a speaking question, students are required to list thematic vocabulary and ideas related to the question's content and topic. Subsequently, they have to draw a mind map with vocabulary and ideas they have just listed before. To make it more specific, students have to write down key words answering directly to the speaking question. This main idea is supported by two more sub-ideas and each supporting idea must have at least two additional details by giving examples, explanations, and quotes, or the statistics related to the subject in question.

For example, to answer the speaking question "What do you often do in your free

time?", first-year students have to fill in the main idea box to directly answer the question "Reading books". The speaking question word is "What", then to get ideas for supporting ideas, students should think of other two question words such as "Where do you read books in your free time?" and "Why do you read books in your free time?". Having thought of the other two sub-questions using other question words, students then have to fill in the two supporting ideas boxes in which supporting idea 1 will be replaced by "library at campus", and supporting idea 2 will be substituted by "widen knowledge". At the first branch "library at campus", students must add more information related to the reason why they choose reading books at the campus. Detail 1 and detail 2 will be then replaced by "variety of books", and "quiet environment" respectively. At the latter branch "widen knowledge", detail 1 and detail 2 will be "academic" and "general". All the steps described above will be demonstrated in Figure 4 in detail.

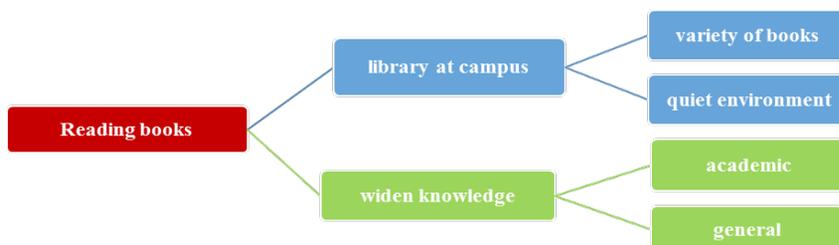


Figure 4. A Mind Map with Speaking Ideas Developed by Students

Once the mind map is accomplished, first-year students have to answer the speaking question. In case they can remember ideas in the mind map, there is no need to look at it. However, they can look at the mind map if they cannot recall ideas.

In the post-speaking stage, language teachers can require students to add more vocabulary to the mind map, and then write down a short paragraph generating ideas from the mind map. Below is a short paragraph written by a first-year student based on the mind map in Figure 5.

*I often read books whenever I have spare time. Where I often read books is the library campus at my university - The University of Foreign Language Studies in Luong Nhu Hoc Street. There are two reasons why I enjoy reading books at the library. You know, there is a variety of books, articles, and journals related to my major which I can easily find out. The second motive that should be taken into consideration is the reading environment. Every student in the library has to be quiet. Library readers are not allowed to make noise; therefore, I can possibly pay attention to what I am reading and that is really amazing. You know why I am really into reading books since I can widen my horizon for academic and general knowledge.*

Once students finish writing paragraphs, they are asked to record their answer and send the recording files to their teachers for assessments. Language teachers will then make comments, email or give feedback on students' speaking performances to them in person.

## 5.2. Conclusion

In order to answer the research questions related to the reality of using mind mapping technique of the freshman students after being instructed to implement this learning method in speaking, the researchers delivered a set of

questionnaire with 7 questions to 240 freshman students, and conducted the interview at the end of each semester, and observed the EFL speaking classes during two academic school years 2017 - 2018, and 2018 - 2019. Following are the conclusions based on the analysis of the data collected in this research and focusing on the frequency, speaking stages, and students' attitudes towards the use of mind maps in EFL speaking classes of first-year students at FE, UFLS - UD.

- There was a significant difference in the frequency of using mind maps in which most first-year students often used this technique in their speaking process. Neither of them always nor never drew mind maps since this technique was associated with certain difficulties, which could inhibit learning and demotivate students to study, namely their shortage of thematic vocabulary, inability to think of main and minor ideas, time length to draw a mind map, and their terrible drawing skill.
- However, once it was used, students drew mind maps mostly in the pre-speaking phase to recall or list related-topic vocabulary and to develop a logical sequence of ideas when speaking. Post-speaking and while speaking stages ranked the second and the least respectively. First-year students tended to draw mind maps to perform speaking activities which required them to work individually on such tasks as topic management. In speaking activities which required interaction among students, mind maps were taken advantage of less than the individual work.
- This technique can be a useful one for EFL learners since all of the first-year students advocated its effectiveness at different levels to develop their English speaking skill. View taken from students taught through the use of mind maps was positive.

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# SỬ DỤNG SƠ ĐỒ TƯ DUY TRONG KĨ NĂNG NÓI TẠI KHOA TIẾNG ANH, TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC NGOẠI NGỮ - ĐẠI HỌC ĐÀ NẴNG

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**Tóm tắt:** Nói, một trong hai kỹ năng sản sinh ngôn ngữ, được sinh viên năm thứ nhất tại Khoa tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ - Đại học Đà Nẵng đặc biệt quan tâm. Người dạy và người học ngôn ngữ sử dụng nhiều phương pháp khác nhau để phát triển kỹ năng này, trong đó có sơ đồ tư duy. Sơ đồ tư duy có thể hỗ trợ người dạy và người học ngôn ngữ cải thiện chất lượng học các kỹ năng ngôn ngữ nói chung và kỹ năng nói nói riêng. Hiện tại, sơ đồ tư duy được sinh viên năm thứ nhất sử dụng trong các tiết học nói để cải thiện kỹ năng này. Tác giả bài báo cho rằng sử dụng sơ đồ tư duy có tác động tích cực giúp nâng cao kỹ năng nói cho sinh viên năm thứ nhất tại Khoa tiếng Anh. Chúng tôi tiến hành nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp định lượng và định tính từ nguồn dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua các câu hỏi phỏng vấn, phiếu điều tra và quan sát lớp học. Tác giả chọn đề tài “Sử dụng sơ đồ tư duy trong kĩ năng nói tại Khoa tiếng Anh, trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ” với mục đích tìm hiểu sinh viên năm thứ nhất Khoa tiếng Anh có thường xuyên sử dụng sơ đồ tư duy, ở những giai đoạn nào, và thái độ của các em khi sử dụng sơ đồ tư duy để cải thiện kĩ năng nói. Đề xuất của nghiên cứu có thể ứng dụng trong dạy và học tiếng Anh, đặc biệt để giúp sinh viên phát triển hiệu quả kĩ năng nói của sinh viên chuyên ngữ tại Khoa tiếng Anh nói chung, và sinh viên năm thứ nhất nói riêng.

*Từ khóa:* giai đoạn, kỹ năng nói, tần suất, thái độ, sinh viên năm thứ nhất, sơ đồ tư duy.

**APPENDIX 1**

**CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Textbook: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher in charge: \_\_\_\_\_ Time length: \_\_\_\_\_

Stages of Using Mind Mapping Techniques				
Pre-speaking	While- speaking		Post- speaking	
Frequency of Using Mind Mapping Techniques				
Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

**APPENDIX 2**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Textbook: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher in charge: \_\_\_\_\_ Time length: \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 1:** What is the frequency of using mind maps in EFL speaking classes of the first-year students at FE, UFLS - UD?

**Question 2:** At which speaking stages do the first-year students at FE, UFLS - UD use mind maps in EFL speaking classes?

**Question 3:** What are the first-year students’ attitudes towards using mind maps in EFL speaking classes at FE, UFLS - UD?

**APPENDIX 3**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

With the aim of investigating the use of mind mapping technique of the first year students in EFL speaking classes at the Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies - The University of Danang, the researchers would highly appreciate your cooperation in completing this questionnaire. Your answers by putting a tick in the following boxes according to your opinions are valuable for the research. You can be sure that all your comments and ideas are confidential and just used for this research not for any other purposes.

**I. Personal questions**

1. How old are you?

- 20
- Under 20

- Over 20

2. How long have you learnt English?

- 3 years
- 7 years
- 10 years
- More than 10 years

**II. Questionnaire on using mind mapping technique in speaking**

1. Do you think it is necessary to use mind mapping technique in speaking?

- Yes
- No

2. How often do you use mind mapping technique in speaking?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Others:.....

3. At what stage do you use mind mapping technique in speaking (more than one answer is possible)

- Pre-speaking stage
- While- speaking stage
- Post- speaking stage
- Others:.....

4. In your opinion, using mind mapping technique in reading comprehension is:

- Extremely effective
- Very effective
- Moderately effective
- Slightly effective
- Not effective at all
- Others:.....

**Thank you for your co-operation!**

# EFL MATERIALS IN TEACHING LISTENING: PERSPECTIVES FROM INDONESIA AND VIETNAM

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**Abstract:** The practices of selecting and using materials for the teaching of listening skill have not yet been examined widely in the literature of materials development in language teaching (Hill & Tomlinson, 2013). This paper presents a cross-analysis of type, selection procedures, and design of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) materials for teaching listening at two public universities, one in Vietnam and the other one in Indonesia. This paper is built upon 15 years of personal experience of two lecturers who have worked in the education system of Vietnam and Indonesia. The analysed data included the course profiles, syllabi, and listening materials used in the two EFL undergraduate language education programs. By providing revealing comparisons of the selection and usage of EFL listening materials in two language programs in Indonesia and Vietnam, this paper hopes to contribute to the literature of materials development and selection for language teaching in Asia as well as around the world.

*Keywords:* listening skill, listening materials, listening textbook, materials development, materials selection, Vietnam, Indonesia.

## 1. Introduction

The practices of selecting and using materials for the teaching of listening skill have not yet been widely examined in the literature of materials development in language teaching (Hill & Tomlinson, 2003, 2013). This paper presents a cross-analysis of types, selection procedures, and designs of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) materials for teaching listening at two public universities, one in Vietnam and the other one in Indonesia. The analysed data included the course profiles, syllabi, and listening materials used in the two EFL undergraduate language education programs. The paper begins with an overview of the cases of Vietnam and Indonesia regarding EFL materials in teaching listening. It then presents a cross-analysis of the two cases.

The paper concludes with some implications of the study on textbook selection and the role of teachers as designers of materials.

## 2. ELT curriculum design

The literature has highlighted primary stages in ELT curriculum design (Johnson, 1994; Nunan, 1988). Nunan (1988) commented that a language course should go through the process of planning, implementation and evaluation. Johnson (1994) further elaborates Nunan's (1988) framework and adds that to achieve a coherent curriculum, the four key stages of development are: curriculum planning, ends/means specification, programme implementation, and classroom implementation. In each stage, different stakeholders play important roles in making the 'content' and 'methodology' consistent and useful.

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Table 1. Stages, decision making roles, products in curriculum development

Developmental stage	Decision making roles	Products
1. Curriculum planning	policy makers	policy document
2. Specification: ends means	needs analysts methodologists	syllabus
3. Programme implementation	materials writers teacher trainers	teaching materials teacher training
4. Classroom implementation	teachers learners	teaching acts learning acts

Johnson's framework emphasizes collaboration at each stage among different stakeholders and the continuous evaluation of programs.

### 3. Textbook selection approaches

The literature has highlighted two primary approaches for textbook selection. The first approach is top-down in which textbooks are often selected by administrators or senior lecturers (Tomlinson, 2008). This approach has been used in many countries such as Korea, Kenya, and Japan. The second approach is bottom-up approach in which teachers and learners have voice and are involved in the process of textbook selection. In this approach, teachers of the same course together consider the general goals of the program and have responsibility to work together to discuss the criteria to select relevant textbooks to their programs. This approach is common in several countries such as Britain, Hong Kong and France.

While these two approaches have been employed in different countries, the top-down approach is more popular than the bottom-up approach. In a survey of twelve countries worldwide, Tomlinson (2008) found that nearly "85 percent of ELT textbooks were selected by administrators, 15 per cent by teachers and 0 per cent by learners". This reflects the fact that not many teachers and learners play important roles in the process

of selecting textbooks in their countries. The next section critically reviews the type, selection procedures, and design of EFL materials for teaching listening in two cases, one in Vietnam and the other one in Indonesia.

### 4. The Vietnam Case

#### 4.1. The role of textbook in EFL courses

The use of textbooks for EFL teaching and learning is compulsory at all educational levels in Vietnam, including the higher education level (The Ministry of Education and Training [MOET], 2011). MOET provides detailed guidelines on the design, selection, evaluation, approval and use of course textbooks in higher education in Circular No. 04/2011/TT-BGDĐT (MOET, 2011). Accordingly, universities have to ensure that each language course uses at least one textbook for learning and teaching purposes. Universities may opt to design their own textbooks or to select commercial textbooks on the market as long as they are relevant and compatible with the goals and objectives of the program and the language proficiency framework issued by MOET. This leads to the fact that different universities may choose/design different textbooks for the same course name and level (Nguyen, 2019). For instance, a Listening 1 course for first year, first semester English Department students in one university may use a commercial textbook of pre-intermediate level. Another university may offer the same

course name at intermediate level and use a module developed by the lecturers teaching the course.

As the main source of materials used in the course, textbooks are suggested to be used as guidance of teaching and learning activities. Teachers should follow the topics and units stated in textbooks. However,

teachers are allowed to make modifications to the contents of textbooks to fit students' needs and the learning context.

**4.2. Textbook selection procedures**

The process of selecting and designing textbooks and syllabi is presented in Figure 1. It is implemented using a top-down approach and decided at the university level.

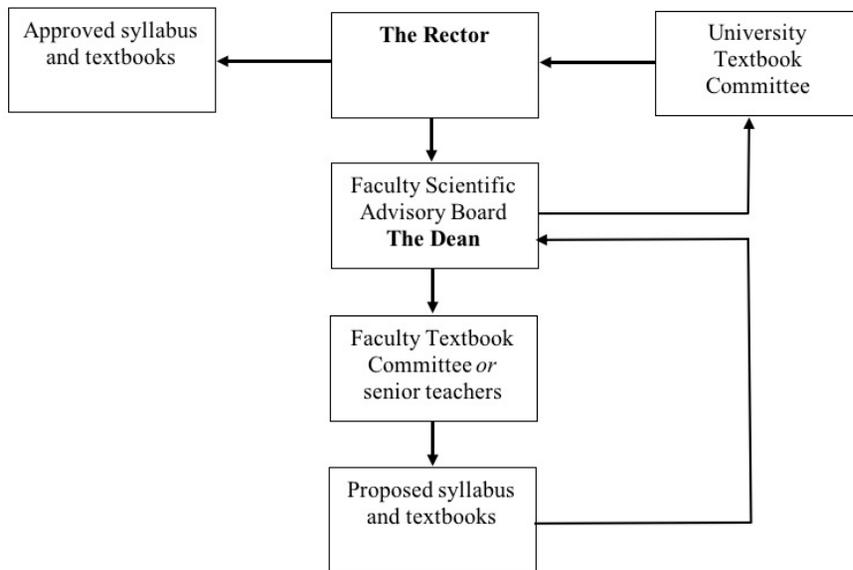


Figure 1. The process of textbook design/selection at the institutional level

To select or design textbook(s) for a course in a program, the rector assigns the Faculty Scientific Advisory Board, which is led by the dean, to conduct this task. Then the dean can establish a Faculty Textbook Committee or directly appoint one or more lecturers to develop the syllabus and select the textbook(s) for each course. The dean needs to ensure that the selected teachers have relevant qualifications and considerable experience in teaching the course. The syllabus for the course must clearly state the structure of the course, course textbooks and supplementary materials. It should be noted that in Vietnam, the syllabus is usually

developed based on the textbook content (Le, 2011; Phan, 2015). The proposed syllabus and the textbook(s) are then submitted to the Faculty Scientific Advisory Board that sends them to the University Textbook Committee to be reviewed. The rector then considers the results of the review process and approves the syllabus and textbooks for official adoption. Only after they are being approved by the rector, the selected textbooks and syllabi are put into use locally in their institutions. Thus, in many cases, lecturers just follow the approved syllabi and textbooks and do not choose the textbooks for their own courses. The approved textbooks and syllabi can be

used for many years until the faculty advises the rector about a new selection of textbooks. However, due to a lack of resources it usually takes universities years to select and purchase new textbooks.

#### **4.3. The design of teaching and materials for teaching listening**

As mentioned in the previous section, textbooks can be combined or selected from the market for official use in the university by the textbook committee. However, it is common that universities will select rather than combine textbooks. For example, four listening courses in the language program used four commercial textbooks, i.e., *Get ready for IELTS: Listening A2+*; *Listening for IELTS*; *Real listening B2-C1*; *Real lives, Real listening B2-C1*. Contents of these textbooks are theme-based and cover various topics that students might experience in their real-life listening. For instance, the topics included in *Get ready for IELTS: Listening A2+* are *Friend Abroad*, *Food and cooking*, *Work*, and *On campus service*.

In teaching, teachers often structure their lessons into three phases, i.e., pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening. While in the while-listening phase, teachers follow the tasks designed in the textbooks, they have more freedom to modify the pre-listening and post-listening tasks. These two phases allow teachers' creativity to make lessons better fit their students' level and interest.

While MOET regulates that textbook usage is compulsory, it is making genuine efforts to give teachers more autonomy. MOET has issued a number of policy documents to encourage teachers to design and use a variety of learning materials to supplement textbooks (MOET, 2008; VietCALL, 2014). Accordingly, teachers can exploit

Web 2.0 computer technologies to expand learning materials and to provide students with authentic and meaningful learning experiences. It is shown in the course profile that in addition to the textbook, lecturers are encouraged to use various online materials including websites, *YouTube* videos, and podcasts. It can be seen that in Vietnam the textbook is the primary learning material and teachers have some freedom to use or design additional online materials to supplement it.

### **5. The Indonesia Case**

#### **5.1. The role of textbook in EFL courses**

The use of textbook in EFL classes at the university level in Indonesia is not strictly regulated by the government nor the university. Each lecturer is given the autonomy to select appropriate resources for his/her class based on the standards set by the Ministry of Research and Higher Education [MRHE] of the Republic of Indonesia, the university, and the study program. MRHE sets the minimum standards of higher education in the MRHE Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 44 Year 2015 on the national standard of higher education. The standards include graduate attribute, course content, teaching and learning process, assessment, academic and non-academic staff, facilities, learning management, and learning expenses standards. In regards to course content lecturers are given the freedom to use any resources to meet the graduate attributes set by the university and the study program. The education guidelines published by the university require that before the semester commences, lecturers have to have prepared learning resources used in their courses that may take the form of recommended and suggested books and additional information. The study program sets the program learning

outcomes and design course descriptions (English Department Catalogue, 2017). Lecturers or groups of lecturers teaching the same course determine the course learning outcomes and prepare resources needed in these courses.

There are four listening courses offered in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> semester at the Department of English, Universitas Negeri Malang: *Intensive Course Listening*, *Basic Listening*, *Intermediate Listening* and *Advanced Listening*. Each course is taught by four to five lecturers and uses modules developed by some of the lecturers teaching these courses. The modules are used as the main coursebook. All lecturers are given the authority to use supplementary materials to suit the needs and interests of their classes.

The modules are compiled from many resources and include multimedia materials. They are revised every four to five years.

**5.2. Textbook selection procedures**

Before each semester commences, all lecturers, individually and in groups, develop a Course Profile (CP) for each of the classes they teach that semester. CPs should be made available for students at the beginning of every semester. They are developed to help students understand the teaching and learning methods that enable the outcome to be achieved; the assessment methods that enable achievement to be demonstrated; and the relationship of the program and its study elements. Specific learning resources are detailed in the CPs. This includes the module and supplementary materials.

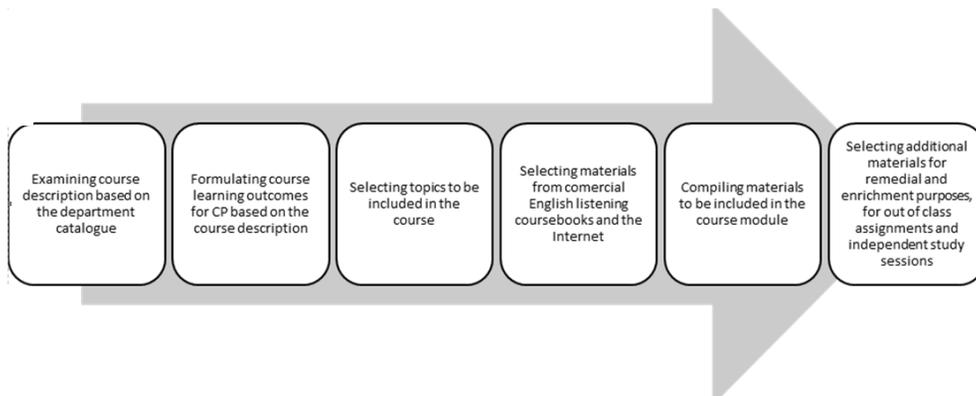


Figure 2. The process of material design/selection at the study program level

The process of learning resources selection starts with the formulation of course learning outcomes which are derived from the course description. Once the course learning outcomes are identified, the course syllabus is created. Based on the syllabus, learning resources are selected from various listening textbooks and compiled into a module. The module is the main coursebook, each lecturer then selects his/her own supplementary materials and lists them in the CP. The materials are used in class as well as outside class as part of out of class

assignments and independent study materials. More additional resources can be added as the semester progresses to address the needs and interest of the students. Some classes may need enrichment materials while other classes need remedial materials.

**5.3. The design of teaching and materials for teaching listening**

The materials for teaching listening are commonly selected based on topics. Table 2 lists the topics for the four listening courses

currently offered by the study program. *Intensive Course Listening* course is a four credit course that meets twice a week. Thus it covers more topics than the other three listening courses that only meet once a week. It can be seen that the topics in *Intensive*

*Course Listening* and *Basic Listening* courses are very familiar and related to language functions and basic grammatical structures. The *Intermediate* and *Advanced Listening* courses cover more general topics.

Table 2. The list of listening course topics

<b>Intensive Course Listening</b>	<b>Basic Listening</b>	<b>Intermediate Listening</b>	<b>Advanced Listening</b>
Nice to meet you.	He's the generous type.	Language learning	Family life
How do you spell that?	We could get him a tie.	Work	Noise
What language do you speak?	What exactly do you do?	Travel	Far from home
What time is it?	Going into business.	Adventure	Sex discrimination
What time do you get up?	Clothes and going out.	Personality	GWR FM
Where is it?	It doesn't fit.	Living situations	Save our earth
What does it look like?	I'm not sure what it's called.	Habits	Loud and aggressive
What do you do?	A global language.	Culture	Sarajevo
What do you do in your free time?	I thought you spoke English.	Money	Jigsaw of a village
Can you call me back?	You'll buy anything.	Disaster	All you need is love?
What does she look like?	Advertising works.	Technology	The great ruby robbery
What are they doing?	Our sales target is \$1.1 million.	Advice	HERE (the poem)
Do you have?	Communication.	Current affairs	
Where should we put the lamp?	I have a driving lesson tonight.		
Do you like living here?			
Is the post office that way?			
How much is the t-shirt?			
What happened then?			
Did you have a good time?			
Is it cloudy or sunny?			
What are you going to do?			
Where will you go?			
I love hamburger!			
How was your vacation?			
What about a movie tonight?			
Would you mind?			
Is bigger better?			
How do we turn it on?			
What should I do?			
I couldn't agree more.			

The classroom activities carried out based the modules can generally be divided into three main stages:

- **Pre-listening** activities to prepare for listening, which may be in the form of: observing and/or discussing pictures, diagrams or other visuals; reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures; reading texts relevant to the topic of discussion; constructing semantic webs or other graphic organizers (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related); predicting the content of the listening text; going over the directions or instructions for the activity, etc.
- **Whilst-listening** activities to help focus attention on the listening text and develop understanding of it, which may be in the form of: listening for the gist; filling in graphs or charts; checking off items in a list; identifying errors; searching for specific clues to meaning; completing cloze exercises; arranging jumbled text; answering factual, inferential and

argumentative questions; note-taking; reading the transcript, etc.

- **Post-listening** activities to help reinforce comprehension of a text, which may be in the form of: making a summary; retelling the content of the text; discussing and responding to the contents of the text; creating similar texts to the text learners listened to, etc.

In addition to these classroom activities, extensive listening activities are also strongly encouraged through class assignments and independent study tasks. Additional materials are generally taken from English learning websites as well as websites which are not for language learning purposes.

### 6. The cross-analysis

A cross-analysis of the cases of Vietnam and Indonesia universities regarding the type, selection procedures, and design of EFL materials for teaching listening results in some similarities and differences. Table 3 presents a summary of the similarities and differences between two cases.

Table 3. Similarities and differences of the type, selection procedures, and design of EFL materials between Indonesia and Vietnam

Aspects	Indonesia	Vietnam
Textbook selection approach	Bottom-up approach	Top-down approach
Course syllabus	Developed before selecting the textbook	Based on the chosen textbook
The textbook	- a compilation of materials - in-house - theme-based	- a whole published textbook - commercial textbooks - theme-based
Supplementary materials	- Teachers have freedom to choose - Teachers opt for online materials	

The main difference is in the selection procedures of textbooks and the course syllabus. In the Vietnam case, textbook selection has to go as high as the university

rector for formal approval. In the Indonesian case, lecturers have the freedom to choose the textbooks they use in teaching listening courses. In the Vietnam case, course syllabus

is developed based on the textbook chosen, while in the Indonesian counterpart it is the other way around. Yet, the condition is actually quite similar. In both cases, a listening course uses one main coursebook and supplementary materials. It is the format of the coursebook which is different. In the Vietnam case, a coursebook is a whole textbook selected for the course, while in the Indonesian case, it is a compilation of materials from various resources. In regards to supplementary materials, in both cases, lecturers are given the opportunity to be more creative in the selection of materials. Online resources are definitely the most widely used supplementary listening materials in both cases. Regarding the design of materials, it can be seen that in Vietnam, teachers often use commercial textbooks rather than in-house ones. However, it is common in Indonesia that teachers combine textbooks from various resources. The similar feature about the design of textbooks in Vietnam and Indonesia is that textbooks are usually theme-based. They cover topics that students are likely to experience in their real-life listening.

The findings showed that while textbooks were the primary materials in the program in Vietnam as it was mandated by the Ministry of Education, in Indonesia this was the prerogative of the lecturers. Moreover, in Vietnam, textbooks were selected following a hierarchical procedure, unlike in Indonesia in which they were chosen collaboratively by those teaching the listening courses. Although both the Vietnamese and Indonesian lecturers in the two language programs were allowed to use and design online materials to supplement the textbooks, the degree of freedom in using this type of material varied. The study suggests that there is a need for lecturers to work collaboratively in selecting and designing textbooks and supplementary materials for

their listening courses. Moreover, lecturers should be encouraged and facilitated in equipping themselves with the relevant skills and knowledge to effectively play the role of instructional material designers.

## **7. Implications of the study**

### ***7.1. Listening to language teacher's voice***

A key finding in this study was that in Vietnam, textbooks played a critical role in EFL teaching in Vietnam and the teachers had to use the textbooks chosen by others. Unlike in Indonesia, textbooks were chosen collaboratively by those teaching the listening courses. The results of this study do not support the idea of removing textbooks altogether but suggest an acknowledgement of the teacher's right to be involved in the decision of selecting and using textbooks for their language courses. In the context of Vietnam where the Ministry of Education and Training requires that textbooks in use need to be approved, they should be selected by textbook committees of elected teacher representatives. Instead of following a top-down procedure in which senior teachers are usually entrusted to select/design textbooks, institutional managers could delegate that responsibility to working groups between relatively junior staff and senior colleagues teaching the same course. By this way, as Johnson (1994) and Hoang (2015) suggested, they could work collaboratively to discuss the criteria to select textbooks which are relevant and meaningful to students and fit the assessment formats for which students have to be prepared for. This approach would, as McGrath (2013) pointed out, ensure a greater match between textbooks, examinations and learners because teachers could integrate teaching syllabus, textbook and assessments. In Vietnam, there have been teachers who are

more autonomous in designing and selecting textbooks. However, there should be favorable policies to encourage and empower teachers to be more active, autonomous and creative in material selection and design.

### 7.2. *Empowering teachers as designers of CALL materials*

Another implication of this study is that it has extended the understanding of the role of EFL teachers as designers of CALL materials. The study has identified that lecturers in the two language programs in both Vietnam and Indonesia had freedom, though varied, to use and design online materials to supplement the textbooks chosen for listening courses. The findings of the current study suggest that there is a need to explicitly recognise and support teachers to develop their roles as designers of materials. Acknowledging the role of EFL teachers as designers of CALL materials has an important implication. This study has demonstrated that teachers do select materials to fit their particular students' needs. Thus, the argument might be that educational leaders should encourage and support teachers to find materials which fit their students and their time constraints, especially in a context where resources for purchasing commercial materials are limited. In other words, teachers should be empowered with the knowledge and skills to select materials for their own courses and to work collaboratively with other lecturers for preparing for the same courses.

### 8. Conclusion

The paper has provided revealing comparisons of the selection and usage of EFL listening materials in two language programs in Indonesia and Vietnam. It showcases the differences and similarities in the way EFL listening materials are selected, used or/and designed in two developing countries. The

paper suggests two important implications for the issues of materials selection and teachers' roles as designers of instructional materials. Giving lecturers the responsibility to select and design listening materials will in one hand give them the freedom to use varied, authentic, meaningful and up-to-date materials but on the other hand require them to be more skillful and knowledgeable. Thus creativity and collaboration should be fostered and a bottom-up approach to material selection and design should be implemented.

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## TÀI LIỆU TIẾNG ANH TRONG GIẢNG DẠY KỸ NĂNG NGHE: GÓC NHÌN TỪ INDONESIA VÀ VIỆT NAM

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**Tóm tắt:** Bài viết trình bày kết quả phân tích về loại hình, quy trình tuyển chọn và thiết kế tài liệu tiếng Anh để giảng dạy kỹ năng nghe tại hai trường đại học công lập, một ở Việt Nam và một ở Indonesia. Bài viết được xây dựng dựa trên 15 năm kinh nghiệm cá nhân của hai giảng viên đã làm việc trong hệ thống giáo dục tại hai quốc gia này. Dữ liệu được phân tích bao gồm đề cương học phần, giáo trình và tài liệu hỗ trợ được sử dụng trong hai chương trình giáo dục ngôn ngữ đại học. Bài viết này hy vọng sẽ đóng góp thêm vào lý thuyết phát triển và lựa chọn tài liệu việc giảng dạy ngôn ngữ ở châu Á cũng như trên thế giới.

**Từ khóa:** kỹ năng nghe, tài liệu nghe, sách giáo khoa nghe, phát triển tài liệu, lựa chọn tài liệu, Việt Nam, Indonesia.

# POLICY MEASURES FOR VIET NAM TOURISM IN RESPONSE TO IMPACTS OF COVID-19

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**Abstract:** While the global community is taking urgent measures to overcome difficulties for production and businesses and ensure social security in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Vietnam tourism industry needs to develop policy measures to minimize economic recession. Based on the research documents of international development organizations on developing policy measures for socio-economic recovery and case studies in Asian countries when the pandemic outbreaks in the region and the world, we propose policy measures to manage Vietnam destination as a national tourism destination. Given the impacts by Covid-19 pandemic, the policy measures addressed in this paper are divided into 3 groups: (1) support businesses to minimize economic losses in order to best promote the tourism business models in pandemic situations; (2) promote tourism stimulus programs and public-private partnerships; and (3) restructure tourism businesses and proper business management models for a new normal situation, in line with Sustainable Development Goals in the long term.

*Keywords:* policy measure, Vietnam tourism, pandemic, Covid-19.

## 1. Introduction

In mid-December 2019, a novel and infectious virus corona (COVID-19) struck Wuhan, the most populous city in central China. Similar to the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) that emerged in 2003, COVID-19 is an airborne illness that is highly transmittable between humans. Immediately after the Chinese government shared information about the virus publicly in late January 2020, stricter preventive measures, such as community quarantines and temporary business closures, swept across Chinese cities. The local outbreak quickly developed into an emerging public health crisis to the extent that World Health Organization (WHO) soon declared it as an unprecedented global pandemic (WHO, 2020; Yang et al., 2020). According to World Tourism

Organization: A United Nations Specialized Agency (UNWTO) (2020a), international tourism arrivals could fall by 20-30% in 2020, which could be translated into a decline in international tourism receipts (exports) of between US\$300-450 billion, almost one third of the US\$ 1.5 trillion generated in 2019. The outbreaks of coronavirus threaten economic development and greatly harm the tourism industry. As tourism products own characters of intangibility, un-restorability, tourist services once produced failed to be sold are lost forever: an unsold hotel room is gone, an unsold table in a restaurant is also uncovered, a trip is not executed at a certain time means its value is partly lost as time does not stand still and is not scalable. This paper focuses on what considerable policy measures that governments can do to manage tourism destinations in response to impacts by Covid-19.

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## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. *Dealing with global pandemics and Covid-19*

Tourism is one of the most vulnerable sectors affected by epidemics. Take a look at the lessons from the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome epidemic caused by the SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) in 2003 that scared the world by its unprecedented danger and rapid spread. At that time, visual examinations at airports were quickly replaced by body temperature tests (by infrared scanners). However, this measure did not demonstrate high effectiveness. In SARS outbreak, more than 35 million international tourists had body temperature scans in Canada, China (including mainland and Hong Kong) and Singapore, but not any SARS case was detected. Therefore, it was argued that instead of investing in screening measures at airports to detect rare infectious diseases, it would rather invest in strengthening the capacity of screening and disease control at disease entry points of health systems (Wilder-Smith, 2006). The author also asserts that screening at departures is more effective in terms of preventing locals from traveling abroad but it is difficult to prevent sick travelers from trying to return home. Another research by Bell et al. showed that after WHO recommended departure censorship on 27 March 2003, not any new cases of SARS infection were detected among countries that had airport screenings. Aggregate data from China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan) showed that out of 1.8 million people who completed the health questionnaire on departure, only 1 case of SARS was suspected. Aggregate data from Canada, China and Singapore indicated that none of the SARS cases among more than 7 million people who had infrared scans at departures (Bell et al., 2004). Regarding

policy solutions, many coordination among public and private organizations in communications and destination marketing to create psychological safety for tourists and boost domestic markets, stimulating tourism demand by such methods as discounts, cost savings, proper use of human resources and performance and capacity improvement. Governments also actively support tourism businesses to come up with initiatives to enhance public sanitation standards (Benjamin, 2007).

From March to date, a number of policy measures were taken by governments in order to reduce the impacts of the disease on the tourism sector. The objective of the government policies are to keep people in jobs, avoiding the worst with regard to layoffs, secure short term liquidity (such as ability to pay off its current liabilities with its current assets) and stabilize long term solvency (such as ability to pay for long-term debt in the long run) and by that prevent personal as well as company bankruptcies (International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism, 2020). In general, most countries strengthen their policy measures on tax reduction; bank loan facilitation; deferrals of payments; short time work compensation and/or wage subsidies, and so on.

In Cambodia, the initial phase of the policy priorities under the state budget support package of about 3% of GDP in 2020, includes: Supporting tourism, clothing and footwear, namely, tax breaks and exemption from contributions to social security funds; Unemployment benefits for laid-off workers (60% of salary) are included in retraining and job improvement programs as well as employment services. Promote domestic tourism by launching campaigns to organize activities and events in Siem Reap province,

extend the validity of tickets to the Angkor Wat complex and improve international passenger routes. In their Medium-term policy priorities, Cambodia established a new SME bank (state-owned) to support small and medium enterprises, including tourism businesses with the aim of improving competitiveness and productivity, facilitating trade and business operations (World Bank [WB], 2020).

Hong Kong government provides a 100% guarantee for SME loans up to HK\$ 2 million. 100% reduction of corporate income tax for 2019 - 2020, up to a maximum of HKD 20,000; Continued operational support measures including subsidies for 75% of electricity costs (maximum HKD 5,000 per month) for four more months and free 75% of water and wastewater costs for the next four months; Exemption from government fees including business registration fees, annual corporate tax returns and ground taxes for businesses in 2020-2021; Continue to provide rental subsidies or a 50% reduction of rent for certain businesses and certain government real estate for six months; Additional support for severely affected industries such as construction (contractor subsidies), transportation (pilot subsidy scheme, corporate income tax exemption for boat rental units) and tourism (increase funding for the HK Tourism Council to HKD 700 million) (WB, 2020). Hong Kong also created the Anti-Epidemic Fund's Travel Agents Subsidy Scheme. Accordingly, each eligible travel agent may receive a one-off subsidy of HK \$80,000. 98% of all licensed travel agents in Hong Kong have registered for the payment (World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2020).

In Malaysia, new financing facilities for SMEs have been set up by banks in addition to a decrease in the policy rate. Dealing with negative impacts on the tourism industry,

Malaysia government prepares to pay 600 ringgit (US \$144) for each taxi driver, tourist bus driver, tour guide and registered cyclo driver (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2020). To minimize the impact, the Government will take a three-pronged approach: first, to loosen the monetary policy to ease the cash flow for affected businesses; second, assist the affected individuals; Thirdly, stimulate the demand for travel and tourism. To reduce cash flow pressures, the Government supports the most impacted businesses for a period of 6 months starting from April to September 2020, including: (1) It is allowed to extend the time of monthly income tax payment for businesses operating in the tourism sector. In addition, companies affected by COVID-19 are also allowed to adjust their profit estimates for 2020 for monthly income tax payments without penalty; (2) Discount 15% of monthly electricity bill for hotels, travel agents, airline, shopping center, convention and exhibition center; (3) Exemption from contributions to the Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) for tourism-related hotels and businesses; and (4) 6% service tax exemption for hotels, starting from March to August 2020 (WB, 2020).

In the Philippines, the Travel & Tourism sector will receive a significant portion of the government's \$523 million (PHP27.1-billion). Specifically, \$271 million (PHP14-billion) aid from the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) has been earmarked for various programmes and projects of the Department of Tourism. To support workers, \$23 million (PHP 1.2 billion) from the Social Security System will be used as unemployment benefits for workers from the private sector. To promote the Philippines as a destination once in the recovery phase, the Department of Tourism (DOT) is allocating approximately

\$118 million (PHP6 billion). At least PHP421 million earmarked for a new campaign for domestic travel and PHP467 million to create content that targets emerging countries unaffected by Covid-19 (WTTC, 2020).

Singapore government is waiving license fees for hotels, travel agents and tour guides, enhanced training schemes and subsidising them up to 90%; providing salary support through Workforce Singapore of up to 70% of fixed monthly salaries (capped at \$2000 a month per employee). The government has also created a temporary bridging loan programme for cash flow support, has implemented rebates on aircraft landing and parking charges as well as rental rebates for shops and cargo agents at Changi. It has created a point-to-point support package for taxis and private hire car drivers. To further support jobs, it has created a job support scheme with a one-off wage support to help enterprises retain their workers. To further enable cash flow, it enhanced its Enterprise Financing Scheme-SME Working Capital Loan as well as implementing a corporate income tax rebate for YA2020 of 25% of tax payable, capped at \$15,000 per company (WTTC, 2020).

In Thailand, the central bank announced a reduction of the policy rate by 0.25 percentage points. On 10 March, the Government announced measures specifically targeted at SMEs, including: low-interest loans (2% - subject to a cap); rules governing the granting of commercial bank loans were relaxed by the Bank of Thailand; a reduction of withholding tax by 1.5 percentage points (from 3% to 1.5%); tax deductions of salary expenses; Dissemination of VAT refunds in under 15 days to entrepreneurs; refunding the deposit for electricity usage; a rebate on contributions to the Social Security Fund by employers and

employees, and; a planned reduction of rental fees for state property. The Finance Ministry also set up specific hotlines for SMEs with queries about these measures (OECD, 2020).

Vietnam suspended on visa issuing for foreigners entering Vietnam for a period of 30 days starting from 00:00 18 March 2020 (Government Office, 2020a); from 0:00 on 22 March 2020, halt entry to all foreigners entering Vietnam (Government Office, 2020b); agree to mobilize hotels, resorts, and tourist accommodation establishments serving as isolation facilities (Government Office, 2020c); mandate social distancing throughout the country for 15 days, from April 1 through April 15 (Prime Minister, 2020); reduce electricity price for tourist accommodation establishments as it is applicable for production households; reduce 100% of the electricity bill for the tourist accommodation establishments where they perform like isolation, medical examination and treatment facilities to serve patients infected with Covid-19 (Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2020).

### 3. Research questions and methodologies

Those issues raise key questions: What are the policy measures for tourism destination management organizations to recover after Covid-19; what are the effects of social distancing in relation to globalization and global value chain on tourism development in the new context; what should be done to minimize possible discrimination of Asian tourists after Covid-19 time?, among others. As urgent measures are required to deal with the outbreak of global pandemic, research questions are raised: What are the policy measures for tourism destination management organizations to recover South East Asia's (SEA) destinations in general and Vietnam in particular after Covid-19

in relation to globalization and global value chain, we use desk study method to collect, analyze, and synthesize secondary data. As international development organizations which are ASEAN, OECD, UNWTO, WB, WEF (World Economic Forum), WHO, and WTTC produced updated research material, we collected and synthesized countries' measures.

In terms of tourism management, we use data analysis, compare with what Vietnam has done so far and what the gaps that need to be filled are. Therefore, we present policy measures for Vietnam tourism to deal with the crisis post-pandemic of Covid-19.

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4.1. Recovering outlook from crisis

In April, against a backdrop of travel restrictions being introduced, UNWTO underscores the importance of international dialogue and cooperation and emphasizes the COVID-19 challenge also represents an opportunity to show how solidarity can go beyond borders. The tourism sector, like no other economic activity with social impact, is based on interaction amongst people. UNWTO stands ready to support recovery measures of its members, affirming that tourism has proved a recovery possibility (UNWTO, 2020b).

One possible policy to facilitate post-crisis tourism recovery is to subsidize tourism consumption. Such practices, like providing tourism consumption vouchers for residents, have been proved useful in China after the global financial crisis. From a general equilibrium perspective, tourism sector subsidies must be financed by resources redistributed from other sectors; A comprehensive includes simultaneous subsidies to the tourism and health sector as

well. The comprehensive policy improves tourism consumption and health rebuilding, albeit at the cost of regular consumption (Yang et al., 2020).

In 2003, the Canadian Tourism Commission conducted market research in all their core markets to determine a profile of consumers who would consider travelling to Canada and those who would not. This helped to re-profile its marketing investment towards source markets, largely in Europe - those are intrepid travelers who see travel as an adventure and inherently risky (Davitt, 2020).

It is not obvious that running the risk of coronavirus outbreaks every few years - or worse - is a price worth paying for multiple annual vacation trips to Paris and Bangkok, say. The lesson from Wuhan should be that we need a broad discussion within and outside of academia about how much mobility is actually desirable. (Baldwin & Mauro, 2020). Travel-related illness may give rise to public health concerns that precipitate a disastrous fall in tourist revenue. The impact of globalization on infectious diseases described requires appropriate forms of global governance on improving systems for prevention, control and treatment (Saker, Lee, Cannito, Gilmore & Campbell-Lendrum, 2020).

In America, 75% of those surveyed said their planned travel in six months will be changed due to concerns of coronavirus, 48% cancelled their trip completely, 39% reduced travel plans, 18% changed destinations to one that they can drive to as opposed to fly, 14% changed trips from international to domestic (Longwoods International, 2020). Social distancing would be a trend for tomorrow for many sectors, including travel and tourism. One can argue that a solution for social distancing time is developing smart tourism. Nevertheless, the issue is that the rate of Internet

use varies between 81% of the population in Singapore and 22% in Lao PDR. Therefore, policy strategies will need to be adapted to local needs. Continued regional co-operation is also needed in addressing shared and cross-border challenges in the digital economy (OECD, 2018). Most importantly, ASEAN and East Asian countries are recommended to (i) increase the supply of public goods to improve connectivity infrastructure in both physical world and cyberspace, (ii) establish rules and regulations to ensure dynamics and competition of online marketplace, (iii) improve connectivity-derived services to generate more value added, (iv) prioritise smartphone economy and Internet financial innovation, and (v) collaborate in regional rule-setting for digital connectivity (Chen, 2020).

#### *4.2. Recommendations by concerned development organizations*

Every government has legitimate objectives associated with infrastructure projects, education, rural and regional development programs, and the like. In the context of a more severe and complex crisis than the 2008-2009 one, it is essential to have clarity about the objectives that economic policy should pursue, and the instruments that can be deployed. If a clear understanding of the size and nature of the challenge it faced, a coherent response will be in place. UNDP's experts recommend the responses to meet three objectives: (1) minimize the human cost of the pandemic; (2) minimize the regressive effects of the crisis, with measures to protect workers' incomes, especially low-income ones; and, (3) preserve macroeconomic stability and the capacity to resume growth once the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic concludes (Levy, 2020).

According to WB's experts, it is necessary to develop a strategy in response to Covid-19's crisis. The sequential approach can be divided into three steps. The first is to support the hardest-hit industries by combining tax breaks or extending the tax payment period, credit support and social security measures. The second step is to implement a number of measures stimulus, especially through accelerating the implementation of the public investment program. Finally, the third step will focus on restructuring to reduce vulnerability to similar shocks in the next few decades (WB, 2020). So far, Vietnam is performing well as this recommendation in the first step. Vietnam is also preparing for the second step after the pandemic is over hopefully in a few months and it is encouraging to consider implementing an action plan for the third step.

World Economic Forum (WEF) has launched the COVID Action Platform to catalyse private-sector support for the global public health response to Covid-19, and to do so at the scale and speed required to protect lives and livelihoods, aiming to find ways to help end the global emergency as soon as possible. The COVID Action Platform will focus on three priorities: (1) Galvanize the global business community for collective action; (2) Protect people's livelihoods and facilitate business continuity; (3) Mobilize cooperation and business support for the COVID-19 response (WEF, 2020).

WTTC urges governments to implement policies that will directly support the sector across the following three areas, namely: (1) Protecting the livelihoods of workers; (2) Fiscal support; (3) Injecting liquidity & cash (WTTC, 2020).

ASEAN needs a general policy framework for ASEAN GVCs in tourism which contains five basic elements: embedding GVCs in

tourism development strategies and policies; In its strategic direction, ASEAN commits to “upgrade local communities and public-private sector participation in the tourism value chain” (Fujita, 2018). ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 proposes to increase the number of community-based tourism projects (ASEAN, 2015).

#### 4.3. Measures taken in Vietnam

To cope with the pandemic situation, the tourism industry cooperates closely with the relevant sectors to implement a number of policy solutions. In mid-February 2020, Vietnam Tourism Association launched a campaign on “Vietnam Tourism Stimulation Alliance”. The Prime Minister issued Directive No.11/CT-TTg dated 4 March 2020 on urgent tasks and solutions to overcome difficulties. Next, on 24 March, MCST requested the Ministry of Finance to consider regulations on exemption and reduction of fees for supporting travel businesses and tour guides within 1 year from 1/4/2020 to promptly support those affected by Covid-19. When the disease situation broke out, the Prime Minister issued Directive No.16/CT-TTg dated 31 March 2020 on implementation of social distancing from 1 April 2020 for 15 days; In order to promote domestic tourism market while Vietnam has not yet opened the international market, the MCST launched “Vietnamese people travel in Vietnam” program from June to December 2020. In addition to policy solutions, many businesses took their best effort to take measures to cope with financial and market crises, and take their corporate social responsibilities. Tourist accommodation establishments in Vietnam conduct a procedure of checking temperature for guests at the front desk and register for those whose body temperature is not over 37°C. Many tourist accommodation

establishments engage in provision of paid and free isolation places.

### 5. Proposal of policy measures for Vietnam tourism

#### 5.1. Group of urgent solutions to support businesses to minimize economic losses in order to best promote the tourism business models in pandemic situations

- Consider applying the deferment of taxes and social security contributions to affected tourism businesses under the flat tax regime. In March, Vietnam applied supportive measures for businesses in all sectors such as rescheduling bank due dates, interest rate exemptions, remaining the debt, reducing fees...
- Reduce payment of credit or reduce temporary costs of credit to tourism businesses.
- Proactive employment support, provision of social insurance to stabilize employment, and social assistance transfers for tourism employees who suffer from employment disruption. Applicable tools include direct cash assistance to affected people and increased benefits of existing social assistance programs through: i) exemption or deferment of contributions social insurance (including unemployment insurance program) over a period of time; ii) loosen the conditions for unemployment insurance benefits and / or simplify the process of claiming benefits for those affected or lost their jobs; iii) use unemployment insurance fund to pay salaries and employment allowances for businesses to stabilize

jobs, focusing on small and medium enterprises; and iv) use unemployment insurance funds to provide public employment and online training and learning services (WB, 2020).

- Develop mechanisms and strategies for crisis management in Vietnam
- Develop responsible tourism to ensure environmental sustainability
- Restore market confidence

### 5.2. Solutions on promoting tourism stimulus programs and public-private partnerships

- Invest in improving market intelligence and digital transformation
- Promote coordination between travel agencies and airline carriers for more flexible policymaking regarding flight bookings, including flexible policies in postponing, canceling and changing dates;
- Improve infrastructure, services and environmental situation in destinations that stimulate high demands, diversified tourism products and connectivity.

### 5.3. Solutions on tourism businesses restructuring and proper business management models for a new normal situation, in line with Sustainable Development Goals in long term

- Undertake data analysis on restructuring tourism businesses.
- Analyze strengths and weaknesses of businesses' strategies on responding to crisis caused by pandemic.
- Carry out research on target and potential markets in a new normal situation when the global value chain is shifted.
- Integrate sustainable tourism into the national development program

- Make transition to a circular or non-emission economy in line with sustainable development goals (SDGs)

## 6. Conclusion

Facing the complicated situation of Covid-19, the Government is considering actions of some countries in the region and the world to adopt proper policy measures for Vietnam to minimize economic costs stemming from the current health crisis. This paper proposes policy measures based on a three-step approach: (i) support tourism businesses in the short-term by incorporating supportive measures. tax, financial and social support; (ii) implement tourism demand stimulus measures, especially through accelerating the implementation of the public investment program to compensate for the reduction in aggregate tourism demand in the medium term; and (iii) accelerate restructuring process in terms of global value chain, promote the development of a digital tourism.

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# GIẢI PHÁP CHÍNH SÁCH CHO DU LỊCH VIỆT NAM ỨNG PHÓ VỚI DỊCH COVID-19

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**Tóm tắt:** Trong bối cảnh toàn cầu đang thực hiện các giải pháp cấp bách nhằm tháo gỡ khó khăn cho sản xuất kinh doanh, bảo đảm an sinh xã hội ứng phó với dịch Covid-19, ngành du lịch Việt Nam cũng cần phải xây dựng các giải pháp chính sách giảm thiểu thiệt hại kinh tế. Dựa vào các tài liệu nghiên cứu của các tổ chức phát triển quốc tế về xây dựng các giải pháp chính sách cho kinh tế - xã hội và nghiên cứu các điển hình ở các quốc gia châu Á từ khi đại dịch bùng phát trên khu vực và thế giới, chúng tôi đề xuất các giải pháp về chính sách cho du lịch Việt Nam. Bên cạnh thực trạng ảnh hưởng nặng nề do dịch Covid-19, các biện pháp chính sách quản lý trong bài nghiên cứu này gồm 3 nhóm: (1) hỗ trợ doanh nghiệp giảm thiểu thiệt hại kinh tế nhằm phát huy tốt nhất mô hình kinh doanh du lịch trong điều kiện dịch bệnh; (2) thúc đẩy các chương trình kích cầu du lịch, phát huy tốt mối quan hệ đối tác công - tư; (3) cơ cấu lại hệ thống doanh nghiệp du lịch và mô hình quản lý kinh doanh du lịch phù hợp với tình hình mới, đảm bảo đạt được các mục tiêu phát triển bền vững của Liên hợp quốc trong dài hạn.

*Từ khóa:* giải pháp chính sách, du lịch Việt Nam, Covid-19