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RESEARCH

PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY IN COMPUTER-MEDIATED SYNCHRONOUS COLLABORATIVE TECHNOLOGY USING GOOGLE DOCS

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Abstract: Participation in online learning environments is increasingly popular following the advent of several computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools. There has been empirical evidence about the positive impacts of using synchronous collaborative technologies on students' classroom interactions and learning outcomes. This article reports on an examination of Google Docs as collaborative technology for group assignments in a content course on designing test items for young learners of English. A total 54 pre-service EFL teachers were examined for their perceived levels of participation, learning, social, and teaching presence in the online community where Google Docs was utilized as a collaborative platform for sharing work and receiving feedback. Main findings indicate the pre-service teachers' overall positive perceptions of the use of Google Docs, and their perceived levels of learning, teaching, and social presence were better than those in the face-to-face meeting condition. The results suggest a cohesive community where exchange of ideas and feedback took place effectively and Google Docs was perceived to improve feedback efficiency thanks to its synchronous and asynchronous feedback mechanisms. The study concludes with pedagogical implications for the use of CMC technologies in EFL classrooms and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Google Docs, community of inquiry, learning presence, teaching presence, social presence, synchronous collaborative tool

Introduction

In modern times, smart devices have become part and parcel of our daily lives, or in Byng's (2015) words, these tools have become extensions of humans' psychological selves. It seems obvious that education has increasingly benefited from the use of a variety of technological applications, and that technology will continue to play significant roles with the development of different digital tools (Kochem et al., 2020). Technical affordances brought about by a multitude of digital tools and online interactive applications have transformed the ways teachers and students acquire knowledge, negotiate meanings, or interact with each other. In the classroom, the use of technological advances for formative assessment practices is expected to boost learning outcomes for their efficiency. Timmis et al. (2016) listed several affordances from technologies for assessment, including various ways to represent knowledge and skills via the use of

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multiple modalities from text, image, audio, video, to data visualization; enhanced opportunities for peer and self-assessment activities where learners are allowed to "exercise agency in the assessment process" (p. 6); more flexibility in terms of timing and location of assessment activities; increased collaboration via co-evaluation and peer assessment as "data can be jointly collected, shared, added to and commented on through the use of synchronous and asynchronous technologies" (p. 8).

Among various technological advances, computer-mediated communication (CMC) is becoming an increasingly popular way to conduct online or blended courses, especially in higher education teaching contexts (Garrison et al., 1999). Since the 1990s, computer-mediated communication with both synchronous and asynchronous media has flourished, enabling flexible ways for learners and teachers to communicate beyond the physical classrooms and overcome previous temporal and spatial constraints (Lomicka & Lord, 2019). As technology continues to make great strides, communication tools have provided us with multiple modes of interaction in the physical as well as virtual classrooms, via not only one-to-one but also one-to-many and many-to-many interaction. In Vietnam, the use of CMC is expanding at all levels of education and in different teaching contexts. Yet, there has been little research into the impacts of these technological applications on students' perceptions, learning process, and learning outcomes. Addressing this gap, the current study aims to examine the use of a popular CMC tool, Google Docs, as a collaborative platform for group assignments and feedback provision in a content course for pre-service English teachers who work together on joint tasks in writing items for English tests. The study is an attempt to look at an under-researched population with the use of Google Docs for a different purpose than collaborative writing commonly found in previous research.

Literature Review

Computer-Mediated Communication

Computer-mediated communication, frequently referred to as CMC in the literature, was defined in early research as "a process of human communication via computers, involving people, situated in particular contexts, engaging in processes to shape media for a variety of purposes" (December, 1997) or the "communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers" (Herring, 1996, p. 1). A common focus of early definitions of CMC is on the examination of human-human interaction without clear conceptualizations about the mediating tool – the computer. Therefore, Carr (2020) urges the CMC research community to shift the focus from *computers* to greater focus on the mediation process in human communication. As technology progresses, computers can also be understood as any form of digital technology or device which "is used to transmit and receive meaning-laden messages between human communicators" (Carr, 2020, p. 10). In other words, the CMC scholarship should aim for deeper understanding of the impacts of computers or digital technologies on human communication processes.

CMC and Digital Affordances for Feedback Provision

Feedback provision as a form of human-human communication via digital tools is part of the CMC scholarship. Carless and Boud (2018) conceptualized feedback as a process during which learners receive and process information from various sources before making improvements to their work or better their learning strategies. This definition highlights the involvement of different stakeholders such as teachers, students, or automated sources of feedback in this process. It also shifts the focus from the feedback givers (e.g., instructors, peers) to feedback receivers (i.e., learners themselves) who take on a proactive role in making sense of the information received to improve their learning. Molloy et al. (2020) posit that to put newly learned knowledge into practice, students have to actively "seek information, make sense of it and undertake subsequent tasks" (p. 528). It is widely believed that the feedback scholarship should be heading in this direction to highlight the two-way communication nature of feedback practices. Yet, previous feedback research has focused more on how the feedback is generated than how the feedback is perceived and processed by its receivers.

Thanks to the implementation of online collaboration tools or social media such as blogs or wikis, the way teachers and learners generate and receive feedback in joint learning tasks in the online learning environment has also transformed. In a well-functioning online community, there are huge benefits that learners can enjoy with digital affordances. Firstly, synchronous CMC platforms enable the combined feedback between spoken interaction and text comments. In addition, asynchronous feedback generated on wikis or Google Docs allow for recorded feedback which can be easily stored and retrieved at any point in time. Most text-based feedback modalities have commenting, underlining, highlighting, or track change functions and even the saving of different versions of text. All in all, technological advances have opened up new opportunities for the provision of feedback and also the ways feedback is addressed and responded to among learners.

Community of Inquiry Framework

With the rapid expansion of online and blended learning, teachers and learners' participation in virtual classrooms has gained greater research attention. An attempt to theorize teachers and learners' participation in collaborative online learning environments is Garrison et al.'s (1999) community of inquiry (CoI) framework which elaborates on the instructional, social, and cognitive processes taking place in the online learning community to create a successful higher educational experience. These make up the three dimensions in the CoI framework, namely teaching presence (TP), social presence (SP), and cognitive presence (CP) (Garrison et al., 1999; Hayes et al., 2015). Elaborating on CoI framework, Shea et al. (2022) posit that for learning to be a fruitful experience, the cognitive, teaching, and social dimensions of online educational environments have to be taken into account. In a cohesive and well-functioning community of inquiry, teachers and students jointly contribute to the cognitive, teaching, and social processes through interaction and collaborative knowledge construction. Garrison et al.'s (1999) CoI framework looks at the multi-dimensionality of participants' involvement in educational activities in virtual classes. Therefore, this framework provides excellent foundational tenets that characterize the interaction patterns taking place in blended or online learning environments.

Considered the most basic element to make higher education successful, cognitive presence is "the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse" (Garrison et al., 1999, p. 11). Originally conceived based on the critical thinking literature and higher order thinking skills, cognitive presence in a CMC environment is not detached from learners' self-direction and self-regulation (Wladis et al., 2016). Cognitive presence is operationalized through the four phases of the practical inquiry cycle, namely *triggering event*, *exploration*, *integration*, and *resolution*. The second dimension, social presence, indicates learners' projection of their personal characteristics into the CoI. Social presence supports cognitive presence through its facilitation of learners' critical thinking and higher order skills in the community of inquiry. CoI researchers identified three indicators of social presence in an online learning environment, including *affective expressions*, *open communication*, and *group cohesion* (Richardson & Swan, 2003; Rourke et al., 2001). Garrison et al.'s (1999) conceptualization of the third element in the CoI framework, teaching presence, indicates the roles of the teacher in designing the educational experience and facilitating learning processes. Facilitation, however, can be a shared responsibility among all participants, which Garrison et al. (1999) emphasized as a common feature of higher education in an online learning mode. In this sense, teaching presence supports cognitive and social presence and facilitates realization of learning outcomes.

About a decade after the proposed CoI framework, Shea and Bidjerano (2012) added a fourth dimension to the original framework, learning presence (LP), to emphasize learners' contributions to collaborative virtual education. Criticizing the original framework for its lack of clear elaborations on instructor and learners' roles, Shea and Bidjerano (2009) expanded the framework by adding learning presence whose indicators are associated with regulatory processes based on educational psychology. Learning presence stresses active and engaged learners' attitudes and behaviors which are projected during online collaborative tasks (Shea & Bidjerano, 2012).

Previous Studies

Suwantarathip and Wichadee (2014) compared two groups of Thai students' writing performance following two writing conditions: one group collaboratively composed their writing on four assignments outside the class using Google Docs, while the second group worked on the same four assignments but together in class. The results from writing tests after the intervention showed that the Google Docs group scored significantly higher than the face-to-face group, and students' perceptions of Google Docs as a collaborative online tool were very positive in terms of both its ease of use and opportunities for peer collaboration.

Shintani (2016) adopted a case-study approach to compare the characteristics of computer mediated synchronous corrective feedback versus asynchronous corrective feedback, both on Google Docs as the online platform. The difference between the two conditions lies in the time lapse between essay composition and feedback generation from the teacher. Using an elicitation task focusing on the use of hypothetical condition structure, followed by stimulated recall interviews with two Japanese EFL learners, Shintani (2016) found that both feedback conditions promoted noticing-the-gap and they also helped the learners acquire metalinguistic knowledge of the target structure. However, synchronous feedback is comparable to oral feedback in some certain aspects, and it encouraged students to focus on both form and meaning simultaneously while in the asynchronous feedback condition, focus on form and meaning took place separately.

Ishtaiwa and Aburezeq (2015) examined the impact of Google Docs on a sample of 178 pre-service teachers on increasing different types of interactions: teacher-student, student-student, student-content, and student-interface. Based on mixed data sources, the study found Google Docs an effective tool in encouraging instructor and peer interactions, and it can also boost student-content and student-interface interactions thanks to the features and resources afforded by this technological tool. Some factors were also found to inhibit the use of Google Docs, including insufficient technological skills as well as some limited features on Google Docs which were not as quick and convenient as other types of communication applications (e.g., text messaging and emails).

Ebadi and Rahimi's (2017) explanatory mixed-methods study compared the impacts of online via Google Docs versus face-to-face peer-editing on Iranian EFL learners' academic writing skills. Twenty students were assigned to two groups whose performances on IELTS writing tasks 1 and 2 were compared using paired-samples and independent-samples t-tests. Although both groups improved in terms of academic writing skills, the Google Docs group made more improvements both in the short and long terms. The interview data further revealed students' positive perceptions of the impacts of peer-editing on Google Docs on their writing skills.

Later, Ebadi and Rahimi (2019) conducted a study to examine the impact of online dynamic assessment (DA) on three EFL tertiary students' academic writing skills as they were preparing for the IELTS examination as well as their perceptions towards such impacts. The online synchronous DA sessions were conducted individually with the students over Google Docs. Main findings indicate students' improved academic writing performance in all the studied areas of task achievement, coherence and cohesion, lexicon, and grammatical range and accuracy although students had some difficulty transferring their developed skills to more challenging tasks. Overall, all of the students expressed positive attitudes about the impact of online DA on their writing skills.

Hafour and Al-Rashidy (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study to examine the impacts of collaborative narrative writing via Google Docs on 30 advanced EFL students' writing performance. The study revealed students' significant improvement in writing fluency and overall performance, but not syntactic complexity after nine weeks' intervention. Students' overall perceptions about the use of Google Docs for their narrative group writing activities were positive. The authors hypothesize that the synchronous and asynchronous interactive features on Google Docs and other similar tools make it easier for "different parties (i.e., instructor and students) to provide varied feedback including corrective and non-corrective, instant and delayed, content- and form-based, and peer and instructor feedback" (p. 137).

Research literature indicates the scarcity of studies on teacher and peer computer-mediated feedback. Also, most previous research has implemented Google Docs as an online collaborative tool for writing skills. Except for Ishtaiwa and Abureze's (2015) study, there is a dearth of research which has investigated the use of Google Docs in content courses which also require drafting and redrafting as teachers and learners interact. The reviewed studies highlight Google Docs' advantage as a collaborative tool where different stakeholders can communicate, generate feedback, and co-construct knowledge within a synchronous and asynchronous environment unbound by time and space constraints. Whether this advantage applies to other educational settings in a different content course is open to further research. It is, therefore, the goal of this study to extend this body of research by looking at the use of

Google Docs as a collaborative working space for pre-service English teachers for their joint projects on designing items of English tests for primary school students. Two research questions thus guided this study.

1. What are pre-service teachers' comparative perceptions of the feedback they receive on their assignments during online lessons via Google Docs versus in the face-to-face class?

2. To what extent does working collaboratively on Google Docs enhance pre-service teachers' perceptions of a community of inquiry in an online learning environment?

Methodology

Study Design

This study is a predominantly survey experiment with post-only and within-subjects design. Harasim (2012) proposed three models of online learning: online collaborative learning (OCL), online distance education (ODE) and online courseware (OC). Among these three, OCL focuses on student collaboration and the significant roles played by the teacher. Peer interaction, conceptual understanding, and knowledge products form the core of OCL (Kilis, 2016). The current research adopts OCL as the model on which the course is structured. The course entitled *Writing Tests for Young Language Learners* was taken by two classes of pre-service EFL teachers in Vietnam. Four assignments were delivered throughout the course when students worked in groups to write test items to assess young learners of English. The course was conducted in a blended mode, with some sessions taking place in the physical classroom, while others being conducted online using Zoom and collaborative tool Google Docs. Despite students' prior experience using Google Docs for other courses, they received training to use this Web 2.0 platform to interact on the shared file via the commenting, underlining, highlighting, and track change functions.

Participants

Two intact classes of a total of 54 participants took part in the current research. Class A had 30 pre-service teachers, while Class B had 24. Participants' age ranged from 20 to 21. All the participants were informed of the research purpose and their responses to the questionnaire were anonymized. Six participants were purposely selected and invited to attend individual interviews after they completed the questionnaire. The researcher got their permission to video record the interviews on Zoom.

Data Collection

This study employs a questionnaire, feedback samples from Google Docs files, as well as six individual interviews. All the participants were required to complete four group assignments as part of the course.

Procedures

Over a duration of a 12-week semester, student groups worked collaboratively on four item-writing assignments in weeks 5, 7, 9, 11. For Class A, group work took place in online meetings via Google Docs in weeks 5 and 7, while Class B had their group assignments conducted in face-to-face meetings. Conversely, Class A worked in class on weeks 9 and 11 while Class B worked online using Google Docs. Details about how the study was conducted are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Class Timeline

Timeline	Class A (30 pre-service teachers)	Class B (24 pre-service teachers)
Sessions 1-2 Both classes were familiarized with *Google Docs* for conducting shared group work on writing test items for young learners of English.		
Session 3 Practice: Writing grammar test items. Both classes submitted work on *Google Docs* and received teacher + peer feedback.		
Session 5	**Assignment 1**: Writing vocabulary test items	
	Online, via Google Docs	In class, using worksheets
Session 7	**Assignment 2**: Writing listening test items	
	Online, via Google Docs	In class, using worksheets
Session 9	**Assignment 3**: Writing speaking test items	
	In class, using worksheets	Online, via Google Docs
Session 11	**Assignment 4**: Writing reading test items	
	In class, using worksheets	Online, via Google Docs
Session 12 Pre-service teachers responded to the questionnaire.		
Session 13 Individual interviews with six pre-service teachers.		

Being a Web 2.0 application, Google Docs has several features which allow users to create, share, and edit documents, making the learning process more learner-centered and enabling collaborative efforts to develop their knowledge and skills. According to Hafour and Al-Rashidy (2020), Google Docs is among the cloud-based applications which allow for collaboration to take place in real time. They overcome shortcomings of other collaborative technologies in terms of its time and space independence, instant viewing of peer edits, and the varying degrees of synchronicity. Google Docs, as a digital technology, allows for participants' sharing of content and technical documentation. Thanks to its functions, Google Docs is a digital platform which can afford "persistence and editability of content, as well as interactive commenting and association with others for whom this content was relevant" (Gibbs, Rozaidi, & Eisenberg, 2013, p. 107). In general, Google Docs facilitates three modes of collaboration:

Collaboration on text: This is done

via the editor mode in Google Docs where students could collaboratively write test items, and members of each group could add, delete, substitute, or rearrange items. This happened at the initial stage of the project when each group worked on their own construction of test items.

Collaboration around text: In the second stage, the instructor asked all the groups to cut and paste their test items to the shared Google document of the whole class. The shared document was initially set to the viewer mode and students were encouraged to read other groups' test items to give comments using the commenting features. The instructor also provided comments at this stage.

Collaboration through text: In the third phase, the shared Google document was set back to the editor mode so that each group could start making edits and revisions to their test items, incorporating teacher and peer comments. This process took place alongside oral feedback from the instructor and peers and more comments from them if they wished to do so, and revisions were done until the end of the class meeting.

In the remaining sessions, students worked face to face in class. Initially, they wrote test items on their worksheet. In the next stage, groups exchanged their items for peer feedback using a peer review worksheet. The teacher also generated feedback using a similar worksheet. Both peer and teacher review worksheets were completed in class and returned to each group for their revisions before they submitted the final test items to the teacher for summative assessments.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire about students' perceived community of inquiry is constructed based on Wertz's (2022) Web-based Teaching and Learning Link to Social and Cognitive Presence (WebTALK) survey which is comprised of four clusters representing four sub-constructs within the CoI framework: cognitive presence, social presence, teaching presence, and learning presence. Specifically, participating pre-service teachers were surveyed about their comparative perceptions of LP (four items via the motivational and behavioral subscales), TP (two items via the teacher facilitation and peer facilitation subscales), and SP (two items via open communication and group belonging subscales) as they collaboratively worked in the CMC environment using Google Docs and in the face-to-face meetings. In addition, six survey items are adopted for the purpose of the current research to reflect the nature of feedback generation and interaction in the CMC environment using Google Docs for group projects. Through these six items, participants' perceptions of the feedback received when working on Google Docs and in face-to-face sessions are examined. Each questionnaire item used a 1-5 Likert scale with the five response options: 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree.

Reliability was calculated to check internal consistency of the items related to students' perceived CoI using Cronbach's Alpha, which shows acceptable internal consistency (α = 0.900 for perceived CoI in online classes and α = 0.803 for the sub-set of items related to face-to-face classes). In addition, Cronbach's Alpha statistics for the cluster of six items on feedback perception are satisfactory, α = 0.920 for feedback via Google Docs versus α = 0.918 for feedback via worksheets.

Interviews

Acknowledging the fact that the use of five-point Likert scale items in the questionnaire may limit the depth of participants' responses, follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted with six individual participants who are referred to using pseudonyms throughout this research. Video recordings of online learning sessions were observed and the comments posted by different class participants on the shared Google documents were tabulated to target this sub-group. To maximize variation within this sub-group for good representativeness of the whole sample, two participants who actively contributed ideas during the lessons with most comments posted in the shared Google documents (S1 and S2), two others who were moderately engaged with some comments posted (S3 and S4), and two who showed little engagement as they rarely spoke up in class with no posted comments on the shared documents (S5 and S6) were invited to take part in the interviews. Guiding questions delved deeper into their perceptions of using Google Docs for group assignments and the feedback they received from the instructor and peers either in the CMC platform and in face-to-face meetings using worksheets.

Data Analyses

The questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS to obtain descriptive statistics. Specifically, the 54 pre-service teachers' responses to the five-point Likert-scale questionnaire items were entered into SPSS to calculate the mean, median, and standard deviation of each item. In addition, to compare participants' perceptions of the feedback received across the two working conditions (i.e., online via Google Docs versus in class using worksheets), as well as their perceptions of teaching, learning, and social presences when working collaboratively in either condition, the normality of the variables related to six items for feedback perceptions and eight items for SP, LP, and TP dimensions was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test. After statistical assumptions were checked, the non-parametric Wilcoxon signed ranks test was conducted on the set of six items for feedback perceptions and the second set of eight items for SP, LP, and TP dimensions in the CoI framework to seek answers to the two research questions.

Qualitative data from the six individual interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy before their thematic coding analysis was conducted. Initially, the researcher screened the transcribed interviews to identify potential themes, which is followed by the creation of the list of codes for themes that align with the major issues addressed in the two research questions. Two major themes were (a) participants' perceptions of using Google Docs as a collaborative technology in online sessions and (b) their comparative perceptions of the feedback received via Google Docs versus that received during face-to-face meetings. On re-reading the transcripts, the researcher continued to identify sub-themes, including the benefits of using Google Docs and participants' perceptions of their learning, teaching, and social presence under the major theme of participants' perceptions, while the second major theme is comprised of the quality and quantity of the feedback received via Google Docs in online sessions versus on worksheets during face-to-face meetings. The finalized list of codes was used for double-coding on one transcript, with the second coder being a colleague who is an experienced EFL lecturer with a PhD in Applied Linguistics. Differences were discussed and resolved before coding of the remaining five transcripts was conducted by the researcher.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure reliability and validity, this study employed three research instruments, including the questionnaire, interview, and documentation of feedback samples on Google Docs. The triangulation of data provides more comprehensive understanding of the two research aims. The reliability of the research is also managed through the fact that the author was the only one to collect data for both the questionnaire and interviews, ensuring the consistency in data collection procedures and eliminating issues related to data collection bias. In addition, validity of the research was obtained through efforts to use simple and straightforward language in the questionnaire and interviews to avoid confusion among respondents. Prior to their official administration to the 54 pre-service EFL teachers, the questionnaire and interview questions were also piloted among five students who shared similar educational backgrounds with the target sample, and any confusing language or unclear expressions were revised. Most importantly, the questionnaire was designed based on Garrison et al.'s (1999) CoI framework and Wertz's (2022) WebTALK survey, and therefore, the items were well conceived with clearly theorized constructs of measurement.

Findings

The findings are presented in response to each research question. In each question, quantitative data are presented first, followed by the qualitative data from the interviews to supplement and triangulate quantitative data.

Pre-service Teachers' Comparative Perceptions of Received Feedback

Statistical assumptions were checked regarding the data for students' responses to the 14 questionnaire items. The normality of all variables was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which shows that the data for all variables were not normally distributed. Therefore, the non-parametric Wilcoxon signed ranks test was employed to compare students' agreement levels with different statements about the effectiveness of giving peer and teacher feedback across the two conditions.

Table 2 presents the results of Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests which show statistically significant differences between students' perceptions of the feedback received via Google Docs versus via worksheets in face-to-face meetings. The results indicate that except for the effect of feedback on the pre-service teachers' understanding of learned materials, their agreement levels with the convenience, ease of use, promptness, support for making effective revisions, and solving problems related to item-writing were significantly higher for the feedback they received during online learning sessions via Google Docs than that on peer and teacher evaluation forms in face-to-face meetings.

Table 2

Students' Perceptions of Feedback via Google Docs vs. Evaluation Worksheets (N=54)

Statements **The feedback via…**	*Google Docs…*		*evaluation worksheets…*		**Wilcoxon signed-rank test**	
	Median	*SD*	Median	*SD*	*Z*	*p*
(1) is very convenient.	4.00	.97	4.00	.82	2.03	0.040
(2) is easy to follow.	4.00	.04	3.00	.91	2.47	0.012
(3) is delivered quickly.	4.00	.87	3.00	.92	3.50	< .001
(4) helps me understand the learned materials effectively.	4.00	.84	4.00	.71	1.77	.061
(5) helps me make revisions effectively.	4.00	.74	4.00	.84	3.13	.001
(6) helps me solve the problems related to item writing.	4.00	.81	4.00	.73	2.57	.007

Students' interviews add support to the questionnaire data regarding the feedback received on either mode. In general, most of the interviewed students commented that the use of Google Docs contributed to enhanced collaboration among students as well as between students and the instructor. In addition, they enjoyed much more support from the feedback delivered online via Google Docs in making effective revisions compared to the feedback they received on the teacher and peer evaluation worksheets in class. Table 3 summarizes the relevant comments on these advantages.

Table 3

Benefits of Google Docs on Feedback Delivery

Benefits	**Number of comments**	**Sample comments**
Boosting collaboration among students and instructors	5	*I think we were more confident in sharing our comments on our peers' test items during the feedback session on Google Docs. We were more comfortable with providing comments on the margin of the shared documents compared to giving written comments on the hard copies of other groups' assignments. Also, more people can add their comments simultaneously on Google Docs. (S4)*
Aiding effective revisions	4	*The feedback is instant, and once we've read the feedback, we can immediately revise to receive further feedback on our revised texts. This is much better than the delayed written feedback on paper worksheets. (S3)*
Convenient retrieval of feedback	4	*This tool allows me to refer to the comments and feedback at any later points in time to see if I can make more revisions to my work. (S2)*

Students' Perceptions of CoI

The second research question was examined by asking students to evaluate the impact of Google Docs on enhancing their perceived learning presence, teaching presence, and social presence in a community of inquiry with eight questionnaire items. Table 4 provides descriptive statistics about students' perceptions of working collaboratively online using Google Docs.

Table 4

Students' Perceptions of CoI Dimensions in an Online Learning Environment (N=54)

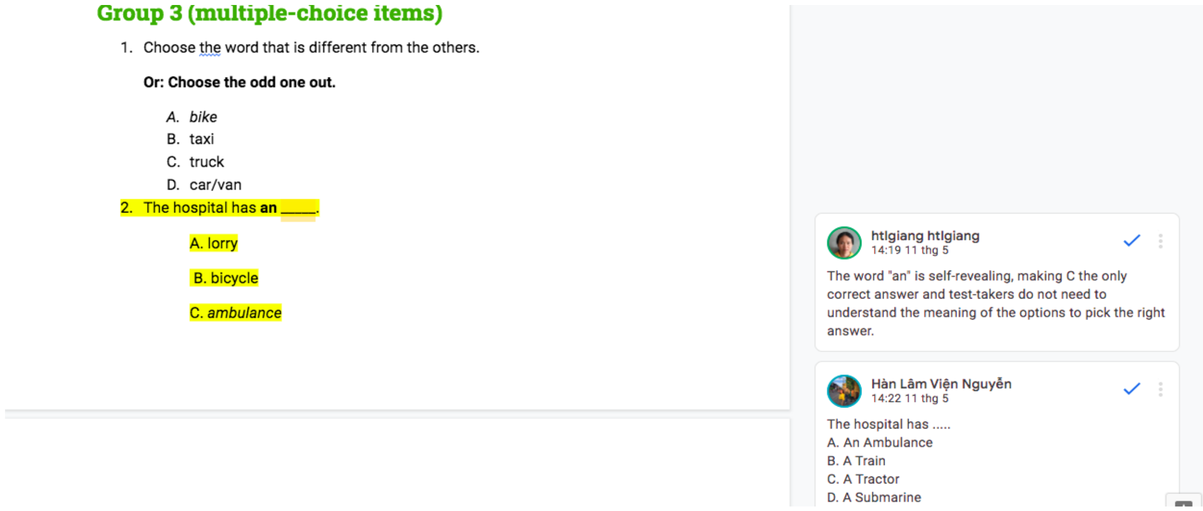
Dimension	Category	Statement	Mean	SD
Learning presence	Motivational	*I found working collaboratively on Google Docs very convenient.*	3.98	.96
		Working collaboratively on Google Docs made me engaged in the tasks.	3.76	.95
		Working collaboratively on Google Docs motivated me to contribute to the group assignments.	3.52	.97
	Behaviors	*I paid more attention to the questions and answers raised during the feedback session online via Google Docs.*	4.15	.79
Teaching presence	Instructor facilitation	*I received a lot of feedback from my instructor to complete the item-writing tasks well.*	4.32	.77
	Peer facilitation	*I received a lot of feedback from peers through comments and peer review to complete the item-writing tasks well.*	4.13	.91
Social presence	Open communication	*I felt comfortable providing and receiving comments from my peers and instructor.*	4.04	.91
	Group belonging	*Interacting and cooperating with other participants gave me a sense of community.*	4.17	.80

By using means and standard deviations of pre-service teachers' responses to the five-point Likert-scale items, the results show participants' high levels of agreement with the statements about the impact of using Google Docs as a collaborative tool for group assignments on their sense of community. Generally, participants agreed that Google Docs is able to promote a sense of group belonging and they reported feeling more confident to give comments on others' works. They also expressed high levels of agreement with statements about receiving a lot of feedback from both peers and instructor, with mean values ranging from 4.04 to 4.32. Correspondingly, the pre-service teachers concurred that they were better engaged in the learning tasks, contributed more to their group assignments, and were confident to raise more questions related to the item-writing tasks during teacher and peer review sessions online (M = 3.52 to 4.15, SD = .79 to .97).

Explanatory factors come from the fact that students were able to contribute simultaneously on Google Docs using side comments, as illustrated in Figure 1 below. In this excerpt, the instructor provided comments on a test item, which was followed by a revised item by another class member which can be viewed by all of the participants synchronously.

Figure 1

An Example for Instructor and Peer Comments and Feedback



Learning Presence

Tables 5, 6, and 7 further present detailed information about Wilcoxon signed-ranks test results when the participants' responses to the questionnaire Likert-scale items were compared regarding students' perceptions of CoI when they collaboratively worked on Google Docs versus during face-to-face meetings. Generally, except for the third statement about motivation, the results show statistically significant differences between students' perceptions about the two collaborative modes (i.e., online via Google Docs versus face-to-face via teacher and peer evaluation worksheets), with statistically higher agreement levels for the statements about the positive impact of Google Docs on boosting the pre-service teachers' sense of group belonging via enhanced levels of learning, teaching, and social presence.

Table 5

Students' Comparative Perceptions of Learning Presence (N=54)

Statements **Working collaboratively …**	*online via Google Docs…*		*in face-to-face meetings via worksheets…*		**Wilcoxon signed-rank test**	
	Median	*SD*	Median	*SD*	*Z*	*p*
(1) is very convenient.	4.00	.96	3.00	.74	2.80	.004
(2) makes me interested in learning activities.	4.00	.95	3.00	.74	2.09	.032
(3) motivates me.	3.00	.97	3.00	.82	1.01	.301
(4) enhances my attention to the questions and answers during the peer review sessions.	4.00	.79	4.00	.72	3.84	<.001

Further elaboration on the convenience of Google Docs was expressed by the interviewed participants. Four of the participants concurred that Google Docs is a great collaborative platform which allows them to access the shared file around the clock and any changes made by group members are instantly updated:

> The greatest convenience is that with Google Docs, we can access the shared file on our smartphones anytime and anywhere. This allows us to easily collaborate for our group assignments. (S1)

> On Google Docs, we can contribute more ideas and have more discussion opportunities. Added to this, it is easy to make revisions if we've got something wrong. (S4)

The participants also appreciated the functions on this collaborative technology which aided them in looking for suitable online materials when they designed test items, "Using Google Docs saves us time as there are available resources, especially the images and pictures, to help us create more attractive test items for kids" (S6).

All in all, Google Docs as a collaborative tool in group assignments has advantages over traditional working modes as it tends to enhance participants' learning presence via convenient functions to access shared documents, retrieve information, give and respond to comments and feedback, as well as make edits and revisions accordingly.

Teaching Presence

Table 6

Students' Comparative Perceptions of Teaching Presence (N=54)

Statements **Working collaboratively …**	*online via Google Docs…*		*in face-to-face meetings via worksheets…*		**Wilcoxon signed-rank test**	
	Median	*SD*	Median	*SD*	*Z*	*p*
(5) I received a lot of feedback from my instructor to complete the item-writing tasks well.	4.00	.77	4.00	.77	4.44	<.001
(6) I received a lot of feedback from peers through comments and peer review to complete the item-writing tasks well.	4.00	.91	3.00	.78	4.45	.006

In the interview, S1 verbalized his thoughts about how he strongly felt the sense of teaching presence as he engaged in the online test item review activities thanks to the promptness of the teacher feedback delivered on Google Docs.

> Compared to working collaboratively in the classroom when we discussed and wrote down the items on paper for teacher and peer feedback, working collaboratively during online sessions via Google Docs allowed us to interact directly with the teacher as she provided comments and suggestions on our test items. Oftentimes, she did not provide the alternative items or directly corrected our mistakes. Instead, she gave hints about things

> that needed attention or correction. When we read her notes and comments on the side like "please review these options" [i.e., for multiple choice test items], we tried to come up with the revisions. Once we'd made changes to the options, the instructor reviewed them synchronously and suggested further corrections if needed. This means that we received two rounds of feedback, which is much more than the feedback received on the teacher feedback form in face-to-face meetings. (S1)

Social Presence

Table 7

Students' Comparative Perceptions of Social Presence (N=54)

Statements **Working collaboratively …**	*online via Google Docs…*		*in face-to-face meetings via worksheets…*		**Wilcoxon signed-rank test**	
	Median	*SD*	Median	*SD*	*Z*	*p*
(7) I felt comfortable providing and receiving comments from my peers and instructor.	4.00	.91	4.00	.80	3.24	<.001
(8) Interacting and cooperating with other participants gave me a sense of community.	4.00	.71	4.00	.78	2.52	.009

Enhanced social presence, according to the interviewed pre-service teachers, was thanks to the multi-way interactions between peers and instructor when they collaboratively worked on their assignment using Google Docs, as S1 commented,

> The use of Google Docs encouraged all participants to join, which turns the learning activity into a shared experience. For example, when we submitted our assignments on the worksheet to the instructor, which was later returned with the teacher feedback, we only learned about what we did well or what we needed to improve. However, working collaboratively on a shared Google document with other groups, I had a chance to look at test items designed by my classmates from other groups. Because of this, I learned from others' mistakes too… More importantly, besides the teacher, all other classmates also provided feedback on our work. Receiving feedback from both the instructor and peers is so useful.

Participants also attributed their positive feelings about the CoI via Google Docs to the fact that the commenting functions on shared Google documents helped them become bolder in generating feedback on other groups' test items during the review sessions,

> I believe that Google Docs makes us more confident in sharing our thoughts. Oftentimes, we are more reluctant to speak up in class to share our ideas. It is much easier to put down our ideas as side comments on Google Docs, and thanks to this, more participants are encouraged to join by contributing ideas for others to improve their works. (S6)

Discussion and Implications

This study examined the impacts of Google Docs as collaborative technology for group assignments on pre-service EFL teachers' perceived levels of CoI via the three dimensions of learning, teaching, and social presence. Main findings indicate positive impacts of this tool on enhancing participants' perceived levels of learning, teaching, and social presence in an online learning environment compared to the face-to-face meetings in class. What particularly stands out as a contributory factor to the enhanced feelings about LP, TP, and SP was the perceived ease and convenience of feedback delivery via the synchronous computer-mediated communication platform afforded by Google Docs.

Pre-service teachers' positive perceptions about the use of Google Docs as an online collaborative tool are in line with previous studies (e.g., Ebadi & Rahimi, 2017; Hafour & Al-Rashidy, 2020; Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014). From a constructivist perspective, online collaborative technologies could promote learners' learning skills thanks to a constructivist environment (Chou & Chen, 2010), which aids them in making more effective revisions. From a sociocultural perspective, formative feedback should be graduated, contingent, and dialogic (Bitchener & Storch, 2016), which are applicable to the peer and teacher feedback delivered via Google Docs. As mentioned in the interviews, the participants were happy about receiving more than one round of feedback from the instructor during the feedback session, which helped them address the issues in their test items properly and improve their work. The level of support usually started off with implicit and indirect feedback, which became guidance for learners' efforts in finding their own solutions for revised items. Instructor feedback is also often followed by suggested revisions from peers, showing some graduation of the feedback received. The synchronous communication during online lessons also allows for dialogic exchange on the provided feedback. In other words, findings from this study corroborate earlier research which found that synchronous computer mediated communication via Google Docs encourages dialogic and contingent feedback where learners can comment, edit, and revise the writings simultaneously (e.g., Ebadi & Rahimi, 2017; Kessler et al., 2012).

Regarding participants' enhanced perceived levels of learning presence during online meetings, the results partially explain what was found in earlier research about students' improved learning outcomes such as higher scores for the Google Docs group when it is used as a synchronous or asynchronous tool to deliver teacher and peer written feedback on student writing (e.g., Ebadi & Rahimi, 2017; Ebadi & Rahimi, 2019; Hafour & Al-Rashidy, 2020; Shintani, 2016; Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014). The feedback scholarship has generally indicated that both teachers and students tend to consider feedback generation as instructors' responsibility, and students are in no position to initiate or create changes to it (Molloy et al., 2019). The current study findings, however, suggest some evidence that shifts the paradigm when Google Docs is utilized for feedback and assessment purposes on group assignments. Through the implementation of Google Docs, students' agency is confirmed, evidenced in the participation of learners themselves as feedback providers (peer editing) and their active processing of the received feedback to make improvements. Learners have transitioned from "acting as active listeners to active seekers and utilisers of feedback, as well as generators of useful information for others" (Molloy et al., 2019, p. 538). Plus, with digital affordances, these feedback sources are delivered immediately and synchronously for effective revisions. In the long run, teacher and peer feedback delivered via a synchronous and asynchronous collaborative tool like Google Docs in structured learning helps learners gradually progress from other regulation to self-regulation.

Perceived levels of teaching presence are also positive when the participants collaborated with peers to write test items and revised the items following teacher and peer feedback. This result adds support to the positive learning outcomes following the use of Google Docs as a synchronous CMC platform reported in previous research. This is thanks to the opportunities for more engaging pedagogy and novel forms of formative assessment afforded by interactive technologies like Google Docs (Timmis et al., 2016). The increased amount of feedback received by the participants seems to consolidate the roles of instructors and peers in helping each participant develop self-regulatory skills. Self-regulation is undeniably a great benefit of using Google Docs for joint work and three-way interaction among the instructor, student, and peers in an online learning environment, as "online learners monitor their time and cognitive strategies, regulate their study environment, and exercise control over their interactions with technology, peers, and faculty to maximize their learning" (Shea et al., 2012, as cited in Kilis & Yıldırım, 2018, p. 62).

Another key finding of this research is the pre-service teachers' favorable perceptions of the online sessions using Google Docs for group assignments, which enhanced their sense of social presence. Explanatory factors were mentioned in the interviews, including increased interactions among students themselves as well as between the instructor and students. In the current time, as learners have easy access to smart devices and technological applications, researchers posit that learners' digital selves may be bolder versions of their true selves. The human-machine interaction may have contributed to the changed perception of our self (Zimmermann, 2020), and via Google Docs, the participants were able to take on more proactive roles in a digital environment when delivering peer feedback and making revisions to their own work. They also tend to be more receptive of the feedback from both the instructor and peers in a less intimidating environment of online classes. When the participants' affective filters are lowered, which opens up a more relaxed space for communication, the participants tend to experience an enhanced sense of group belonging.

All in all, once the time and space constraints have been lifted and students are more emotionally relaxed to share and receive comments on their work, they benefit more from the interactions which support their progress and learning outcomes. Some pedagogical implications can be forwarded based on the findings of the current research. First, the use of Google Docs as an online collaborative tool can potentially enhance students' participation and sense of group belonging if properly used. The findings suggest that the use of Google Docs and other similar online collaborative tools is of great relevance to not only second language writing classes but also content courses, especially at tertiary levels where learners have easy access to smart devices. Similar to L2 writing lessons, blended and online content courses may benefit from the commenting, editing, and track change functions provided by this Web 2.0 application which works well for not only teacher synchronous and asynchronous feedback on student works but also for group tasks where students collaborate to produce an end product. This is partially because the implementation of collaborative technologies for classroom use provides learners with easy access to available online learning resources which help them better fulfill learning tasks. This, in combination with the one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many interactions among the instructor and students, can support each individual learner's development of self-regulatory skills and transition to self-regulation. Therefore, the application of Web 2.0 technologies should be made part of pre- and in-service teacher training programs, not only as a separate course but also as a regular tool for assignments and group work activities.

As said, the benefits of Google Docs as a collaborative tool can only be maximized if proper actions are taken to enhance course participants' social and learning presence. The findings particularly point to the perceived value of Google Docs as an effective feedback provision platform. Accordingly, content course instructors can encourage students to engage in peer feedback and peer editing activities via this tool on a regular basis. Strategies can be devised to ensure that all of the students contribute their ideas about peers' performance through variable levels of required feedback from general comments to diagnostic feedback (i.e., indirect to direct, generic to very specific) depending on their preferences and abilities. Under certain circumstances, the instructor can assign the roles of feedback providers to specific students on specific learning activities to make sure everyone can exchange feedback using the commenting functions on the shared document. Compared to the intimidating situation of speaking up to give oral comments in face-to-face meetings, posting a written comment on Google Docs provides a good starting point for less confident learners to share their ideas. It should also be made part of the requirements for course participants to collaboratively draft and redraft their works prior to submission to the instructor. This way, students can benefit from the multiple rounds of feedback conducted via online platforms like Google Docs. Overall, in order to create a cohesive online community, instructors need to take into consideration their teaching context, learner characteristics, available technological resources, and course contents to structure their teaching and incorporate digital tools appropriately.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The current study has a few limitations to be acknowledged. Being a predominantly survey experiment, this research measures pre-service teachers' perceptions through their evaluation of the impact of Google Docs on enhancing learning presence, teaching presence, and social presence in an online learning setting and how that compares to a face-to-face condition. The self-report data may not fully capture the depth and breadth of the participants' experience in an online community as well as the impacts of synchronous and asynchronous CMC tools like Google Docs. In addition, the predominantly survey experiment with post-only and within-subjects design may not guarantee the validity of inferences made about the impact of using Google Docs on pre-service teachers' perceptions of the online community of inquiry. Therefore, future research can adopt a pre-post experimental design to measure the impacts of these communication platforms on students' cognitive, behavioral, and social development.

It should also be noted that the study was conducted in a content course where pre-service EFL teachers learned to design language test items for young learners of English. Although this research context contributes a significant extension to the current CMC scholarship, the comments and discussion regarding students' positive perceptions of the use of Google Docs should be taken with some precaution to avoid over-generalization to other teaching contexts. Future studies should, therefore, aim for a larger scope to include more participants across a wider range of domains, from language skills to content courses. In consistence with the collaborative nature of CMC digital tools, focus group interviews can be utilized as a data collection instrument to encourage productive discussion related to the four constructs in the CoI framework.

Also relevant to the depth and breadth of the participants' experience in an online community, the current research has not researched the cognitive dimension in the CoI framework. Other research instruments such as classroom observations combined with stimulated recall interviews and learners' reflective journals can shed further light on this fourth dimension. Building on the findings of the current study, a mixed methods approach to conducting research in this line of enquiry will promisingly shed light on students' educational experience in an online learning environment via the use of interactive technologies.

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NGHIÊN CỨU TRẢI NGHIỆM CỦA SINH VIÊN NGÀNH SƯ PHẠM TIẾNG ANH VỀ CỘNG ĐỒNG KHẢO CỨU THÔNG QUA ỨNG DỤNG CÔNG CỤ XỬ LÝ VĂN BẢN HỢP TÁC ĐỒNG BỘ GOOGLE DOCS

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Tóm tắt: Với sự ra đời của các công cụ giao tiếp dựa trên nền tảng công nghệ (computer-mediated communication – CMC), việc tham gia vào môi trường học tập trực tuyến ngày càng phổ biến. Một số nghiên cứu thực nghiệm đã chỉ ra tác động tích cực của việc sử dụng các nền tảng công nghệ đối với sự tương tác của người học trong lớp và kết quả học tập của họ. Nghiên cứu này khảo sát việc sử dụng Google Docs như một công cụ hợp tác trực tuyến được sinh viên ngành sư phạm sử dụng cho các bài tập nhóm trong một khóa học về thiết kế các bài kiểm tra tiếng Anh cho trẻ em. Tổng cộng có 54 sinh viên ngành sư phạm đã được khảo sát về nhận thức của họ liên quan đến ba yếu tố trong mô hình đào tạo truy vấn cộng đồng (community of inquiry – COI): sự hiện diện của quá trình học tập, sự hiện diện về nhân tố xã hội và sự hiện diện của quá trình giảng dạy trong cộng đồng học tập trực tuyến khi Google Docs được sử dụng làm nền tảng cộng tác để sinh viên cùng thực hiện bài tập nhóm và phản hồi lẫn nhau trong các giờ học trực tuyến. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy những phản hồi tích cực của người học về việc sử dụng Google Docs. Cụ thể, họ có cảm nhận rõ hơn về sự hiện diện của quá trình học tập và quá trình giảng dạy cũng như trải nghiệm tích cực hơn về sự hiện diện của nhân tố xã hội so với việc thực hiện bài tập nhóm cùng nhau tại lớp theo cách truyền thống trên giấy. Kết quả cho thấy Google Docs đã góp phần tạo ra một cộng đồng khảo cứu gắn kết và là nền tảng để người học trao đổi ý tưởng và cùng hợp tác để hoàn thành tốt các bài tập nhóm. Google Docs cũng được người học nhận xét là giúp cải thiện đáng kể hiệu quả của quá trình nhận xét và phản hồi của giảng viên cũng như phản hồi đồng cấp. Dựa trên kết quả nghiên cứu, bài viết đưa ra những đề xuất cụ thể đối với việc sử dụng công nghệ CMC trong các lớp học và các hướng nghiên cứu vấn đề này trong tương lai.

Từ khóa: Google Docs, cộng đồng khảo cứu, công cụ hợp tác đồng bộ

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS TOWARDS THE INFLUENCE OF PEER ASSESSMENT ON THEIR COMMUNICATION AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

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Abstract: The study aimed to investigate students' perception towards the use of peer assessment to improve their employability skills, especially communication and critical thinking skills. To achieve this objective, a survey was conducted with the participation of 226 students at a university in Hanoi, Vietnam. They were taking the course named "Skills for University Success", in which it was required that students made presentations and gave feedback to other groups' performances. The analyzed data showed that students highly valued the benefits of giving and receiving peer assessment. In terms of communication skills, the majority of students agreed that through this activity, they could learn and improve their ability to convey the ideas, listen to others, and create a friendly atmosphere while giving comments. Regarding critical thinking skills, peer assessment helped students identify strengths and weaknesses of peers' performances more quickly and correctly. The study suggested that lecturers or curriculum organizers should consider making this activity compulsory in their courses so that students can boost their employability skills.

Keywords: employability skills, peer assessment, assessing peer, critical thinking, communication skills

1. Introduction

One of the critical issues in higher education is equipping students with sufficient knowledge and skills that match employers' requirements. However, there still exists a visible gap between skills which graduates possess and those needed at the workplace, or employability skills. Employability skills are defined by National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Australia as those enabling "people to gain, keep and progress in employment" (Naidu et al., 2020, p. 16). Although each country has their own framework for employability skills, they still share some common ones such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, organizational skills.

Via surveys, businesses affirm that they cannot gain success without a workforce possessing those skills. Such skills, with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, even become more important. Specifically, in research to assess the impact of Covid-19 on job and skills, OECD (2021) finds out that while technical competencies in the healthcare field are in higher demand, transversal skills like communication skills or teamwork are even more vital in top-tier job positions. Interpersonal, communication

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skills, and decision-making skills are also perceived as essential to very important among individual factors for the success in obtaining a job in Vietnam labor market in the report of V2work project (Climent, 2019).

Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated changes not only in the mode of learning but also in the working paradigm. Many businesses are considering working models to adopt among full-remote; "hybrid" or partially remote; or physical, also known as "going back to the office" (Saraiva et al., 2021). According to the Capgemini Research Institute (2020), the transition to a hybrid workforce model is foreseeable, in which skill profiles tend to change as humans interact with new technologies, or in other words, there is “a request for new skills and the updating of existing ones” (Schilirò, 2021). Schilirò also identified critical thinking as one of the most crucial skills for employees. At the same time, Cook (2020) added some protocol-related factors for the changes from face-to-face communication mode to digital mode when engaging in business conversations and information exchange.

Within the scope of this study, with limited resources and time, it was impossible for us to equip and develop employability skills for our students. Therefore, we chose to focus on two essential types, which is communication and critical thinking skills. They are not only shared skills in many frameworks created in different countries but also mentioned as the 21st century skills that are critically significant to success in today’s world.

Peer assessment is considered as a form of assessment which ‘requires students to provide either feedback or grades (or both) to their peers on a product or a performance, based on the criteria of excellence for that product or event which students may have been involved in determining’ (Boud & Falchikov, 2007, p. 132). This activity can be termed as peer grading, peer feedback, peer evaluation or peer review (Topping, 2021). In our study, peer assessment could be both peer feedback and peer grading when students were to give comments on their peers’ performance and then complete a marking form.

The influence of peer assessment on four aspects of students’ learning: (1) performance and achievement, (2) affective aspects, (3) students’ awareness of the learning process and (4) employability skills was investigated in various studies. Most of them, however, tended to focus more on the first three aspects and effects on employability skills of students were just a “by-product”. Specifically, in an attempt to improve students’ performance, while many studies found that giving and receiving feedback did bring positive effects Barac et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2020; Chien et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021; T. N. Pham et al., 2020), some of them discovered that peer assessment could also develop students’ critical thinking. Chien et al. (2020) asserted that by providing comments to peers and making self-reflections, apart from improving speaking skills, students were able to significantly enhance their critical thinking skills. Likewise, in another study, students learning with Virtual Reality design activities based on peer assessment approach demonstrated better critical thinking tendency than those without peer assessment (Chang et al., 2020). Within the Vietnamese context, Pham et al. (2020) aimed to improve their students’ writing skills by using electronic peer feedback. Along with the desired outcome, they also discovered that this activity could foster students’ critical reflective thinking.

Findings on the effectiveness of peer assessment on communication skills are even rarer. While comparing the benefits of giving and receiving peer feedback, Ion et al.

(2019) discovered that receiving feedback could better students' communication with their peers as well as their ability to argue. Likewise, students in another study affirmed that they became a better listener when doing peer review (Barac et al., 2021).

In short, to our best knowledge, the influence of peer assessment on employability skills in general and critical thinking as well as communication skills in particular have not been adequately researched. Therefore, while seeing the potential of peer assessment in developing these skills for students, we also hope to contribute to the current literature of this field. Our study aimed to answer the questions:

(1) How do students perceive the influence of peer assessment on their communication skills?
(2) How do students perceive the influence of peer assessment on their critical thinking?

To answer the above questions, we find it necessary to conduct our research through a course in which critical thinking and communication skills are the focus and peer assessment is included. *Skills for university success* is a course aiming at fostering the different study skill sets for students such as study planning skills, critical thinking skills or teamwork skills. It is delivered for students who are majored in languages and international studies at a university in Vietnam. Various learning activities are conducted during the course, especially weekly collaborative presentation and end-of-course project. More specifically, every week students work in groups of 4 to present on a given topic related to an aspect of study skills, which is intended to prepare them for the final group projects in terms of choosing teammates, topics and working process. Learning from weekly presentations, students team up and create a video, a poster, or an oral presentation for the final project. After weekly presentation or demonstration of the final product, each group receives peer assessment from their classmates then followed by a debrief from the teacher. Both oral and written comments from peers are allowed via different platforms like Zoom and Google forms. Students can also give feedback anonymously to the groups. After the presentations, groups are asked to submit a report on their teamwork with guided questions.

2. Literature Review

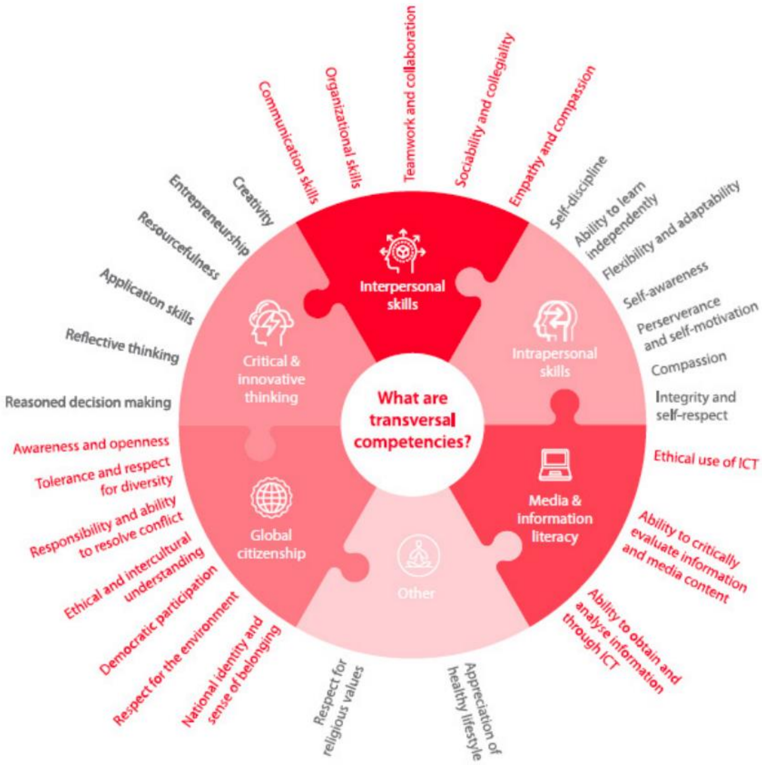
2.1. Employability Skills

Though innovations have constantly been conducted at universities so that graduates can satisfy the labour market demands, employers are still seeking a set of skills other than just specialized knowledge in those prospective candidates. This means that good academic qualifications are not the guarantee for them to get a job position anymore (Yorke, 2006). They need to develop employability skills which allow them "to gain, keep and progress in employment" (Naidu et al., 2020, p. 16). Employability skills can be termed as transferable skills, soft skills, behavioral competencies skills or cross-curricular skills (Awofala et al., 2017).

Even though different regions and industries require different sets of skills, there are common ones that can be found in almost all places and jobs. Such skills are named by Moldovan (2020) as "transversal skills" or "transversal competencies", which are illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 1

Groups and Sub-Groups of Transversal Competencies

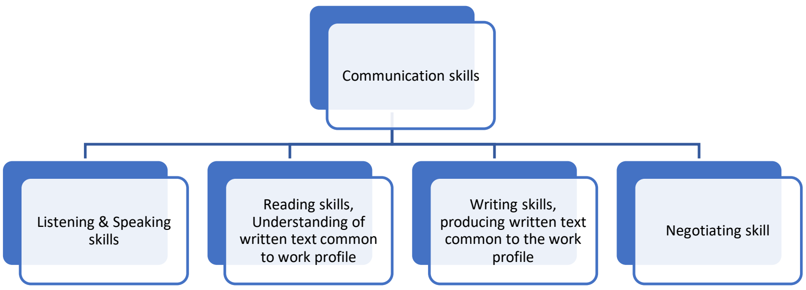


Note. Adapted from “A Reference Framework for Continuous Improvement of Employability Assessment”, by L. Moldovan, 2020, *Procedia Manufacturing*, *46*, pp. 271-278. Copyright 2020 by Elsevier.

As can be seen in the figure, communication skills are categorized in the group of Interpersonal skills, together with organizational skills, teamwork and collaboration, sociability and collegiality, empathy and compassion while critical thinking and innovative thinking form another group. Each sub-group is then further explained with specific competences. For example:

Figure 2

Sub-Competences of Communication Skills



Note. Adapted from “A Reference Framework for Continuous Improvement of Employability Assessment”, by L. Moldovan, 2020, *Procedia Manufacturing*, *46*, pp. 271-278. Copyright 2020 by Elsevier.

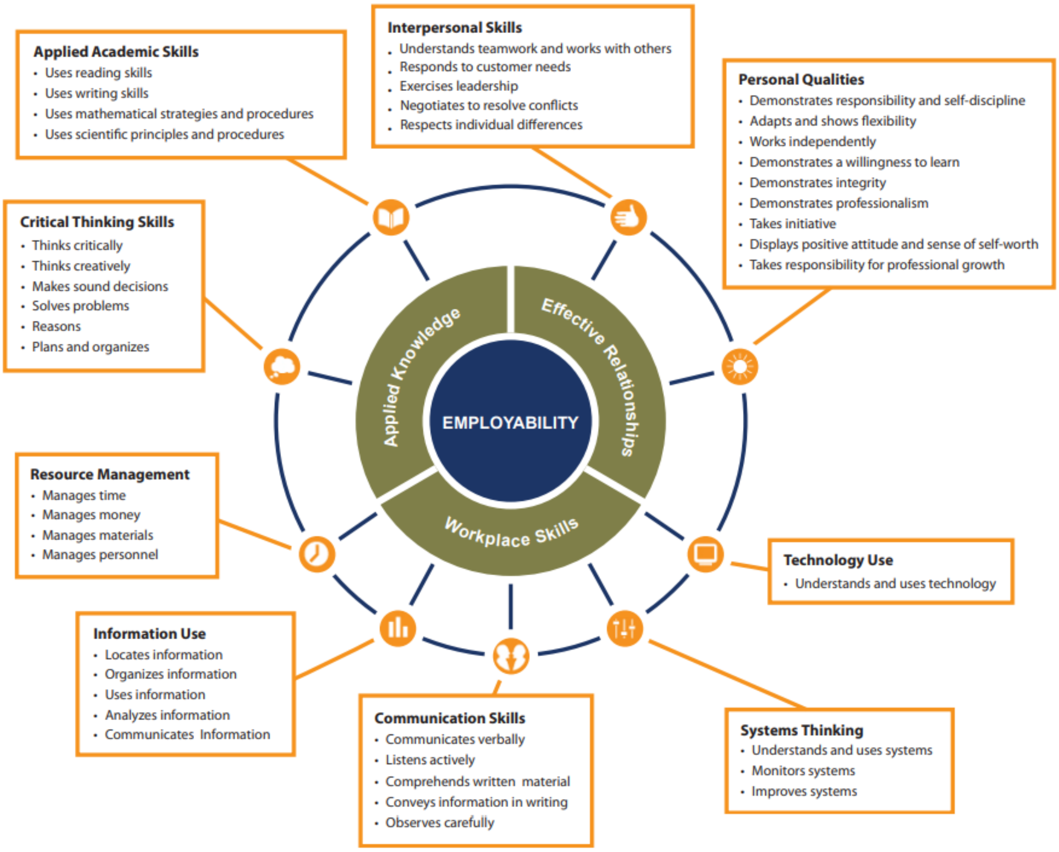
Cook (2020) added into communication skills as the ability to maintain digital communication through electronic devices, using communication functions of digital platforms. Particularly, communicating via Zoom or Google Meet which is popular as a conferencing platform, users should have been able to initiate, to join or re-join meetings, communicate in chat box and use reaction buttons to express their opinions and emotions. Once employees are able to do these tasks, their communication skills are upskilled to fulfill the requirements of new working models, namely, hybrid and remote ones.

In *The Reference framework of key skills for employment and assessment indicators*, Moldovan (2020) also mentioned a set of specific skills, which are directly job related. However, in the scope of this study, we just referred to transversal ones as those are skills that match with the term "employability kills" we used in the study.

While the above framework is established as a part of *the Continuous Improvement for Employability Assessment (ASSESS)* project for European countries, the U.S. Department of Education also develops *Common Framework for Employability Skills* based on an inventory of existing employability skills standards and assessments, as follows:

Figure 3

Common Framework for Employability Skills



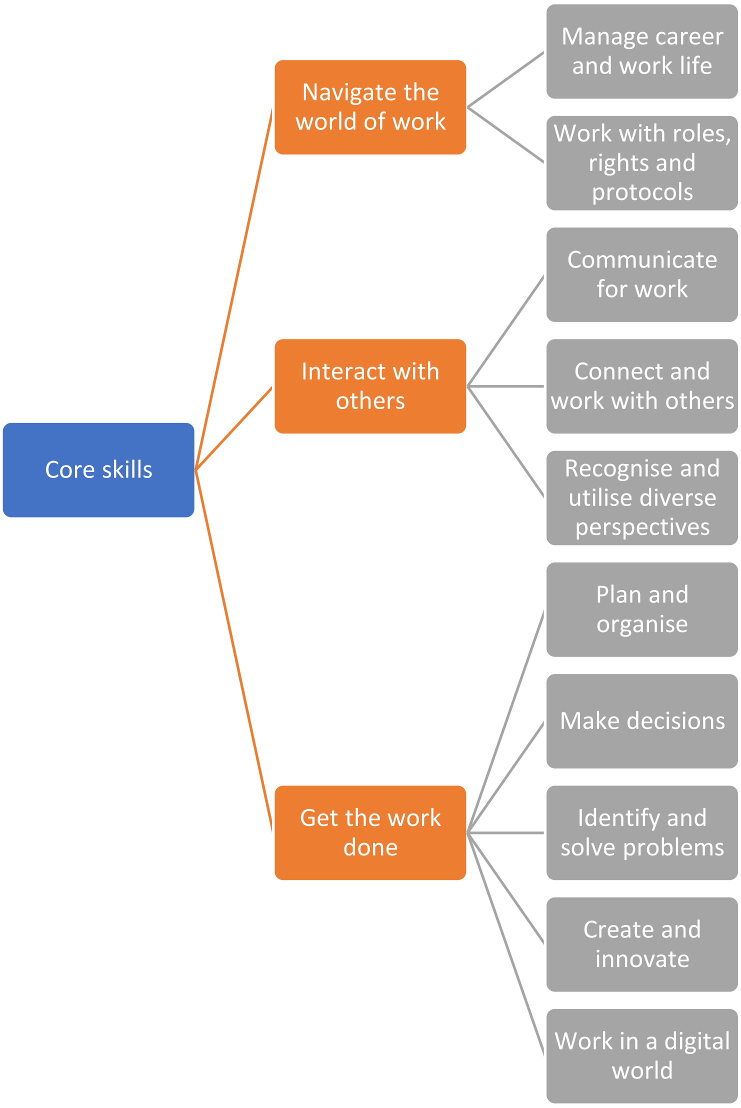
Note. Adapted from *Employability Skills Framework*, by U.S. Department of Education, n.d. (https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/employability-skills-framework). Copyright by the U.S. Department of Education.

In this framework, employability skills are divided into three main categories: Applied Knowledge, Effective Relationships and Workplace Skills, each of which includes sub-skills. Even though compared to the framework developed by Moldovan (2020), communication skills and critical thinking skills belong to different skill groups, they are still essential part of the framework.

Putting employability skills another name, Australian Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business build *The Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework (2018)* to define and assess crucial skills and knowledge for successful participation at work. In this framework, skills are categorized in three clusters: (1) navigate the world of work, (2) interact with others and (3) get the work done. Communication skills belong to the second cluster and a part of critical thinking – decision-making skill is a component of the third one.

Figure 4

The Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework

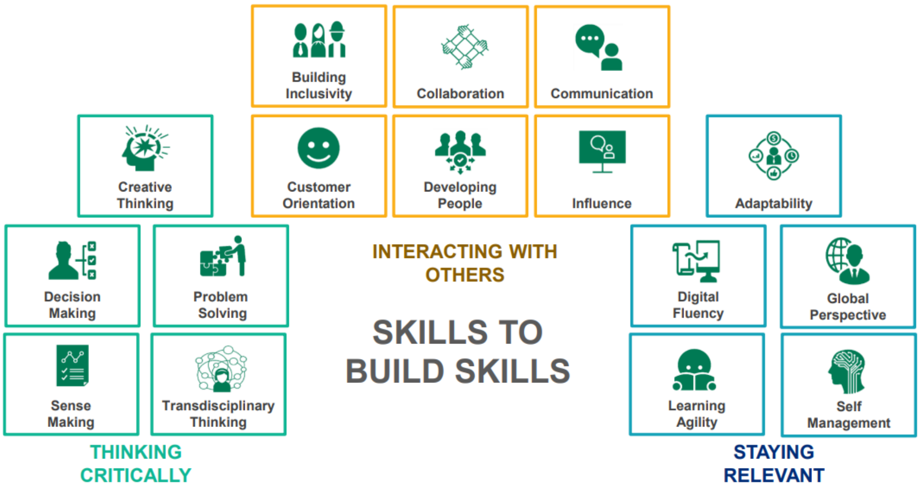


Note. Adapted from *Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework*, by Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, 2018. Copyright 2013 by the Commonwealth of Australia.

In Asia, not many countries have developed a complete set of employability skills, except for Singapore. The country has formulated a framework called Critical Core Skills, which comprises a total of sixteen (16) competencies grouped into three (3) clusters of skills that workplaces consider most essential. They are: Thinking Critically – Interacting with Others – Staying Relevant. Each of the skills has its own description and proficiency level descriptions, together with recommended Knowledge and Abilities for a person to show evidence of the skills. This framework is a reliable reference for individuals who need to figure out which skills they should possess to perform in the job roles, for employers who desire to reskill and upskill their employees and for training providers who have intention of develop soft skill curriculum. The skills of the framework can be seen as follows.

Figure 5

Critical Core Skills Developed by the Government of Singapore (2019)



Note. Adapted from *Critical Core Skills*, by the Government of Singapore, 2019 (https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/initiatives/mid-career/criticalcoreskills). Copyright by the Government of Singapore.

While many frameworks have been figured out in many parts of the world, especially in wealthy countries, in Vietnam, a developing country, there has not been any framework for employability skills developed. However, from the above outstanding frameworks, it can be seen that communication skills and critical thinking are among the most common components of the employability skill framework. In this study, with limited time and resources, we just focused on these skills, which are essential employability skills for students (Jackson, 2013).

2.2. Peer Assessment

Peer assessment is a form of assessment in which students give feedback or grades to their peers on a product or performance. This activity can include peer grading, giving feedback, evaluation or review (Topping, 2021). In our research, students both gave comments on their peers' work and filled out a marking form.

The benefits of peer assessment towards student learning have long been affirmed by numerous studies (Li et al., 2021). According to Sanchez et al. (2017), these benefits can be classified into three categories: meta-cognition, motivation and transferable skills. However, the learning process is not a sole straight path, but it is like a flow combining three smaller ones – the cognitive process, emotional process and social process (Illeris, 2002) – which occur simultaneously. Current literature on peer assessment indicates its effects on all these three dimensions.

It is quite easy to find the influence of assessing peers on the process of gaining knowledge of students in literature. Many studies have been conducted to prove its positive impact on students' learning achievements (Barac et al., 2021; Cao et al., 2019; Chang et al., 2020; Chien et al., 2020; Hogg, 2018; Huisman et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021; Pham et al., 2020; Stančić, 2021). For example, Chang et al. (2020) integrated a peer assessment approach into virtual reality design activities for primary students in a science course and found out that students learning with this approach had higher test scores, especially in open-ended questions in comparison to the control group. In writing skill teaching, online peer feedback was supposed to be able to enhance the quality of writing aspect, globally and locally (Pham et al., 2020). Moreover, in this study, it was found that students could understand more about the writing assessment criteria by practicing the evaluation with a rubric. For higher education, Yu (2019) indicated that giving feedback on peers' academic writing works helped students more aware of the thesis/dissertation genre, especially the content and organization of a thesis. This activity also enhanced students' writing skills and the quality of their theses. Surveys on students' perceptions also affirmed the influence of peer assessment on their learning outcomes (ArchMiller et al., 2017; Hogg, 2018; Huisman et al., 2020; Ion et al., 2019; Stančić, 2021; Wanner & Palmer, 2018). Specifically, though no significant increase in marks was found, students believed that peer assessment helped them boost their work quality (Wanner & Palmer, 2018). Students in Hogg's (2018) study felt satisfied that peer assessment contributed to their grade. Likewise, reflections collected showed students' appreciation for the usefulness of peer assessment in learning. Especially, they even believed that peer assessment was more beneficial for learning than self-assessment (Stančić, 2021). In short, findings on the impact of peer assessment on students' learning performance and achievement are the most abundant.

The use of peer assessment affects not only the cognitive process but also the emotional dimension or the affective aspects of learning (Chang et al., 2020; Chien et al., 2020; Ion et al., 2019; Planas-Lladó et al., 2018). In studies conducted by Chang et al. (2020) and Chien et al. (2020), the integration of peer assessment in the classroom was proved to motivate students more than the conventional approach. One reason given for this was that students felt safer and less stressed, thus more motivated in the class. Perceptions of students towards assessing peers were positive also due to the fact that it was able to motivate and facilitate students' learning process (Planas-Lladó et al., 2018). Beside motivation, receiving feedback from classmates strengthened the relationships between learners. They trusted, felt stronger sense of belonging to the group, and less anxious at the same time when they received peer feedback (Ion et al., 2019). However, in another study, students showed concerns about their friendship or the risk of team conflict when they tried to ensure the fairness of their marks for peer's performances (Carvalho, 2013). In brief, despite initial anxiety and concerns relating to maintaining relationships in class, peer assessment can create a comfortable and motivating learning environment for students.

The last process – social process refers to students' interactions, social learning and socialization (Poscente, 2006).

Barac et al. (2021) found that peer review could boost the collectivism or solidarity among students when they had to worked together towards shared goals. Receiving comments created more open-minded listeners and sympathetic speakers. Planas-Lladó et al. (2018) indicated that students with more experience of assessing peer tended to be more involved in teamwork. They created more positive interactions with peers in a team even though they received criticism. These interactions simultaneously enhanced students' communication skills as they were able to figure out ways to convey their ideas effectively to their peers after peer assessment. Likewise, according to Ion et al. (2019), students could communicate more effectively with their peers when receiving feedback regularly. The use of peer assessment in improving communication skills of nurses and doctors is also popular. In a study where nursing students were required to provide written comments to their peers' videos on YouTube, the research recorded a significant increase in students' communication performance when they received feedback from peers. Especially, interactions where patients are the center were observed to happen more frequently thanks to peer assessment (Lai, 2016).

In fact, regarding the benefits of peer assessment to the cognitive process, students not only realized that they could improve their performance or achievement but also increase their cognitive skills such as critical thinking. Specifically, to improve learners' development of information literacy, Hwang et al. (2023) integrated peer assessment (PA) into digital storytelling to help learners reflect on and evaluate their videos according to rubrics, and further improve their videos. The results of the quasi-experiment showed that the PA-enhanced approach was more successful than teacher assessment in promoting student knowledge about information literacy, self-efficacy, and critical thinking abilities. Similarly, Chang et al. (2020) believed that higher scores in open-ended questions of students learning with the peer assessment approach were evidence of their better high-level thinking ability and creativity. In comparison, from statistical results, it was found that students learning via a peer-assessment approach had considerably higher critical thinking skills than those who did not (Chien et al., 2020; Hogg, 2018; Pham, 2021; Planas-Lladó et al., 2018; Wanner & Palmer, 2018; Yu, 2019). In these studies, although critical thinking skills are supposed to be essential employability skills, their improvement after applying peer assessment in classrooms seems to be just the "by-product" as the main purpose of the research was to enhance students' knowledge or language skills.

However, there are few studies focusing solely on the development of critical thinking during peer assessment. For example, Jiang et al. (2022) developed a peer assessment technique based on the idea of knowledge building approach to enhance the critical thinking abilities of a class of 33 undergraduate students in just one semester. The findings revealed that students' critical thinking abilities had significantly increased and there was a significant correlation between these skills and peer evaluation in the knowledge-building community, including both peer comments and peer grades. In other words, the promotion of critical thinking skills among students was greatly aided by comments expressing strong disagreement. Another noticeable perspective to look at the importance of peer assessment to the improvement of critical thinking skills is from the cultural eye. Research into this issue is popular in Western countries but quite rare within a Confucian heritage context (Zhan, 2021). Zhan (2021), with a design characterized by six elements, examined the effects of online peer assessment in a General Education course on the growth of critical thinking in

Hong Kong undergraduates (i.e. online peer assessment training, provision of guiding questions, peer feedback requirements, anonymity, student evaluation of the usefulness of peer feedback and summative use of online peer assessment). Examination of the participants' electronic journals showed that the experimental groups significantly improved their ability to think critically.

Within the Vietnamese context, another country bearing the influence of Confucianism, where less attention has been paid to equipping students with employability skills (Nghia, 2018), studies conducted to investigate the influence of peer assessment on these skills, especially critical thinking and communication skills are even rarer. Therefore, our study is expected to fill this gap.

3. Methods

This study is cross-sectional survey research in which we wanted to investigate students' perceptions towards the effectiveness of peer assessment on the development of their communication and critical thinking skills.

The participants of the study come from a university in Hanoi, Vietnam. All of them were freshmen who were taking a course called *"Skills for University Success"*. In this course, students were supposed to gain adequate and essential skills to adapt to the new environment – life at the university. Regarding peer assessment, from week 2 to week 5 of 11-week course, the students were divided into groups of 4 students with a topic related to study skills and then required to present on it. For the last two weeks, students reported on their final group projects whose products were 10-minute videos or 15-munite presentations on student life-related topics. All presentations were carried out online due to social distancing in Covid-19 Pandemic and followed by assessment sessions. The assessment varied from oral or written comments, reactions and scores via both Zoom and Google forms from other classmates and the teacher. Except for those who gave oral comments or reacted on Zoom, others could stay anonymous with their assessment to feedback receivers. To engage students in comment sessions, a participation policy was established. In addition, presentation groups were required to submit a post-presentation report on work share among members and their reflections on the experience.

At the end of the course, a questionnaire was delivered to 299 students in 06 classes which had conducted peer assessment activities during the term, 226 responses were received. Among these students were 192 females and 34 males, at the age of 18 to 20. Due to the Pandemic, the questionnaire was delivered to students via Google Forms.

The questionnaire was to find out how they think about the benefits of peer assessment, especially in terms of communication and critical thinking skills. The two-part structure of the survey is as follows:

Part 1 was about students' personal information such as age, gender and email address.

Part 2 included two types of questions: close-ended and open-ended ones. These questions aimed to find out how students perceived the effectiveness of peer assessment on their communication and critical thinking skills. The questions were devised based on the Common Framework for Employability Skills created by the U.S. Department of Education to design questions for our survey. This is because it is a clear and detailed framework with categories matching the two types of skills we were investigating: critical thinking and communication. Besides, the questions were adjusted to fit the situation, which were about the development of communication skills and critical thinking skills in the context with peer assessment. In the questionnaire, 16 questions with a 5-point Likert scale (1 denoted "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree") involved subskills of communication (10 questions) and critical thinking skills (6 questions) while the 3 open-ended questions at the end of the survey asked students to give more opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of peer assessment as well as things that teachers can do to improve this activity (Appendix 1).

The data collected then was sorted and analyzed descriptively with the software SPSS version 26.

4. Results

The data was analyzed descriptively by SPSS. The internal consistency proved to be high with Cronbach's alpha $\alpha = .93$ for questions on Communication skills and Cronbach's alpha $\alpha = .87$ for the Critical thinking skills group (Appendix 2).

4.1. Effects of Peer Assessment on Communication Skills

In the questionnaire, there are 10 questions asking students to evaluate the influence of giving and receiving feedback on their communication skills. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 1

Students' Perceptions Towards the Influence of Peer Assessment on Their Communication Skills

Statements	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Via peer assessment, I have learnt to actively listen to others' comments/opinions.	226	4.36	.061	.914
I am aware of how to express my idea the most appropriately and effectively.	226	4.26	.062	.936
While giving feedback, I am aware of creating safe and friendly atmosphere.	226	4.40	.060	.905
I become more confident in expressing my opinion after each time giving peer assessment.	226	3.91	.065	.982
I have learnt how to give constructive comments.	226	4.16	.061	.920
I have learnt to control my voice so that it is easier to understand.	226	4.06	.067	1.003
I am aware of caring and understanding my peer's emotion before giving feedback.	226	4.21	.065	.983
I have learnt to give encouraging comments.	226	4.23	.065	.984
I am able to express myself more clearly.	226	3.88	.073	1.099
I know how to use other ways to show my response to my peers' performances. (using reactions or icons in Zoom)	226	4.33	.063	.943

As can be seen from the table, the majority of students showed their appreciation for the effects of peer assessment on many aspects of their communication skills (Mean ranges from 3.88 to 4.4).

Students also tended to be more thoughtful when communicating with peers after each time giving comments. Most students are more conscious of the importance of having a secure and welcoming environment when giving evaluation to their peers (M = 4.40, SD = .905). A great number of students also cared about their peers' emotions as they were about to express their points (M = 4.21, SD = .983) by constructive (M = 4.16, SD = 920) and supportive comments (M = 4.23, SD = 984).

> Peer assessment activity gave me the chance to express my thoughts as well as to discuss thoroughly, which I did not have in high school. I suppose the best value of this activity is that I have a safe environment to share suggestions, two-way communication. Even when it's not direct contribution, observing and listening to the discussion brings new perspectives, lessons, and ideas. (SS1)

> I find assessment activity can also increase improvisation and emotional management when receiving evaluations from classmates. (SS2)

Moreover, they become more active listeners by practicing peer assessment (M = 4.36, SD = .914) and know how to express their opinions non-verbally in online platform (M = 4.33, SD = .943). One of the differences between face-to-face and online learning is the way students interact with each other. While the former allows students to be more flexible in using non-verbal cues such as body language to express themselves, the latter limited this. Peer assessment seems to be able to create chances for students to interact with peers in comfort as it allowed them to give responses by hitting reaction buttons or icons. In fact, peer assessment is said to be the mediator for students in communication while participating in learning activities.

> I think that activity helped us understand each other better and be closer to implement our project more effectively, then we could become good friends. (SS3)

> [Peer assessment] helped us interact with our classmates better, become more sociable and calmer. (SS4)

However, peer assessment was less effective in helping students boost their confidence and self-control. Even though students are well aware of the appropriateness and effectiveness in delivering their peer feedback (M = 4.26, SD = .936), a small group of students find it hard to become confident to express themselves confidently (M = 3.91, SD = .982) and clearly (M = 3.88, SD = 1.099). Similarly, not so many students agree peer assessment helps them know to control voice to make themselves understood (M= 4.06, SD = 1.003).

> Sometimes language limitations and translating thoughts into constructive comments also cause difficulties for me. (SS5)

> As a comment giver, I have a bit of difficulty choosing the right words, making a positive contribution and not causing misunderstandings or displeasing to peers, but still being realistic. (SS6)

In short, most students agreed that many of their communication skills had been improved after peer assessment, especially giving peer evaluations and marking. While being more active listeners received the highest level of consensus, being able to express ideas clearly was recognized by the smallest number of students.

4.2. Effects of Peer Assessment on Critical Thinking

High order thinking is crucial to the study at university as well as the working life of students in the future. Therefore, it is one of the key components of the course "Skills for University Success". However, the lessons in the course related to this skill mostly explain theory, which leaves a gap in the curriculum requiring students to practice it more. Peer assessment added to this course was considered a good chance for them to apply what they have learnt in the course and develop their critical thinking skills even better.

In the questionnaire, the next 6 questions involved subskills of critical thinking that we think are important to students. They are presented in the table below.

Table 2

Students' Perceptions Towards the Influence of Peer Assessment on Their Critical Thinking Skills

Statements	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
After giving and receiving feedback, I can realize strong and weak points of a presentation more quickly.	226	4.18	.063	.954
I have learnt to give evidence or examples to make my point more persuasive.	226	3.92	.069	1.036
I can realize fallacies more quickly.	226	3.80	.071	1.063
By giving and receiving feedback, I have learnt to deduce using provided information.	226	4.04	.063	.952
Thanks to peer assessment, I have learnt how to give information that is relevant to the topic.	226	4.21	.062	.933
Because of peer assessment, I become more curious about things around me.	226	4.02	.073	1.093

It is clear from the table that most of the students realized the impact of peer assessment on their critical thinking skills though compared to communication skills, the figures are quite lower (Mean ranges from 3.8 to 4.21). Specifically, students believed that they were able to provide proper and relevant information through practicing peer assessment (M = 4.21, SD = 0.933). This is quite similar to the figure for students affirming that they can figure out the good and bad points of a presentation faster (M = 4.18, SD = 0.954). Indeed, peer assessment helped students realize that they can use different lenses to look at a subject or event before giving judgement, which was the thing they had never had a chance to do at high school:

> I think I have learned to see things in many ways, before in high school I had very few opportunities and many times refused the opportunity to comment and evaluate other students' products. (SS7)

> I have a more dimensional view of my group's work and … also thanks to that peer assessment that we can review our group more closely. (SS8)

Relating to the ability of make logical arguments, students were less confident that they could be more persuasive by being able to give proper examples (M = 3.92, SD = 1.036). In addition, the lack of knowledge and skills was a reason for students to be more reluctant and less confident when giving persuasive assessment to their peer:

> Regarding the role of a reviewer, I feel that I do not really have enough knowledge and understanding about a certain issue or topic, so sometimes I do not dare to give a comment. (SS9)

> It's just that my analysis skills are not very good. (SS10)

> Sometimes there are so many things I want to evaluate but I can't sum them all up, so I forget a few details. (SS11)

> I'm a bit shy, so sometimes my comments aren't accurate. (SS12)

Realizing fallacies is the skill which was perceived to be least improved via peer assessment with M = 3.8, SD = 1.063. Identifying fallacies is one of the most important parts of the course, so students were expected to have more chance to practice this with peer assessment. However, it seemed that this skill is one of the most challenging competencies to students:

> I need to think very carefully before giving a comment so as not to get caught in fallacies and not cause misunderstandings between individuals. ^^ (SS13)

In addition, students could learn to deduce logically based on provided information (M = 4.04, SD = 0.952) and be more curious about the surrounding environment after experience peer assessment (M = 4.02, SD = 1.093). This finding is confirmed by students' responses to the question about additional advantages of peer assessment that they can realize:

> In my opinion, peer assessment is extremely necessary when working in groups. It helps the team to accurately see the progress as well as make timely and reasonable adjustments to produce the best product. (SS14)

> I see that peer assessment also has some advantages as follows: You can learn from your good points or learn from your bad points; forming the ability to take responsibility for their own comments and assessments of their classmates; form more clearly in themselves the requirements for learning, how to behave with others, thereby, adjusting or developing their own behavior and attitude. (SS15)

In short, critical thinking skills are supposed to be improved via peer assessment activities, but not as much as communication skills, according to students' perception.

5. Discussion

The study aimed to figure out how students perceived the benefits of peer assessment to their critical thinking and communication skills. The results show that the majority of students appreciated the effects of this activity to their skills.

Regarding communication skills, giving peer evaluations and marking others brought students opportunities to develop various aspects. Firstly, like what Barac et al. (2021) found, after each time of receiving other's comments, they became more active listeners who welcomed every comment with a positive attitude. A student in the study shared that he or she was friendlier and calmer after a semester doing this activity while another admitted that peer assessment allowed them to give up on their big egos and be more open. Secondly, learning to communicate is not only learning to control the voice or talk about something attractive, but also learning to care about listeners, which is not clearly mentioned in previous studies as they did not separate the communication ability into sub-skills for more detailed investigation. Students in the study agreed that through peer assessment, they knew how to create a safe and comfortable atmosphere when giving comments. However, this does not mean that students just gave positive comments to please their peers, as a student shared: "I became more straightforward and not afraid to give opposite ideas" or another insisted that he or she could express his or her points in a comfortable and positive way. Furthermore, students reported that they learnt to give constructive feedback to their peers, thereby becoming more confident when they realized that all supportive comments were welcomed. This is similar to what Hogg (2018) found that students perceived that they were able to give critical feedback diplomatically and encouragingly. One special thing about giving peer assessment in online classes is that students were able to use emotional icons on Zoom to express their feelings and evaluations. Feeling more confident in expressing themselves is another aspect that students found had been improved. In short, while a number of studies affirmed the improvement of students' communication skills after using peer assessment (Barac et al., 2021; Chien et al., 2020; Ion et al., 2019; Planas Lladó et al., 2014), few studies dug deep into each sub-skill of the communication skill group like what the current study has done.

In terms of critical thinking skills, like various studies, we believed that giving and receiving peer feedback can improve students' high-level thinking. Specifically, students reported that they became more skillful in giving persuasive comments by being able to provide examples or logical arguments. Besides, they could realize the strong and weak points in the performance more quickly. In order to do these things, students needed to understand what their peers were conveying and possessed the ability to analyze and respond to the input quickly. Similarly, in Chang's et al. (2020), students did better in fill-in-the-blank questions, proving that they could restructure knowledge and enhance their high-level thinking competence. In the survey, students also shared that they could base on peer's comments to perfect their performance and improve skills. It is quite the same as findings from Chien et al. (2020), Wanner & Palmer (2018). Moreover, students even went further when they engaged in evaluating, filtering and applying feedback that they found the most useful for them. In other words, they were doing backward evaluation (Pham et al., 2020). Most importantly, peer assessment could stimulate students' curiosity, which is a crucial characteristic of a critical thinker. It seems that this trait is often ignored in studies on the benefits of peer assessment to students' critical thinking.

In short, providing students with a safe environment where they can express their ideas freely means providing chances for them to develop many aspects, from specialized knowledge to practical skills.

6. Limitation and Recommendations

The study tried to investigate possible profits of peer assessment to students by asking them to give their perceptions towards this activity. However, these are just subjective opinions which was not necessarily what they really achieved after a semester learning to give peer comments. Besides, as no defined framework of employability skills for Vietnamese students was found or set up, the current study used a framework developed by a developed country, which might result in some mismatch with the Vietnamese context. Another limitation of the study is that not all employability skills were investigated because critical thinking skills and communication skills are considered to be the most important ones in many frameworks and because of limited time and resources.

Further studies should be carried out to test whether or not there is an improvement in students' skills after applying peer assessment with a more suitable framework of employability skills or with a wider range of skills.

7. Conclusion

In this research, students' perspectives on how peer assessment activities actually helped develop their employability skills, specifically, communication and critical thinking skill, were examined through "Skills for University Success" course. The results found that students in the study appreciated the use of peer assessment during the course in their classrooms. Both of the processes of giving and receiving feedback are believed to provide students with a chance to boost their skills in interacting with other people and high-order thinking. Notably, in online learning paradigm, these skills are updated since the digital environment requires extra effort to integrate digital literacy. In real-world context, the digital transformative force has caused the shift to blended and remote working models; therefore, the need to reskill the old ones is urgent. Besides, they believed that various aspects of their communication skills as well as critical thinking had been improved after a semester practicing peer assessment. This study also adds to the growing body of literature that peer assessment is a valuable activity to be implemented in the classroom, not only to enhance students' knowledge or academic achievement but also practical skills, which are essential for their future work.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire: Students' Perception

Towards the Influence of Peer Assessment on Their Employability Skills

Part 1: Personal Information

Your name (optional): …………………………………………..

Your age: ……………..

Your gender:

a. Male
b. Female
c. Rather not say

Part 2: Main Questions

No.	Statements/Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Via peer assessment, I have learnt to actively listen to others' comments/opinions.					
2	I am aware of how to express my idea the most appropriately and effectively.					
3	While giving feedback, I am aware of creating safe and friendly atmosphere.					
4	I become more confident in expressing my opinion after each time giving peer assessment.					
5	I have learnt how to give constructive comments.					
6	I have learnt to control my voice so that it is easier to understand.					
7	I am aware of caring and understanding my peer's emotion before giving feedback.					
8	I have learnt to give encouraging comments.					
9	I am able to express myself more clearly.					
10	I know how to use other ways to show my response to my peers' performances. (using reactions or icons in Zoom)					
11	After giving and receiving feedback, I can realize strong and weak points of a presentation more quickly.					
12	I have learnt to give evidence or examples to make my point more persuasive.					
13	I can realize fallacies more quickly.					
14	By giving and receiving feedback, I have learnt to deduce using provided information.					
15	Thanks to peer assessment, I have learnt how to give information that is relevant to the topic.					
16	Because of peer assessment, I become more curious about things around me.					
17	What advantages of peer assessment can you recognize besides the above?					
18	What difficulty did you encounter while giving and receiving peer assessment					
19	What can be changed to improve the effectiveness of peer assessment?					

Appendix 2

Reliability Statistics

1. Questions Related to Communication skills

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.930	10

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
C1	37.43	46.602	.805	.919
C2	37.53	46.677	.776	.920
C3	37.39	47.537	.732	.922
C4	37.88	47.688	.651	.927
C5	37.63	47.195	.747	.922
C6	37.73	47.389	.658	.926
C7	37.58	47.320	.680	.925
C8	37.56	46.194	.771	.920
C9	37.91	45.436	.732	.923
C10	37.46	47.209	.724	.923

2. Questions Related to Critical Thinking Skills

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.870	6

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CT1	20.00	15.907	.698	.843
CT2	20.25	15.236	.720	.839
CT3	20.37	15.932	.598	.861

CT4	20.14	15.390	.782	.829
CT5	19.96	16.821	.581	.862
CT6	20.15	15.337	.654	.851

QUAN ĐIỂM CỦA SINH VIÊN VỀ ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA HOẠT ĐỘNG ĐÁNH GIÁ ĐỒNG ĐẲNG ĐỐI VỚI KỸ NĂNG NGHỀ NGHIỆP

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu nhằm mục đích điều tra nhận thức của sinh viên về việc sử dụng đánh giá đồng đẳng để cải thiện kỹ năng nghề nghiệp (employability skills) của họ, đặc biệt là kỹ năng giao tiếp và tư duy phản biện. Để đạt được mục tiêu này, một cuộc khảo sát đã được thực hiện với sự tham gia của 226 sinh viên một trường đại học tại Hà Nội đang tham gia khóa học có tên “Kỹ năng để thành công ở trường đại học”, trong đó yêu cầu sinh viên thuyết trình và đưa ra phản hồi về phần thể hiện của các nhóm khác. Dữ liệu được phân tích cho thấy sinh viên đánh giá cao lợi ích của việc cho và nhận đánh giá từ bạn học. Về kỹ năng giao tiếp, đa số sinh viên đều cho rằng thông qua hoạt động này họ đã học hỏi và nâng cao khả năng truyền đạt ý kiến, lắng nghe người khác, tạo không khí thân thiện khi phát biểu ý kiến. Về kỹ năng tư duy phản biện, đánh giá đồng đẳng giúp sinh viên xác định điểm mạnh và điểm yếu của bạn học nhanh và chính xác hơn. Nghiên cứu gợi ý rằng các giảng viên hoặc người tổ chức chương trình giảng dạy nên xem xét việc đưa hoạt động này trở thành bắt buộc trong các khóa học của họ để sinh viên có thể nâng cao các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của họ.

Từ khóa: kỹ năng nghề nghiệp, đánh giá đồng đẳng, đánh giá bạn học, tư duy phản biện, kỹ năng giao tiếp

METACOGNITIVE LISTENING ACTIVITIES USE TO ENHANCE FIRST-YEAR NON-ENGLISH MAJORED STUDENTS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION: AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract: The action research project was conducted with the aim of exploring if the use of the metacognitive listening activities could improve non-English majored students' listening comprehension and how students' metacognitive knowledge about listening was affected. To collect data, the researchers used a questionnaire, pre-test, post-test and students' journals. The questionnaire data showed a lack of students' listening strategies, thus highlighting the need to conduct the action research project. In terms of the test score, students' listening comprehension scores improved after the integration of the metacognitive listening activities. In addition, the data from students' journals demonstrated a number of examples of broadened metacognitive knowledge about listening, which were reflected through three elements: (1) the awareness of the nature of listening (task knowledge), 2) greater motivation and better ability to work collaboratively (personal knowledge), and 3) the awareness of the importance of planning/prediction and making self-evaluation (strategy knowledge). A number of implications based on the main findings were then given to language instructors, materials developers, and others in the field of language learning and assessment.

Keywords: listening skills, metacognitive listening activities, non-English majored students, Vietnam

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

In learning a second language, listening skills are acknowledged as very significant, for they are the basis for language acquisition. The student gains input into the language through listening (Rost, 1994). Despite this, in Vietnam where the testing system has paid more attention to grammar and vocabulary, the listening skill has received less attention from instructors and high school students (Ngo, 2019). This somehow has created some difficulties for high school graduates when entering university where they are required to learn English for communication purposes, including listening comprehension.

One of the techniques that has been proven to assist students to improve their listening comprehension is the metacognitive approach (Vandergrift &

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Goh, 2012). This is because this approach engages learners in listening and thinking about their listening through an active and reiterative process, while they practice listening skills, within an integrated, holistic approach to learning (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). The aim of this approach is to help language learners become self-regulated listeners who maximize opportunities for listening inside and outside the classroom and develop skills for real-life listening (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In the context of a General English class at an educational university in Hanoi, Vietnam where 57 non-English majors whose input level was A2 were taking a course to achieve B1 level, in the reseachers' observation, there were some problems in the listening lessons: 1) students showed their lack of interest toward listening activities; 2) when doing listening, students usually went straight to listening without any preparation such as underlining key words; 3) they seemed to lack listening strategies when dealing with listening comprehension exercises.

The researchers used Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) (Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal & Tafaghodtari, 2006-Appendix 1) to confirm the problem (refer to section 3.2.1 for more information on this questionnaire). In general, the findings from the questionnaire (Appendix 2) indicated that although students seemed to focus on their listening lessons and could avoid distraction, 47 out of 57 students (80.23%) found listening as the challenging task for them, and that listening was the most difficult skills of the four language skills with around 90% (52 out of 57) of them agreeing. The findings also show that the majority of students (over 75%-43 out of 57) did not seem to be able to guess the meaning of new words and use their experience to relate to the listening topics, nor to re-evaluate the listening process.

The researchers have searched the related literature and found that the metacognitive approach might be a solution to these problems. Research in international and Vietnamese contexts shows the positive effects of metacognitive listening strategies (Vandergrift, 2012) on the listening comprehension of EFL learners and on their awareness of metacognitive activities (Abdullah, 2010; Bozorgian, 2012; Movahed, 2014, Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010; Le, 2006; Ngo, 2015; Ngo, 2019). However, most of the related studies have focused on finding out which strategies in the approach worked in which circumstances. In other words, they are mostly concerned with the final product-that is students' listening comprehension, rather than the process of using the appropriate strategies to deal with listening comprehension. Thus they could not help the researchers to find out the specific answers to the research problems mentioned above. As a result, this action research study was conducted to improve students' listening comprehension process through the teachers' use of metacognitive listening activities (in light of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence model by Vandergrift, 2007).

Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions: To what extent does the implementation of the metacognitive listening activities 1) improve students' listening comprehension? and 2) affect their metacognitive knowledge about listening?

2. Literature Review

This section provides information on the related concepts and theory for this study. It begins with the core concept of listening comprehension and the theory of interactive processing which considers listening as a process, rather than a skill. To develop this process and to become self-regulated listeners, students need to have metacognitive knowledge, which might be achieved by following the activities in the Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence model. The section then reviews related studies to provide a rationale for the action research project being reported in this paper.

2.1. Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension, especially in a foreign language, is "…at the core of second language acquisition…" (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 235). A number of theories have therefore been formulated, of which the theory of interactive processing (Gilakjani & Adamadi, 2011) that considers listening process as an active process has gained popularity in recent years. This theory holds that this process includes sub-processes, of which, "the higher-level processes (top-down) are driven by the listener's expectations and understandings of the context, the topic, and the nature of the world. The lower level processes (bottom-up) are triggered by the sounds, words and phrases which the listener hears as he or she attempts to decode speech and assign meaning" (Bano, 2017, p. 23). This theory is relevant to our research study in that it views listening as a process where listeners take charge of their listening and thus could become self-regulated listeners who can develop their metacognitive knowledge about listening.

2.2 Metacognitive Knowledge

Metacognitive knowledge could be divided into three categories: person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge (Vandergrift, 2012).

Person knowledge is an understanding of how individuals learn and the variables that influence their learning. Additionally, it encompasses the students' ideas about what factors contribute to achievement or failure. If a student assumes that listening is too difficult, they may attempt to avoid circumstances in which listening and comprehension are needed, for example, a testing scenario.

Task knowledge refers to an individual's comprehension of the purpose and requirements of a task. Additionally, it may relate to the students' understanding of spoken language characteristics, such as discourse or grammatical knowledge.

Finally, strategy knowledge involves understanding which methods are used to accomplish a task's objective and an understanding of specific characteristics of various text kinds for learners to use the most suitable strategies and knowledge (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

2.3. Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence Model (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012)

The metacognitive pedagogical sequence model (MPSM) includes a tried-and-tested sequence of listening lessons and exercises that teach learners how to activate their metacognitive knowledge that is common among competent listeners (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). The metacognitive pedagogical sequence model (MPSM) for metacognitive listening instruction was designed in alignment with metacognitive processes with five stages.

Figure 1

The Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence Model (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, p. 109)

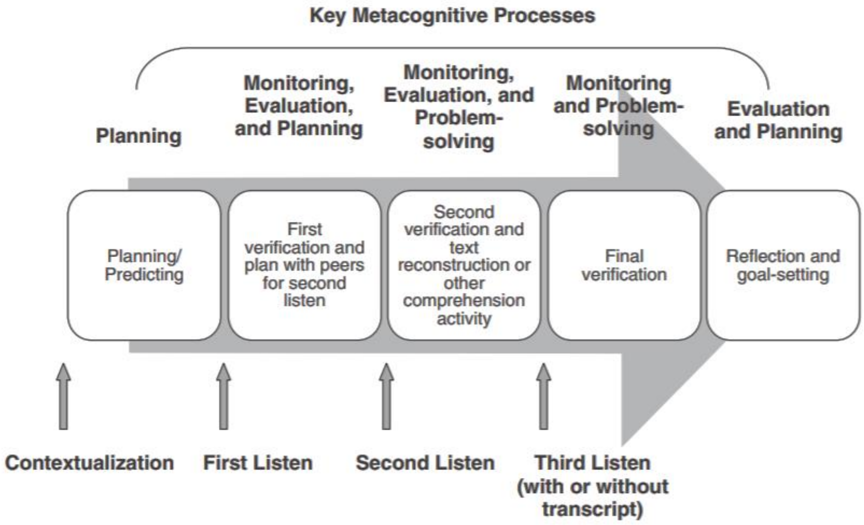


Figure 1 details the metacognitive pedagogical sequence model with 5 stages. The 1st stage, planning-predicting stage, which is at first directed by the instructor, starts with a whole-class brainstorming exercise. The 2nd stage of the model is "the first verification stage and plan with peers for the second listen". The main goal of this phase is to keep track of the anticipated information, as well as gather new information. At the 3rd stage "second verification stage", students revise and write down more information to the notes. Then, the 4th stage "final verification" starts with the third listening of the text, so that students can listen to information found in the discussion that may not be known before. Finally, in the "reflection and goal-setting stage", the teacher encourages students to evaluate their own activities and the strategies. Additionally, the teacher can also set future listening objectives in this step.

2.4. Related Studies and Gaps

There have been a number of research studies conducted on the effects of metacognitive listening strategies on the listening comprehension of EFL learners as well as their views of metacognitive awareness.

Abdullah (2010) conducted an experiment among 40 beginner students of ESL in Turkey. The primary data collection instrument of the study was the pre-test and post-test. Those tests were similar to the listening activities into which the strategy training was embedded. The secondary collecting tool of the research was the MALQ questionnaire adapted from that of Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010). The research findings revealed that the experimental group made significant gains over the comparison group.

Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010), in their study on 106 college students studying French using metacognitive listening activities over 13 weeks found that the treatment group (with 59 students) outperformed the control group (47 students). They also found that less good students obtained more out of this way.

To contribute to the literature of metacognitive strategy training, also in the international context, Bozorgian's (2012) study measured the effectiveness of teacher's guidance on metacognitive activities in four learning sessions of 70 minutes. The strategies of planning, guided, selective attention was taught to 28 male students from 17 to 24 years old. The research results show that those students who had better preparation in planning stage made more progress in their listening comprehension.

Similarly, a quasi-experimental research study was conducted in Iran with 58 EFL students to evaluate the effect of listening technique training on academic lecture comprehension (Khaled, 2013). A total of 14 hours of listening strategy training was provided to the treatment group, including a presentation, practice, and evaluation of the strategy's application, while the control group got no strategy instruction. The analysis results revealed that the individuals in the treatment group outperformed those in the comparison group in the listening post-test.

Furthermore, Movahed (2014) examined the effects of metacognitive strategy training on listening comprehension, metacognitive cognition, and listening anxiety in a group of students who had previously completed a listening course. 55 students took part in the course. Eight sessions of strategic instruction were provided to students, based on Vandergrift's seven-step approach for success. The experimental group had a better result over the control group in the post-exam, and their anxiety levels were considerably lower.

Likewise, through his personal reflection in teaching at a private university in Japan and his consulting relevant literature on second language listening, Siegel (2015) coordinated an action research using listening strategy instruction in a 15-week semester to help his students improve their listening comprehension.

However, different from the studies mentioned above, an experimental research study, which examined 100 first-year university students, including 45 in the treatment group and 55 in the control group at a public university in Mainland China, revealed that both the intervention group and the control group improved their scores, with no statistically significant difference between the two groups (Wang, 2016). The Vandergrift model serves as the foundation for the educational cycle. In addition to the exams, participants were required to complete reflective listening diaries, with the contents being classified into three categories: person, task, and approach understanding. It was found that substantial improvements in the post-test may suggest that the educational process has affected the listening; diaries indicate that the treatment group is using more strategies of planning and evaluation than their counterparts.

In the Vietnamese context, a study was conducted by Ngo (2015) aiming at investigating the listening strategies of EFL learners in Tay Bac University. The other study was conducted by Le (2006) in Thai Nguyen University to explore the strategies use of EFL learners. Both of these two studies shared the common conditions of similar settings of regional universities and the proficiency level of the pre-intermediate sophomore EFL learners. The findings revealed that metacognitive and cognitive strategies were employed with the first and second highest frequency, respectively, demonstrating that the students heavily resorted to metacognitive and cognitive strategies in order to complete the listening comprehension task successfully.

In short, the review of related studies shows that most of the studies have focused on finding out which strategies in the model worked in which circumstances. In other words, they are mostly concerned with the final product-that is students' listening comprehension, rather than the process of using the appropriate strategies to deal with listening comprehension. In order to have an insight into the students' changes in using the strategies in their listening process, together with the pre and post-tests, students' journals could be relevant. That is the reason why the researchers conducted this action research project using the pre-and post-tests together with students' journals as the data collecting instruments to fill in these gaps in previous studies.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Context and Participants

The study was carried out in the context of a General English class in Hanoi National University of Education. The research project lasted for twelve weeks in the second semester of the 2020-2021 school-year, with the participation of 57 non-English majored freshmen, whose major was Mathematics.

Initially, when entering the school, the first-year students had to take a university placement test including 4 skills into 2 levels A1 and A2. The students taking part in the project were at the A2 level and were expected to achieve B1 level upon finishing the course. This was their first course in English at the university.

The textbook was *New English File Intermediate*, and students had to do 5 periods (50 minutes each period per lesson) of English per week. Each lesson included four language skills and three components of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The listening topics covered everyday life topics, such as Food, Families, School and the students were required to listen to some conversations and answer the questions about the conversations.

The intervention was actually the redesign of the listening activities in the textbook following the principles of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence by Vandergrift and Goh (2012) and was carried out in 9 lessons over 8 weeks (refer to section 3.2.2 for more information on the intervention).

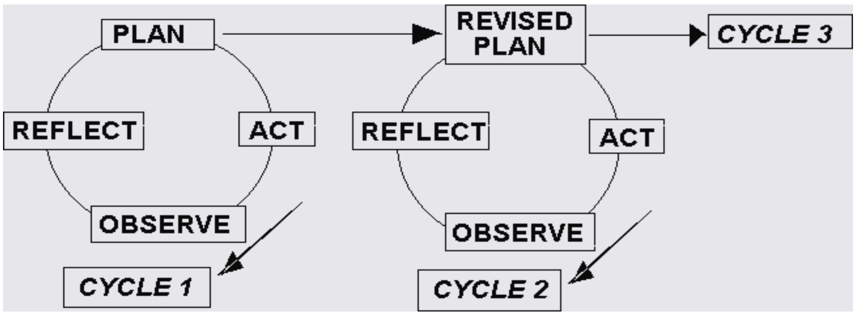
3.2. Research Design and Procedures

3.2.1. Action Research Model

For this study, the action research model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) was used.

Figure 2

The Action Research Model (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988)



Following this model, the following stages were followed in the project.

1. Planning: In the first two weeks, the researchers confirmed the problem of students' lack of listening strategies using the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) (Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal & Tafaghodtari 2006 - Appendix 1). The MALQ includes 5 types of metacognitive strategies, namely Planning and evaluation, Problem solving, Personal knowledge, and Directed attention, and Mental translation. The final strategy, mental translation, was not focused on since it was seen as a less effective technique. Also, a pre-test in the form of a Cambridge University test (Appendix 3) was used to test students' ability to follow and understand a range of spoken materials including announcements and discussions about

everyday life. Only part 1 and 2 of the test were used because they were relevant to the students' English level of A2.

2. Action: In the eight following weeks from week 3 to week 10, the researchers designed an intervention plan, implemented the intervention activities designed in light of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence model (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012) to enhance the English listening comprehension in nine listening lessons. In this stage, students' journals (Appendix 5) were collected.

The topic and the audio were kept as in the textbook, however, the researchers redesigned the listening activities. Students were required to finish one unit, which included three new lessons and one review lesson, in 2 weeks according to the university course outline; therefore, there were two listening lessons in week 3, 5, and 7, while there was 1 listening lesson in week 4, 6, and 8.

3. Observation: At the end of week 10, students took a post-test in the form of a Cambridge University test (Appendix 6). In week 11-12, the researchers analysed the data collected. The data collected from the pre-test and post-test scores were analysed and compared through a box plot. In addition, the data from students' journals were thematically analysed.

4. Reflection: The researchers made some reflection based on the findings. Because of the limitation of time, only one cycle of the action research process was implemented.

3.2.2. The Intervention

An intervention was designed for the nine listening lessons in the textbook New English File Intermediate. Following the Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence Model by Vandergrift and Goh (2012), Table 1 below presents brief information on the pedagogical stages, metacognitive processes and listening contents in the intervention. A detailed sample of a lesson plan can be found in Appendix 4.

Table 1

The Intervention Following the Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence Model

<table>
<tr><th>Pedagogical stages</th><th>Metacognitive processes</th><th>Listening contents</th></tr>
<tr><td>1. Pre-listening: Planning / predicting stage After learners have been informed of the topic and text type, they predict the types of information and possible words they may hear.</td><td>Planning</td><td rowspan="3">1A: Food: Fuel or pleasure?: an interview with an English chef who has just opened a restaurant in Chile
1B: Sports: an interview with an ex-Champions League referee from Spanish
1C: Family: an interview with a psychologist to discuss the effect of family position on children' personalities
2A: Money: a news bulletin with a number (a number, money, percentages, decimals and fractions)
2B: Life: an interview with</td></tr>
<tr><td>2. First listening: First verification stage
a. Learners verify their initial hypotheses, correct as required, and note additional information understood.
b. Learners compare what they have understood/written with a partner, modify as required, establish what still needs resolution, and decide on the important details that still require special attention.</td><td>Monitoring & evaluation

Monitoring, evaluation and planning</td></tr>
<tr><td>3. Second listening - Second verification stage</td><td>Monitoring, evaluation, and</td></tr>
</table>

a. Learners verify points of earlier disagreement, make correction, and write down additional details understood.	problem-solving	primary school teacher who took a year off and went to live in Beirut with her husband
b. Class discussion in which all class members contribute to the reconstruction of the text's main points and most pertinent details, interspersed with reflections on how learners arrived at the meaning of certain words or parts of the text.	Monitoring, evaluation, and problem-solving	2C: Transports: an interview with a road safety expert talking about the tests 3A: Culture: an interview with four people who have lived in England answering the question “Are English people too polite?”
4. Third listening - Final verification stage Learners listen specifically for the information in the class discussion which they were not able to make out earlier. This listening may also be accompanied by the transcript of all or part of the text.	Monitoring and problem-solving	3B: Appearances and personalities: a radio interview with a musician’s profile: his name, parents, languages, nationality and profession.
5. Reflection and goal-setting stage Based on the earlier discussion of strategies used to compensate for what was not understood, learners write goals for the next listening activity.	Evaluation and planning	3C: Success: a psychologist talking about how to succeed at learning to do something new.

3.2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)

A MALQ (Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal & Tafaghodtari, 2006) was adapted to collect data on students’ metacognitive strategies (or a lack thereof), thus to confirm students’ problems (Refer to section 1.2 above for the main results). The original questionnaire consisted of 21 statements that represented five areas of metacognitive awareness about listening. These areas could be divided into three categories of metacognitive knowledge: person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge (Vandergrift, 2012) on a 6-point scale from (1) Strongly disagree to (6) Strongly agree. The MALQ has three personal knowledge statements, four directed attention statements, six problem-solving statements, five planning-and-evaluation statements, and three mental translation items. We crossed out the three statements representing mental translation since mental translation, which required the students to translate the listening text into their mother tongue, was not a skill included in the syllabus of the university. Thus the number of these questionnaire items was only 18. The questionnaire was then put online in Google form and a QR code to the questionnaire was shared with the students so they could complete the questionnaire online. The data from the questionnaire were then analysed in percentages and presented in a table (Appendix 2).

Pre-Test and Post-Test

The pre-test and post-test were in the form of a Cambridge test. Because only the first two parts of the tests were concerned with conversations, which were similar to what the students actually learnt in class, these two parts of the test were conducted. The students were given the tests in class, and the marks were given by the researchers. The scores of the pre-test and post-test were then entered into Excel and analysed using a box plot.

Students’ Journals

At the end of each listening lesson,

the students were required to write a journal regarding the metacognitive activities they had done in the lesson. The journal was designed to collect data on students' awareness of the three metacognitive categories, namely, task knowledge, personal knowledge, and strategy knowledge (Vandergrift 2012). The data from students' journals were then analysed thematically (Richards, 2005). In more detail, the researchers read the journals and chose the words/phrases from the journals that had some common meaning/themes that fell under the three metacognitive categories. The real names of the students were not disclosed, instead, the researchers numbered the students and the weeks of the journals they wrote, such as *S10-Week 2* when reporting data from their journals.

4. Results

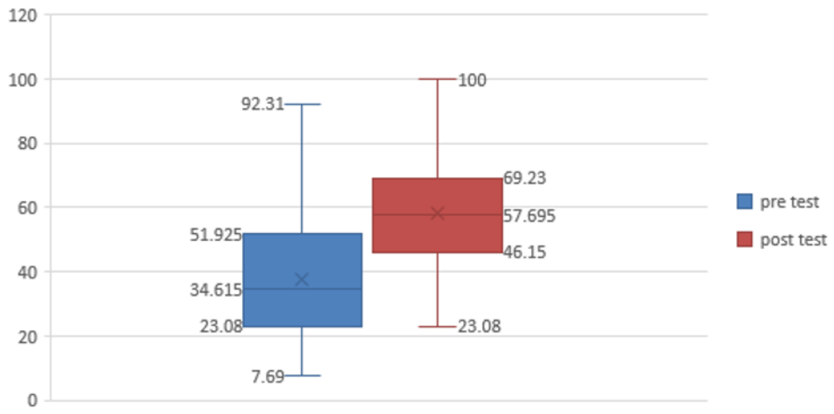
Data from the questionnaire MALQ (Appendix 2) confirmed the problem of a lack of metacognitive strategies in listening comprehension and of metacognitive listening strategies experience, therefore, it drove the researchers to implement the action research project. Before the intervention, a pre-test was conducted to measure students' listening comprehension. While the metacognitive listening activities were being implemented, data were collected by means of students' journals and a post-test. These data show the improvement of students' listening comprehension test scores, and their increased metacognitive knowledge of listening. The sections that follow will detail these findings.

4.1. Research Question 1: To What Extent Does the Implementation of the Metacognitive Listening Activities Improve Students' Listening Comprehension?

The quantitative data from student's pre-test and post-test indicated that students' listening comprehension scores improved after the integration of the metacognitive listening activities.

Figure 3

Pre-Test and Post-Test Score in Average



The box plot in Figure 3 compares the pre-test and post-test scores. First, the range of score in the Pre-test was wider than in the post-test. The variable pre-test score had a high of 92.31% and a low of 7.69%, while the variable post-test had a high of 100% and a low of 23.08%. Moreover, the mean in the pre-test was about 34.50, while that of the post-test was 57.7. That is to say, the average post-test score was approximately 23.2% higher than that of the pre-test score.

Second, 25% of students in the pre-test received more than about 51.92% correct answers, whereas the top 25% of students in the post-test had 69.23% correct answers. Also, two-thirds of students had more than 46.15% correct answers in the post-test, which doubled the pre-test's result, at 23.08%.

On average, the post-test results were about 23.2% higher than the pre-test levels. The findings showed that the implementation of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence model might have been a factor that enhanced students' listening comprehension.

4.2. Research Question 2: To What Extent Does the Use of Metacognitive Listening Activities Affect Students' Metacognitive Knowledge About Listening?

The answer to the 2nd research question was collected through students' journals, which were designed following the MALQ by Vandergrift et al. (2006). Overall, learners offered a variety of positive comments, many of which were related. In other words, student responses demonstrated many instances of increased metacognitive knowledge about listening, regarding task knowledge, personal knowledge, and strategy knowledge, which were reflected through 1) the awareness of the listening nature (task knowledge), 2) greater motivation and collaboration (personal knowledge), 3) the awareness of the importance of planning and prediction and making self-evaluation (strategy knowledge).

Students' Awareness of the Nature of the Listening Process

Students responded that they had to focus when listening. From their journals, the integrated lesson significantly enhanced both the awareness of directed attention and selective attention. Although at the beginning of the course, most students vaguely perceived their listening process, over time, students had a positive response to the teaching method.

Firstly, in terms of directed attention, students were able to join in general to the listening task, ignore interference and sustain attention while listening. In the first two weeks, students did their best to stay focused, but still felt lost in the middle of the listening. *"I couldn't hear anything from question 5. Even I tried, my brain stops working"* *(*SS12-Week 1). The main distraction was the noise/ background noise. *"While listening I was distracted because of the noise, but I could still hear and answer the questions. I think I should practice more"* (S23-Week 2). Moreover, the other distractor reported by journals was the quality of the audio file. The student 35 in week 3 also agreed that *"The audio has a lot of noise. I have tried to listen"*.

Toward the end of the course, during weeks 5-6, the situation was better when students reported that their concentration span significantly increased. "*I have tried my best to focus on the listening even though there are a lot of distractions around me, and I feel great when I don't fall asleep in the middle"* (S12-Week 6). Similarly, student 35 in the next week stated *that "I think this time I listened better because the audio is so clear, not too much crack sound."* However, as time went by, during the two final weeks, students could pay closer attention to the listening and ignore the crack sound. *"Today I'm so proud of myself because I can stay focused all the time."* (S23-Week 7)

Secondly, concerning selective attention, students could be more focused on what information to fulfil the task completion. The first top of their focus was synonyms and keywords they had underlined before listening. In the first two weeks, students did not mention a particular element in the audio: *"I underline keywords as my teacher said and just listen"* (S19-Week 2) or *"I just listen, listen, and listen. It is important to listen"* (S16-Week 1). However, in the middle of the course, they could employ this activity more effectively.

"I feel I heard more with this task because I've followed the keywords and relied on the adjectives given." (S19-Week 6). *"I look for the synonyms and write them down. I fill in a lot of words"* (S10-Week 6).

Other two criteria that they paid attention to were "linkers" and "speaker's intonation." Similarly, at first, students just listened, however, gradually, after week 6, students reported that they could be more strategic and selective while listening. *"I pay special attention to the woman's voice"* (S11-Week 6) or *"When listening to the woman's answer, I heard the word "but", then I concentrated on the information after "but"* (S14-Week 7).

Students' Higher Motivation and Knowledge of Their Listening Through Collaboration

Among the student responses, the most obvious is new motivation inspired by the success of the students through this method of listening. In week 1, students quite hesitated about the collaboration. *("I think I'm not confident to share or discuss my answer with friends because I'm not sure. However, my friend is so nice. Actually, I kinda love talking with her")* (S23-Week 1), *(I'm afraid I got all wrong answers, to be honest, so I do not want to share with my friend)* (S15-Week 1). After 3-4 weeks, students started to enjoy this activity more. *("I feel more open now when I have my partner discuss the answers after listening. I think it is great to share what I've been able to listen to as well as what I've missed. It's not as frightening as I thought")* (S15-Week 5). Next, at the end of the project, student comments focused on the sense of accomplishment they had after absorbing all the important details via a third listening session. *("In the last listening lesson… I already understand the whole process, so it lets me know that I could understand the whole conversation. This is a real confidence booster")* (S23-Week 9). These entry-level students recognized the potential of this method, despite their limited command of language, they could access the real text and transfer the strategies learned in class to the situation outside the classroom *("when successful, you would feel more confident after practicing in class… I can be sure that I would understand at least part of what people say to me") (*S12-Week 8). Most importantly, they thought that they could respond to listening needs, thereby boosting their sense of self-efficacy *("I learned to deal with listening comprehension when I hear the text*") (S15-Week 10).

In addition, it was also found that collaboration has been viewed as an indispensable part in the way higher-level students learned to deal with the listening task. Listening was essentially a personal act, but to these students it turned out that collaboration with partners was helpful in verifying and expanding preliminary predictions. From the first week, students showed their great interest toward the collaboration. Such comments by the students illustrate this point. *"I think the sharing is great, I could gather the missing part in my listening.) (S41-W1)* or *"This is so new to me. I really enjoy discussing with my partner" (*S55-Week 1*)*. Toward the final weeks, students expressed more excitement to the collaboration process during the listening *"... it helps to talk about it [because], it can help you think twice"* (S23-Week 8) or *"...The lost information and the information my partner heard provide me with key phrases and ideas that I can actively listen to in the next session."* (S55-Week 9). It is also helpful to verify understanding with partners because it encourages more monitoring activities *(" ... When my partner has heard messages that contradict my hearing findings... In that case, I learned a lot by listening to why I have misheard."* (S41-Week 10).

Students' Awareness of the Importance of Planning/Prediction and Self-Evaluation

The data from the journals also showed that students could develop planning strategies, which means they promoted recognition of what needed to be done to fulfil a listening task, forming a proper action plan and/or suitable plans to overcome problems that may stand at completing a task successfully. Students could perform better when they anticipate what they are going to hear. It was found that students viewed "Prediction" as one of the most effective steps to successfully accomplish the listening task. Student 11, who did not use any strategies during week 1 and 2, gradually applied and started to evaluate the strategies in week 6, said *"Before listening, I read the questions and underlined the keyword. While listening, I concentrated on listening, guessed the meanings of new words, and noted quickly on paper. After listening, I discuss and compare with my friend's key to review my answers* (S11-Week 6). A similar answer was obtained from Student 27 in week 5, *"Before listening, I guess the word about the oldest child, the youngest child, middle children, and only children with the lecturer and friends. During listening, I focus on the word I guessed and write down the word I listened. After listening, I compare the answer with my friends and listen again to find the correct answer"* (S27-Week 5). In general, they usually predicted the general situation from the pictures, titles, and instructions; for example, *"I can understand this sentence because I have known something about the English culture like the popular dishes"* (S11-Week 6). Also, they speculated by looking at information from the question *"Because in the questions it talks about the difficulties working in the kitchen, so maybe there are few women, even zero. And I got it right."* (S23-Week 7)

Also, the journals indicated that students checked, verified, and corrected their understanding in both the first time; moreover, they conducted a deeper understanding during the second time of the listening task. In the first two weeks, students did note down information and highly appreciated the note-taking time. *"I tried to note down in the first listening and I think it helps me to some extent to check my answer in the second listening. It's great but quite difficult. I still want to try more."* (S12-Week 2). In the second half of the project, students became familiar with the process and mentioned detailed achievement in each phase. In the first time of listening, they normally noted down the words they heard and then decided the answer. *"During the task, I listen to the synonym and choose the answer. Sometimes I could get it right with my prediction".* (S12-Week 7*), "I focus on important words to hear after I review the wrong statements."* (S29-Week 8). In the second time, they usually used notes they made and grammatical knowledge to verify their answers. Sometimes they could get their answers during the second time of listening *"I find out information about the topic of listening; hear more details: write single words, highlight; check my answer), after (focus on content and form (word form, word meaning, note collocations)"* (S29-Week 9). It also helped them to cultivate more vocabulary in context *"I like the post activity post because I could know some words, I understand but I don't know the spelling"* (S32-Week 5). Moreover, students showed that they could correct their comprehension *"I don't catch all the information in Question 4"* (S30-Week 8) or *"If I paid attention to the word "not at all", I think I would have a correct answer"* (S46-Week 8).

As Planning/Evaluation should be intertwined with each other, they should be discussed simultaneously. In this study, students could become more independent when they could plan before listening and evaluate their performance after that. Therefore, this could show that the intervention could boost students' listening awareness. Regarding planning, it was reported that students performed better when they anticipated before listening. During the first two weeks, students noted that prediction was difficult *"I think it's not easy to guess because I don't have lots of words and vocabularies*." (S32-Week 2). After that, in the middle of the project, low-level learners who participated in these process-based activities had a better understanding of what is required to complete a listening task and overcome listening problems. Every week, the course proceeded in the same manner, with new listening textbooks being utilized. *"I think prediction is one of the most important parts in the listening. I got 2 out of 5 correct answers just by guessing. I realized that I know more words than I thought. I really enjoy guessing before and checking after listening."* (S32-Week 10). In terms of personal knowledge, learners often expressed their delight in comprehending more than they anticipated and handling the emotional variables that arise during listening sessions. During the first weeks, students were in lack of confidence in listening. *"I got 6 out of 10 correct answers. It's not too bad but I feel a bit nervous* (S30-Week 1). In the final week, students showed more self-assurance of being able to deal with the listening. The examples of strategic knowledge that were most prevalent in the student responses were the most striking. In particular, students emphasized the significance of prediction techniques and the need to evaluate understanding throughout the course. *"I think guessing before listening is very important and useful. I thought I didn't know many words, but it turned out I could recall lots of words. I could also pay more attention to the listening. Besides, it is great because we could have the second time to check our prediction. I could have more correct answers and it is interesting to do listening this way"* (S30-Week 10).

5. Discussion and Reflection

In general, the data from students' pre-test and post-test indicated that students' listening comprehension scores improved after the intervention of the integration of the metacognitive listening strategies. Our findings were the same as those studies examining the effectiveness of metacognitive instructional strategies in listening (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010; Khaled, 2012; Siegel, 2015). More importantly, the concentration of students during the lesson could be the significant element to gain greater achievement since students showed greater attention to and less worry about learning the language than those who considered English as part of their degree requirements (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010; Khaled, 2012; Siegel, 2015).

The findings from students' journals also indicated that the findings are consistent with the teaching sequence implemented in Canada in Mareschal's (2007) intensive language training course. Learners noted that having the chance to review their understanding with their partner and consult the transcript of the text was beneficial in improving their listening comprehension. These comments support the argument that increased awareness of the learning process can motivate students to be successful and make them feel good about themselves and their abilities.

When it comes to students' collaboration in their listening activities, the findings of this study are different from findings from the Vietnamese context, but similar to those from the international context. In this study, the students could gain personal knowledge, or they could be more motivated and confident in themselves after attending the integrated lesson. However, Ngo (2015) found that their second-year participants only focused on planning (strategy knowledge), selective attention, and directed attention (task knowledge) in terms of metacognitive strategies. However, the findings are in line with Cross's (2015) that emphasised the significance of collaborative conversation in the development of metacognition because discussions improved understanding of strategies, text characteristics, and comprehension processes. This shows that collaboration in listening activities by students is a complex issue that needs further investigation.

Finally, in terms of students' better self-evaluation, the explanation may be because a critical consequence of students' metacognitive instruction is the capacity to self-regulate their learning (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012), which is an active and constructive process in which learners establish learning objectives and work to monitor, regulate, and manage their motivation and behavior concerning those objectives and the contextual features of the environment (Zeidner, Boekaerts & Pintrich, 2000). This ability helps them better identify, evaluate, and use the auditory signals they receive, which improves their capacity to engage in parallel processing, both bottom-up and top-down processes, in the process. A self-adjusted foreign language listener could gain two benefits, namely better control of the course and outcomes of certain listening activities to increase their odds of comprehending and using the information they hear, and the greater freedom to select and control their listening development activities outside of official classroom hours.

6. Implications and Conclusion

The implementation of metacognitive strategies in listening has much room to explore in the context of Vietnam. Based on the findings of this study, it can be said that the use of metacognitive listening strategies could improve listening comprehension in terms of both test scores and students' metacognitive knowledge of listening. The study has a number of implications as follows:

(1) When it comes to students, in general, when they have a proper understanding of the listening process, they could perform better during the listening task. For successful students, they could monitor their learning as they listen with peers. "Collaboration" is a helpful way in improving their listening (especially at the post-listening stage).

(2) For practice, teachers of a second language should focus more on teaching the learners the important strategies that can enhance more effective listening comprehension. The teaching of such strategies should be the first step taken in the teaching of the second language so as to adequately equip the learners with the necessary skills and strategies in the language learning process. Moreover, an additional emphasis has to be placed on innovative approaches to learning tasks as students who do not succeed on a learning task often have an inadequate understanding of appropriate strategies. Learners and teachers would benefit from awareness of effective listening strategies. As for syllabus designers, they should take into consideration the inclusion of metacognitive strategies instruction into the syllabus, especially in listening skill syllabus.

3) In terms of future research, this study has ignited a hypothesis that metacognitive listening activities could be used to improve students' listening comprehension and influence the process of awareness of students in terms of strategy use and motivation in listening comprehension. Future research could include more longitudinal studies or case

studies to collect further data to confirm this hypothesis.

In conclusion, this study has investigated how the integration of metacognitive listening activities affected students' listening comprehension. Despite the small scale of this action research project, we hope that the findings from the project will convey inspiration to language instructors and researchers since it has contributed to the body of literature in the field of teaching methods for the English language.

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Appendix 1

The MALQ Questionnaire to Confirm the Problem

Circle the number which best shows your level of agreement with the statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Partly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I find that listening in English is more difficult than reading, speaking, or writing in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. When my mind wanders, I recover my concentration right away.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I feel that listening comprehension in English is a challenge for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. As I listen, I quickly adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I feel nervous when I listen to English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I don’t give up and stop listening.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. When I guess the meaning of a word, I think back to everything else that I have heard, to see if my guess makes sense.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. As I listen, I periodically ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I have a goal in mind as I listen	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix 2

Results From the MALQ Questionnaire Confirming the Problem

N=57	Factors affecting listening process	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Partly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Personal knowledge	I find that listening in English is more difficult than reading, speaking, or writing in English.	0.00%	0.00%	5.42%	18.88%	**80.23%**	35.12%
	I feel that listening comprehension in English is a challenge for me.	0.00%	0.00%	8.39%	20.65%	**38.06%**	**32.90%**
	I feel nervous when I listen to English.	0.44%	0.00%	3.97%	8.03%	27.79%	59.77%
Directed attention	I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.	2.19%	5.84%	5.11%	24.09%	**42.34%**	**20.44%**
	When my mind wanders, I recover my concentration right away.	2.92%	7.30%	25.55%	24.09%	**29.20%**	**10.95%**
	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	1.46%	4.38%	5.11%	19.71%	**43.80%**	**25.55%**
	When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I don’t give up and stop listening.	2.19%	3.65%	15.33%	16.06%	**35.04%**	**27.74%**
Problem solving	I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.	0.73%	**28.47%**	**51.09%**	6.57%	6.57%	6.57%
	As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic.	0.00%	8.76%	16.06%	**23.36%**	**35.04%**	**16.79%**
	I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand.	0.00%	**31.54%**	**43.08%**	22.31%	3.08%	0.00%
	As I listen, I quickly adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.	0.00%	27.51%	18.52%	16.40%	27.51%	10.05%
	I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't understand.	0.00%	11.45%	20.98%	19.06%	23.23%	**64.99%**
	When I guess the meaning of a	0.73%	0.00%	13.87%	29.20%	43.07%	13.14%

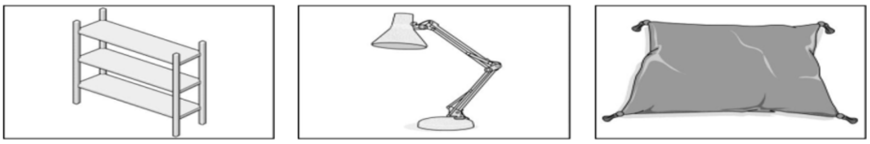
	word, I think back to everything else that I have heard, to see if my guess makes sense.						
Planning and evaluation	Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.	4.38%	12.41%	24.09%	20.44%	30.66%	8.03%
	Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.	1.71%	**21.37%**	**34.19%**	24.79%	11.97%	5.98%
	After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.	**37.23%**	**21.17%**	**14.60%**	13.14%	8.03%	5.84%
	As I listen, I periodically ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.	10.22%	21.17%	29.93%	13.87%	18.98%	5.84%
	I have a goal in mind as I listen	24.82%	28.47%	20.44%	5.84%	11.68%	8.76%

Appendix 3

The Cambridge English Test as the Pre-Test 1

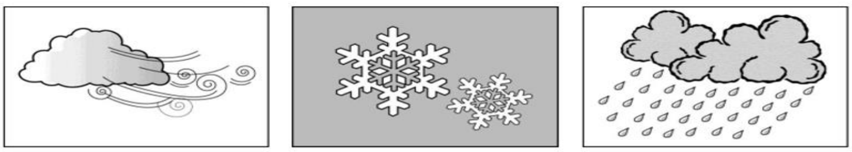
Part 1
Questions 1-7: For each question, choose the owed answer.

1. What did the girl buy on her shopping trip?



A B C

2. Why did the plane leave late?

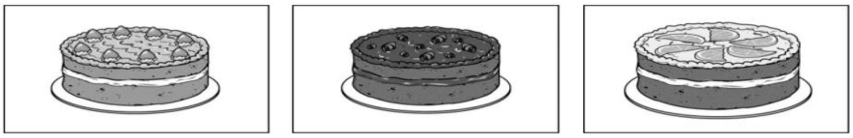


A B C

3. What activity does the woman want to book for the weekend?

A B C

4. Which cake will the girl order?



A B C

5. How much must customers spend to get a free gift?

A B C

6. What did the family do on Sunday?

A B C

7. Which programme is on first?

A B C

Part 2

Questions 8-13: For each question, choose the correct answer.

8. You will hear two friends talking about a new clothes shop. What does the girl say about it?
   A. The staff are helpful.
   B. It only has the latest fashions.
   C. Prices are reduced at the moment.

9. You will hear two friends talking about a pop band's website. They think the site would be better if …
   A. its information was up to date.
   B. it was easier to buy concert tickets.
   C. the band members answered messages.

10. You will hear a woman telling a friend about an art competition she's won. How does she feel about it?
   A. upset that the prize isn't valuable .
   B. excited that the judges liked her picture .
   C. disappointed that she can't use the prize.

11. You will hear two friends talking about the girl's flatmate. The girl thinks that her flatmate …
   A. is too untidy.
   B. talks too much.
   C. plays music too loud.

12. You will hear two friends talking about a football match. They agree that their team lost because …
   A. the players weren't confident enough.
   B. they were missing some key players.
   C. the players didn't do the right training.

13. You will hear two friends talking about a tennis match they played. The boy wants the girl to …
   A. help him to get fitter.
   B. practise with him more often.
   C. enter more competitions with him.

Appendix 4

A Sample of a Lesson Plan

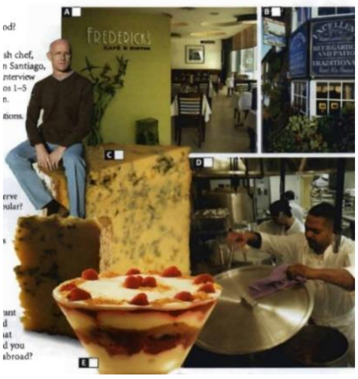
Lesson plan: Unit 1: 1A: Food: Fuel or Pleasure?

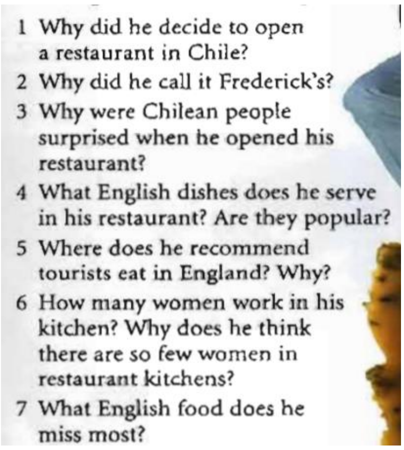
Aims: listening for specific information/details

Teaching aids: projectors/handouts

Book: *New English File Intermediate*, Oxford University Press (2006)

Time duration: 50 minutes

Timing	Pedagogical Stages	Activities	Purposes (in Vandergift, 2007 model)
10'	Stage 1: Pre - listening - Planning / predicting stage	Activity 1: Brainstorm: Students read the instruction by looking at the pictures  - Teacher asks students: + What is his name? Kevin Poulter + What does he do? An English chef + What has he done? He has just opened a restaurant in Santiago, the capital of Chile. + Look at the picture. How many pictures are there? 5 pictures + What can you see in picture A? Federick. Tables, restaurants B – outside of a restaurant C – cheese D – kitchen, cooking dishes E – cake, yogurt, pudding, strawberries	Activity 1: This is the 1st phase in the Metacognitive pedagogical sequence – Planning. (Vandergrift, 2007). Students are asked to look at the problem they are to solve (e.g. read the questions they are to answer), to see what they need to do to prepare for the task. In details, this activity is to provide context for the learners through information about topic, text genre, and any relevant cultural information. In this phase, learners can use (1) text knowledge (interview, report, dialogue) to predict organization of the information, and (2) topic knowledge (work life of a cook in a restaurant, food in the region, what a restaurant owner might discuss on opening a restaurant) to predict information they would hear.

		Activity 2: - Ask students to predict what is the logical order of the picture. And justify. - Ask students to read the questions. - Underline the key words, guess and underline possible answers. -> underline the Wh- question -> so they know the targeted answer. *(recommend -> suggest, tourists -> visitors)*  1 Why did he decide to open a restaurant in Chile? 2 Why did he call it Frederick's? 3 Why were Chilean people surprised when he opened his restaurant? 4 What English dishes does he serve in his restaurant? Are they popular? 5 Where does he recommend tourists eat in England? Why? 6 How many women work in his kitchen? Why does he think there are so few women in restaurant kitchens? 7 What English food does he miss most?	Activity 2: This activity is included in the 1st phase of the Metacognitive pedagogical sequence (Vandergrift, 2004), which includes metacognitive strategies: Predicting. Learners decide to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that assist understanding (and/or task completion). Also, learners decide (in advance) to attend in general to the listening task and to ignore irrelevant distractions; maintain attention while listening.
10'	Stage 2: First verification stage	Activity 4: Students listen to the audio the first time. Ask them to note down key words as they listen. They don't need to take care of every single word.	Activity 4: This step is based on the 2nd phase in the metacognitive pedagogical sequence, which is Monitoring. Monitoring refers to when a listener checks, verifies or corrects his or her comprehension during the course of a listening task. The goal of this activity is to note information learners have successfully predicted and to add new information.
		Activity 5: Let students compare their answers with friends.	Activity 5: This activity is included in the 2nd phase of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence (Evaluation and Planning). Evaluation: The first exchange answers among partners would help students recall what they heard and add more information to their listening comprehension. Planning: This activity is to set learners up for the second listen. When learners compare listening results with a

			partner and discuss discrepancies in their understanding, they prepare themselves to monitor more carefully during the second listen and to determine the parts of the text that need most careful attention.
10’	Stage 3: Second verification stage	Activity 6: Students listen to the audio the second time and verify their earlier disagreement. Also write down some key words they could hear.	Activities below are based on the 3^{rd} phase in the metacognitive pedagogical sequence which underlies metacognitive strategies: Monitoring, Evaluation and Problem Solving
			Activity 6: Double-check monitoring: Same as comprehension monitoring - but during the second listen. -> Learners have updated their understanding of the text.
		Activity 7: Students compare and discuss their answer the second time.	Activity 7: Evaluation The discussion is to make any additional revisions to the interpretation of the text.
		Activity 8: Teacher leads class discussion – elicit answer key Collect students’ work on the board and collect some of their notes along with their answers. Lead a discussion of the content of the text and the correct answers to the questions or task given. Provide students with the meaning of unknown words, synonyms or underline collocations.	Activity 8: Problem Solving This activity is to reconstruct the main points and most salient details of the text. This allows learners to listen for information revealed during discussion that they may not have understood earlier.
10’	Stage 4: Final verification stage		Activity 9 and Activity 10 occur in the 4^{th} phase in the metacognitive pedagogical sequence which underlies two metacognitive strategies: Monitoring and Problem Solving.
		Activity 9: Teacher give students handouts of the transcripts. They need to listen the third time and fill in the gap.	Monitoring Students listen the 3^{rd} time and try to follow the text while they listen.
		Activity 10: Teacher would provide students with answers, and also answer students’ questions if there are any.	Problem-Solving: The teacher introduces all or part of the text transcript at this point so that learners can follow along for purposes of verifying sound–symbol

			relationships, particularly for points in the text where the sound stream seemed impossible to understand
10’	Stage 5: Reflection and goal - setting stage	Activity 11: Students reflect individually on how they have completed the listening exercises in their reflective journal. *What made this task easy or difficult* *What I would do differently next time* + The teacher facilitates a discussion by encouraging them to ask questions or give comments after each reflection. + Strategies used + Main idea questions (listen and take notes) + detailed questions (underline key words, guess their synonyms, listening) + Personal issues: I need to calm down, more focused.	Activity 11 occurs in the final phase in the metacognitive pedagogical sequence which underlies two metacognitive strategies: Evaluation and Planning. Evaluation which refers to when a listener explicitly identifies “the central point needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion”. The first question along with teacher’s discussion support is to encourage learners to evaluate their approach to the activity, the difficulties they confronted, and how they were or were not successful in coping with these difficulties. Planning: With the second questions, students are about to set goals for the next listening efforts.

Appendix 5

Sample of the Student’s Journal

STUDENT’S NAME: … WEEK 7 - CODE: S27

- **What was the listening about?**
  The influence your position in the family has on your personality.
- **What did you do during the whole listening task (before during after)**
  Before listening, I guessed the word about the oldest child, youngest child, middle children and only children with the lecturer and friends.
  During listening, I focus on the word I guessed and wrote down the word I listened.
  After listening, I compare the answer with my friends and listen again to find the correct answer.
- **How many correct answers do you have? Are you pleased with the results why?**
  I have 75% correct answers so i think i pleased with the result because i concentrated on this task.
- **Do you think you have done better than your listening last time? If yes, explain it.**
  Yes because i can listen many keywords.
- **Would you do things differently next time?**
  I will prepare more carefully for example new words and listening skills.
- **How do you feel about the class today? Why do you feel this way?**
  I feel happy because i can listen better than my listening last time.

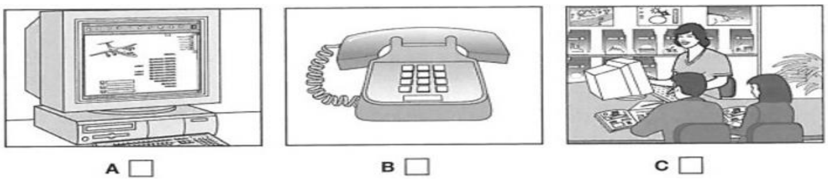
Appendix 6

Cambridge Test as the Post-Test

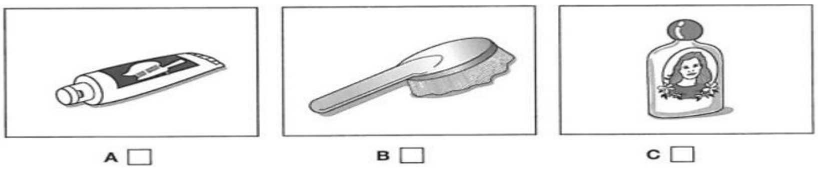
Part 1:

Questions 1-7: There are seven questions in this part. For each question there are three pictures and a short recording.

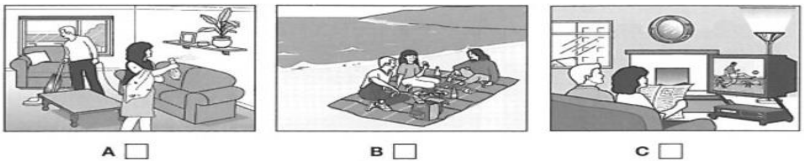
1. How will they book their flights?



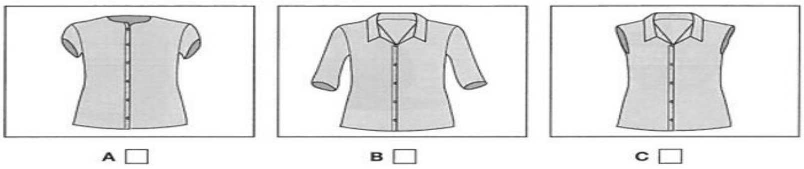
2. What has the daughter forgotten to bring on holiday?



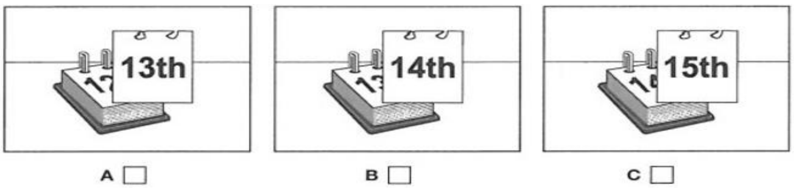
3. What will the man and woman do on Sunday?



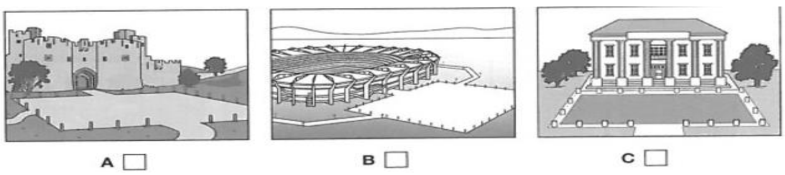
4. Which blouse does the girl decide to buy?



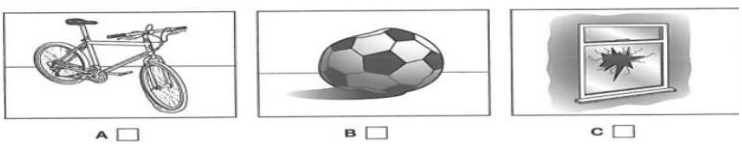
5. When is the girl having a party?



6. Where is the motorcycle race going to finish?



7. What will the woman repair next?



Part 2

Questions 8-13: You will hear a radio interview with a man called Robin Marshall, who has written a book about Argentina.

8. What was Robin's job in Argentina?
   A. translator
   B. tour guide
   C. travelling salesman

9. On Robin's last trip to Argentina, the weather was …
   A. colder than he expected.
   B. suitable for what he planned.
   C. different from the forecasts he heard.

10. What did Robin buy from the market he visited?
   A. a picture
   B. a chair
   C. a record

11. How did Robin feel during the dance performance he saw?
   A. He wanted to get up and dance.
   B. He wished he had continued his dance classes.
   C. He was sad he didn't dance well.

12. What did Robin do while he stayed in the village?
   A. He went on a bus tour.
   B. He went into the forest.
   C. He went on a river trip.

13. What did Robin like about his favourite place?
   A. the wildlife
   B. the views
   C. the peace

NGHIÊN CỨU HÀNH ĐỘNG VỀ VIỆC SỬ DỤNG HOẠT ĐỘNG NGHE SIÊU NHẬN THỨC ĐỂ CẢI THIỆN KHẢ NĂNG NGHE HIỂU CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ NHẤT KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH

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Tóm tắt: Dự án nghiên cứu hành động được thực hiện với mục đích tìm hiểu việc can thiệp sư phạm của giáo viên khi sử dụng các hoạt động nghe siêu nhận thức có thể cải thiện khả năng nghe hiểu của sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh và những hoạt động này ảnh hưởng thế nào đến nhận thức của họ về việc sử dụng các chiến lược này khi thực hành nghe. Để thu thập dữ liệu, nhóm nghiên cứu đã sử dụng bảng câu hỏi, bài kiểm tra đầu khóa, cuối khóa và nhật kí học tập của sinh viên. Dự án nghiên cứu đã tìm ra hai kết quả nổi bật. Về điểm kiểm tra, điểm nghe hiểu của sinh viên có cải thiện nhất định sau can thiệp sư phạm. Ngoài ra, dữ liệu từ nhật ký của sinh viên đã chứng minh một số ví dụ về kiến thức siêu nhận thức mở rộng về nghe, được phản ánh thông qua ba yếu tố: (1) nhận thức về bản chất của việc nghe (kiến thức về nhiệm vụ), 2) động lực cải thiện và khả năng sự cộng tác tốt hơn của sinh viên (kiến thức cá nhân), 3) nhận thức về tầm quan trọng của việc lập kế hoạch/ dự đoán (kiến thức chiến lược), và khả năng của tự đánh giá (kiến thức về chiến lược). Kết quả đạt được từ dự án nghiên cứu này có ý nghĩa đối với các giảng viên ngôn ngữ, nhà phát triển tài liệu và các chuyên gia khác trong lĩnh vực học tập và đánh giá ngôn ngữ.

Từ khóa: kĩ năng nghe, hoạt động sư phạm siêu nhận thức trong việc nghe, ngoại ngữ tiếng Anh, Việt Nam

DECODING ENGLISH NAMES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN VIET NAM: UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSLATION PROCEDURES

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Abstract: In today's era of the internationalization of higher education, the name of a higher education institution (HEI) plays a crucial role. This study investigates the Vietnamese and English names of 276 HEIs in Viet Nam that are authorized to offer university-level education or higher, and the translation procedures used to create their English names. The research applies both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data, statistically categorizing the translation procedures based on the category of HEI, academic subject area, and descriptors of personal and place names. By providing an overview of the English names of HEIs in Viet Nam, the study acknowledges efforts to translate them in accordance with international practices, but also exposes inconsistencies and inaccuracies in several name translation cases. It is recommended that education officials set more stringent criteria for approving institutional names. and that HEIs choose names that reflect both their identity and reputation while adhering to international norms.

Keywords: higher education institution, translation procedure, proper name, Vietnamese, English

1. Introduction

As they integrate into global education, higher education institutions (HEIs) in Viet Nam strive for improved global recognition and reputation through branding efforts. One of the ways they have pursued this is by translating their names into English or establishing their English names filled with numerous meanings, intents, expectations, visions, and the like.

HEI names can be analyzed as brand names when viewed as businesses in the process of marketing the education sector. The selection of a brand name is an important consideration that can influence customers' perceptions of the same brand (Klink, 2001). Similarly, university names can be viewed as a significant factor that influences how students perceive them. As a result, choosing the appropriate institutional and brand name is a critical decision for universities.

In Viet Nam, the significance of the names of educational institutions is acknowledged by law. Article 2 of Decree No. 99/2019/NĐ-CP (on detailing and guiding the implementation of a number of articles of the Law on Amending and Supplementing a Number of Articles of the Law on Higher Education) details regulations on “Naming and renaming higher education institutions” as follows:

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> The international business name of a higher education institution shall be translated from Vietnamese to a foreign language using terminologies appropriate to international practice. For universities affiliated with a parent university, their international business names shall be stipulated by such parent universities.)[1]

Several Vietnamese institutions have English names that are not appropriate for international practice, which can cause problems in educational management and administration, as well as affect their reputation due to misunderstanding or inaccurate translation. Inconsistent translations of these names can cause confusion for international colleagues and harm the institutions' reputation by demonstrating a disregard for their brand.

Inspired by the work of Dang Hong Thu (2018) and astounded by how the names of Vietnamese HEIs have been translated into English, we are motivated to identify and analyze translation procedures employed for translating the Vietnamese names of the currently registered HEIs into English based on the typology of Translation Procedures suggested by Newmark (1988). By doing so, we would also like to draw out a thorough description of the status quo of the English names of the current HEIs in Viet Nam.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Names of HEIs as Proper Names

Within the field of onomastics, as Nguyen Viet Khoa (2021, p. 61) maintains, it is a must to distinguish proper names from proper nouns. A proper noun is a noun identifying a single entity and is used to refer to that entity as opposed to a common noun, which refers to "a class of entities" (Anderson, 2007, pp. 3-5). That is to say, proper nouns are nouns denoting unique entities. Proper nouns are, in principle, capitalized in written English, Vietnamese and many other languages. In terms of grammar, a proper noun is a noun subclass, whilst a proper name is "the institutionalized name of some specific person, place, organization, etc., institutionalized by some formal act of naming and/or registration" (Huddleston 1988, p. 96). Thus, *Ha Noi* or *London* is deemed a proper noun while *University of Languages and International Studies* or *Imperial College of London* is considered a proper name. Proper names are a cultural feature that should be studied from a variety of angles, including historical, geographical, cultural, linguistic, cross-linguistic, and social aspects.

In international onomastics, commercial or brand names are sometimes called *ergonyms*. However, this term encompasses more than just commercial names. It also includes names of non-commercial entities like educational institutions, cultural institutions, churches, and various administrative organizations.

Names of HEIs are certainly proper names, and more precisely institutional names or ergonyms since they possess all the traits that proper names own. For instance, *Hanoi University of Science and Technology* singularly refers to a university in Viet Nam with capitalized names when written whose meaning is reflected in the components of the name. Other elements included in the names of HEIs are geographical names and people's names, which are also associated with the concept of proper names.

[1] The English versions of the articles of Decree No. 99/2019/NĐ-CP and Law No. 34/2018/QH14, which are mentioned in this paper, are translated by the author as an official version of these documents is not yet available to date.

2.2. HEIs in Viet Nam

2.2.1. Term Definition

According to the amendments to Article 4 of Law No. 34/2018/QH14 dated November 19, 2018 on amendments to the Law on Higher Education, a number of terms relating to HEIs in Viet Nam are construed as follows:

1. "Higher education institution" (Cơ sở giáo dục đại học) means an educational institution of the national education system and is permitted to provide higher education training, be engaged in science and technology activities, and serve the community.
2. "University" (Trường đại học, Học viện) means a higher education institution that provides training in multiple academic disciplines and has an organizational structure conformable to this Law.
3. "Parent university" (Đại học) also refers to a higher education institution that provides training in multiple fields, has an organizational structure conformable with this Law and multiple units that pursue the same missions and objectives.
4. "Subsidiary" (Đơn vị thành viên) means a university or research institution that is a legal entity, established or permitted to be established by the Prime Minister, has the autonomy over its organization and operation as prescribed by law and its own internal rules and regulations.
5. "Affiliate" (Đơn vị trực thuộc) means a legal entity affiliated to a higher education institution, established under a decision of the school council of the university or parent university (hereinafter referred to as "school council"); organized and run in accordance with the law, internal rules and regulations of the higher education institution.
6. "Affiliate" (Đơn vị trực thuộc) also refers to a unit of a higher education institution that is not a legal entity, established under a decision of the university council (school council); organized and run in accordance with the law, internal rules and regulations of the higher education institution.
7. "School" (Trường) means a training unit of a higher education institution, established under a decision of the university council (school council) in accordance with regulations of the Government; organized and run in accordance with internal rules and regulations of the higher education institution.

Also, in the amended Article 7, HEIs are defined as legal entities, including universities, parent universities and other categories of HEIs defined by law. HEIs can be public (invested, maintained and represented by the State) or private (invested and maintained by domestic or foreign investors). National universities and regional universities are parent universities responsible for the achievement of strategic national and regional development objectives.

2.2.2. Components in Names of HEIs

Refined from the research result provided by Dang Hong Thu (2018), it has been noted that a Vietnamese HEI's name typically consists of two components: ***Category of HEI*** at the first place followed by one or more ***Descriptors*** (descriptive elements). Three primary descriptors are ***Academic Subject Area***, ***Name of a Place*** and ***Name of a Person***. The subject area includes common nouns and adjectives (Industrial, Technology, etc.). On the other hand, Name of a Place (geographical name or toponyms) and Name of a Person (personal name or anthroponyms) are proper names, indicating singular references. The examples of names of HEIs in Viet Nam divided in the aforementioned pattern are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Components in Names of HEIs

HEI Category	**Descriptor**			
	Field/Subject area	***Place name***	***Personal name***	***Other name***
Đại học *(university)*	-	Thái Nguyên	-	-
Trường đại học *(university)*	Dược *(pharmacy)*	Hà Nội	-	-
	-	-	Tôn Đức Thắng	-
	-	-	-	FPT
Học viện *(institute)*	Tài chính *(finance)*	-	-	-
	Âm nhạc *(music)*	Huế	-	-
Trường sĩ quan *(college/university)*	Không quân *(air force)*	-	-	-

2.3. Newmark's Translation Procedures

Translation procedures are the proper procedures or methods used by the translator in transferring the source language (SL) into the target language (TL) as closely as possible by reproducing the meaning and style of the source language. This necessitates a close examination of the ideas and concepts conveyed in the original text. Translation is frequently used to demonstrate a person's proficiency in a foreign language.

Different techniques for translating proper names have been suggested by several scholars. These include the approaches proposed by Hermans (1988), Newmark (1988), Pym (2004), Xu (2005), Coillie (2006), Calderón and López (2019), Nyangeri and Wangari (2019), and others. Among those, Newmark's (1988) model has been established as a reliable and comprehensive approach for translating proper names. This model includes 18 procedures, namely *transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, synonymy, through-translation, shift or transposition, modulation, recognized translation, compensation, componential analysis, reduction and expansion, paraphrase, couplets, and notes.* Newmark (1988) also distinguishes between translation procedures and translation methods as such "translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language" (p. 81).

The conditions of the source text (ST) and target text (TT) have the greatest influence on how the translation procedure is used. The use of translation procedures can help to simplify understanding of a text, especially when communicating ideas from a different culture. Through the translator's operation, these procedures can also introduce the foreign culture to the target culture. In this context, the translator serves as a carrier of both language and culture, and the procedures used are the means by which these elements are transported (see also Le Hung Tien, 2022).

2.4. Translation of HEIs Names Based on Newmark's Model

Many people believe that translating proper names from one language to another is a simple task because they consider proper names to be nothing more than labels used to identify people or things. However, this view is incorrect, and in reality, translating proper names is a complex issue that is closely linked to the question of what the proper name actually means (see also Hanaoka, 2002; Nguyen Viet Khoa, 2021; Nyangeri, 2019; Vermes, 2003).

Newmark (1993, p. 15) sees proper name translation as a challenging aspect of translation, which many other scholars agree with. Proper name translation is considered to be a common issue in the act of translation. The 18 translation procedures proposed by Newmark (1988, pp. 82-91) are addressed below. We manage to provide examples involving ergonyms, but an alternative is offered where impossible.

Literal translation: The SL grammatical structures are converted to their closest TL equivalents, but individual words are translated without regard for context. Because the ST is written in a standardized language, translators are advised to use additional methods and exercise caution when checking the ST's content.

Trường Đại học Nông Lâm Thái Nguyên

→ Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry

Transference: Newmark believes that this is the most common procedure used for translating proper names and it is primarily aimed at the SL. The process of transference involves a translator transferring a word from the SL to the TL text. This procedure includes transliteration and is also known as "adoption," "transfer," "loan words," or "transcription" according to other scholars.

Trường Đại học Hải Phòng → Haiphong University

Naturalization (or Transcription): The SL term is adapted to fit the TL's pronunciation and morphology during this translation procedure. The translator looks for a word in the TL that is similar to the original term from the SL.

University of London → Đại học Luân Đôn

Cultural equivalent: The translator is expected to replace cultural terms in the SL with their corresponding equivalents in the TL in this procedure. However, the degree of cultural correspondence between the two languages can have a significant impact on the feasibility of finding a cultural equivalent. As Newmark acknowledged, this is not always a straightforward or accurate process.

Reform on TVET in Vietnam (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) → Đổi mới Đào tạo nghề Việt Nam

Functional equivalent: When translators come across cultural words that have no equivalent in the TL, they must choose between using a culture-neutral word or coining a new word to convey the SL word's meaning. Known as neutralization, this approach is widely regarded as the most accurate way of dealing with cultural terms that have no direct equivalent.

10 Downing Street → Phủ Thủ tướng Anh

Descriptive equivalent: To describe the meaning of the term and provide additional clarification, the translator may use different words in the TL. This can help ensure that the original term's intended meaning is accurately conveyed in the translation.

John/Jane Doe → Người được nhắc đến, người chưa biết danh tính, John Doe dùng để ám chỉ một người đàn ông vô danh. Jane Doe dùng để ám chỉ người phụ nữ vô danh.

Componential analysis: If the ST words have more specific connotations than the corresponding TL words, the translator may need to supplement the TL components with additional words to convey a more precise meaning. This process may entail breaking down a lexical unit into its constituent meaning atoms and translating them separately, with prepositions sometimes used to connect the elements.

Cuộc sống chiến đấu → life of struggle

Synonymy: When there is no precise equivalent word in the TL, the translator must choose a near-equivalent word instead. Newmark refers to this near-equivalent word as a “synonym” in situations where a precise equivalent may or may not be available. However, Newmark emphasizes that a synonym should be used only when a literal translation is impossible.

Bim bim → light snacks

Through-translation: Through-translation, also known as “calque” or “loan,” is the practice of translating common collocations, organization names, and compound components literally. This procedure should only be used for terms that are already established and recognized, such as those used by international organizations with “universal words” that can be understood in multiple languages.

United Nations → Nations Unies (French), Naciones Unidas (Spanish)

Shift or transposition: The translation procedure is used by replacing the grammatical structure in the SL with a different type of TL grammar that has the same impact in the TT. Simply put, transposition is the process of translating while changing the order of the parts of speech.Take an example of translating *The United Nations* into French, it will become *Les Nations Unies*. It is in fact a shift of word class.

Modulation: Modulation is a translation procedure that involves adapting the original message of the SL to the norms of the TL while accounting for any differences or contradictions between the two languages. This process typically involves larger translation units and may necessitate a shift in perspective. However, modulation is not commonly used in the translation of institutional names.

The South China Sea → Biển Đông

Recognized translation: Recognized translation is a translation procedure in which the official or widely accepted translation of an institutional term is used by the translator. This approach is employed when the translator normally uses the authentic or established translation of an institutional term.

ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) → ASEAN (Hiệp hội các quốc gia Đông Nam Á)

Translation label: When the ST contains SL-specific characteristics, a translation label may be used to find an approximate equivalent or a new term in the TL. This type of procedure is frequently used with proper names, technical terms, and other specialized vocabulary.

Russell Group universities → Các đại học Anh thuộc “nhóm Russell”

Compensation: Compensation happens when the loss of meaning, sound effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part, or in a contiguous sentence (Newmark, 1988, p. 90). Nguyen Viet Khoa (2021, p. 65) introduces an example of an idiomatic phrase: *If I ever have to do a Lord Lucan and flee the country, this is where I'll head. → Nếu phải biến mất khỏi đất nước mình, đây là nơi tôi sẽ tới.* In the Vietnamese version, the “Lord Lucan” factor has been omitted. The reason for such an affair deals largely with the stylistic possessions of both Vietnamese and English. Instead, the phrase *biến mất khỏi* “compensates” the possible “loss” that the deletion of *Lord Lucan* may cause to the meaning.

Reduction and expansion: While expansion is a more descriptive method of translating a statement and uses more words in TL than SL, reduction entails leaving out a word from an expression that is not necessary for understanding.

Voltage stabilizer → Ổn áp; Linguistics → Khoa học ngôn ngữ (Ngôn ngữ học)

Paraphrase: This procedure allows for the addition of detailed information to clarify the significance of a text passage. To achieve greater clarity, different words are used to express the meaning. The explanation here is far more detailed than the descriptive equivalent.

Vice-Chancellor → Phó Hiệu trưởng điều hành trong hệ thống đại học Anh quốc, hay còn gọi là Giám đốc điều hành của đại học.

Translation couplets: Combining different translation procedures (borrowing, literal…) in order to convey a more accurate and nuanced meaning in the TL is what this procedure entails. It is used when the TL terms are not universally recognized or for "politically colored terms".

Hồ Hoàn Kiếm → Ho Hoan Kiem (Hoan Kiem Lake, "Lake of the Returned Sword")

Notes: Notes are extra bits of information that may be included in a translation, particularly for cultural terms. Although some stylists consider a translation sprinkled with footnotes to be horrible looking, their use can help TT readers make better judgments of the ST contents.[2]

2.5. Considerations for Functional and Dynamic Equivalence

The relationship between the ST and the TT in translation is referred to as equivalence, which is a central concept in translation studies. The term equivalence refers to how translators can retain the meaning and effect of the original text in the translation despite differences between the SL and TL. Many scholars have debated how to classify the concept of "equivalence," with the majority dividing it into two opposing categories such as formal correspondence and textual equivalence, natural and directional equivalence, or formal and dynamic equivalence (Catford, 1965; Gile, 1995, as cited in Le Hung Tien, 2022). These categories correspond with Newmark's methods of semantic and communicative translation.

Formal equivalence is concerned with the message's form and content, whereas dynamic equivalence focuses on having the same effect on target language readers as on source language readers. It is not always possible to find the closest equivalent between linguistic units, which is the goal of formal equivalence. The readability of the text for the source language audience is prioritized by dynamic equivalence. Both Nida and Newmark use linguistic-oriented and target-oriented approaches that prioritize either the linguistic features of the source language or the author's intention to avoid distorting the original meaning.[3]

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

In this article, by higher education institutions we mean the ones that are legally allowed to provide undergraduate training, master's training and doctoral training. The education institutions that provide lower

[2] Footnotes, according to Nida (1964), should serve at least two functions: (i) to provide supplementary information, and (ii) to call attention to the original's discrepancies. Notes can appear in the form of 'footnotes' (pp. 237-39).

[3] Nida pioneered the concept of "dynamic equivalence" in translation, but later developed "functional equivalence," which emphasizes maintaining the original text's communicative function in the target language. This method prioritizes conveying the original text's message or function in the translation, even if it means using different words or sentence structures. The goal is for the translated text to serve the same communicative purpose as the original text while not necessarily replicating its form (Nyangeri & Wangari, 2019).

education training levels (associate/ foundation degree) or the research institutes that have doctoral training only are not the subjects of the research.

The names of such degree-awarding recognized institutions are provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) on its website (https://moet.gov.vn/cosogiaoduc). These names must denote the category of HEIs such as “đại học” (“parent university”), “trường đại học” (“university”), “học viện” (“academy”) or “trường (school/ college/ university).

Based on this criterion set, a list of 276 HEIs are collected as of January 2023. This includes 6 parent universities and their members, 236 universities, 2 institutes, 33 academies and 5 institutions with other names selected to be the subject of this research. The researcher then compiles and compares their English names from the following sources: i) Names they registered with MOET (2023); ii) Names from their official websites; iii) Names from their most up-to-date admission project documents.

The collected names are stored in Appendix A. This is an Excel file with four sheets:

- Sheet 1: A full list of 276 HEIs with fields such as Vietnamese names, websites, management level, locations, and type of ownership;
- Sheet 2: Vietnamese names and English translation names;
- Sheet 3: Category of HEIs and counts;
- Sheet 3: Name structure and counts.

To better understand the English names of the Vietnamese HEIs, we compile a list of 175 HEIs in the UK (as of January 2023). These are the HEIs that must already hold full authorization for taught degree awarding powers (TDAP) and research degree awarding powers (RDAP) in the UK. All of the institutions on this list are recognized bodies with university status, as evidenced by their use of the university title in their name on the country's Department of Education's recognized bodies list or by a reference to the Office for Students database.[4] These collected HEI names are detailed in Appendix B.

The two appendix Excel files are also available online at https://tinyurl.com/ybz4jsps (Appendix A) and https://tinyurl.com/4pnukeme (Appendix B).

3.2. Data Analysis

In this study, we employ purposive sampling, which enables the researcher to deliberately choose data sources that are consistent with the study's objectives. In order to identify the translation procedures for names of HEIs in Viet Nam, the researcher use both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the collected data. The original names are broken into meaningful units and the translation procedures for each of these units are then analyzed. The researcher will then use qualitative techniques to thoroughly evaluate representative cases and create a detailed table of translation procedures for the entire sample. By combining the two methodologies, the researcher can study the data in a systematic manner and learn more about the translation procedures.

[4] The status of all universities and degree-awarding bodies is recognised and protected by UK law. The Privy Council is responsible for advising the King on universities' proposals to amend their Royal Charter (or Articles/Instrument of Government in the case of post-1992 universities). Since the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, the Office for Students has expressed powers to vary or revoke degree awarding powers in England, including where authorisation was originally made under Acts or Royal Charters, subject to agreement by Parliament (QAA, 2018).

Afterward, the material is analyzed in detail using a quantitative method to better comprehend how proper nouns are translated. The final statistics that demonstrate how the translation procedures are distributed for the study's goals are produced by a methodical analysis of the source data and the use of numerical synthesis. The quantitative approach provides a broad overview of the frequency and style of HEI name translations.

Finally, the distribution of translations is further explained using a qualitative approach, and the ramifications of the data are critically discussed. The statistical method supplements and broadens the perspective gained from the qualitative analysis.

4. Findings

4.1. Translation Procedures for Categories of HEIs

As mentioned in §2.2.3, the classification of names of institutions includes common nouns to describe the categories of HEIs. On the grounds that the HEI category is characterized by its descriptiveness, literal translation is adopted to render all items in this name unit. The categorization of institution names entails using common nouns to describe different categories of HEIs. A literal translation approach is used for all items within the name to ensure accuracy in describing the category of institution.

The closest equivalents are chosen after translating the SL terms into the TL based on their level of transparency and standardization. The concept of equivalence is demonstrated if the translator is able to accurately convey the meaning and impact of an institutional name in the TL. For instance, "university" can be considered equivalent to "đại học", and "academy" can be considered equivalent to "học viện".

As aforementioned, a challenge in translating different categories of HEIs is finding accurate equivalents for literal translation. This is due to the fact that there are rarely exact equivalents and the concept of institutions varies. The literal translation's choice of terminology for the HEI category is heavily influenced by the translated text's readers. However, the intended audience for the translated HEI name is not specified, which causes confusion when determining appropriate terminology, especially when translating the terms "đại học" and "trường đại học".

When translating terms from an SL to a TL, the translator should aim to find the closest equivalent in the TL based on the transparency and standardization of the terms. If the translator is successful in presenting an institutional name in the TL that conveys the same meanings and effects to readers of the SL as the original name does, this is considered a demonstration of equivalence.

In Table 2 below, all 6 "đại học" are translated as "university", enjoying functional equivalence. The translation of the term "trường đại học" as "university" has been applied in all 226 instances, resulting in 100% dynamic equivalence. On the other hand, for the term "học viện" (and "nhạc viện"), 32 out of 39 institutions with this name have been translated as "academy," accounting for 82.05% of cases. The remaining 7 institutions have chosen other translations: 5 picking "university", one using "institute," and another selecting "conservatory" (i.e., *The Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music*). As Table 2 shows, 5 military institutions whose Vietnamese names contain the phrase "trường sỹ quan" are being translated as "college."

Table 2

Equivalence in Translation of Category of HEIs

HEIs Vietnamese	Equivalence	
	Functional equivalence	***Dynamic equivalence***
Đại học	6 (100%)	-
Trường đại học	-	226 (100%)
Học viện	32 (82.05%)	7 (17.95%)
Trường sỹ quan	5 (100%)	-
Total 276	44	232

It is interesting to note that while the phrase "trường đại học" is literally translated to "university" using dynamic equivalence, other translations use functional equivalence. This dynamic equivalence trend is especially prevalent among HEIs in Viet Nam, as they strive to improve their reputation. This is due to the common belief in Viet Nam that the term "university" carries more prestige than "college". It is worth mentioning that the only 5 institutions that use the term "college" in their names are all military institutions (such as the *Trường Sỹ quan không quân - Air Force Officer College*). The fact that the seven "học viện" (institutes) are translated using dynamic equivalence indicates an inconsistency in the translation of HEI names.

The choice of equivalence has a significant impact on the outcome of a literal translation, especially when translating terms related to HEIs, because readerships in the SL and TL may hold opposing views. This study indicates that this decision should be made on an individual basis, with individual institutions taking into account their objectives and target audience. Currently, dynamic equivalence is the preferred choice for translating "trường đại học" as "university", while functional equivalence is favored for other categories of HEIs. However, this results in a lack of uniformity in the literal translation of HEI types.

4.2. Translation Procedures for Descriptors

One key factor determining HEI specialization is their descriptive elements (descriptors), which can be difficult to translate because they aim to express the unique identity of each establishment. In the researcher's experience, Vietnamese HEI names tend to be more descriptive and structural than their English counterparts, often incorporating geographical or personal proper nouns/names in the former and proper nouns in the latter. As a result, different translation procedures are required for each element of this segment. The translation of descriptors can be further divided into two parts: translation procedures for the academic subject area and for the name of a place or person.

4.2.1. Translation Procedures for Academic Subject Areas

Based on the subject area, four primary translation methods are commonly used: literal translation, functional equivalent, reduction of information, and transference. Table 3 presents the statistics of the translation procedures utilized for this subject area.

Table 3

Translation Procedures and Counts for Subject Area

Translation procedures	Count
Transference	3
Reduction and expansion	11
Functional equivalent	12
Literal translation	169
Total	195/276

4.2.2. Translation Procedures for Names of Places or Persons

Toponyms and anthroponyms are not necessarily equivalent in meaning or connotation. In other words, toponyms and anthroponyms may have different meanings or connotations, even if they share the same linguistic roots or cultural significance (see Crystal, 2004; Hough, 1994; Newmark, 1981; Nick, 1998).

Table 4

Translation Procedures and Counts for Name of Place/Person

Translation procedures	Count
Transference	175
Reduction and expansion	5
Literal Translation/Transference	2
Literal translation	9
Transference/Reduction and expansion	1
Total	192/276

As shown in Appendix A, three main translation procedures are commonly used for these proper names: literal translation, transference, and reduction. Table 4 presents statistics on the frequency of these translation procedures.

5. Discussion

5.1. HEI Concept and Name Structure

The variation in HEI categories creates challenges in translating the category of institution due to inconsistent naming conventions across individual institutions. In addition, the terms "university" and "college" are understood somewhat differently by Vietnamese and English speakers. The term "đại học" is most closely translated as "university," while "four-year college" or "college" (like the ones of *The University of London*) shares the same educational principles and awarding powers as "trường đại học." However, Vietnamese speakers often translate "college" as "trường cao đẳng", which is associated with a less prestigious degree. This deeply ingrained perception complicates accurately translating HEI categories between the two languages.

The reputation of a "university" brand (which includes terms such as "academy" and "institute") in Viet Nam has a direct correlation with the translation preference of the terms "đại học" and "trường đại học", which accounts for 98% of the preference for translating HEI categories. Only five institutions choose the term "college" while their Vietnamese version is "trường đại học". These five are all military institutions (e.g., *Trường Sĩ quan không quân* → *Air Force Officer College*). This is a bit different from that in the UK where most HEIs include the word "university" in their name structure, but some institutions singly pick "college" or even "school" instead (e.g., *Imperial College London; London School of Economics and Political Science*).

To ensure that HEI names in Viet Nam are recognized and acknowledged internationally, they must be grammatically and semantically precise, as well as familiar and easy to pronounce for native English speakers. Meeting this criterion, however, can be challenging because the translated versions may appear foreign to TL readers due to differences in the constituent elements and descriptors of the name pattern.

As seen in Appendix B, it is obvious that most of the common structures of HEI names in the UK contain the pattern "The University of [Placename]" (e.g., *The University of Sussex*). This structure accounts for more than 50% of the HEIs. Another typical structure is "[Proper name] University" (e.g., *Newcastle University*). Conversely, a small minority of institutions has their names post-modified with common nouns or adjectives denoting subject area, accompanied by city names in a pre-modified position, as in "[Name of a Place/ Person] [Category of HEI of] [Subject area]" (e.g., *Norwich University of the Arts*), or pre-modified by a placename and or an adjective denoting the subject area (e.g., *Royal Agricultural University*).

The naming conventions of HEIs in Viet Nam differ significantly from those in the UK, owing largely to the descriptors used to ensure that the proper names have an unambiguous reference. As shown in Appendix A, most Vietnamese HEIs have names that consist of denotative nouns and/or adjectives that describe the subject areas they specialize in (e.g., *Hanoi University of Industrial Fine Arts*). Notably, only three Vietnamese institutions follow the structure "The University of [Placename]" (e.g., *The University of Danang*), which accounts for just 1.08% of all HEI names in Viet Nam, compared to over 50% in the UK.

5.2. Academic Subject Area

One of the struggles in translation stems from differences in subject-area classification across countries. This can make determining the appropriate formal equivalent for a given subject area difficult, resulting in translation inconsistencies. This issue is particularly difficult in the context of Vietnamese HEIs because there is no standardized classification system for subject areas, further complicating the translation process. An example that highlights the challenges of subject-area classification in translation is the major "sư phạm" (teacher education) in Vietnamese HEIs (see Table 5).

Table 5

Inconsistency in Translating "Sư phạm"

No.	HEIs in Vietnamese	HEIs in English
1	Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội	Hanoi National University of Education
2	Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội 2	Hanoi Pedagogical University 2
3	Trường Đại học Sư phạm kỹ thuật Vinh	Vinh University of Technology Education
4	Trường Đại học Sư phạm, ĐH Huế	University of Education, Hue University
5	Trường Đại học Sư phạm, ĐH Đà Nẵng	University of Science and Education - The University of Danang
6	Trường Đại học Sư phạm, ĐH Thái Nguyên	University of Education - Thai Nguyen University
7	Trường Đại học Sư phạm kỹ thuật Hưng Yên	Hung Yen University of Technology and Education

Take No. 1 and No. 2 in Table 5 as an example. The major "sư phạm" are being described as both "education" and "pedagogy," even though these terms have different connotations and meanings. Pedagogy is a discipline that specifically deals with the theory and practice of teaching, while education encompasses a wider range of topics related to teaching and learning, such as curriculum development, educational psychology, and educational policy. Pedagogy is often considered a subfield of education, but it is not synonymous with education as a whole.

Besides, the inclusion of "number 2" in the university name may hurt its reputation, implying a lower status than the university with the "number 1" designation. This may be particularly problematic if the universities are of comparable caliber, as it may create the impression that the "number two" university is inferior.[5] Similar examples of such inconsistency can also be found in the names of several "sư phạm" universities (see Table 5).

This subject area major is a typical example of how the lack of a standardized classification system can lead to difficulties in finding the appropriate formal equivalent in translation. Historical reasons may considerably play a part here. After the Geneva Accord, in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, a number of 'universities' specialized in a particular discipline/ occupation following either the Soviet or Chinese style were established due to, among various factors, lack of teachers and finance.

Translators may also have difficulty determining the parts of speech of terms in the TL that display their proper syntactic functions. As aforementioned, universities in the UK rarely include a subject area in their name, whereas in Viet Nam, it is common for educational institutions to include descriptors that can be either common nouns or adjectives referring to the subject area. For example, the two following institutions in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City share the same subject major but use different descriptors in their names.

Trường Đại học Kiến trúc Hà Nội → Hanoi Architectural University

Trường Đại học Kiến trúc TP.HCM → University of Architecture Ho Chi Minh City

Regardless of whether such usage is considered grammatically correct, this shows a clear inconsistency. Using adjectives that describe a subject area in the English translation of the names of Vietnamese HEIs can also create challenges for readers who are not familiar with the terminology. In the UK, it is not typical for HEIs to incorporate adjectives into their names. Instead, in some rare cases of using descriptors of subject area, the institutions utilize noun form of terminologies in any name structure.

As regards the subject areas in the HEI names, there are three exceptional cases keeping their Vietnamese version of the subject areas (certainly with some form of transference).

Trường Đại học Thủy lợi → Thuyloi University (Water resources)

Trường Đại học Thương mại → Thuongmai University (Commerce)

Trường Đại học Nông Lâm TP. Hồ Chí Minh → Nong Lam University - Ho Chi Minh City (Agriculture and Forestry).

The universities' English names preserve the meaning of the Vietnamese names but use a transliteration of the Vietnamese words. These universities are unique in that they use the Vietnamese version of their subject areas in their English names, which is not a common practice in other universities around the world. It would be explained that they would like to use the Vietnamese as their proper names rather than the sector/discipline/occupation they used to be engaged in, partly as they want to be multidisciplinary. Also as an effort to be multidisciplinary, in more recent years many of these HEIs have managed to change their names, e.g., the case of *Hanoi University* from *Hanoi University of Foreign Languages*.

Inconsistency in the translation of names of HEIs can occur due to a variety of factors, including differences in terminology and parts of speech used in the two different languages. These factors can result in confusion and inconsistency in the translation of HEI names, highlighting the importance of careful consideration and

[5] It is also possible that the name is simply a tradition or has historical significance, and in that case, it may not have a significant impact on the university's reputation.

research in the translation process.

5.3. Onomastic Elements

As discussed in §2.1 and §2.4, onomastic elements like proper nouns/names in the name structure of HEIs, including the name of a place and the name of a person, are generally rendered using transference. By this translation procedure, the orthographic pattern of the word is preserved, but all the diacritics and tone marks are removed from the original names.

Cần Thơ → Can Tho;

Tôn Đức Thắng → Ton Duc Thang

Vietnamese is largely a monosyllabic language with each syllable separated by space in writing and a word may consist of one or more syllables. A name, therefore, can be of one or more words. However, with romanized transference, the spelling of the name may vary. Transference of names of cities (or provinces) is one evident example:

Trường Đại học Đà Nẵng → The University of Danang

Trường Đại học Kỹ thuật y - dược Đà Nẵng → Da Nang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy

The two translations of the geographical name "Đà Nẵng" both refer specifically to the city of Đà Nẵng. However, when this name is written with different spacing variations, it results in different word forms. While readers of the TL may still understand these variations, yet with their eyebrows raising to some extent, it can complicate information digitization. For example, "Danang" and "Da Nang" are treated as separate entries in databases and other information systems, even though they both refer to the same entity. As a result, while different spacing variations are acceptable for communication purposes, they can complicate information organization and management.

Based on the observations and analysis of the findings, it can be inferred that there is still room for improvement in the application of translation procedures. One consideration is the need to carefully translate original names and HEI categories to ensure they are easily understood by English speakers. Furthermore, standardization of the translation process is necessary to address differences in academic subject areas and proper name factors.

6. Implications and Conclusion

6.1. Implications

The findings of this article focus on the translation procedures used for the names of HEIs in Viet Nam. The study reveals that the classification of HEI names involves using common nouns to describe different categories of HEIs, and a literal translation approach is used to ensure accuracy in describing the category of institution. The study also highlights the challenge of finding accurate equivalents for literal translation due to the fact that there are rarely exact equivalents and the concept of institutions varies. The translation of descriptors, which aim to express the unique identity of each establishment, is another key factor determining HEI specialization, and different translation procedures are required for each element of this segment. Overall, the names of HEIs in Viet Nam have been translated into English with a relatively high level of accuracy, although some minor inaccuracies and inconsistencies may exist in the translations.

It is implied that ensuring the English names of HEIs in Viet Nam are grammatically and semantically precise, easily recognizable, and effectively convey their intended meaning and level of prestige is of paramount importance. The translation of HEI names and categories presents challenges that highlight the need for careful consideration of cultural and linguistic nuances, as well as the potential impact of translation choices on the perception of HEIs by English-speaking audiences. While the name of a university carries weight, it is ultimately the quality of education and research that it provides which truly determines its worth and impact. It is true that "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet".

It can be observed that a number of HEIs may not directly translate their Vietnamese names into English. Rather, they want to establish an English name which may be related to their mission, vision, expectations, directions for development, their historical background, etc. Thus, various intents may be compacted in the English names. Another possible reason is HEIs may aim at multidisciplinary development rather than single discipline/sector/occupation as they were originally established. Unfortunately, uncovering this information requires in-depth interviews and/or consultations with particular HEIs, which were not conducted as part of this study. This is a limitation of the paper that should be addressed in future research. Besides, due to the constraints of this article, the author was not able to delve deeply into certain aspects related to the names of HEIs, such as the spelling (e.g., *Vietnam* or *Viet Nam*, *Hanoi* or *Ha Noi;* presence of diacritics and tone marks), the legal considerations of naming conventions, and the lack of uniformity in the literal translation of HEI types. The study acknowledges the need to address these issues at a more comprehensive level in future research.

6.2. Conclusion

HEIs are multifaceted institutions that are crucial to the cultural, economic, social, and national aspects of a country's identity. The global demand for more prestigious and global HEIs has increased in recent decades, as higher education has become an important part of countries' economic plans for developing their human resources in the future (Anderson, 2006). In this course, one of the first measures HEIs take is to make their name accessible to the global audience, and HEIs in Viet Nam are not an exception.

The names of HEIs in Viet Nam have been structured so that they include the category of institution and descriptors such as academic subject area, place name, and person's name. The study found that for the 276 HEIs analyzed, the most commonly used translation approaches were literal translation using functional equivalence (15.94%) and dynamic equivalence (84.05%). Among the 195 HEIs with subject areas in their names, four translation procedures were employed for the descriptors: transference, reduction and expansion, functional equivalent, and literal translation, with literal translation being the most common at 86.66%. For onomastic elements, there were five recorded procedures: transference, reduction and expansion, literal translation/transference, literal translation, and transference/ reduction and expansion. Transference was the most frequently used procedure, accounting for 91.14% (175 out of 192 HEIs).

While striving to comply with international practice, the English names of HEIs in Viet Nam differ significantly from those in the UK. Unlike many HEIs in the UK, which use the structure "The University of [Placename]", only three HEIs in Viet Nam follow this structure. Additionally, the use of excessive adjectives in subject areas and different transference variants of proper names is also evident in the English names of the Vietnamese HEIs.

To conclude, this study provides a thorough examination of the English names of higher education institutions in Viet Nam, and identifies inconsistencies and inaccuracies in their naming conventions. By shedding light on these issues, this study aims to persuade authorities in Viet Nam to establish standardized naming practices that are consistent with international standards for HEIs. Finally, it is hoped that this research will inspire Vietnamese higher education institutions to adopt names that accurately reflect their identity and reputation on a global scale.

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GIẢI MÃ TÊN TIẾNG ANH CỦA CÁC CƠ SỞ GIÁO DỤC ĐẠI HỌC TẠI VIỆT NAM: TÌM HIỂU VỀ CÁC BƯỚC DỊCH THUẬT

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Tóm tắt: Trong thời đại quốc tế hóa giáo dục đại học ngày nay, tên gọi của cơ sở giáo dục đại học (CSGDĐH) đóng một vai trò vô cùng quan trọng. Bài viết này tiếp cận tên tiếng Việt và tiếng Anh của 276 CSGDĐH ở Việt Nam được phép đào tạo trình độ đại học trở lên, và tìm hiểu các bước dịch thuật được sử dụng để dịch tên các CSGDĐH này sang tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu áp dụng cả phương pháp định tính và định lượng để thu thập và phân tích dữ liệu. Tiếp theo, nghiên cứu phân loại và thống kê các quy trình dịch thuật dựa trên cấp hạng của CSGDĐH, lĩnh vực đào tạo và các yếu tố nhận diện liên quan tới tên người và tên đất. Thông qua mô tả tổng quan về tên tiếng Anh của các CSGDĐH tại Việt Nam, nghiên cứu ghi nhận những nỗ lực dịch thuật theo thông lệ quốc tế, nhưng cũng chỉ ra những điểm chưa nhất quán và chưa chính xác trong một số trường hợp dịch tên cụ thể. Nghiên cứu khuyến nghị các nhà quản lí giáo dục cần xây dựng các tiêu chí nghiêm ngặt hơn để công nhận tên các cơ sở giáo dục và với các CSGDĐH thì cần lựa chọn tên riêng sao cho vừa phản ánh được bản sắc và danh tiếng vừa tuân thủ các tiêu chuẩn quốc tế.

Từ khóa: cơ sở giáo dục đại học, bước dịch thuật, tên riêng, tiếng Việt, tiếng Anh

E-LEARNING ECOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON FIRST-YEAR VIETNAMESE EFL STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND MOTIVATION IN A TRANSITION TO ONLINE PLATFORMS

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Abstract: The transition from high school to university academic life is challenging for many first-year students as they have to adapt to new learning styles and a self-regulated environment that is different from what they were familiar with during school. Learning becomes complicated when the traditional class setting switches to e-learning, requiring tremendous effort. Students have to adjust their learning habits, learn to collaborate and maintain interaction with others. This study investigates first-year EFL students' experience during the transition from face-to-face to e-learning, targeting the influence of factors such as interaction with lecturers and peers, assessment, and peer support on students' motivation and self-regulated learning. Three hundred fifty-two students participated in the survey, and 36 joined the interview. The lecturer interaction and peer support were crucial to motivate students; peer interaction helped navigate self-regulated learning, and assessment regulated students' learning approach. Challenges of e-learning were notified, and recommendations were proposed to enhance learning quality.

Keywords: learning ecology, e-learning, motivation, self-regulated learning, transition, interaction

1. Introduction

Integrating digital platforms into language teaching and learning is essential in the globalization process and the advancement of technology. The outbreak of Covid-19 waves has sped up the transition from a rigid traditional face-to-face to a flexible blended learning or e-learning (also referred to as online) mode. According to the report *Policy Brief: Education during Covid 19 and Beyond*, released by the United Nations in August 2020, the "crisis and the unparalleled education disruption are far from over" (United Nations, 2020, p. 1); however, the crisis has vitalized innovation with the distinctive soaring of e-learning. While some are concerned that the swift switch to e-learning can later lead to consequences and whether e-learning will persist post-pandemic, others decide to make this learning mode an integral part of their 'new normal' education setting to strengthen education resilience and deliver quality education.

Previous studies suggest that e-learning impacts EFL language learners' motivation and outcomes (David & Grosu-Radulescu, 2016; Fandino et al., 2019) because language learning requires time and effort. Hence, learners must be physically, mentally, and emotionally immersed in

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learning to acquire the language successfully. For first-year EFL students, transitioning from regular face-to-face learning to e-learning/online learning is challenging if they cannot foster a sense of self-regulated learning and actively engage in a new learning environment. The bewilderment when moving from high school to university learning culture and the lack of physical interaction with lecturers and peers in an e-learning environment can lead to demotivation and negative experiences.

E-learning environment is considered an umbrella term for learning factors and processes taken on the internet (Moore et al., 2011). It can include interaction with lecturers and peers, support, assessment, and self-regulation. Each factor in the learning ecology can mitigate or aggravate students' pressure. However, there needs to be more studies on the influence of e-learning factors on first-year EFL students. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the interrelation among e-learning factors and their impacts on first-year EFL students' self-regulated learning and motivation at a university in Vietnam.

Research questions:

1. How did students experience e-learning in terms of interaction with lecturers and peers, institution support, skill enhancement, assessment, self-regulated learning, and motivation?

2. How did e-learning factors (interaction with lecturers and peers, peer support, and assessment) influence students' motivation and self-regulated learning?

2. Literature Review

Previous studies on e-learning have shown that e-learning factors influence EFL students' motivation; students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation decreased in online learning (Meşe & Sevilen, 2021). However, e-learning offers efficient assistance for self-regulated learning (Zhao & Chen, 2016). There is a link between the learning environment and students' motivation and satisfaction with the course (Park & Choi, 2009; Li et al., 2016). Interaction, instructor presence, technology, and self-regulation can affect students' decision to continue or drop out of the course (Kauffman, 2015).

2.1. Interaction

Interaction is the main factor that motivates students' learning and satisfaction with the course (Moore, 1989; Anderson, 2003). According to Rhode (2009), the interactivity of e-learning or online courses can occur in two forms, i.e., formal and informal interaction. The formal includes the interaction of students and their lecturers, peers, and learning content, whereas the informal extends the standard components to the student network and student collective. Student network refers to the ability to connect and collaborate to develop a learning ecology niche, while student collective implies the ability to access other supplementary informal resources. The insufficiency of either formal or informal interaction environment leads to learning deficiency and dissatisfaction (Kurucay & Inan, 2017).

In an e-learning environment, the student-lecturer connection can occur by receiving feedback, comments on students' performance, teaching methods, and discussion of learning content to increase active participation (Sher, 2009; Al-Khresheh, 2021). Student–content interaction is the process of students' interaction with the e- materials of the course (Kumar et al., 2021). Student-student interaction occurs through collaborative tasks, giving and taking contributions of group members. Student-student interaction positively influences language learning by providing chances to communicate in the target language and collaboration among them (Hien, 2019). As a result, the education transaction of student-lecturer and student-student has engaged students in activities and provided support and motivation (Gikandi, 2021; Meşe & Sevilen, 2021).

2.2. Assessment

Previous studies have confirmed the strong linkage between assessment, self-regulated learning, and motivation in EFL (Birijandi & Tamjid, 2010). Assessment involves reflecting on the quality of the learning process by collecting feedback on their performance and outcomes. There are two forms of feedback: external and internal (Yan & Brown, 2017). External feedback comes from interaction with lecturers, peers, and learning content, whereas internal feedback refers to self-generated 'implicit information' via their internal states (Yan, 2019). Topping (2003) and Panadero et al. (2018) further report that self-assessment positively influences self-regulated learning. The shift to e-learning requires adapting assessment techniques. Self-assessment and peer assessment can be used for personalized feedback (Kearns, 2012). However, the lack of I.T. skills, internet availability, and online assessment reliability can cause challenges for students (Beleulmi, 2022).

2.3. Self-Regulated Learning

Self-regulated learning is defined as the process in which students direct their learning. They set goals and monitor, regulate, and modulate their cognition, motivation, and behaviors within an educational setting (Zimmerman, 2000; Pintrich, 2004). The link between motivation and self-regulated learning has been the focus of many studies. Strategies such as self-assessment, planning, archive records, peer and lecturer assistance seeking, and note reviewing are successful learning tools related to motivation and performance (Sahin Kizil & Savran, 2016).

Using technology to enhance self-regulated learning has made further steps in foreign language teaching and learning with various online tools. The advance of technology has enhanced formal and informal learning environments beyond the physical classroom context (Lai et al., 2013). Students can discuss with class members via forums or meeting rooms and fulfil tasks online. Language learning can take place anytime, anywhere, as long as it suits students' schedules and plans.

2.4. Motivation

Factors affecting second language motivation were classified into two groups: internal and external. Internal factors emerging within the individual include knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation (Ng & Ng, 2012), such as interest, confidence, and curiosity. External factors, on the other hand, come from outside the individual, e.g., feedback, rewards, and networks. In some studies, motivation predicts self-regulated learning (Mahmoodi et al., 2014) and controls the regulation process (Schunk, 2005).

2.5. Learning Ecology

Learning ecology emerged from 'ecology' or 'ecosystem' in biology, which implies the connection and interaction between the individual and the surrounding environment. According to Barron (2006), learning ecology is the collection of formal and informal 'contexts' in physical and virtual environments to provide learning opportunities through technological mediation. With the merger of technology into the learning environment, the 'digital ecology' (Girard & Stark, 2007) provides learners with new interactive experiences and collaboration. Similarly, Normak et al. (2012) propose an ecological approach to enable self-regulated learning possibilities. In this model, learners receive feedback from the learning community to develop their learning pathways between niches. Li et al. (2020) leverage that the English teaching ecosystem comprises ecological factors such as teachers, peers, ICT, teaching resources, and ecological environment as policies, teaching facilities, and campus culture. Under the influence of ecological factors in the learning environment, students configure their learning strategies and develop their ecological niches towards English learning goals (Li et al., 2020). The interaction and relationships among factors in learning ecology and their impact on students' self-regulated learning and motivation during the transition from face-to-face to online learning require further research.

Based on the previous studies on learning ecology, e-learning, motivation, interaction, and self-regulated learning, this study proposes a research model which includes two main groups of formal and informal settings (Barron, 2006) in e-learning ecology. The formal setting involves institutional support, lecturer interaction, and assessment factors. The institution support facilitates and assures the quality of the online courses via policies, feedback, technical support, information updating, and an e-learning platform. Lecturers provide learning content, carry out teaching processes, and give support and feedback to students. Lecturer interaction can also occur in small talk and outside class communication. E-learning assessment covers online tests, quizzes, and assignments from lecturers, and students can check results and self-assess their work. The informal setting covers peer interaction, self-regulated learning, motivation, and skill enhancement. The interaction with peers has various forms, such as support, feedback, or group work discussion. Although self-regulated learning and motivation act as two independent factors, they also receive impact from other factors of e-learning ecology. These formal and informal settings play their role in e-learning ecology, providing tools, support, and a platform for the student's learning process.

3. Methodology

3.1. Context and Participants

The research took place in a foreign language teaching university in Vietnam, and 352 first-year non-English major students participated. It is required that students have to achieve B1 (CEFR) or equivalent when they graduate. Since the university is a member of the National University, the course is provided for students from different majors of other member universities; as a result, lecturers use different online platforms provided for the courses, such as Moodle, Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams.

This research was carried out after students had experienced e-learning for at least three months to have sufficient experience with the new learning mode.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

3.2.1. Quantitative Data

Google form was used for data collection, and the survey link and QR code were sent to students via their emails registered for the English course.

A questionnaire was the main data collection method. The questionnaire items were written in Vietnamese so that all students understood. The questionnaire was adapted from Nguyen and Tran (2022). Statistical Product and Services Solutions (SPSS) version 22 was used for data analysis. Likert Scale with 4 points was used in the questionnaire to avoid confusion and reduce the chance of neutral choice because it is documented that 'more scale points seem to reduce skewness' (Leung, 2011), and the use of 4 points was considered an optimum (Borgers et al., 2004).

The questionnaire was piloted with 46 students to check the reliability of the scale items. Two items with Cronbach's Alpha under the threshold of 0.5 were removed, and three items were reworded after the pilot test. Students participating in the pilot were asked to refrain from participating in the official survey.

The questionnaire was divided into two main parts. The first part asked about general information such as gender, specialized subjects, and tools used for e-learning; the second part inquired about time spent on online tasks and the frequency of doing online activities. This part also explored students' motivation, interaction with lecturers and peers, self-regulated learning, assessment, technical support from schools, and skills acquired during the e-learning. In this research, e-learning and online learning are used interchangeably with no difference.

3.2.2. Qualitative Data

Participants who took part in the survey were invited to the in-depth discussion, and 36 students agreed to join the interview. A sequential explanatory design was used for this study. The results of quantitative data gave the basis for a qualitative approach to discuss in more detail with students. Semi-structured interviews with guided questions were used for the interview targeting the influence of lecturer and peer interaction, peer support, and assessment on self-regulated learning and motivation. Students were asked to share their opinions and experience in e-learning. Participants could choose to use either chat box, Google Form, or Zoom for the interview. All questions and answers were in Vietnamese, and the data was later transcribed and coded for analysis.

4. Findings

4.1. Students' Experience in the E-Learning Environment

Table 1

Demographic Results and General Information

	Frequency (n =352)	**Percent (%)**
Gender		
Female	242	68.8
Male	110	31.3
Majors		
Economics	44	12.5
Computer Science	62	17.6
Science	48	13.6
Social Sciences	70	19.9
Foreign Languages	128	36.4
Tools used		
Laptop	231	65.6
Smartphone	93	26.4
Desktop	24	6.8
Tablets	4	1.2

Table 1 demonstrates the critical characteristics of the survey results. Among 352 first-year-students taking part in the survey, female students were dominant with 68.8%, and male students covered 31.3. Students came from different majors such as Economics (12.5%), Science (13.6%), Computer Science (17.6%), and Foreign Languages (36.4%), i.e., Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and French. Laptops were mainly used for online learning with 65.6%, followed by smartphones (26.4%) and desktops (6.6%), and tablets were not favoured with only 1.2%.

Table 2

Time Spent on Materials Provided in E-Learning Courses for Each Lesson

	Never	5-10 minutes	10-30 minutes	30-60 minutes	> 60 minutes	Total
Video/clip	10.2	23.0	35.5	19.6	11.6	100%
Ppt/pdf/doc	1.1	6.8	28.1	39.2	24.7	100%
Other materials	9.7	18.5	33.0	24.1	14.8	100%

As can be seen from Table 2, with the materials provided in the e-learning course, only some students resisted working on materials. They spent at least five to 60 minutes watching videos and reading documents. Many students took around 10 to 30 minutes of reading materials per lesson. Non-English major students may need more time to watch and read repeatedly to fully comprehend the content, which explains why some students spend more than 60 minutes on given materials.

Table 3

Students' Experience With Lecturer-Student Interaction in E-Learning

No	Interaction with lecturers	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Lecturers provided sufficient learning materials and information for courses on an online platform.	3.41	.643
2	I received the lecturer's feedback during my learning course.	3.34	.682
3	Receiving lecturers' assessment feedback on my work helped me progress in learning.	3.21	.768
4	I contacted lecturers outside a class hour for support when I had learning difficulties.	2.64	.935
5	I gave feedback on the teaching method and content of the lecturer.	3.04	.856
6	Lecturers worked with us to clarify and develop assessment criteria for e-learning tasks.	3.27	.714
*N= 352. Minimum 1, Maximum 4			

The study findings showed that the interaction with lecturers during the e-learning occurred from both sides. Lecturers provided materials and feedback throughout the course (mean 3.34), and students initiated their connection by giving feedback on content and teaching method (mean 3.04). Students reported that lecturers' feedback helped their learning progress (mean 3.21). In addition, technical support from lecturers to set up and clarify assessment criteria for online tasks was well-perceived by students (mean 3.27). The general agreement with lecturer interaction items indicated that lecturers played an essential role in students' progress. However, it was apparent that students were reluctant to contact lecturers outside class hours (mean 2.26), as presented in Table 3.

Table 4

Interactions With Peers in E-Learning

No	Interaction with peers	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Peer support		
1	I gave feedback on my peers' work in the online forum.	2.82	.898
2	I actively asked for my peers' help when I struggled with my learning tasks.	3.12	.795
3	I received peer support in e-learning activities.	3.15	.774
4	I collaborated with peers when we had group work.	3.45	.694
	Peer interaction		
5	I actively contributed ideas to clarify the task issues.	2.88	.744
6	I suggested solutions for group work tasks.	3.02	.722
7	I adjusted my solution according to my classmates' suggestions.	2.95	.764

*N= 352. Minimum 1, Maximum 4

Regarding interaction and collaboration with peers, the results of Table 4 signified that students actively sought and offered assistance for friends when having difficulties (mean 3.12 and 3.15). They also suggested solutions for group work (mean 3.02) and collaborated with peers to fulfil tasks (mean 3.45). Nevertheless, it was noted that giving feedback to peers in online forums was not high (mean 2.82). The result matched with the participation frequency shown in Table 2 that students barely joined in class discussion forums and feedback activities.

Among the group of peer interaction, suggesting solutions in group work tasks ranked the highest (mean 3.02), followed by adjusting solutions after receiving feedback (mean 2.95) and actively offering ideas to clarify the issues (mean 2.88).

From the results, students are more enthusiastic in assistance situations and less interested in contributing to class and group tasks which may later influence students' motivation in e-learning and self-regulation.

Table 5

Assessment of the E-Learning Platform

No	Assessment in an online platform	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Self-assessment helped me achieve my learning goal.	2.99	.745
2	Peer assessment helped me learn effectively.	2.69	.816
3	I could check the learning results immediately.	3.24	.743
4	The results of the assessment correctly reflected my ability.	2.82	.965

*N= 352. Minimum 1, Maximum 4

Another e-learning ecological factor is assessment which is usually one of the main concerns for students, especially when they switch to new assessment tools (Table 5). Students reported that they could check results immediately (mean 3.24) and self-assess their work to achieve their learning objectives (2.99), although some needed clarification on whether the online assessment correctly reflected their competence (mean 2.82). In addition, peer assessment was not considered an influential factor for their learning (mean 2.69). Students possibly felt that they could check the results online and assess their learning; consequently, the evaluation from peers was not preferred.

Table 6

Self-Regulated Learning in the E-Learning Environment

No	Self-regulated learning	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I planned my learning schedule.	3.09	.769
2	I actively adjusted my learning pace (preparing lessons before class, submitting early, finishing tasks early).	3.19	.732
3	The deadlines were suitable for me to finish tasks.	3.17	.847
4	I archived tests, evaluation sheets, and lecture notes for consolidation.	3.13	.795
5	Besides provided materials, I actively searched for other resources to achieve my learning goals better.	3.03	.787
6	When learning on the online platform, I upheld my focus.	3.08	.729
*N= 352. Minimum 1, Maximum 4			

Since students are required to get B1 (CEFR) or other equivalent tests such as TOEFL and IELTS to graduate, they are well – aware that proactiveness and regulation in their learning are vital, which explains the high ranks of the self-regulated learning construct. The results in Table 6 indicated that students planned and organized their study throughout the learning process, from designing the learning schedule (mean 3.09), regulating the learning pace (mean 3.19), searching for supplementary resources (mean 3.03), keeping materials for consolidation (mean 3.13) to focusing on learning (mean 3.08). Among these activities, adjusting the learning pace (e.g., preparing for lessons, finishing tasks early, etc.) ranked the highest (mean 3.19), and the second highest ranking was the reasonable deadline for the online tasks (mean 3.17).

Table 7

Institution Support and Skill Enhancement

No	Institution support	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I attended training courses on using online platforms.	2.39	.883
2	I received technical support from the university during my e-learning.	2.73	.895
3	The university updated me with e-learning information.	3.17	.784
4	I am offered to give feedback on the effectiveness of learning on the online platform.	3.23	.807

	Skill enhancement		
5	I learned more I.T. skills.	3.30	.777
6	I learned more soft skills (group work, presentation, conflict solution).	3.14	.847
7	I could apply knowledge learned to solve problems.	2.91	.785
*N= 352. Minimum 1, Maximum 4			

Besides the interaction with lecturers and peers, students interacted with their universities through technical channels regarding updated information, surveys on the effectiveness of e-learning, technical support, and training courses. However, the results show that only some students attended training courses or sought technical support from their universities (mean 2.73 and 2.39).

One of the advantages of e-learning was the development of I.T. skills and soft skills enhancement. Students confirmed that they acquired more I.T. skills (mean 3.30) and learned to collaborate, solve conflict, present ideas (3.14), and apply what they learned to solve real-life problems (mean 2.91). Table 7 wrapped up the results from students' opinions on institutional support and skill enhancement.

Table 8

Motivation in E-Learning

No	Motivation	Mean	St. Deviation
1	I am interested in e-learning.	2.57	.778
2	There were useful activities on the online platform.	2.81	.796
3	I had chances to demonstrate my ability with e-learning.	2.24	.854
4	I get higher marks when using the online platform for learning.	2.33	.914
5	I could interact with classmates frequently during e-learning time.	2.68	.987
*N= 352. Minimum 1, Maximum 4			

Regarding motivation in e-learning, this section receives the lowest points compared to other factors (Table 8). The finding reflects students' bewilderment after switching to complete e-learning. The internal factors (possibility of demonstrating ability and interest) or the external factors (practical online activities, frequent interaction with peers, and getting higher marks) could not motivate students. Although many students rated that there were practical online activities (mean 2.81) and they could frequently interact with peers (mean 2.68), they disagreed that they had chances to demonstrate the ability (mean 2.24) and could get higher marks in online platforms (mean 2.33). Students also pointed out in interviews that their motivation was low during e-learning time.

4.2. Students' Opinions on the Impact of E-Learning Factors on Students' Self-Regulated Learning and Motivation

Thirty-six students were invited to join the discussion to provide more insights into the impact of e-learning factors on students' motivation and self-regulated learning. Students were asked to share their experiences about the interaction with lecturers, peers, and assessment and how these factors impact their self-regulated learning and motivation.

4.2.1. Impact of Lecturer Interaction

Lecturers in e-learning classes were reported to affect students positively or negatively depending on how they interact and acknowledge students' effort - regarding the lecturer's factor, interaction and communication emerged as main sub-themes for motivation. Many students emphasized in the interview that they needed more interaction and small talk with lecturers to motivate them.

Participant 11: *'I was new in this learning environment; interaction with the lecturer was important and affected my motivation.'*

Participant 8: *'Seeing lecturers physically and direct conversation led to some small talks and made closer relationships. As a result, I would feel more comfortable and love English more.'*

Participants 3 and 18, who experienced being ignored in online class interaction, said they were disappointed and lost motivation due to the incident.

Participant 3: *'I frequently interacted with lecturers during class hours; however, they did not acknowledge my contribution and compliment other students, which disappointed me and made me unmotivated to learn.'*

Participant 18: *'The decreased interaction with lecturers discouraged me from learning. The lecturer asked a question and only the called-on student answered; hence, my learning could have been more efficient than on-site learning.'*

Few students reported that their intrinsic motivation was not affected; for instance, participant 23 said that his motivation for English learning came from his own needs. Participant 9 noted no difference between online and face-to-face interaction, which did not affect motivation.

Regarding self-regulated learning, students had mixed reactions. They acknowledged that lecturers gave advice and suggestions on learning and finding resources, and the interaction with lecturers made them more studious. Interestingly, while some believed they needed guidance from lecturers to shape their learning and develop skills, most of the interviewed students confirmed that they managed their learning. As a result, the interaction was not an influential factor.

Participant 20: *'The advice of lecturers was the direction for me to adjust my learning. For example, in debate learning, I was suggested to find information about fallacies, and I was more certain about what I should prepare for a successful debate.'*

Participant 24: *'Lecturers helped me visualize my plan to learn four skills better. For example, I learned one skill in each lesson and practiced what I learned after class. My English learning became effective because I used to learn what I liked.*'

Participant 13: *'No, the interaction, support, and teaching of lecturers did not influence how I organize and manage my learning.'*

Participant 9: *'I spent time self-learning and was autonomous in learning.'*

4.2.2. Impact of Peer Support and Peer Interaction

Peer support is one of the crucial factors in an e-learning environment that impact students' motivation and self-regulated learning. A common opinion among students was that peer support helped them focus and understand the tasks, although sometimes they needed to be more open to asking.

Participant 25: *'I asked for peer support, and it worked well for my study.'*

Participant 5: *'We often discussed or organized Zoom meetings to practice. Their support was useful for my learning. I could understand the lesson and organize my learning.'*

Some students expressed that they felt motivated and less isolated due to friends' assistance:

Participant 26: *'I usually asked for peer support which helped me to understand the projects and deadlines. So, I am excited to learn online thanks to their support.'*

Participant 1: *'I frequently sought peer support, and this helped me less lonely in my learning.'*

Participant 4: *'I did ask for peer support, even more than lecturers. Their opinions are useful. I believed I was motivated because of them.'*

It was reported that peer interaction with friends helped increase competition and effort. Students pointed out that their learning style and habit was somehow influenced by such interaction:

Participant 14: *'If someone were brilliant, it would pressure us to learn more. So, besides personal development, my motivation was to compete with them.'*

Participant 5: *'When I saw that my friends could answer the lecturer's questions, I had to try hard to be as good as them.'*

Participant 6: *'The interaction with peers greatly influenced how I learn. My motivation was somehow affected as well.'*

4.2.3. Impact of Online Assessment

The interview results revealed that the new assessment format affected students' self-regulated learning and motivation. Students reported being anxious and worried that technical difficulties or poor network connection might happen during the evaluation, which would badly affect their results. Consequently, they had to adjust their learning to get familiar with different assessment formats.

Participant 30: *'Online assessment had a dramatic impact on my learning organization and regulation because I had to do more online tests and exercises for reading and writing.'*

Participant 31: *'I had to get familiar with reading tasks on the laptop, which is quite inconvenient.'*

Despite the challenges of online assessment and evaluation, students listed advantages of the new assessment style, such as efficiency, less pressure, and fun. Doing exercises online was faster than on paper, and students could enhance their I.T. skills.

Participant 35: *'Doing assessment online reduced my handwriting time. I just needed to type, which saved time and developed my I.T. skills.'*

Participant 34: *'Quite exciting because it is more convenient than a paper test. I felt less stressed than doing the test in class.'*

4.2.4. Impact of E-Learning Setting on Motivation

Regarding self-regulated learning in an e-learning environment, two opposite stances were noticed. While some tried to adapt to the new learning culture and became more focused, autonomous, and creative, others got lazier and less active in learning.

Participant 14: *'After this online course, I developed my self-learning skills and became more autonomous.'*

Participant 25: *'I used to practice by writing out main ideas on paper. Now I create flashcards and consolidate my lesson online.'*

Participant 28: *'I became lazy, and my learning habit got worse and worse.'*

Regarding motivation in e-learning, most students confirmed that their motivation was severely affected, which matched the questionnaire results. Distractive surroundings and long hours in front of screens were mentioned as a cause for students' demotivation. Students reported that they were distracted, exhausted, or sleepy.

Participant 30: *'I was exhausted after days working on my laptop. My motivation decreased.'*

Participant 11: *'Really bad. I felt my motivation decreased greatly compared with face-to-face learning, and my marks also decreased. It seemed that online learning required autonomy. However, my self-learning at home is not good enough due to the interference of other chores, which decreased my focus.'*

Participant *28: 'I became lazier, got up late, and slept in online learning more. I thought I would enjoy my university life and be guided on how to learn, but now I had to do everything myself and spent all my time with my closest mentor 'my old laptop'.'*

5. Discussion

This study investigated the impact of e-learning factors on students' self-regulated learning and motivation. Two research questions were raised to discover how first-year EFL students experienced their e-learning and how the e-learning factors such as interaction, assessment, and support from lecturers and peers affected their self-regulated learning and motivation.

The qualitative and quantitative results indicated that interaction with lecturers is essential to motivate students in e-learning. As Hull and Saxon (2009) and Aromaih (2021) pointed out, even though more interaction does not necessarily mean better outcomes, a deeper level of interaction can optimize students' engagement and participation. This study's students reported high motivation due to receiving feedback and interaction with lecturers. For first-year students, who are in the adaptation process of the transition phase, the interaction with lecturers through formal or informal contexts is a good start for learning preparation and readiness. In addition, sufficient or insufficient lecturers' feedback during the e-learning course or on assessment tasks affected learning motivation. The finding of this study supports studies by Heidari et al. (2017) and Meşe and Sevilen (2021) that lecturer interaction has the potential to be a decisive factor in students' motivation and willingness to communicate. Lecturers, therefore, should be more proactive, involve more students in class activities and design more opportunities for interaction and communication between lecturer–student.

Another result of this research is that although lecturer interaction influences students' motivation, it does not notably affect how students regulate their learning. Students take advantage of peer interaction, seek support and organize their learning accordingly. Peer support and interaction are essential to foster adequate adaptation and help reflect on their learning. In e-learning, not all students know how to adjust their learning with minimum guidance; therefore, the companions of classmates work as a productive channel. However, it is noted that motivating students to participate actively and contribute to online discussions and forums takes effort and time. This finding resembles the study of Fernandez-Rio et al. (2017), who reported that positive interaction and collaborative groups reduce school failure, increase students' motivation, and promote self-regulated learning.

Assessment plays a crucial part in motivating and shaping students' learning both in online and face-to-face contexts by providing insight into learning progress and feasible goals for achievement. This study finding shows that to be qualified by assessment, and students must find a practical learning approach to adapt to the new learning environment. This study supports Kearns's (2012) study that online assessment has many advantages besides technical difficulties, such as convenience, effectiveness, time-saving, and I.T. skill enhancement. In addition, e-learning assessment can be operated easily before, during, and after each lesson to increase students' participation and engagement, improve learning outcomes, and promote personalized learning.

6. Conclusion

E-learning has proven its advantages in distance learning and disrupting standard settings during the learning crisis to ensure the coverage and continuity of education. Through communication tools incorporated into the e-learning environment, lecturers and students have developed a virtual community to support learning. Accordingly, the effective and efficient use of technology is critical to learning. The finding is in line with the study of Sher (2009) that students appreciate opportunities to have meaningful and positive communication with lecturers and peers to facilitate learning.

The findings of this study show that e-learning ecological factors impact students' motivation and self-regulated learning, and the most critical factor is interaction. Interaction is considered a fundamental indicator of learning success (Moore, 1989), and students appreciate the support, guidance, and interaction of lecturers and peers during their e-learning. The lack of interaction, therefore, has led to demotivation among first-year students.

The interview results of this study also alert the unfavorable factors such as distraction of surroundings, lack of lecturers' monitoring, and the decrease of autonomy, which lead to students' demotivation and ineffective learning style. Despite the advantages of e-learning, students prefer traditional education in the long run, where they can socialize face-to-face with peers and lecturers and focus on learning in physical education classrooms.

Undoubtedly, e-learning is a promising learning option to integrate into current 'new normal' education settings. Hence, universities, lecturers, and students should be well-prepared for a change and make sure everything runs smoothly in e-learning. Accordingly, disadvantages such as demotivation, technical difficulties, and lack of interaction and monitoring should be carefully considered in updated versions of e-learning. Also, various formative assessments in e-learning should be designed to promote individualized learning so students can regulate and monitor their learning.

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HỆ SINH THÁI E-LEARNING VÀ TÁC ĐỘNG TỚI HỌC TẬP TỰ ĐIỀU CHỈNH VÀ ĐỘNG LỰC HỌC CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ NHẤT VIỆT NAM HỌC CHƯƠNG TRÌNH TIẾNG ANH NHƯ MỘT NGOẠI NGỮ (EFL) TRONG GIAI ĐOẠN CHUYỂN ĐỔI SANG CÁC NỀN TẢNG HỌC TRỰC TUYẾN

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Tóm tắt: Quá trình chuyển từ trường trung học sang đại học là một thách thức đối với nhiều sinh viên năm thứ nhất vì họ phải thích nghi với phong cách học tập mới và môi trường tự điều chỉnh khác với những gì họ đã quen thuộc trong thời gian đi học trước đó. Việc học càng trở nên phức tạp hơn khi phải chuyển từ môi trường học tập truyền thống quen thuộc sang học trực tuyến, điều này đòi hỏi nỗ lực rất lớn. Sinh viên phải điều chỉnh thói quen học tập của mình, học cách hợp tác và duy trì sự tương tác với những người khác. Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu những trải nghiệm của sinh viên năm thứ nhất học chương trình Tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ (EFL) trong quá trình chuyển từ học trực tiếp sang học trực tuyến và tập trung tìm hiểu tác động của các yếu tố như tương tác với giảng viên và bạn bè, đánh giá và hỗ trợ đồng đẳng tới động lực và khả năng tự điều chỉnh học tập. 352 sinh viên đã tham gia khảo sát và 36 sinh viên tham gia phỏng vấn. Kết quả cho thấy sự tương tác của giảng viên và hỗ trợ đồng đẳng là rất quan trọng để tạo động lực cho sinh viên. Tương tác đồng đẳng giúp định hướng việc học tập tự điều chỉnh và đánh giá giúp sinh viên điều chỉnh cách thức tiếp cận học tập của bản thân. Nghiên cứu cũng đã chỉ ra những thách thức của việc học trực tuyến và đưa ra các khuyến nghị để thúc đẩy chất lượng học tập.

Từ khóa: hệ sinh thái học tập, e-learning, động lực, học tập tự điều chỉnh, chuyển đổi, tương tác

"WHAT ARE THE GRAMMATICAL POINTS STUDENTS NEED TO DEVELOP?": NEED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH-MAJORED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: The importance of grammar in L2 learners' development of language skills has anchored for the necessity of teaching grammar to learners of English. However, it is observed that there has been insufficient formal data relevant to the needs of L2 learners for learning grammar, particularly in the context of Vietnam. These two mentioned reasons motivate this current study into the needs of students at a university in Vietnam for learning English grammar with a hope to help teachers and curriculum designers make more informed decisions on their teaching methods and the content of the grammar course, respectively. In the study, students had difficulties with certain English grammatical points such as *Linking words and phrases*, *Tenses to describe events in the past*, *Articles, determiners and pronouns*. Students also expected their grammar lessons to be more interactive with writing and speaking practice included, while formal explanations of grammatical structures be maintained.

Keywords: English grammar, L2 learners, needs, difficulties, wants

1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale

Despite difficulties second language (L2) learners have with English grammar, "to teach, or not to teach English grammar" explicitly has remained a controversial discussion over years (Ellis, 2006; Krashen, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 2009). While Krashen (1981) argued that learning grammar would take place unconsciously as long as L2 learners were exposed to sufficient comprehensible and meaningful input, it has been shown in the literature that grammar instruction is beneficial (Norris & Ortega, 2000) and contributes to overall L2 linguistic knowledge (Ellis, 2006). In other words, it is important for L2 learners to learn English grammar, including forms, meanings, and uses of different grammatical structures (Larsen-Freeman, 2001), in order to reach their targets of L2 performances.

Turning to needs analysis, which emerged from English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as an instrument for course design, analyzing needs of learners has shown its importance not only in ESP programs but also in programs of general English (Brown, 2009; West, 1994). When being conducted continuously, needs analysis would provide course designers with helpful input to modify the content of the course to accommodate constant changes in linguistic needs of L2 learners. Unfortunately, little has been done regarding analyzing needs of L2 learners in the context of English

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education in Vietnam (Duong, 2007).

In some curriculum in the undergraduate program for English-major university students, English grammar has been treated as a separate compulsory course, aiming to enhance learners' grammatical knowledge and to develop their overall linguistic awareness to B2 level (CEFR). At the university where the study is conducted, *First Certificate Skills: Use of English* (Harrison, 2008) is currently used as the core textbook in the grammar course which delivers grammatical rules as well as their meanings to L2 learners. Nevertheless, it has come to our attention that few studies have been conducted in relation to needs analysis with a specific focus on English grammar. Given the importance of grammar learning, and the insufficient data on L2 learners' needs for English grammar, this present study aims to examine the needs for learning English grammar of English-major students who are currently students at a university of foreign language studies in Vietnam. This may become helpful input for course designers of English grammar at this on-going evaluations and development of the curriculum and give a reference to those who are interested in grammar teaching and learning, curriculum development for English-major university students in Vietnam.

1.2. Research Questions

With the aim to study the needs for learning English grammar of English major students, the paper puts forward two research questions:

1. What are the grammatical points that students need more improvement?
2. How do students want to learn English grammar in the classroom?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Grammar

Even though grammar plays a critical role in language development (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Ellis, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2009; Nazari et al., 2022), its definition has not yet been agreed in the literature (Larsen-Freeman, 2009). From the viewpoint of generative linguistics, grammar includes sets of morphosyntactic rules that enable words to get combined in multiple ways. Halliday (1994, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2009), on the other hand, considered grammar as a resource for making and exchanging meaning. When pragmatics and meanings are the hearts of functional grammar, morphological features and grammatical rules are viewed as instruments to communicate ideas. Nevertheless, when it comes to teaching grammar, these definitions seem difficult to further operationalize. As a result, in this study, grammar is defined as a system of meaningful structures and patterns that are governed by particular pragmatic constraints, which comprises form, meaning, and use (Larsen-Freeman, 2009).

In traditional syllabi that were based on structural grammar, forms of such structures and patterns were more emphasized over their meanings (Ellis, 2006). Although modern courses of English grammar have shifted the focus to the functions of those forms, such model of teaching was not preferred by teachers and syllabus designers. According to Ellis, (2006), they found the change not useful to improve learners' knowledge of English grammar and relied on modern descriptive grammar, whose content was presented in detail in *The Grammar Book* by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999). Grammatical points included in this book were also found similar in other grammar books for L2 learners such as *English Grammar in Use* (Murphy, 2012), *Practical*

English Usage (Swan, 2017), and *First Certificate Skills: Use of English* (Harrison, 2008), including as many as 145 units (Murphy, 2012), describing the structures and their meanings, as well as identifying subtle differences between similar grammatical patterns (Swan, 2017).

First Certificate Skills: Use of English (Harrison, 2008), on the other hand, seems more exam-oriented as it is specifically designed as a reference book for the paper *Use of English*, one of four papers of Cambridge English: First (FCE) (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2022). The book comprises 12 units in accordance with 12 key grammatical points of English grammar, with their forms, meanings, and uses being explained in detail. Although the number of units of this book is far fewer than that of *Practical English Usage* (Swan, 2017) and *English Grammar in Use* (Murphy, 2012), it claimed to "cover all the main areas of grammar … that appear in the Use of English paper" (Harrison, 2008). This book has been chosen to be the core textbook for students to learn English grammar when they are in the first year of their undergraduate program. Therefore, for the consistence between what the students learned and what they would be asked in the questionnaire, grammatical points in this paper will refer to the content of *First Certificate Skills: Use of English* (Harrison, 2008), which consists of: (1) Tenses to describe events in the present, (2) Tenses to describe events in the past, (3) Tenses to describe events in the future, (4) Linking words and phrases, (5) Reported speech, (6) Verb structures (infinitives and -ing forms, (7) Articles, determiners and pronouns, (8) Modal verbs, (9) Conditional sentences, (10) Passive voice, (11) Relative clauses and participles, and (12) Comparison.

2.2. Grammatical Knowledge

Grammatical knowledge has been controversially defined in the literature (Myhill et al., 2013). While grammatical knowledge and metalinguistic knowledge were used interchangeably in certain studies, other articles considered metalinguistic knowledge as an over-arching terminology, of which grammatical knowledge was a sub-category (Andrew, 2003). Myhill et al. (2013) defined grammatical knowledge as a part of metalinguistic knowledge which 'draws specifically on explicit knowledge of grammar in terms of morphology and syntax, rather than on broader knowledge about language and how texts work as socially-constructed artefacts' (p. 78). For L2 learners, L2 grammatical knowledge involves their understanding of morphological features of L2 words and syntactical features of L2 sentences.

A close terminology to grammatical knowledge is grammatical competence, which is 'the knowledge and the ability to use grammar in meaningful contexts' (Muhammed et al., 2018, p. 63). Nevertheless, in this current paper, grammatical knowledge is understood as the explicit understanding of L2 learners on 12 grammatical points (see section 2.1), in terms of their meanings, forms, and uses, with the understanding of different uses being shown through highly-controlled written practice.

2.3. Needs

In the literature, the term "needs" has been approached from different perspectives (Brown, 2009; Flowerdew, 2013). In terms of democratic philosophy, needs refer to learning goals that most relevant stakeholders prefer. From the viewpoint of analytic philosophy, needs are defined as the knowledge students would learn next, based on the information about them and their learning processes. Diagnostic philosophy treats "needs" as linguistic components or language skills that are critical for learners. In other words, if the learners missed any of them, that would cause harm to their language development (Brown, 2009). Nevertheless, the definition of needs, from the point of view of discrepancy philosophy, seems to fit the aims of this study the most. The present paper will consider "needs" as "any differences between future desired student language performances and what they can currently do" (Stufflebeam et al., 1985, as cited in Brown, 2009, p. 271).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) further identified "needs" in three different aspects: (1) necessities, which means what L2 learners need to know in order to have a successful performance in L2; (2) lacks, i.e., any differences between the target L2 level and the current L2 knowledge of learners; and (3) wants, or subjective needs, which are what L2 learners would like to learn, and how they would like to learn them. These subcategories of needs may allow researchers to conduct needs analysis in an easier and more systematic way. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also provided a framework for target situation analysis that has been often used by different researchers (Yan & Zou, 2021). However, as the present study aims to examine the needs for learning English grammar of L2 learners, only the three subcategories of needs provided by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) will be employed, leaving the framework of needs analysis for future studies. More specifically, "needs" mentioned in this paper entails lacks and wants of L2 learners, with the former corresponding to research question 1, and the latter to research question 2. The researchers are well aware of the necessities, nevertheless, as the present study focuses on L2 learners rather than course designers and teachers of English grammar, the necessities were opted out in this paper.

3. Previous Studies

As grammar teaching remains controversial over years (Richards & Renandya, 2002), some research on English grammar has recently focused on teachers' beliefs and practices in grammar teaching (Nazari et al., 2022; Sato & Oyanedel, 2019). Although being conducted on different participants, the two papers of Nazari et al. (2022) and of Satos and Oyanedel (2019) have yielded similar results on beliefs of teachers on how to teach English grammar, i.e., putting more emphasis on pragmatic meanings of grammatical structures. However, as Ellis (2006) pointed out multiple issues in teaching grammar, these recent papers have not done much on what grammatical features should be taught to L2 learners. In Vietnam, Nguyen (2019) did a study on teaching grammar for EFL learners in different Vietnam's universities. The paper proposed a solution to teaching grammar based on a communicative language teaching approach, which encourages the learning of English grammar to take place implicitly through reading comprehensible input rather than teaching grammar rules.

L2 learners were also the focus of the study by Vi et al. (2022) when the researchers investigated their strategies for learning English grammar at a university in Vietnam. The paper approached grammar learning strategies of L2 learners from different angles, namely cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, socio-affective strategies. Participants in this study showed their significant awareness of the importance of English grammar, yet they found it very difficult to learn and to master the structures. Nonetheless, specific challenges that they had were left unanswered in this paper.

Needs analyses have been conducted on EAP programs (Duong, 2007; Yan & Zou, 2021). Employing the framework for target situation analysis (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), Yan and Zou (2021) investigated needs of doctoral candidates in an EAP program. While the results highlighted expectations of learners to the content and the learning methods of the program, the paper did not focus on a particular language component or linguistic competence. Duong (2007) compared the procedure of needs analysis in two EAP programs, one in Vietnam and the other in New Zealand as well as observing two EAP classes in each country. The results showed significant differences in analyzing needs of L2 learners between the two programs. While needs analysis was treated formally and systematically in the program in New Zealand, it was not as formal and systematic in the program in Vietnam. Though Vietnamese teachers were aware of a lack of needs analysis and they tried to accommodate learners' needs, what they did was considered informal and the idea of conducting surveys on learners' needs was still an on-going discussion. Therefore, given potentially helpful data that could be collected in terms of what students need (Brown, 2009; Flowerdew, 2013), more needs analyses should be done in a formal and consistent way in Vietnam, not only within EAP programs but also programs for general English.

Grammar needs of L2 learners have also been discussed in studies by Yunita et al. (2018) and Ahmad (2018). The former paper, by distributing questionnaires to 44 students, showed several wants of L2 learners when they learn English grammar, but further details on their current grammatical knowledge were not mentioned. Ahmad (2018) also used questionnaires to yield helpful information on students' lacks and their wants in learning English grammar, yet the paper did not specify the problems students had with English grammar, regarding grammatical structures they found difficult.

As a result, due to a significant lack of formal studies on needs analysis in Vietnam, particularly within the scope of general English, and insufficient information on specific difficulties that L2 learners have with English grammatical features, this paper decided to examine the needs for learning English grammar of English-major university students at a university in Central Vietnam. The study aims to fulfil two objectives, which are (1) to identify the grammar points that they need more improvement, in terms of their awareness of the importance of such grammar points, and their grammatical knowledge, and (2) to describe their expectations to learning English grammar in the classroom.

4. Methods

The study followed a quantitative approach with the use of a questionnaire and a grammar test as research instruments. The questionnaire was virtually distributed to 118 participants, then 42 of them agreed to do the grammar test. Details of the participants, as well as the research instruments, were presented in sections. 4.1 and 4.2, respectively.

4.1. Participants

The survey involved 118 students, and 42 of them took the grammar test. Their participation in the survey and the grammar test was totally voluntary.

In 118 students responding to the questionnaire, 42 were first-year students, 39 second-year students, and 37 third-year students. Their length of studying English varied from less than 5 years to more than 10 years, with the majority of the participants more than 5 years.

Regarding 42 participants to the grammar test, their level of English was determined by the Cambridge Level Test (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2022), whose results are referred to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), ranging from A1 to C2. It was reported that 11 students reached A2 level, 14 students for B1 level, 13 for B2, 3 for C1, and 1 student for C2 level. No participants reported their level of English as A1.

4.2. Research Instruments

In this study, a grammar test and a questionnaire were utilized to fulfill the objectives set in section 1.2.

A grammar test of 65 multiple-choice questions was employed to analyze the grammatical points that students need to develop (research question 1, see section 1.2). The test was compiled from two grammar knowledge tests, *Clear Grammar Placement Test* (Michigan English Language Teaching, n.d.) and the grammar test in the book *English Grammar in Use* for intermediate learners (Murphy, 2012). As the length of such original test may cause exhaustion to participants, the researchers decided to compile the items from the two tests, with questions being shuffled to ensure that students were not aware of the origins of the questions.

A questionnaire of 37 items was designed to answer the proposed research questions (see section 1.2). Four-point Likert-scale questions were used to identify students' expectations to learning English grammar in the classroom (research question 2, see section 1.2), as well as investigating their awareness of the importance of the English grammatical points. The rating of the importance of English grammatical points given by students would also provide more in-depth information on the improvements that students may need regarding the grammatical points (research question 1, see, section 1.2).

4.3. Data Collection Procedure

A survey was designed on Google form and then distributed to students via their online classrooms on Microsoft Teams in June, 2022. After this period of time, 119 responses were received from students of first year, second year, third year, and fourth year, the number of which was 42, 39, 37, and 1 respectively. As there was only one response from a fourth-year student, compared to the remaining numbers, this response was purposefully deleted from the data set in order not to interfere in the overall results.

When the survey was closed, the researchers preliminarily classified the responses into three sub-sets based on the year of the students, then sent the online grammar test to the participants via their personal emails provided in the survey. Time limit was not set for this test, as time pressure may have affected the answers of the students. In total, the test received answers from 42 participants.

4.4. Data Analysis

The data were saved and analyzed using Microsoft Excel as this was the most accessible tool of processing numbers for the researchers at that moment. For the data from the questionnaire, textual information was coded to generate descriptive statistics. Regarding the grammar test, the answers of students were coded and marked on this software as well.

4.5. Validity and Reliability of the Study

4.5.1 Validity

The validity of the study was contributed by the validity of the two instruments, i.e., the questionnaire and the grammar test. The test was designed and administered with the main aim to measure students' understanding on 12 grammatical points that they previously learned in courses of Basic English Grammar. The selection of questions for the grammar test was guided by 12 grammatical points mentioned in section 2.1. There were initially 60 questions in the test in correspondence to 12 grammatical points, but after the constructive feedback from senior colleagues whose expertise was syntax, the point of *articles, determiners,* *and pronouns* was divided into 2 sub-categories, i.e., *articles*, and *determiners and pronouns*. Therefore, 2 questions were added to measure students' knowledge of articles, and 3 additional items were put in the test to examine their understanding of determiners and pronouns. In total, there were 65 questions in the grammar test.

In the questionnaire, four-point Likert scale was used to collect students' opinions on their needs to learn English grammar in the classroom (research question 2), and to examine their awareness of the importance of English grammatical points. Initially, a multiple-choice question with multiple answers was designed to collect the data for students' wants to learning grammar; however, after being reviewed by two senior colleagues, multiple-choice items were alternated by Likert-scale ones to ensure the consistency of the questionnaire.

4.5.2 Reliability

The internal consistency of the two instruments made a contribution to the reliability of the study. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated separately for the questionnaire and the grammar test.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was .93, which indicated a strong consistency among the responses of the students. However, the coefficient of the grammar test was .68, exceeding the warning point of .60 and being close to .70, a point that the reliability coefficient should aim to (Dörnyei, 2007). As a result, it was considered a respectable figure contributing to a positively acceptable degree of reliability of the study.

5. Results

5.1. Awareness of Students on the Importance of English Grammatical Points

The needs of students for improvements on English grammatical points were initially reflected on their awareness of the importance of these structures. The four-point Likert scale was used to examine how students rated the importance of each grammatical point, the results of which were described in Table 1. Generally, students showed their deep awareness towards the role of 12 grammatical points in learning English.

Table 1

Students' Rating the Importance of Grammatical Points

Grammatical points	Mode	Mean	SD
Tenses to describe events in the present	3	3.27	0.67
Tenses to describe events in the past	3	2.35	0.66
Tenses to describe events in the future	3	3.18	0.69
Linking words and phrases	3	2.98	0.67
Reported speech	3	2.80	0.77
Verb structures (infinitives and -ing forms)	3	2.93	0.78
Articles, determiners and pronouns	3	2.83	0.82
Modal verbs	3	2.92	0.73
Conditional sentences	3	2.88	0.83
Passive voice	3	2.96	0.77
Relative clauses and participles	3	2.97	0.72
Comparison	3	2.92	0.76

The mode value in Table 1 shows that *Important* was the most frequently chosen answer of participants. In other words, all 12 grammatical points were perceived mostly as important to learning English, with *Tenses to describe events in the present* having the highest mean score, closely followed by *Tense to describe events in the future* and *Linking words and phrases*. The means of other grammatical points varied insignificantly from 2.97 to 2.80, showing that these points would play an important role in learning English of the participants.

However, it is noticeable that while tenses for present and future events were rated as the two most important grammatical points, the mean score of *Tenses to describe events in the past* was significantly lower than the others in Table 1 (2.35). It could be inferred from the figure that students did not consider this grammatical point as important as the other features.

In short, 118 students participating in the survey perceived all 12 grammatical points as important to their learning of English, though the degree of importance varied among the categories. *Tenses to describe events in the present* was considered the most important, while *Tenses to describe events in the past* was interpreted as the least important.

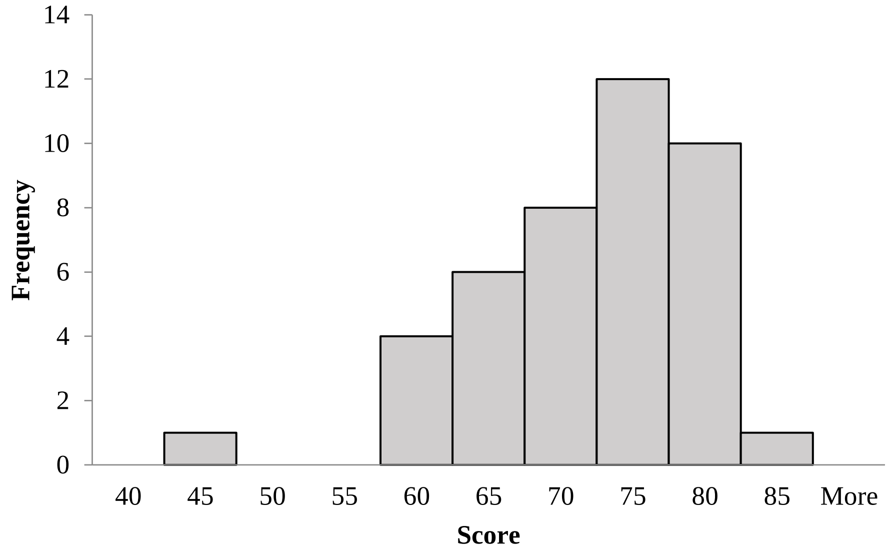
5.2. Grammatical Points That Students Need to Develop

Results from the grammar test showed the understanding of students on each grammatical point, indicating the first sense of "need", i.e., lack of grammatical knowledge (see section 2.3). Answers of 42 participants to the test were summarized in Figure 1. The maximum score of the test was 100, and the minimum was 0.

As shown in Figure 1, the score range was from 45 to 85, with the most frequent score being 75. Although the distribution of the scores was negatively skewed, it can be interpreted that students' grammatical knowledge is well above the average. They were able to provide correct answers for the majority of the questions, which may show that they had more or less understood the basics of the 12 grammatical points. One student was able to get 85, and in total, there were 31 in 42 participants whose scores were 70 or above. In other words, the students participating in the grammar test had shown their understanding of English grammar, yet their knowledge in this aspect was, to a certain extent, far from perfect, as the number of students who scored 85 was only one and there was no one that achieved above 85.

Figure 1

Score Distribution of the Grammar Test



Nevertheless, when the correlation between the students' level of English and their grammar test scores was computed, the result was not significant. The Pearson's $r = -.02$ ($p > .05$) shows that there was insignificant relationship between the level of English of students and their grammatical knowledge. The level of English may not be a good indicator of students' grammatical knowledge and vice versa.

When the answers of the participants were analyzed, it yielded some interesting results (Table 2). Questions targeting *Comparison* and *Relative clauses* did not cause many difficulties to the participants, when 90% of the test takers answered them correctly. Also, over 70% of students managed to choose correct answers for items related to *Reported speech*, *Passive voice*, *Verb structures*, *Tenses to describe present and future events*. Accordingly, these grammatical points may not pose significant challenges to 42 participants.

However, the second half of Table 2 shows different results. Less than 70% of the test takers chose correct answers to questions on *Linking words and Phrases*, *Tenses to describe events in the past*, *Articles*, *Conditional sentences*, *Modal verbs*, and *Determiners and pronouns*. Noticeably, less than a half of the participants were able to answer questions related to *Determiners and pronouns* correctly. The descending order of the percentages of correct answers may indicate the increasing level of difficulty of each grammatical point. While *Comparison* was considered the least difficult grammar point to the participants, they were having more trouble with *Articles*, *Conditional sentences*, *Modal verbs*, and particularly, *Determiners and pronouns*.

Table 2

Percentages of Correct Answers for 12 Grammatical Points

Grammatical points	Percentage of correct answers
Comparison	91%
Relative clauses and participles	90%
Reported speech	86%
Passive voice	83%
Verb structures (infinitives and -ing forms)	79%
Tenses to describe events in the present	75%
Tenses to describe events in the future	72%
Linking words and phrases	66%
Tenses to describe events in the past	66%
Articles	62%
Conditional sentences	59%
Modal verbs	56%
Determiners and pronouns	45%

When the figures in Table 2 were put in comparison with those in Table 1, there were some noteworthy observations. While *Comparison* and *Relative clauses and participles* were rated less important than such other grammatical points as Tenses to describe events in the present and in the future, the former were the ones causing the least difficulty for students in the grammar test. Furthermore, as less important as *Tenses to describe events in the past* was rated compared to other categories, this grammatical feature was shown to challenge the participants of the grammar test significantly, with less than 70% of them were able to provide correct answers. Similarly, *Articles, determiners and pronouns* was considered the third least important grammatical feature to students, when as low as 62% of the grammar test takers managed to choose correct answers for questions targeting *Articles*, and more than a half of the test takers were not able to answer question items related to *Determiners and pronouns* correctly.

In brief, it is observed that the general understanding of the participants on English grammar was well above the average, though this may not be an indicator to their general English competence or vice versa. More specifically, *Linking words and phrases*, *Tenses to describe events in the past*, *Articles*, *Conditional sentences*, *Modal verbs*, *Determiners and pronouns* seemed to signified students' lacks in terms of grammatical knowledge. These are suggested to be the grammatical points that students should make more efforts to fully understand.

5.3. Students' Wants to Learn English Grammar in the Classroom

The study also examined the ways that students want to learn English grammar in the classroom, which addressed the second sense of "needs" in this paper (see section 2.2). Several ways of delivering the meanings, forms, and uses of English grammatical points were listed in the questionnaire and participants were asked to what extent they would agree or disagree with each way of delivering the knowledge, from 1 *(strongly disagree)*, 2 *(disagree)*, 3 *(agree)*, to 4 *(strongly agree)*.

As shown in Table 3, students would like their teachers to explain the details of English grammatical points, then they want to do interactive exercises rather than traditional paper-based ones (3.32 compared to 3.11). It seems that students would not enjoy exploring English grammatical knowledge either by themselves or in groups as much as listening to teachers' explanations.

With regards to expectations of participants when they practice English grammar (Table 4), they would like to practice what they learned about English grammar structures, including their meanings, forms, and uses, by applying them to writing and speaking activities rather than doing either multiple-choice exercises or gap-filling ones. This was also harmonized with students' wants to learn English grammar, as they would expect their teachers to assign interactive exercises to them. Nevertheless, it can be seen in Table 4 that students seem to enjoy doing sentence-transformation practice, as this was the way with the highest mean score.

Table 3

Students' Wants to Learn English Grammar in the Classroom

Ways of learning English grammar	Mean	SD
Teachers explain the details of grammatical points.	2.87	0.77
Teachers explain the details of grammatical points, and assign traditional paper-based exercises to students.	3.11	0.71
Teachers explain the details of grammatical points, and assign interactive	3.32	0.68

exercises to students.		
I want to study the details of grammatical points by myself.	2.81	0.88
I want to study the details of grammatical points in groups.	2.61	0.78

As interesting as doing exercises on online platforms (Kahoot, Quizizz) may sound, participants did not show their strong interest in this way of practice. Similarly, they may not expect to make infographic posters, make videos or presentations about English grammar as much as doing exercises, and particularly, writing and speaking with the employment of target grammatical structures.

Table 4

Students' Wants to Practice English Grammar in the Classroom

Ways to practice English grammar	Mean	SD
I want to do multiple-choice exercises.	2.72	0.74
I want to do gap-filling exercises.	2.88	0.80
I want to do exercises on sentence transformation.	3.14	0.72
I want to do exercises on online platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz.	2.71	0.79
I want to do writing exercises in relation to grammatical points (e.g., write a letter to describe past events)	3.10	0.76
I want to do speaking practice in relation to grammatical points.	3.02	0.84
I want to make infographic posters about the details of grammatical points.	2.77	0.71
I want to make videos about the details of grammatical points.	2.63	0.82
I want to make presentations about the details of grammatical points.	2.58	0.84

In summary, students expressed their wants to learn English grammar through the explanations delivered by teachers, and to practice grammatical points by means of writing and speaking. Additionally, in the curriculum, they would appreciate English grammar as a separate course rather than its content being integrated into lessons of English Language Skills.

6. Discussion

Data from the questionnaire and the grammar test indicated the awareness of students majoring in English, as well as their needs for learning English grammar, in terms of the grammatical points they need to understand further, and their wants to learn English in the classroom. The results of students' awareness were similar to the ones that were reported by Vi et al. (2022), whose study was conducted on English-majored students at Thai Nguyen University of Technology. Participants in the research project of Vi et al. (2022), who shared the same educational background with the respondents to the questionnaire of this study, also showed their strong awareness of the important role of English grammar.

Besides, Vi et al. (2022) reported that half of the students participating in the survey found it difficult when they learned English grammar. Nevertheless, no further details on such difficulties were provided, which was a research gap that may be fulfilled by this present paper. Although the sample of this current study was not sufficiently large to provide reliable generalizations, the challenges that the test takers faced in the grammar test may be informative for future studies, as well as for teaching and learning English grammar. Students may need additional support from their instructors in some grammatical points, such as *Linking words and phrases*, *Articles, determiners and pronouns*.

The study by Ahmad (2018) further pointed out that L2 learners did not manage to use grammar in the correct context, and that they wanted to get English grammar integrated into reading and speaking skills. This result is partially similar to how students in this paper want to learn English grammar. Both groups of participants expressed their interests in employing English grammar in meaningful contexts such as speaking activities, yet the participants in this study still appreciate explanations of forms, meanings, and uses of grammatical structures, and would prefer English grammar as a separate course rather than its content being infused in Language Skills courses.

Although needs of L2 learners may vary in accordance with their first language, educational backgrounds and individual differences (Ahmad, 2018; Vi et al., 2022; Yunita et al., 2018), they all seem to share one need to learn and to use English grammar in a meaningful context, through such productive practices as writing and speaking. This is a significant point that teachers and curriculum designers may shift more of their attention to. Traditional structured assignments as multiple-choice exercises, gap-filling exercises, or sentence transformation practice may not ignite L2 learners' interest in learning English grammar, which could further interfere their general English competence, as grammatical knowledge is shown to play a critical role in developing L2 learners' language skills (Nazari et al., 2022; Sato & Oyanedel, 2019).

The wants of the participants in the present study were also aligned with the benefits of teaching grammar that has long been discussed in the literature (Ellis, 2006; Long, 1988; Norris & Ortega, 2000). As controversial as the problem of teaching or not teaching grammar to L2 learners may be (Ellis, 2006), what students wanted in this study may contribute to justify the presence of English grammar as an independent course in English language curriculum. They showed their expectations to learn grammatical knowledge explicitly through the explanations of grammatical points from their teachers.

An interesting result is the insignificant relationship between the overall English proficiency of L2 learners and their English grammar knowledge. In other words, those who achieved a significant level of English such as B2 are not necessarily the ones who mastered English grammar, and vice versa. This is worth noting for L2 learners when they approach English grammar courses. The values that those courses offer should not be underestimated, and students enrolling in the courses may need to show their appreciation towards such values in order to have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of English. By this way, the English level that they are labelled with would truly reflect their English competence.

In terms of needs analysis, differences in students' needs between the present study and the previous studies that were conducted by Ahmad (2018) and Yunita et al. (2018) suggested that learning needs of L2 learners vary significantly among contexts. As the first step in curriculum development (Brown, 2009), understanding needs of learners is critical and should be done continuously (West, 1994). As a result, the findings of the present paper may provide insights to the teaching of English grammar at Faculty of English.

Teachers in the faculty may need to provide their students with extra support on grammatical points that they have more problems with, e.g., *Articles, determiners and pronouns*. Also, as students showed to enjoy interactive and productive practice, instructors may consider adding these activities to their lessons in order to accommodate such want and stimulate their students' learning progress. Also, as needs may change over time (West, 1994), the findings of the present study may need to be re-examined to inform teachers and curriculum designers what students need, what they lack, and what they want, in order for the grammar lessons to be modified appropriately and for the content of English grammar course to be updated accordingly.

The results of the present study and previous ones have suggested useful implications for L2 learners, teachers of English, and curriculum designers of English programs. L2 learners of English have expressed the importance of learning English grammar while they acquire the language. Given a substantial number of benefits that teaching grammar explicitly has brought to students, prospective L2 learners should prepare themselves to get exposed to grammar rules and a wide variety of grammar practices which will potentially help them master this component of English language.

More importantly, teachers should be better-informed of grammatical points that students have more difficulty with and their wants to learn English grammar. *Linking words and phrases*, *Articles*, *determiners and pronouns* are among the most challenging categories that teachers should not overlook when they outline their lesson plans and deliver the knowledge. These categories are equally important compared to the other ones, e.g., multiple tenses, *Conditional sentences,* or *Comparison*, that should deserve better attention from the instructors, as well as the students. Also, English grammar lessons are suggested by L2 learners to be more skill-integrated, i.e., reading, writing, and speaking practices may be infused in the lessons to get students immersed into meaningful contexts of different grammatical points. That would potentially be a great help not only for the improvement of English grammar knowledge but also for an overall better language development.

Last but not least, curriculum designers should be knowledgeable and updated with various needs of L2 learners in different contexts, together with constant changes in the needs, when they modify an existing syllabus or design a new one for a program. Needs analysis should be conducted continuously for the educators to be informed of what students need to know, what they lack, and what they want. The results from those needs analyses would be solid justifications for any modifications or changes in the curriculum.

7. Conclusion

The present study aims to investigate students' needs for learning English grammar, in terms of what grammatical points they needed further improvement on and how they wanted to learn English grammar in the classroom.

From the results in section 5, it can be seen that students were well aware of the critical role of English grammar, and they performed relatively well in the grammar test. The students demonstrated generally good English grammatical knowledge, but there were six grammatical points that may require additional efforts from them. *Linking words and phrases*, *Tenses to describe events in the past*, *Articles*, *Conditional sentences*, *Modal verbs*, and *Determiners and pronouns* were the points that participants showed their lack of understanding regarding the meanings, forms, and uses. *Comparison* and *Relative* *clauses and participles* seemed not to pose much of a challenge to the students, though they were not perceived as important as *Tenses to describe events in the present*.

Another noteworthy point that should be taken was students' expectations of learning English grammar in the classroom. The students wanted their teachers to explain the details of English grammatical points, and they would like to get engaged in grammar practice that involved writing and speaking skills. Traditional multiple-choice and gap-filling exercises in the classroom seem not to be preferred by the students. As a result, teachers and course designers may need to pay more attention to these wants in order to make English grammar lessons more enjoyable, and to ensure the alignment between the English grammar syllabus and the needs of the stakeholders.

The study attempted to identify students' needs in learning English grammar as rigorously as possible, yet there existed unavoidable flaws that should be improved in future research. The sample size should have been larger to provide a more comprehensive view on students' wants, and the grammar test should have been validated to improve its quality and consistency.

Nevertheless, the results from the grammar test and the questionnaire may become a good source of reference for English grammar course instructors to enhance the quality of their teaching of English grammatical points. More importantly, as the expectations of students may change constantly, the activity of analyzing their needs as this study may have to be conducted on a regular basis to keep teachers well-informed of the changes and provide course designers with insights for any modifications on English grammar syllabus.

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"SINH VIÊN CẦN CẢI THIỆN NHỮNG ĐIỂM NGỮ PHÁP NÀO?": PHÂN TÍCH NHU CẦU CỦA SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGÀNH NGÔN NGỮ ANH

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Tóm tắt: Ngữ pháp đóng vai trò quan trọng trong việc phát triển kĩ năng ngôn ngữ của người học ngoại ngữ, và điều này đã lí giải cho sự cần thiết của việc giảng dạy ngữ pháp cho người học tiếng Anh. Tuy nhiên, dữ liệu chính thống về nhu cầu của người học ngoại ngữ đối với việc học ngữ pháp còn hạn chế, đặc biệt trong bối cảnh ở Việt Nam. Đây là những lý do để nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm tìm hiểu nhu cầu của sinh viên tại một trường đại học ở Việt Nam trong việc học ngữ pháp tiếng Anh, với mong muốn hỗ trợ giáo viên lựa chọn phương pháp giảng dạy phù hợp, và hỗ trợ các cá nhân xây dựng chương trình đào tạo thiết kế nội dung cho các khóa học ngữ pháp. Kết quả của nghiên cứu này cho thấy sinh viên gặp khó khăn với một số điểm ngữ pháp tiếng Anh như *Từ và cụm từ liên kết, Các thì diễn tả sự việc ở quá khứ, Mạo từ, từ chỉ định và đại từ*. Ngoài ra, sinh viên mong muốn các bài học ngữ pháp có tính tương tác cao hơn, kết hợp giữa phần giải thích nội dung của các cấu trúc ngữ pháp và các hoạt động luyện tập viết và nói.

Từ khóa: ngữ pháp tiếng Anh, người học ngoại ngữ, nhu cầu, khó khăn, mong muốn

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF REPORTING VERBS IN NON-NATIVE MA THESES AND INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ARTICLES

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Abstract: Using reporting verbs effectively in academic writing is an essential academic skill and a prominent learning activity to present previous research outcomes. But it seems to have been a problem for non-native graduate students for many years. Non-native learners often use reporting verbs inappropriately. To raise graduate students' awareness of using reporting verbs, this study compares the frequency, types, and tenses of reporting verbs in the literature review section of 25 MA theses written in English by Chinese graduate students, and 45 articles from 5 prestigious international journals in the field of linguistics. The findings demonstrate the similarities and differences in the use of reporting verbs by Chinese graduate students majoring in English and international experts in the field of linguistics. The two groups of writers use discourse, research, and cognition reporting verbs in a descending order of frequency. Chinese graduate students use a larger number but fewer types of reporting verbs. Experienced researchers demonstrate greater proficiency in using reporting verbs than graduate students who are considered novice researchers. The comparison also reveals that the two groups of writers show a similar tendency in using verb tenses to report information, namely, using simple present tense and past tense frequently, and using the present perfect tense infrequently. Via the analysis, suggestions for novices and pedagogical implications are provided.

Keywords: MA thesis, international journals, reporting verbs, contrastive study, linguistics

1. Introduction

Academic papers exert an essential influence on the communication of international academia. If a scholar wants to have an achievement in his research field, he needs not only the original insight but also ingenious writing techniques (Manan & Noor, 2014). The literature review section, a significant component of academic writing, is indispensable for classifying prior research and identifying future research gaps. One typical feature of the literature review section is to cite or report the previous studies, which intends to use it in the later research articles and lay a foundation for the new research. Even the most original research paper must integrate and represent ideas, concepts, findings, and theories from other sources. Without doing so, it is unlikely to meet the publication requirements of scientific journals (Hyland, 2002). Using reporting verbs is an explicit way to express ideas in the literature section. The selection of reporting verbs varies according to disciplines and particular sections of academic papers (Jaroongkhongdach, 2015; Chen et al., 2022; Kwon et al., 2018). The literature review section of an academic paper typically includes a collection of references and citations to previous research. As a result,

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this section often contains a greater number of reporting verbs. Thus, the research subject of the present study focuses on the use of the reporting verbs in the literature review section. Researchers have defined and categorized reporting verbs from a variety of angles (Swales, 1990; Thompson & Ye, 1991; Thomas & Hawes, 1994). To use English reporting verbs is challenging, and non-native English learners have a series of problems in reporting the research results of the previous studies (Liu & Si, 2022). It is therefore necessary to explore distinctions in using reporting verbs between non-native novice writers and international expert writers. Given the above literature, many scholars agreed on the importance of reporting verbs. This study compares the similarities and differences in the use of reporting verbs between literature review sections of Chinese English-majored MA theses and those in international journals. The study hopes to provide implications for academic writing classes, raise the awareness of second language academic writing of Chinese graduate students, and enrich the empirical research in this field.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Reporting Verbs

Reporting verbs are a vital component of citation practice and an effective way for scholars to demonstrate the credibility and validity of published research (Maryam, 2021). They are the explicit outward manifestation to cite the research of others. This study uses Hyland's classification of reporting verbs. It is a comprehensive and influential classification that is widely recognized and used by the academic community. The concrete categories are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1

Hyland's Classification of Reporting Verbs (2002, p. 122)

Reporting verbs	**Research acts**	Findings	Factive
			Counter-factive
			Non-factive
		Procedures	/
	Cognition acts	Positive	/
		Critical	/
		Tentative	/
		Neutral	/
	Discourse acts	Doubt	Tentative
			Critical
		Assurance	Factive
			Non-factive
		Counters	/

Hyland divided the reporting verbs into three identifiable types according to the activity types they referred to. Research acts are implied in experimental activities in reality, which occur in the finding (notice, show, discover) or procedures (calculate, analyse, explore). Cognition acts (suspect, believe, view) focus on the mental processes of researchers. Discourse acts (hypothesis, discuss, state) concentrate on the verbal expressions of cognition and research activities. According to the evaluative function, each process category of reporting verbs is composed of its subdivisions. Hyland (2002) noted that the categories were not perfect, some verbs showed multiple categories overlap. According to Swales (1990), the language had process meaning. With respect to the situation, the reporting verbs with overlapping meaning were analyzed in terms of the categories to which they belong in the contexts. Furthermore, the tenses of reporting verbs also remain an element to affect the citation. Scholars have reached an agreement in classifying the tenses of reporting verbs (Swales, 1990; Weissberg & Buker, 1990). Three widely used tenses of the reporting verbs are the present, past and present perfect tenses. Consequently, this study focuses on the analysis of the three tenses. In sum, Hyland's framework in types and the Swales' classification of reporting verb tenses are adopted as a new analytical model in present study.

2.2. Previous Studies

The most important means of attributing content to another source or presenting rhetorical meaning is the use of reporting verbs, which are the verbs used when making a citation and the verbs that introduce prior research results (Swales, 1990; Thompson & Ye, 1991; Hyland, 2000). Reporting verbs can be used to explain previous research and improve engagement and communication between the author and the authors they are citing, which aims to establish the author's own research space. While reporting verbs have been extensively studied across genres, academic writing by second language learners presents a particularly intriguing research domain (Lou, 2022; Jalilifar & Dabbi, 2012; Manan & Noor, 2014). The studies conducted so far have revealed that second language learners are capable of using different types of reporting verbs, but there are still instances of misuse. Thus, second language learners should enhance their competence in academic writing. In the meanwhile, scholars also attempted to conduct comparative studies, which generally focused on two aspects. On the one hand, it was reflected in interdisciplinary research (Park, 2021; Maryam, 2021; Eckstein et al., 2022). The interdisciplinary studies reached an agreement that there are differences in using reporting verbs between different disciplines and different authors. Denotative reporting verbs were used more frequently than the evaluative ones, and research act reporting verbs were used with a clear predominance. On the other hand, a diversity of works have been run on cross-language studies (Manoochehr & Amirali, 2015; Yeganeh & Boghayeri, 2015; Liardét & Black, 2019; Duong & Tran, 2021). The cross-language research covered several kinds of languages in the world.

Like interdisciplinary studies, cross-language comparative research has revealed variations in the use of reporting verbs among scholars. Specifically, native experts tend to employ a wider range of these verbs. Moreover, the comparative study of reporting verbs also embodied on the authors with different academic proficiency or in different learning stages (Jaroongkhongdach, 2015; Wen & Pramoolsook, 2021). They concluded that the experts and learners in higher grades were more varied and skillful in the use of reporting verbs than novices and the learners in lower grades. Recent years have seen renewed interest in cross-genre comparative studies of reporting verbs. To cite an example, Yongkook (2021) compared the academic papers with the personal blogs discourse, which found that reporting verbs used in blog writing are more infrequently than in the academic writing. The innovation point is that this study compared the academic writing and personal discourse, in other words, the formal and informal writing.

Put it briefly, researchers have conducted studies and comparative studies of reporting verbs cross disciplines, languages and genres. These researches provide valuable sources for the present study. However, little scholarly attention has been paid to the application and distribution of reporting verbs based on Chinese MA thesis in English major and prestigious international journals. Understanding this gap, this research compares and analyzes academic papers written by Chinese graduate students in English major with international experts. Given the research status quo, this paper aims to answer the following research questions via a comparative analysis of literature review sections in MA theses of Chinese English majored graduate students and prestigious journals written by native scholars: (1) how is the overall frequency distribution of reporting verbs in Chinese English-majored MA theses and international journals? (2) how are the types and type-token ratios (TTR) of reporting verbs used in Chinese English-majored MA theses and international journals? (3) how are the tenses of reporting verbs used in Chinese English-majored MA theses and international journals?

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus and Data Collection

All research data from this study were written during 2019-2021. Twenty-five literature review sections of MA theses with a corpus size of 110,911 words were taken from the Chinese graduate students majoring in foreign linguistics and applied linguistics in “double world-class project” universities in CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure). Forty-five literature review sections of international journals were collected with a corpus size of 110,986 words, which emanate from five prestigious journals (Impact Factors over 3.0), namely *Applied Linguistics, Journal of Memory and Language, Journal of Second Language Writing, Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, Language Learning*. The average number from each journal is 9. Two small corpora were created based on the data, including the Chinese MA thesis Corpus (CLC, Chinese Learner Corpus) and the International Journals Corpus (IJC, International Journal Corpus). The two corpora are comparable in terms of capacity. To improve accuracy, international authors are all native speakers, which are judged through the authors’ affiliation. The genre of all selected research articles is empirical to guarantee the validity of the corpus. To eliminate the personal preference in employing reporting verbs, this study avoids selecting the research articles written by the same author.

3.2. Analysis Procedure

The literature review sections of the Master's theses were initially downloaded from CNKI in caj format, while international journals were obtained in pdf format. To adhere to the text formatting requirements of AntConc 4.1.4 software, both corpora were transformed into txt format. Two corpora, CLC and IJC, were built using these two kinds of data. What’s more, the study employed the frequently available reporting verbs and their tenses based on Hyland and Swales’ classification and examples. The identification of reporting verbs was divided into two stage, the common reporting verbs and their tenses in Hyland and Swales’ definition were retrieved by regular expression in AntConc and annotated with [da] for discourse act reporting verbs, [ra] for research act reporting verbs, and [ca] for cognition act reporting verbs. The present, past, and perfect tenses were annotated using [pr], [pa], and [pp], respectively. As some reporting verbs can't be retrieved by the software, manual check and annotation were employed in the second stage by reading the corpus sentence by sentence after the retrieval annotation. The CLC corpus was annotated first, followed by the IJC corpus. The annotation and analysis process was carried out independently by the two writers of this paper, with any disagreements being resolved through negotiation to improve the reliability of the annotation. After three rounds of corpus annotation and revision, AntConc 4.1.4 was employed for frequency retrieval, and Chi-square and Log-likelihood Calculator software were used to examine whether there were any significant differences in the types and tenses distribution of reporting verb.

4. Results

4.1. The Comparison in Overall Distribution of Reporting Verbs

According to Table 2, Chinese graduate students used 267 types of reporting verbs a total of 1960 times, while scholars in international academic papers used 218 types of reporting verbs a total of 1307 times. To make the research findings more precise, the normalized frequency of the type and tokens of reporting verbs with per 10,000 words was taken into account. Table 2 indicates that Chinese graduate students cite the type of reporting verbs at a density of 24.07 per 10,000 words and tokens at a density of 176.72 per 10,000 words. Correspondingly, the density of the types and the tokens of reporting verbs used by international scholars are 19.64 and 117.76 per 10,000 words respectively. It points out that Chinese graduate students generally used more types and numbers of reporting verbs than international scholars. After chi-square test, there exists a significant difference in number (X^2=131.85, df=1, **p < .01) and types (X^2=4.99, df=1, *p < .05) in the use of reporting verbs. Compared with the types, the number difference is more salient in statistical significance.

Table 2

The Comparison in Types Distribution of Reporting Verbs

Category	CLC	IJC	X^2	Sig.
Types/ Normed	267/24.07	218/19.64	4.99	0.0256
Tokens/Normed	1960/176.72	1307/117.76	131.85	0.000

4.2. Comparison in Overall Distribution of Each Type of Reporting Verbs

Table 3 shows that both Chinese graduate students and international scholars used the discourse act reporting verbs most frequently, accounting for 50.36% and 57.23% respectively.

Examples:

(1) Schunk (1994) reported [da pa] that students with low self-efficacy are more prone to anxiety, because they subconsciously exaggerate the difficulty of the task and worry about failure. (From CLC)

(2) Prior work indicates [da pr] that the effects of semantic processing and articulation are potentially separable (Bodner, Taikh, & Fawcett, 2014; Fawcett, 2013; MacLeod et al., 2010). (From IJC)

Chinese graduate students and international scholars have a tendency towards using the research reporting verbs as their second priority, taking up 44.80% and 39.94% respectively.

Examples:

(3) Liddicoat, Scrimgeour, and Chen (2008) examined [ra pa] the citation practices of high school students, using textual analysis and semi-structured interviews. (From CLC)

(4) Perchemlides and Coutant (2004) found [ra pa] that the common language provided by the rubric enabled students to evaluate their own compositions and learn from their own strengths and weaknesses. (From IJC)

Two groups of scholars used the least cognition reporting act verbs, and the exact percentages account for 4.84% and 2.83%.

Examples:

(5) Some scholars believe [ca pr] that such processing difficulty of the relationship between words can be quantified according to the distance between words (Gibson, 1998, 2000). (From CLC)

(6) The incremental strengthening and weakening of associations is often the hypothesized [ca pr] mechanism for both implicit and procedural learning, and models of this process typically employ simple connectionist learning algorithms (e.g. Gupta & Cohen, 2002; Cleeremans & McClelland, 1991). (From IJC)

It suggests that both Chinese graduate students and international authors consistently used three different types of reporting verbs in the process of academic writing. To find out whether there exists significant difference in the use of reporting verbs by two groups, the chi-square test was used. The results demonstrate that **p < .01 in three types of reporting verbs, which indicates that there exist statistically significant differences in the use of discourse, research, and cognition act reporting verbs.

Table 3

The Comparison of Each Type of Reporting Verbs

Category	CLC		IJC		X^2	Sig.
	Frequency/Normed	Percent	Frequency /Normed	Percent		
Research	878/79.97	44.80%	522/47.03	39.94%	91.77	0.000
Cognition	95/8.57	4.84%	37/3.33	2.83%	26.41	0.000
Discourse	987/88.99	50.36%	748/67.4	57.23%	33.19	0.000

4.3. Comparison in Type/Token Ratios (TTR) of Reporting Verbs

Table 4 contains the information on the number, types and the percentage of the type-token ratios (TTR) of three kinds of reporting verbs. TTR is known as the ratio between word type and word frequency. It is the measure to assess the diversity of the use of reporting verbs in the CLC and IJC. The range and diversity of reporting verbs tends to be wider when the TTR is higher, while the use of reporting verbs is more homogeneous and concentrated when the TTR is lower. Table 4 shows that academic papers of international experts presented higher TTR than Chinese graduate students in three types of reporting verbs, which reports that international authors used more diverse reporting verbs than Chinese graduate students. According to the results of comparison in Table 4, the highest percentage TTR of reporting verbs for both

Chinese and International scholars refer to the cognition act reporting verbs, though they take up the lowest percentage.

Table 4

The TTR Comparison of Reporting Verbs

Category	CLC			IJC		
	Tokens	**Type**	**TTR(%)**	**Tokens**	**Type**	**TTR(%)**
Research	878	76	8.66	522	57	10.92
Cognition	95	18	18.95	37	12	32.43
Discourse	987	173	17.53	748	149	19.92
Total	1960	267	13.62	1307	218	16.68

4.4. The Comparison in Tenses Choice of Reporting verbs

According to the data in Table 5, both groups were much more likely to use the simple present and past tenses than the present perfect tense. The simple present tense is employed more frequently by international experts than by Chinese graduate students. In statistics, the value of *p<.05 indicates a significant difference, while the value of p>.05 suggests no significant difference. Strong significant relationship can be shown when the value **p < .01. The most frequently occurring tense is simple past tense in both two groups. Chinese graduate students majoring in English were found to use the simple past tense more frequently than international scholars, and this difference was statistically significant (X^2=369.21, df=1,**p < .01).

Examples:

(7) Previous intercultural studies have confirmed [da pp] that metadiscourse in RAs differ according to the authors' cultural background (Moreno, 1997; Abdollahzadeh, 2011; Loi & Lim, 2013). (From CLC)

(8) Vidal (2011) demonstrated [ra pa] that the effects of incidental learning of cognates were larger when participants listened to texts with unknown words compared to when they read such texts. (From IJC)

The simple present tense ranks second in the frequency distribution of reporting verbs. In terms of statistics analysis, there is no noticeable difference in the use of the simple present tense (X^2=2.21, df=1, p>.05).

Examples:

(9) Ribalta (2018) studies [ra pr] the main characters in the novel and Jasim (2018) focuses on [da pr] the isolation and escape from reality of the protagonist. (From CLC)

(10) Dispersion is another dimension of collocational association; it considers [ca pr] the distribution of the node and collocates in the corpus (Gries, 2008). (From IJC)

The present perfect tense occurs least frequently in both groups. A statistically significant difference can be found in the use of the present perfect tense between the two groups (X^2=-122.22, df=1, **p < .01).

Examples:

(11) The Soruş and Griffiths study has provided [da pp] the perceptive ideas for questionnaire design and interview operations. (From CLC)

(12) Surprisingly, the hypothesis that learners' awareness of cognates (at any level) is necessary to benefit

from their cognate status has not been experimentally verified. Several studies have pointed out [da pp] that learners usually do not notice word cognateness in texts (e.g., Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August & White, 2011; Nagy, Garcia, Durgunoglu & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993; Singleton, 2006). (From IJC)

Table 5

The Tenses Comparison of Reporting Verbs

Category	CLC		IJC		X^2	Sig.
	Frequency/ Normed	Percent	Frequency/ Normed	Percent		
Simple present	553/49.86	28.2%	505/45.50	38.6%	2.21	0.137
Simple past	1326/119.56	67.7%	516/46.49	39.5%	369.21	0.000
Present perfect	81/7.3	4.1%	286/25.77	21.9%	-121.22	0.000

5. Discussion

5.1. Similarities and Differences in the Overall Use of Reporting Verbs

Writing a dissertation is the first shot that a novice researcher embarks on writing for academic purposes. Learning how to cite the works of others is essential for novice researchers to establish a foundation for their research, persuade readers, and give credit to other researchers. Reporting verbs were explicitly utilized in the MA theses slightly more than international authors. Such evidence lends support to Duong and Tran's (2021) research on the TESOL journal papers written by both native and non-native speakers. It can be presumed that graduate students rely more on reporting the previous research directly to demonstrate their familiarity with the research field and to create their own research space or improve the credit of their studies. Conversely, the results of this study differ from Liu and Si's (2022) study in which Chinese and foreign papers were selected from the Science Direct database. That may be due to the Liu and Si's research corpus focused on full text, the corpus was derived from the same database, and the research article genre was consistent. It suggests that scholars with relatively equivalent academic competence are prone to publish articles that adhered to uniform writing norms. As a result, Chinese graduate students should shed light on the reading of high-level experts' academic outcomes, pay attention to the use of reporting verbs in experts' academic papers, learn the language expression ways, and adhere to the norms of prestigious journals.

5.2. Similarities and Differences in TTR and Types of Reporting Verbs

Experienced writers are more adept at citing the research of others, selecting diverse reporting verbs, and using more personalized verbs to convey their assessment of the cited contents (Lombardi, 2021). By counting the number and calculating the TTR, Chinese graduate students used more reporting verbs in general, and international experts used more types of reporting verbs in academic papers. To demonstrate their familiarity with the subject, Chinese graduate students mainly used finite reporting structures and tried to use the attribution function of citing sources. The findings bear out the previous studies (Hu & Jiang, 2007; Lou, 2013). The results indicate that Chinese graduate students show greater interest in the use of reporting verbs, but they should strive to use them more flexibly and diversely. They need to read international literature and accumulate different kinds of reporting verbs. Even though the graduate students who have learned English for many years, they still need to learn about the use of reporting verbs.

Chinese graduate students and international experts tended to use discourse, research, and cognition reporting act verbs in a similar distribution overall. It demonstrates that both Chinese and international authors are attentive to the general norms that exist in the academic discourse community and observe the general rules for the use of reporting verbs in academic papers. According to the aforementioned findings, the discourse act reporting verbs were employed with the highest frequency. This finding contradicts with Un-udom and Un-udom's (2020) and Maryam's (2021) studies, differences in corpus capacity and source may be a contributing factor. The result concludes that both groups of scholars used more discourse reporting verbs to convey their evaluation of the cited content and to lay a foundation for their own research. In addition, the present study reveals that there are significant differences in the use of sub-categories of reporting verbs by non-native novice writers and experts. It can be confirmed in the study of Marti, Yilmaz and Bayyurt (2019). Marti and his companies investigated the differences between native and non-native writers in their reporting practices, which suggests that professional knowledge is an important factor in differences of academic writing. Therefore, Chinese graduate students should insistently improve their professional knowledge, enhance their overall academic literacy, and constantly approach the academic proficiency of expertise.

5.3. Similarities and Differences in Tenses Choices of Reporting verbs

The reporting verbs have multiple tenses, each of which has a distinct meaning. Tense stands for particular communicative consequences. Tang (2004) pointed out that the simple present tense focuses on an overview of the study and a summary of the current research situation. On the contrary, the simple past tense is merely an introduction to individual studies of the previous period. In addition to the simple present and past tense, the present perfect tense is often used to provide a positive conclusion to previous research. The comparison reveals that both groups frequently used the simple past and simple present tenses but rarely used the present perfect tense, which is in line with the findings of the study of Tang (2004). Using the simple present tense of reporting verbs is more convenient because it can weaken the limitation of time and reduce the challenge in tenses choice (Chen, 2010). The simple present tense has no significant difference in the two corpora, which implies that both groups use the simple present tense to provide an overview of previous research. There is a significant difference in the use of the simple past tense. Chinese graduate students are likely to use the simple past tense to present research results. In contrast, the role of the present perfect tense is more complex. Chinese learners rarely use the present perfect tense, but international journal authors show certain proficiency in the use of this tense. The differences in the use of simple past tense and the present perfect depict that international experts are ingenious in the use of reporting verbs, while Chinese graduate students try to avoid the risk of making mistakes in tenses selection. Some learners are confused about the use of reporting verbs and tend to use tenses in a simplistic manner (Liu & Si, 2022). In brief, reporting verbs remain one of the important ways to cite the research results. The general distribution of reporting verbs used by Chinese graduate students is consistent with international scholars. Turning to the details, there are significant differences in the use of each concrete type. The comparison of second language learners' and international experts' discourse can provide learners with valuable references.

6. Conclusion

To use the reporting verbs effectively and accurately proves to be an important aspect in academic writing, especially for the non-native novice researchers. This study investigated the similarities and differences in the use of reporting verbs between MA theses written by Chinese graduate students majoring in English and prestigious international journals authored by native experts. The comparison of the two groups of scholars shows the following conclusions: (1) Chinese graduate students used more reporting verbs in terms of quantity. (2) International scholars seem to be more varied in the use of the types. (3) Two groups of researches use discourse, research and cognition reporting verbs in a decreasing order and there exist significant differences in each concrete type. (4) In tenses choice, scholars used the simple present and past tenses obviously more than the present perfect tense. The implication of this study is twofold. The one is that English-majored graduate students should study, refer and imitate the use of reporting verbs in prestigious international experts' academic papers. The novices should approach the writing levels of international experts and the professional capability also needs to be improved. The other is to provide the pedagogical implication. English teachers should illustrate the differences in the use of reporting verbs in the English academic writing classroom to raise learners' awareness to use various reporting verbs flexibly so that they can enhance their ability to write academic papers and increase their opportunity to publish articles in international journals. However, it is worth emphasizing that the present study only selects the MA thesis of English-majored graduate students from some top-ranked universities in China, which limits the scope of the corpus. In addition, the research only focuses on the literature review section. Hence, more corpus are necessary to collect more corpora, and the other sections of research articles also should be concerned in future studies.

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MỘT NGHIÊN CỨU SO SÁNH VỀ ĐỘNG TỪ TƯỜNG THUẬT TRONG LUẬN VĂN THẠC SĨ CỦA HỌC VIÊN PHI BẢN NGỮ VÀ BÀI BÁO TRÊN TẠP CHÍ QUỐC TẾ

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Tóm tắt: Sử dụng động từ tường thuật một cách hiệu quả trong văn bản học thuật là một kỹ năng học tập thiết yếu và là hoạt động học tập nổi bật để trình bày các kết quả nghiên cứu trước đó. Tuy nhiên, nhiều năm qua, học viên cao học phi bản ngữ dường như luôn gặp vấn đề về việc sử dụng loại động từ này. Họ thường sử dụng các động từ tường thuật không phù hợp. Để nâng cao nhận thức của học viên cao học về việc sử dụng động từ tường thuật, nghiên cứu này so sánh tần suất, loại và thì của động từ tường thuật trong phần Tổng quan tình hình nghiên cứu của 25 luận văn thạc sĩ bằng tiếng Anh do học viên người Trung Quốc viết và 45 bài báo trên 5 tạp chí quốc tế có uy tín trong lĩnh vực ngôn ngữ học. Kết quả nghiên cứu chỉ ra những điểm tương đồng và khác biệt trong việc sử dụng động từ tường thuật giữa hai nhóm tác giả. Hai nhóm này sử dụng các loại động từ tường thuật diễn ngôn, nghiên cứu và nhận thức theo thứ tự tần suất giảm dần. Học viên Trung Quốc sử dụng số lượng lớn hơn nhưng ít loại động từ tường thuật hơn. So với những người mới bắt đầu nghiên cứu, tác giả bài báo trên tạp chí quốc tế khéo léo hơn trong việc sử dụng các động từ tường thuật. So sánh cũng cho thấy rằng hai nhóm tác giả cùng có xu hướng sử dụng thì động từ để báo cáo thông tin, cụ thể là sử dụng thì hiện tại đơn giản và thì quá khứ thường xuyên, và sử dụng thì hiện tại hoàn thành không thường xuyên. Thông qua kết quả phân tích, bài báo đưa ra những gợi ý cho người mới bắt đầu và một số gợi ý mang tính sư phạm.

Từ khóa: luận văn thạc sĩ, tạp chí quốc tế, động từ tường thuật, nghiên cứu đối chiếu, ngôn ngữ học

THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA RIVALRY AND ITS IMPACTS ON WASHINGTON AND BEIJING RELATIONS WITH HISTORICAL COMPLEXITY OF TAIWAN

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Abstract: This paper aims to analyze the United States and China rivalry which impacts their relationship with Historical Complexity of Taiwan using the Balance of Threat Theory and qualitative research method. Both the United States and China have different perspectives on the Taiwan issue. China considers that historically Taiwan is part of China. However, the disintegration that Taiwan faces makes some Taiwanese people not feel part of China. This incident was later used by the United States in intervening and expanding its influence in the East Asia region since the 1950s. As a result, the Taiwan area has become a battleground for the United States and China as they compete for regional influence. The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) in 1979, provides Washington a legal framework to continue selling weapons to Taiwan. On the other hand, Beijing took the initiative to open a free market with Taipei under the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) in 2013. This paper suggests that both Beijing and Washington have always refrained from escalating into an open conflict that ended in war. Thus, a future war is unlikely.

Keywords: the United States' TRA, China' CSSTA, Taiwan, Historical Complexity, East Asia

Introduction

In the geopolitical contestation in East Asia, the dynamics of the relationship between China and the United States are determined by the continuation of Taiwan's sovereignty. Unlike other countries on the international stage, Taiwan is not a sovereign political entity. In the global forum, Taiwan is positioned as a non-state economic entity (Hilpert et al., 2022). Therefore, despite its advanced economic development, Taiwan has unequal political power with other countries. It is not surprising that Taiwan's movement in the global environment is largely determined by its relations with major world powers, such as China and the United States, the two countries with the most interest in the Taiwan Strait.

Historically, compared to the United States, China has longer ties with Taiwan. One of the factors is because the geographic locations of China (Mainland) and Taiwan are close together, only separated by the Taiwan Strait. However, historical and

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geographic proximity does not appear to be directly proportional to political and economic closeness. In contrast to communist China, Taiwan chose democracy in line with the United States. Since its inception, Taiwan has adopted a similar economic system to the United States. This situation makes Taiwan seem to be squeezed into two contradictory global powers. However, the two global powers have strategic interests with Taiwan. China and the United States have their own interests to influence Taiwan.

To China, Taiwan is its lost island. Various wars in the past made Taiwan repeatedly experience integration and disintegration with China. China's leaders believe that Taiwan's reunification with China will make this country bigger and stronger. Therefore, the unification of Taiwan with China is a big dream and the Presidents of China, including Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping. In the centenary of the Nationalist Revolution that brought down the monarchy in Beijing on October 10, 2011, Hu Jintao as the former president of the People's Republic of China claimed that "China and Taiwan should end antagonisms and heal their wounds of the past". Hu Jintao encouraged both countries to work together in order to achieve reunification in a peaceful way that aims to "serves the fundamental interests of all Chinese, including our Taiwan compatriots" (AP et al., 2011). Two years later, Xi Jinping who replaced Hu Jintao as President affirmed his desire for unification because "both sides of the (Taiwan) strait are family" (Wang, 2013). On the other side, the intervention conducted by the United States has hampered China's efforts to unite Taiwan in its territorial areas. The Enactment of Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) 1979 provides a legal framework for Washington to help arm and protect Taiwan without establishing formal diplomatic relations. This fact shows the conflicting interests between the United States and China and have caused Taiwan to become the battle arena for the two global powers, thus adding complexities to the Taiwan Issue. Based on the background, this paper will analyze **how the rivalry of the two major powers, the United States and China, will impact the relationship between the two countries in the historical complexity of Taiwan**.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. First, this paper briefly explains the concept used in discussing the research question, which is the balance of threat theory proposed by Stephen Walt. Then, the first part of the discussion section explains the historical review of Taiwan, especially how China could claim it from the start. The next section examines Taiwan's relationship with the United States and China. Then, going to the main points of the discussion, this paper continues on explaining how the United States started to intervene in the Cross-Strait Relation which caused the complexity of Taiwan issue. The next section discusses China's action towards its policy against the United States and also Taiwan. In the last part of the discussion, this paper provides a brief explanation about the United States and China's perceptions towards Taiwan. The last section of the paper offers a conclusion.

Conceptual Framework

In order to understand how the United States and China rivalry impacts their relationship with the historical complexity of Taiwan, this paper will use the balance of threat theory that was modified from the realism theory of International Relations. The balance of threat theory assumes that a country will prevent the domination of another country's power by balancing the power of other countries in order to oppose it (Ababakr, 2021). Furthermore, Stephen Walt's idea on the theory of balance of threat assumed that a state did not react to the strength of other countries, but to threats (Bock & Henneberg, 2013).

In the concept balance of threat theory, according to Walt (1987), there are various indicators that affect and perceive a country as a source of threat, such as (i) aggregate strength which is the total resources of a country. In this case, depicting a country the greater the aggregate power brings great potential and the greater the state threat can arise; (ii) geographical proximity refers to the distance between the threatened country. The greater the distance, the more limited it is in projecting the power of the state so that the potential threat will be more limited and vice versa; (iii) offensive capability refers to the combination of aggregate strength, geographic proximity and aggressive action. The greater the offensive from a country, the greater the threat that arises, and (iv) perceptions of a country's threat to the aggressiveness of another country, because the more often a country shows aggressive actions with its strength, the greater the perceived threat to that country.

In dealing with threats, the hedging strategy is the right method to be used by every country. The hedging strategy that Kuik (2008) has developed describes it as a behavior in which a country acts in response to threats by pursuing policy options that combine balancing and bandwagoning strategies to produce a neutral effect under a situation full of uncertainty and high risk. This strategy can be seen through elements of economic dependence and security cooperation. Kuik (2008) also stated that a major contribution to the development of the hedging strategy is through the introduction of risk-contingency and return-maximizing options. In the concept of balance of threat, there are three pieces of advice that describe the nature of the state in the international system. First, external balance against threats is more likely because a country that has power will involve threatening actors, through various incentives, as a substitute for a more rigorous approach such as a counterweight. Second, balancing against threats is more likely to take place outside the country facing regional military threats than political or ideological threats. Third, the State poses a threat to regional level threats even when it conflicts with the balance of power at the global level.

Balance of threat theory then predicts the risks in seeing the activities of other interested countries to create power from various aspects. Risk-contingency in order to reduce certain risks, such as military or economic threats, that come from countries with aggressive powers. This option is more about balancing where to reduce risk, a country will choose to cooperate with a country that is not a source of threat. On the other hand, the return-maximizing option is an option to maximize the profits of the aggressive power. In this choice, it is more directed to the acceptance of the force of the threatening or bandwagoning state. When the choice is in risk-contingency, there are two options. First, indirect-balancing refers to increased military efforts to overcome the uncertainty of a threatening country, indirect-balancing refers to informal military action. Second, dominance denial is a choice to prevent the emergence of a dominant power from other state. In addition, to refuse the emergence of a dominant power from a threatening state. The threatened countries have to develop relations in strengthening diplomatic influence with other countries (Kuik, 2008).

Qualitative research was done with the balance of threat theory analysis of secondary data. Ababakr (2021) argues that the balance of threat theory knowing that states tend to be aggressive when threats come while the hedging strategy is the method that can be used by any state to survive from incoming threats. Both of these theory and strategy are parallel with the actions taken by the United States and China in dealing with the Taiwan issue. Conflict does not always become a threat but a momentum to encourage cooperative relations to maintain interests. Countries will face a situation of chaos in the international system. So the countries carry out bilateral and multilateral relations and form allies to maintain conflict. In this context, China and the United States as actors who play an important role in the Taiwan conflict always take advantage of the momentum to protect and enhance their national interests. The United States prefer a soft power approachment through economic and cultural aspects. On the other hand, Taiwan considered its political system as a hegemonic country by looking for alliances and making choices that lead to denial of dominance. This illustrates that an influential country in this case, Washington will keep on developing relations in strengthening the influence of diplomacy.

Historical Review of Taiwan

Historically, Taiwan’s connection with Mainland China dates back to when the region was first discovered in 230 during the Three Kingdoms period (220-280). After the Sui Dynasty (586-618) and Tang Dynasty (618-907), Chinese rule was established in the area called Yizhou Island. During the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), Han immigrants, mainly from Fujian Province, began to arrive in Taiwan (Taiwan Affairs Office of the Chinese State Council, 1998). In the era of Song Dynasty, China actively traded with Japan and countries in Southeast Asia, including the Middle East. However, the situation was conflicted when the Ming Dynasty fell (1366-1644). The Ming government withdrew its officials and evacuated Chinese immigrants from Taiwan. Maritime activities in Taiwanese territory were halted (Wills & Rubinstein, 1999).

At the same time, European imperialism was spreading to Asia. When Mainland China underwent a change of power from the Ming Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Taiwan was occupied by the Dutch through its trading partners, the Dutch East India Company (1624-1662). The Netherlands used Taiwan as its market base to bring together traders from colonial countries with China and Japan. Feeling exploited by the Dutch, the Ming Dynasty rulers invaded Taiwan and captured the region in 1662. 21 years later, the Ming Dynasty was overthrown by the Qing Dynasty. At that time, Taiwan’s population increased dramatically as the immigration program intensified. The population of Taiwan in the 1650s was only around 100,000 people, soaring up to 1.78 million in 1824 (Shepherd, 2016).

As Taiwan showed more significant development, the Qing rulers gave more attention to the island. However, these efforts were often interrupted by the intervention of foreign powers from Europe, attempting to control China in particular, and Asia in general. The Opium Wars (1856-1860), waged by the British and French, further weakened the strength of the Qing dynasty. Although the two European countries had landed their troops on the island of Taiwan, the Chinese military managed to expel them. However, this was not the case with Japan, successfully seizing Taiwan through the Shimonoseki Treaty in 1895. Until 1945, Japan used Taiwan as a military base to send troops to Southeast Asia. At the same time, Japan massively and repressively erased the cultural roots of Taiwanese society by launching the “Japanization” program (Wang, 2013).

The repressive measures of 50 years in some ways changed the view of the Taiwanese people towards mainland China. Therefore, when Japan surrendered in World War II and was forced to hand Taiwan back to China in 1945, Nationalist government had not completely taken over mainland China. Moreover, the Nationalist government did not seem to give much attention to the Taiwanese people. Instead of focusing on post-war restoration, the Nationalist government was more preoccupied by civil war with the Communists. As a result, there was a growing animosity and dislike towards China in Taiwan. The success of the Communist Revolution in 1949 resulted in the transfer of the Nationalist government from Beijing to Taipei, but it did not easily dispel this resentment (Wang, 2006). Although in its development, the Nationalist government in Taipei succeeded in encouraging Taiwan's economic progress, it still did not reduce the desire to separate from mainland China.

The 50 years of Japanese occupation (1895-1945) had a negative impact on Taiwan's relations with China. Although they were united for four years (1945-1949), the Communist Revolution resulted in reintegration. The United States' intervention since 1950 has exacerbated disintegration (Wang, 2006). Supportedby the United States, the Nationalist government began to build the economy and develop Taiwan's democratic system. At that time, China experienced slow economic growth and continued to survive with its communist system. Taiwan experienced rapid economic development and grew into a democratic country. After being pressured by authoritarianism, the martial law policies implemented by the governments of Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo (1949-1987), the Taiwanese people felt political freedom with the holding of direct presidential elections in 1996. In that first election, Lee Teng-hui from the Kuomintang Party (KMT) was elected as President.

Unlike the previous president, Lee Teng-Hui often travels to various countries to enhance Taiwan's international reputation. Not only holding informal meetings with Southeast Asian leaders, former President Lee Teng-Hui also asked the United States to allow him to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Seattle in November 1993. This is an attempt to legalize Taiwan's status as a full member of an international organization. Lee Teng-Hui asked the United States to support Taiwan's right to be accepted as a member of international organizations, especially in relation to the economic agenda. The United States has responded positively in helping Taiwan gain membership rights by not requiring its members to become sovereign states (Suettinger, 2003). Furthermore, Lee Teng-Hui took advantage of Taiwan's economic progress as a bidder instrument for other countries to shift its recognition back from China to Taiwan. Lee Teng-Hui promised to disburse 1 billion USD if Taiwan was approved as a member of the United Nations (Tucker, 2009). Interviewed by the Washington Post in November 1997, Lee Teng-Hui stated that "Taiwan is already independent... Taiwan is an independent, sovereign country". Hence, since early 1998, Lee began speaking on behalf of Taiwan as an independent and sovereign state. He urged Beijing to place Taiwan and China as two equal political entities and not to place Taiwan as subordinate to China. For Lee Teng-Hui, the concept of "One Country, Two Systems" was only suitable for former British colonies, such as Hong Kong, not suitable in Taiwan (Tucker, 2009).

Although originally from the KMT, Lee Teng-Hui had the tendency to push Taiwan towards independence. Unsurprisingly, the pro-independence movement continues to develop. At the same time, the political position of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in favor of permanent separation from China grew. The strengthening of that position paid off in the 2000 Presidential election when the DPP won the election and installed Chen Shui-bian as President. After being out of office for two terms, the KMT returned to power in 2008. Former Taipei mayor, Ma Ying-Jeou, was elected President twice and remains in control of the government. Unlike President Chen Shui-bian who took Taiwan away from China, Ma Ying-Jeou tried to strengthen Taiwan's relations with China.

One of the concrete forms of President Ma Ying Jeou's policy is the signing of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) on June 21, 2013 in Shanghai. CSSTA is a trade pact between Taiwan and China to liberalize the service industry sector, including banking, health, tourism, film, telecommunications, and publishing. Under the agreement, Taiwan and China must open up Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) between the two sides, which allows businessmen from each country to cross the Taiwan Strait freely. Taiwan will open 64 industrial sectors for Chinese investment, while China provides 80 industrial sectors for Taiwanese investment (Mo, 2013). Consequently, it is easier for Chinese companies to set up branch companies in Taiwan and vice versa. Worried about the adverse effects of CSSTA, when the parliament began discussing the ratification process of the agreement, students that led the pro-independence movement staged a large protest by occupying the Legislative Yuan building for days in March 2014. The demonstration, known as the Sunflower Movement, demanded the cancellation of CSSTA and was thought to increase Taiwan's dependence on China. However, President Ma Ying Jeou rejected the students' demands and maintained the free trade agreement. Ma Ying Jeou explained that "As Taiwan's economy relies heavily on foreign trade, the island is in urgent need of more free trade agreements" (Xinhua, 2014). Despite the failure, the Sunflower Movement succeeded in spreading an important message to the government that the Taiwanese did not fully support Ma Ying Jeou's policies to strengthen ties with China. Consequently, Taiwanese society is divided into two camps, pro-independence and pro-China. Various historical momentum has colored the cross-strait relations, involving not only China but also the United States.

Taiwan and the United States Relations

Taiwan has had informal relations with the United States since 1979. The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) is the agreement that provides the legal framework for the continuation of non-diplomatic relations between the United States and Taiwan (Chang, 2000). The primary purpose of the TRA legislation was to help maintain peace, security and stability in the Western Pacific and to promote the United States' foreign policy by allowing for the continuation of commercial relations. The law further emphasizes that it is the policy of the United States to maintain its capabilities and to reject any attempts of violence or other forms of coercion that could jeopardize the security, social and economic systems of the people in Taiwan. In the end, the United States carries out arms sales to Taiwan, which aims to increase Taiwan's confidence in dealing with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The United States arms sales have contributed to maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and created a conductive atmosphere that enhances cross-strait relations (Chang, 2000).

Taiwan became a fully democratic country with its first direct presidential election in 1996, and today Taiwan enjoys a free press, free elections, stable democratic institutions and guarantees of human rights. As a result, Taiwan has received more support and respect in the United States. Washington and Taipei relationship began with trade activities that had grown impressively over the past twenty years, from 9.2 billion USD in 1979 to 51.2 billion

USD in 1998. Today, Taiwan is known as the seventh largest trading partner to the United States. Cultural relations between the United States and Taiwan have also deepened, scientific and technological exchanges are also frequent, and around 117 bilateral agreements, trade agreements, and memoranda of understanding help regulate relations between Taiwan and the United States. Despite its past successes, the TRA framework is in decline today compared to 1979, because the United States' stance does not match the content or spirit of the action. The TRA has had different failures, such as (i) on August 17, 1982, Sino-American Communique mentioned that "the United States does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, either in qualitative or quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China and that it intended to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan until the final resolution" (McClaran, 2000); (ii) a 1994 policy review to prohibit the United States visits by the top leadership of Taiwan; and (iii) the "three no's" pledge made by President Clinton to Beijing. The Sino-American Communique of August 17, 1982 stipulated that in terms of arms transfers, the United States would provide Taiwan with the necessary defense equipment and defense services to enable Taiwan to maintain adequate self-defense. The vague words sparked questions about who would decide what weapons would be sufficient for Taiwan's security.

The TRA contains explicit references to continuing the United States arms sales to Taiwan. It is a source of tension in the United States-China relations. The responsibility for determining Taiwan's security needs rests with the United States military, president and congress regardless of China authority. Moreover, George Bush' administration insisted on continuing arms sales to Taiwan after the United States-China normalization in 1979 for three reasons. First, arms sales to Taipei will make Taiwan more confident in its defensive capabilities against China. Thus, it is unnecessary for Taiwan to panic or seek radical solutions such as nuclear options which are contrary to American interests. Second, continued arms sales to Taiwan could reduce suspicion and doubts from other allies in the region about the United States' reliability in meeting its defense commitments. Third, if Taiwan remains militarily strong, China is unlikely to launch an attack on Taiwan. However, under the order of the 1982, Beijing Communique stated that the United States government would reduce arms sales to Taiwan (Chang, 2000).

The United States perception on Taiwan issue is fundamentally different from the problem China has. One of the reasons why Taiwan is so important to the United States is of course ideological reasons. Washington strongly believes that democracy and prosperity at home depend on economic expansion and the promotion of democratic values, such as free markets, freedom, and human rights. To Washington, Taiwan is the only Mandarin-speaking place that enjoys democracy and American values. Although in 2011 Taiwan only had a population of 23 million people, it was the 10th largest trading country in the world. The success of Taiwan's transition from authoritarianism to liberal democracy is believed to be a role model for China because it shows an alternative model to the Chinese communism (Kuntić, 2015).

Taiwan and China Relations

The relationship between China and Taiwan is one of the longest unsolved international political and security issues since the era of World War II. After the United States-China normalization in 1979 and under China's economic reforms and democratization and globalization, Beijing and Taipei have built relationships that have increased economic interdependence and people-to-people relations. In addition, since Ma Ying-Jeou was elected president of Taiwan in 2008, political rapprochement has taken place in the Taiwan Strait, which was illustrated when President Ma Ying-Jeou met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Singapore in November 2015. But on the other side, neither China nor Taiwan has been able to overcome the problem, let alone resolve their political differences. Since 2007, China has prioritized cross-strait development, but did not recognize Taiwan's statehood. China has been threatening Taiwan's military to reunite with the Chinese terms, called "One Country, Two Systems" which is the same as Hong Kong and Macau (Cabestan, 2016). Furthermore, Beijing considers the guarantee given by the United States to Taipei, namely the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) as a hindrance to reunification purposes. But Taiwan's democratization since the late 1980s has reinforced its separate identity, engendered a pro-independence force and strengthened its desire to maintain the status quo, while normalizing its relationship with Beijing and enhancing its international status (Taiwan Relation Act, 1979).

In the 1990s, China experienced an unprecedented economic revival, military modernization, and increased nationalism that changed the strategic equation across the Taiwan Strait. The development of trade and economic relations across the Strait has created an increasingly harmonious relationship between China and Taiwan, which is increasingly dependent on China. This is due to increased defense spending and military modernization that has increasingly led to the People's Liberation Army (PLA), forcing the United States to reconsider its role in securing Taiwan. In the same year, Beijing adopted an "anti-secession law", which is a law that legalizes the use of a "non-peaceful" way to reunite with Taiwan. Since President Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, China's foreign policy has been stricter and concerned on their security, especially in the maritime area that has emphasized Taiwan and the United States.

Since the election of Ma Ying-Jeou and the Kuomintang (KMT) back to power in 2008, relations in the Taiwan Strait have improved considerably. Economic trade is growing rapidly, with bilateral trade increasing from 129 billion USD in 2008 to 199 billion USD in 2014, including in 2014 amounting to 152 billion USD of Taiwanese exports (IMF, 2021). Educational exchange and cooperation programs, culture and people-to-people relations are also growing rapidly. Likewise, economic relations and social interactions throughout the Taiwan Strait have contributed since Beijing and Taipei resumed relations in 2005, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) have held dialogues that seek to find common ground on some of the most politically sensitive issues, such as concluding a peace treaty or reducing military tensions in the Taiwan Strait (e.g. withdrawal of Chinese missiles aimed at Taiwan) to stabilizing relations and to some extent enhancing the island's security. In late 2011, Ma Ying-Jeou announced that if he were re-elected, he would start his political negotiations to end hostilities or conclude a peace deal with Beijing, but those policies were later canceled by him.

Despite Ma Ying-Jeou's declared 'rapprochement' policy with China, polemics intervention remain. First, the reconciliation between the KMT and the CCP has strengthen Ma Ying-Jeou's policies by Taiwan's main opposition group, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the entire 'green camp' contested if there is no formal independence or the two lands are separated by retaining full rights as a nation (Kan, 2014). Second, the economic benefits to Taiwan from rapprochement with China were neither visible nor evenly distributed. The policy has favored politically important sectors (such as fruit farming) and, in general, large companies over small businesses. Third, it looks to promote its economic and political ties with China, but sometimes Ma Ying-Jeou's government is also worried about China's interests. For example, he restricted the entry of Beijing's opponents into Taiwan, avoiding encounters with Chinese dissidents such as 'Barefoot Lawyer' Chen Guangcheng, who took refuge in the United States in 2012 (J. R., 2013).

During the eight-year tenure, President Ma Ying-Jeou and former Chinese President Hu Jintao have sought to build a close and warm relationship with the KMT government and the business people involved. In general, Xi Jinping's strategy towards Taiwan does not deviate from his predecessors. Xi Jinping continues to emphasize their economic and social relations, expanding relations with all segments of Taiwanese society, including the DPP and the independence-leaning green camp aimed at winning the hearts and minds of Taiwanese. For China, securing China's borders is a closely related goal. The CCP, however, cannot establish official relations with the DPP as long as the party still applies the 1992 Consensus and future resolutions of Taiwan 1999. Despite its patience, however, Beijing is doing everything in its power to integrate Taiwan into the mainland and narrow the island's room for maneuver. Beijing has never forgotten its ultimate goal in order to reunite with Taiwan (Cabestan, 2016).

The United States' Intervention Towards Cross Strait Relation

In this case, Taiwan and other great powers other than China, the United States of course, become a container for protecting countries that do not have the power to maintain conflict and the existence of power. The international system has always been troubled by various polemics that are difficult to resolve. It is undeniable that Taiwan and the United States have a very strategic and comprehensive relationship from economic, military and geopolitical aspects. The consequences that Washington can face will certainly have a very significant impact on China.

In order to promote foreign policy as a strategy to achieve national interests, sustainable cooperation is required. The complexity of every state will make it seek consistency of intervention and conflict management by establishing and maintaining relations with other countries. In this case, Taiwan and the United States certainly have the opportunity to promote connectivity and cooperative relations as political interests. By prioritizing the foreign policy of containment and engagement, the United States has carried out harmonious cooperation to achieve political goals. Washington's relationship with Taipei is due to Taiwan's different political system from China and their similarities on political foundation, which are democracy and liberalism.

In the framework of the description, cross-straits relation is dependent on several factors, such as (i) international system factors; (ii) interaction factor between the two parts of the force; and (iii) domestic political factors related to cross-straits relations (Wu, 2013). Dealing with domestic political problems of course requires bilateral interaction between countries as holders of political power. The political condition of the international system in which the United States supports Taiwan influences its internal politics. The greater power dependence between Washington and Taipei will reduce the United States intervention in Taiwan. In the condition of the international system which is uncertain, this could become a forum for countries to express their influence and strength in military, economic and diplomatic approaches. Dependence is the main problem that affects Taiwan's position. The United States' support towards Taiwan will influence China's degree of decision on the assertiveness of Taiwan's bureaucracy. It could affect Taiwan's leadership decision regarding the level of firmness that should be taken as a new policy for China's independence (Romberg, 2014).

However, in the case of Taiwan, the motive for the United States approach certainly causes Taiwan to feel dependent so that Taiwan can maintain interactions and influence of the United States. In addition, it is necessary to maintain harmonisation between China and Taiwan. This intention is to urge Taiwan to take an approach through persuasive negotiations to get the attention of the United States. Besides that, it also aims to push Taiwan's closeness to China towards treat actions that affect policies and future of the two countries. The three countries have a determination mechanism and political leader. This then illustrates that, when the United States decides to intervene in Taiwan, it must be through negotiation and correct decisions through diplomacy in order to obtain a ratification in the aspects of the economy, military and political system. When the United States intervenes from an economic context, there is a relationship of cooperation and political ratification of the system. It encourages cohesiveness and interdependence between Taiwan and the United States which intends to make China worry about taking rare policies to apply political interests. The authority possessed by the three international players certainly has interests which can become the principle for intervening with each other. The United States backed up Taiwan by participating in the World of Health Assembly (WHA) as an observer from 2009-2016 (Romberg, 2014). In this context, Washington expressed a warm attitude in justifying the needs of each country.

In 1985, the United States accounted for just over 48 percent of Taiwan's total export to the world, but this ratio dropped to 12 percent in 2015. Nevertheless, Taiwan is still the ninth largest goods trading partner for the United States with 63.74 billion USD in total commodity trade in 2015. Two-way trade in services totaled 20.3 billion USD, with 4.7 billion USD trade surplus in favor of the United States in the same year (Chow et al., 2017). According to Department of Commerce, the United States exports of goods and services to Taiwan supported an estimated 217,000 jobs in 2014 (Chow et al., 2017). Besides trade relations, Washington and Taipei are deepening their relations with scientific, technological and cultural exchanges and also agreed on several bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding to promote and regulate relations between both countries.

China's Policy Toward the United States

Several factors explain the changing behavior of China's foreign policy. One of them is the establishment of the "Market System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" in 1992 by the Chinese Communist Party. It provides a predictable commitment to reforming market-oriented economies. Since then, the central government launched a series of massive reforms, including finance, banking, budgeting, taxation, trade, state-owned enterprises, and administrative organizations (Wong, 2001). President Clinton passed the United States-China Relations Act of 2001, which provided for Beijing's trade relations with the United States and paved the way for China to join the World Trade Organization in 2001. From 2002 to 2005, China fully implemented World Trade Organization

(WTO) commitments and effectively promoted well-designed, market-oriented and rules-based economic and trade liberalization, leading to significant improvements in the transparency of trade laws and regulations and management of trade policies (Bin, 2015).

China is taking steps to implement market access commitments according to the schedule set by the WTO, including reducing tariffs, removing non-tariff barriers, and expanding market access services for foreign providers. In particular, China binds all tariffs including the Most Favorable Nations (MFN) tariffs which is set to fall from an average of 15.6 percent in 2001 to 9.7 percent in 2005. With a decrease in tariffs for manufactured goods from 14.3 percent to 8.9 percent and several sectors such as manufacturing, automotive and auto parts, textiles and clothing, and Information Technology products, they experienced a significant reduction in tariffs. In terms of non-tariff barriers, most import permits, import quotas and special tender requirements were removed before January 2005. China made a broad service liberalization commitment that is unusual with the developing country average. This covers more than 100 over 160 sectors on the General Agreement on Trade in Service (GATS) list, especially in areas of large commercial significance such as banking, securities, insurance, telecommunications, retail services and distribution (Chen & Whalley, 2014).

China's trade liberalization reform momentum has slowed since 2006, due to domestic criticism of China's weakness in the WTO and a lack of consensus within the Chinese government on market-oriented economic reform priorities, particularly on how to deal with state-owned enterprises. During this period, the average tariff was not significantly reduced. However, more tariff quotas were abolished and in 2008 only very limited items, such as grain, sugar, wool, cotton and fertilizers, were subject to tariff quota restrictions. With the reshuffle of trade barriers in China's export market after accession to the WTO, China's exports increased rapidly, and therefore led to a huge increase in the trade surplus. The share of the current account surplus to GDP reached its historical peak of 11 percent in 2007. In 2011, the United States trade deficit with China increased from 273.1 billion USD in 2010 to 295.5 billion USD. This increase accounted for three-quarters of the growth in the United States trade deficit. In March, Washington submitted a request for a consultation with China at the WTO on its restrictions on exporting metal. The United States and its allies argue China's quotas violate international trade norms (Choukroune, 2012).

In 2014, the United States court charged five Chinese hackers with alleged links to the Chinese people's liberation army for stealing trading technology from the United States' company. Washington reveals evidence that Chinese hackers are behind the information theft breach of twenty-two million federal employees at this time (Williams, 2014). In March 2018, the United States Vice-president Mike Pence delivered a speech about the Trump administration's policies towards China and the significant hardening of the United States' position. Mike Pence said Washington would prioritize competition over cooperation by using tariffs to combat "economic aggression". The Trump administration announces massive tariffs on Chinese imports, valued at 50 billion USD, in White House accusations of China's theft of the United States technology and intellectual property. After importing steel and aluminum, the measures targeted goods including clothing and some Chinese investment in the United States. Instead, China imposed retaliatory measures on various United States products, which ultimately sparked fears of a trade war between the world's largest economies (Perlez, 2018).

The Trump administration has again raised tariffs from 10 to 25 percent on 200 billion USD worth of Chinese goods. China retaliated by announcing plans to increase tariffs on the United States goods worth 60 billion USD. Trump believes the high fees imposed by the tariffs will force China to forge a deal that benefits the United States. Then, the Trump administration banned the United States companies from using foreign-made telecommunications equipment that could threaten national security, a move believed to target Huawei. The dynamics of the nearly two-year trade war between the United States and China finally found a trade agreement. The deal eases some of the United States tariffs on Chinese imports and binds China to purchase an additional 200 billion USD worth of American goods, including agricultural products and cars over the course of two years and China has also pledged to enforce intellectual property protection (Swanson, 2022).

China's Policy Towards Taiwan

The conditions of anarchy in the international system are of course very diverse from countries that have power in various fields. China is categorized as a major power. But it is not surprising if other countries also have power as a threat in seeing China's strength and its existence in the global stage. In this case, China's role through domestic and foreign policy is very diverse with its national principles. The implementation of China's policies for Taiwan cannot be separated from the influence and interaction. These two things will become a pattern in carrying out Chinese activities to influence policies towards Taiwan (Glaser, 2016).

In the international context, there are several China's policy strategy towards Taiwan (Wu, 2013), such as (i) China will create better relations with the United States so as to reduce the United States support for Taiwan; (ii) China has always created and built strong alliances with Russia to limit the interaction and influence of the United States in carrying out its principle mechanisms and directing the United States' political strategy to the Asian region, which is referred to as a cross-strategy issue; and (iii) China will make and choose risk-contingency with the first option, namely indirect-balancing, in which China will make enhanced military efforts to overcome the threatening state uncertainty, indirect-balancing refers to informal military action.

China's always updating the concept of an approach in carrying out policies to meet Beijing's interests and refers to China's national principles but it is undeniable that the foreign policy is certainly influenced by aspects of interaction. The interaction aspect is seen in the birth of a policy that can be carried out by China, in which the Taiwan issue regarding the cross-strategy certainly has an impact on China's domestic policy. Beijing's domestic policy is focused on improving the year framework concept as a form of mapping of a country that can be understood as a policy that will be pushed through agreements and ratifications in any field to carry out the foreign policy strategy. In carrying out interactions that can help to find solutions, some approaches can be taken by China such as political communication. In this case, China and Taiwan have always placed suspicions on each other. However, the initiative pushed by China is to create political interactions, thereby reducing Taiwan's suspicion. Furthermore, China has sensitive talks with Taiwan, such as confidence-building measures (CBM) and communication on political talks.

China's capacity has always reflected Beijing's existence in facing the presence of the United States. Politically, Beijing maintains very good relations with Taiwan and the United States. In domestic policy, countries that have big powers like China certainly have conflict management and have strategies in dealing with domestic and international problems. China with the "influence and interaction" approach certainly has a negotiation strategy. What is then interesting is the problem with Taiwan's attitude that China does not take a hard power approach. Taiwan has always been in a bandwagoning position. It is inconvenient for China if the relationship between the United States and Taiwan has continuous coordination from an economic aspect. Where this analysis is based on the concept of balance of threat, China has offensive power which refers to a combination of aggregate strength, geographical proximity to Taiwan and the potential for aggressive action. The greater size of China's offensive power, the more significant threats that arise from various countries, such as the United States.

Looking on China's policy towards Taiwan of course makes Taipei choose and position the risk-contingency option, namely the option that is targeted and chosen by Taiwan to reduce the risk of China's threat and the United States. Threats occur towards an economic or military aspect. This is then the approach China will take as a country that tries to promote influence and interaction with Taiwan. So it does not rule out if China's soft power conditions can put Taiwan in a balancing position. But Taiwan will prefer to cooperate with China as a policy to reduce risk and also choose to cooperate with countries that are not a source of threat. When China and the United States have taken a rare political turn to intervene, Taiwan certainly has a chance to negotiate. However, on a favorable basis, Taiwan repositioned itself and opted for re-maximization, in which Taiwan would state its stance, in this case the option to maximize the benefits of the aggressive power of China and the United States.

China and the United States Perception Towards Taiwan

China and the United States understand the Taiwan issue from a different perspective. Since the beginning, China has always viewed Taiwan as an integral part of its territory that cannot be separated from its jurisdictions. However, the historical experience of Taiwan is different from that of mainland China, making Taiwan unable to be managed in the same way as the mainland, so the Chinese government implemented a "One Country, Two Systems" policy (Cabestan, 2016). Meanwhile, the United States has never considered Taiwan as part of China. To Washington, Taiwan is not China, Taiwan is Taiwan, its political economy and socio-cultural system cannot be equated with China. Such views have been shaped in the mindset of the United States policymakers since World War II (Lin, 2020). Therefore, any form of interference from China to Taiwan must be contained by the United States. Washington interests in East Asia reinforce policies to protect Taiwan. Differences in views have made China and the United States relations often tense. However, the two countries continued to maintain harmonious relations between them by refraining from escalating into open conflict.

The history of Sino-the United States relations on the Taiwan issue stems from Washington support for the Nationalist government in the face of Japanese aggression on mainland China in the early 1940s. At the same time, Mainland China was engulfed in a civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists. Even though the United States was fully aware that the Nationalist government was corrupt and not supported by most of the Chinese people, but for ideological reasons, the United States continues to support the Nationalists to prevent the spread of communism (Xiao, 2001). As a result, when the Communist Revolution succeeded in overthrowing the Nationalist government and forming the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the United States decided to support the new government formed by the Nationalist group in Taiwan. The purpose of this support is to prevent the Communist Revolution from spreading throughout the world. Taiwan was used as a tool to achieve the United States' goal of containment of the spread of communism with foreign assistance reaching millions of US dollars.

The Korean War, which took place on June 25, 1950, was a momentum to direct the United States involvement in securing Taiwan. The war lasted until 1953 for the United States to change its strategy in the Taiwan Strait. Washington, which was originally passive, became active because it was concerned that Beijing's involvement would encourage the spread of communist ideology (Bush, 2003). In addition, Washington was worried that the Korean War would result in China's aggressiveness to occupy Taiwan. Furthermore, the United States President Harry Truman deployed Fleet VII to the Taiwan Strait and the China-Korea border. China saw this action as an invasion of its territorial sovereignty, so China sent its troops to Korea. In response to this, on December 8, 1950, the United States announced an economic embargo on China and it ended in 1971 (Tucker, 2009; Wang, 2006).

During the embargo period, Taiwan was used by the United States as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" to fight China with its communist revolution which was seen as a threat to Western capitalism. While the United States and China were enemies for two decades (1950-1971), the United States and Taiwan relations grew closer. This is indicated by the United States economic assistance to Taiwan reaching 2.2 billion USD. In addition, the United States provided military assistance to Taiwan amounting to 3.19 billion USD (Hu, 2000). Washington assistance further strengthened economic stability as well as the legitimacy of the Nationalist government in the early days of moving to Taiwan. In 1951-1965, the United States distributed financial assistance of 100 million USD to Taiwan each year. Through this assistance, Washington played a major role in increasing economic growth and strengthening its influence in Taiwan (Wang, 2006).

The close relationship between the Taiwanese and the United States troops was strengthened by the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty in December 1954, making Taiwan highly dependent on the United States and pushing Washington to become increasingly involved in the Taiwan Strait conflict (Lin, 2013). China accuses the United States-Taiwan defense agreement, placing Taiwan under the United States protection as an invasion of Chinese territory and a scenario to permanently separate Taiwan from China. In the 1970s and 1980s, the United States changed its strategy by moving closer to China to keep up with the Soviet Union in the Cold War. After the Soviet Union collapsed, in the early 1990s the United States again used Taiwan to counter China's rise. Nevertheless, both sides tried not to stir up hostilities in order to prevent war from happening (Wang, 2006). For the Taiwan issue, the United States needs to carefully map out how to achieve its goals without confronting China's interests. Furthermore, Washington should maintain a military presence by supporting Taiwan's defenses to prevent attacks while convincing Beijing that its weapons sales objectives and military presence are not aimed at supporting the separation between Taiwan and China (Chen, 2017).

Throughout the 1970s, the United States under the administrations of Richard Nixon (1969-1974) and Jimmy Carter (1977-1981) began to put the Taiwan issue aside and decided to approach China to stem

Soviet influence in the Cold War (Bush, 2003). On one occasion, Richard Nixon even said that “good relationship with China was more important than good relationship with the Soviet Union” (Mann, 1999). Therefore, after China’s seat on the United Nation Security Council was occupied by the Nationalist government, the Communist government took over in 1971, the United States transferred its sovereignty from Taipei to Beijing. Washington’s support for China’s sovereignty was shown by Richard Nixon during his visit to Beijing in 1972. This historic visit resulted in the Shanghai Communique agreement, one of which states “the United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China” (Hu, 2000). The peak of improvement between China-the United States relations occurred in 1979 when the two countries agreed to normalize diplomatic relations. Since then, the relations between the two countries have continued to improve even though they have fundamental differences (Wang, 2006).

The Taiwan issue remains an obstacle to China and the United States relations. Moreover, when Washington government normalized diplomatic relations with Beijing in 1979, the United States Congress counterbalanced by passing the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) on April 10, 1979. In TRA, it is said that “Washington would maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people in Taiwan” (TRA, 1979). This policy makes the issue of Taiwan even more complicated and complex because on the one hand the United States recognizes the One-China Policy according to the Shanghai Communique, but on the other hand the United States is obliged to protect Taiwan based on the mandate of the TRA (Yang, 2014). Responding to the ratification of the TRA, China raised its objection and questioned the United States commitment (Tucker, 2009). After normalization, China and the United States relations can be said to be harmonious and prone to conflict due to differences in attitudes towards the Taiwan issue. When Ronald Reagan was President of the United States (1981-1989), he made frequent statements of support for Taiwan. Reagan criticized President Jimmy Carter’s policy of normalizing relations with China as a surrender to Beijing, not a victory of diplomacy. Reagan explained that to restore diplomatic relations with the United States, China should recognize Taiwan’s independence (Tucker, 2009).

Reagan’s pro-Taiwan policies were continued by his successor, George H. W. Bush (1989-1993), by arming the Taiwan military. After the Cold War, Washington continued to sell weapons to Taipei. During 1990-2007, Washington played a major role in strengthening the ability of the Taiwanese army to control not only the Taiwan Strait but also the Taiwan Air Defense Identification Zone (TADIZ). In the same period, the democratization process began to be pushed by President Lee Teng-Hui, thus encouraging the pro-independence movement in Taiwan (Wang, 2006). Therefore, the United States is increasingly supporting Taiwan with its close relationship between the two. President Lee Teng-Hui’s visit to the United States is embodied in a speech at his alma mater, Cornell University, on June 7, 1996. Throughout history, this is the first visit of a Taiwanese president to the United States. In his speech, Lee Teng-Hui urged China to follow the democratic model developed by Taiwan. The Doctor of agricultural economics, graduated from Cornell University (1968), emphasized that Taiwan is a sovereign country, not just the successor to the Qing dynasty which was overthrown by the Nationalists in 1911. China responded to Lee Teng-Hui’s visit with great anger. Beijing accuses the Bill

Clinton administration (1993-2000) of deliberately using Taiwan to undermine China, politically and economically.

As a result, China withdrew its ambassador from the United States, canceled the defense minister's state visit to Washington, postponed a meeting on arms control with the United States delegation, ended cross-Strait dialogue, and refused to approve a new United States Ambassador. The most stressful thing was that China deployed its military force to the Taiwan Strait, resulting in a regional crisis (Tucker, 2009). Quickly, the United States sent two warships to protect Taiwan. A war did not happen, but the tensions in the Taiwan Strait reflect the uncertainty of China-the United States relations. Washington action appears to be merely intended as a symbolic message to China, such as (i) the United States is consistent in maintaining the existence of Taiwan through strengthening its armed forces, and (ii) Taiwan is the United States strategic partner to maintain regional stability while safeguarding Washington's interests in the Western Pacific (Yang, 2014).

Recognizing the dangers of the United States intervention, after 1996, China accelerated weapons modernization by placing Taiwan as the main target. China is shifting from deterrent to coercive strategy. The purchase of war equipment from Russia was significantly increased. At the same time, the United States arms sales to Taiwan were increasing. Washington is committed to strengthening Taiwan's military so that it is able to defend itself from possible Chinese attacks, so Taipei has high confidence in negotiating with Beijing (Tucker, 2009). Besides standing by in the Taiwan Strait, China began to develop closer ties with the United States through "new type of great power relations" launched in October 2009. In line with the new pattern of mutually beneficial relations, in February 2012, Vice President Xi Jinping visited the United States and declared that China and the United States should establish "a new type of great power relations" which is unprecedented and informs the future". Three months later, in the Fourth of the United States and China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED), President Hu Jintao said that "advance mutually beneficial" and "win-win cooperation" as pillar from "new type of great power relations". In a meeting with President Barack Obama in June 2013, Xi Jinping who replaced Hu Jintao as president summarized the substance of "new type of great power relations" in three concepts, namely (i) neither a confrontation nor conflict; (ii) mutual respect; and (iii) win-win cooperation (Lu, 2014).

However, China's initiative to develop a new pattern of closer relations has not deterred the United States from arming Taiwan. In September 2011, the United States and Taiwan agreed to a 5.9 billion USD F-16 aircraft modernization package (Lowther, 2011). For the United States, selling these weapons will increase the "survivability, reliability and combat capability" of the Taiwanese army. The United States believes that this policy contributes to the stability of the Taiwan Strait. However, the Deputy Prime Minister of China, Zhang Zhijun strongly protested and stated that "the wrong attitude by the United States side will inevitably undermine bilateral relations as well as exchanges and co-operation in military and security areas" (Zhao, 2011). Zhang Zhijun added that "China strongly urges the United States to be fully aware of the high sensitivity and serious harm of the issue, seriously treat the solemn stance of China, honour its commitment and immediately cancel the wrong decision".

Hickey (2014) argues that the United States continues its security relationship with Taiwan for six reasons. First, the United States remains committed to running TRA and ensuring Taiwan has a strong defense capability. Second, arms sales are needed to keep pace with China's increasing military budget. Third, the democratization of Taiwan encourages the United States to protect Taipei. Fourth, arms sales to promote cross-strait reconciliation because it allows for equal bargaining power between Taipei and Beijing. Fifth, the United States wants to prove that Taiwan really appreciates a commitment so that it is expected to increase credibility for other regional alliance countries. And sixth, the United States views arms sales as not a violation of the Shanghai Communique because Beijing has deployed 1,400 ballistic missiles to intimidate Taiwan. In addition, Hickey (2014) also argues that in contrast China sees arms sales in six views. First, arms sales are a form of intervention and could threaten China's sovereignty. Second, arms sales distort prospects for peace by reducing Taipei's initiative to negotiate. Third, arms sales further strengthened the pro-independence movement. Fourth, arms sales will not increase Taiwan's confidence in negotiating with China because when a similar policy was implemented in 2001, there was no significant progress in cross-Strait relations. Fifth, it should reduce arms sales according to its promise, the United States has actually violated this promise by selling weapons of up to 50 billion USD since 1979. And sixth, weapons from the United States will not have an impact on the balance of power between Taiwan and China.

In the future, the United States is likely to send weapons to Taiwan regardless of objections from China. Washington is trying to maintain the status quo by exploiting the advantages of the problems in the Taiwan Strait. On the one hand, the United States supports Taiwan's political developments, including taking advantage of the profits from arms sales to ward off China's rise. On the other hand, the United States wants to maintain peace in Asia by avoiding actual war in the Taiwan Strait. So far, the United States has managed to balance the two goals. However, if not managed properly, the conflict will lead to a major war in Asia.

Conclusion

International relations are always occupied by countries that have variations that carry strategic concepts from different countries. The presence of the state in international relations undoubtedly adorns an anarchist atmosphere which is a concern for countries. The Southeast Asian region to the European continent has certainly become a focus place for the major powers. Geopolitically, Taiwan has problems that are of concern to interested countries. Starting from the very complex issue of Taiwan, of course, it cannot be separated from various countries that have national interests. In this case, Taiwan and major power other than China, namely the United States of course, become a means of protecting countries that do not have the power to maintain conflict and the existence of power.

The international system is always adorned with various polemics that are difficult to resolve. It cannot be denied that Taiwan and the United States have a very strategic and comprehensive relationship from economic, military and geopolitical aspects. It would be inconvenient for China to have the relationship between the United States and Taiwan have continuous coordination from an economic aspect. Through cooperation and mutual interest, the United States backed up Taiwan in participating in the World Health Assembly (WHA) as an observer from 2009-2016... In this context, Washington expresses a warm attitude in upholding the needs of each country.

China and the United States keep the issue of Taiwan in a status quo because it benefits both countries. With the "One

Country, Two Systems" policy, Beijing strongly influences Taiwan, especially after the CSSTA has been agreed. The pro-China policies supported by the KMT government are a guarantee that Taiwan will continue to maintain close ties with China. Thus, China does not need to force Taiwan to reunify. Because, if that happens, the United States will respond harshly and threaten interference. For Washington, the current situation is still very favorable because it can still control Taiwan with economic and military assistance based on the Taiwan Relation Act (TRA). In the status quo, Beijing and Washington try to avoid open conflict and end up in war. For both countries, regional stability is essential to secure their strategic interests. A stable East Asian region can potentially increase the volume of trade between the two countries. Therefore, despite having experienced an arms crisis in the Taiwan Strait in 1996, China and the United States remain harmonious. Thus, a future war is unlikely.

The balance of threat theory gives perspective on the dynamics of the two rivalries of the United States and China across the Taiwan Strait. The theory helps explain the role of the United States in composing the balance of threat in the issue and how the country could maintain that position in the area. The different interests between the United States and China on claiming Taiwan's sovereignty make both countries look for ways to reach a balance of power. In addition, Beijing and Washington have not stopped trying to put Taipei into their orbit of influence that will result in conflict. Similar to the great imperialist powers of the past, the two countries view Taiwan as a strategic area. Its geographic position between East and Southeast Asia does not only make it a potential fortress, but also as an economic base in Asia. As a result, the United States continues to provide economic and military assistance to Taiwan. Meanwhile, China continues modernizing its weapons and liberalizing trade relations with Taiwan.

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SỰ ĐỐI ĐẦU GIỮA HOA KỲ - TRUNG QUỐC VÀ TÁC ĐỘNG LÊN MỐI QUAN HỆ GIỮA WASHINGTON - BẮC KINH VỚI LỊCH SỬ PHỨC TẠP CỦA ĐÀI LOAN

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Tóm tắt: Sử dụng thuyết Cân bằng mối đe dọa và phương pháp nghiên cứu định tính, bài viết này tập trung phân tích những tác động của sự đối đầu Mỹ-Trung lên mối quan hệ của hai nước này đối với lịch sử phức tạp của Đài Loan. Cả Hoa Kỳ và Trung Quốc đều có quan điểm khác nhau về vấn đề Đài Loan. Trung Quốc coi Đài Loan trong lịch sử là một phần của mình. Tuy nhiên, việc Đài Loan tan rã khiến một số người dân nước này không cảm thấy mình là một phần của Trung Quốc. Hoa Kỳ sau đó đã lợi dụng điều này để can thiệp và mở rộng ảnh hưởng ở khu vực Đông Á từ những năm 1950. Từ đó, lãnh thổ Đài Loan trở thành chiến trường để Hoa Kỳ và Trung Quốc tranh giành tầm ảnh hưởng trong khu vực. Đạo luật Quan hệ Đài Loan (TRA) năm 1979 tạo khung pháp lý để Washington tiếp tục bán vũ khí cho Đài Loan. Mặt khác, Bắc Kinh đã chủ động mở cửa thị trường tự do với Đài Bắc theo Hiệp định Thương mại dịch vụ xuyên eo biển (CSSTA) vào năm 2013. Bài viết này gợi ý Bắc Kinh và Washington kiềm chế để không leo thang thành một cuộc xung đột mở dẫn đến chiến tranh. Do đó, một cuộc chiến tranh trong tương lai là điều khó có thể xảy ra.

Từ khóa: Đạo luật Quan hệ Đài Loan của Hoa Kỳ, Hiệp định Thương mại dịch vụ xuyên eo biển của Trung Quốc, Đài Loan, lịch sử phức tạp, Đông Á

FACTORS AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION AT MULTI-MEDIA ROOMS: FROM LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: This study is to explore the main factors affecting the quality of consecutive interpretation of English majored students at School of Languages and Tourism (SLT), Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI). The data for this paper is mainly collected from a semi-structured interview which was adapted from the research by Chunli et al. (2021). The researchers interviewed 4 lecturers at SLT, then compared the answers with an in-depth analysis and review of common errors in students' interpretation in the final test of the 7th semester which was assessed by the criteria for interpreting assessment proposed by Zwischenberger (2010). The research findings indicated that language competence, interpreting techniques, and psychological elements had great influence on the quality of students' consecutive interpretation. Good preparation, avoiding perfectionism and practice are key points for students to improve the consecutive interpretation quality. The paper, hopefully, brings deeper understanding of consecutive interpretation as well as helpful information for lecturers and researchers in language study.

Keywords: quality, consecutive interpretation, semi-structured interview, errors

1. Introduction

Interpreting is a difficult and stressful job that not everyone who graduated from foreign language majors wants to or is willing to do. Christoffels and Groot (2004) affirmed that this job requires interpreters to comprehend, process and produce languages at the same time. The demand for skilled interpreters is always on the rise, especially in the context of globalization. Interpreters seem to play a vital role in negotiation, product launch campaigns, conferences, speeches, etc. Consecutive interpretation (CI) is more common and accurate than simultaneous interpretation because it allows "interpreters to take notes to support memory skills retrieving what was said" (Gile, 2001). In fact, CI is usually placed with greater importance in interpreter training courses at universities of foreign language studies. At School of Languages and Tourism (SLT), Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI), the design of textbook and curriculum has mostly focused on CI with many supportive activities for students to practice helpful skills for interpreters (listening comprehension and memorizing skills; listening comprehension and note-taking

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skills, presentation and interpretation in talk shows or simulations) and to practice interpreting (unilateral interpreting, bilateral interpreting, etc.). In addition, two new multi-media classrooms were equipped with Canadian Smartclass software, a copyright computer-assisted language learning system to mainly serve interpreting subjects. Lecturers, including the researchers who are in charge of teaching interpretation, were trained directly by technical staff from Sao Mai Education Group in order to ensure that they are excellent at utilizing dedicated features of the software for interpreting classes. Interpreting practice tasks are assigned to students via Smartclass software at multi-media rooms for face-to-face training and via learning management system (LMS) for online training and self-study.

The quality of CI has been discussed in many studies such as a study by Arumí Ribas (2012) on problems and strategies in CI and Chunli et al. (2021) on factors influencing the quality of CI from the perspective of interpreter. There is little or even no research on factors affecting the quality of students' CI when they are trained at school of foreign language studies. As interpretation lecturers for more than 10 years, the researchers would like to find out factors affecting their students' CI quality at multi-media rooms. To reach this goal, this paper addresses the following research questions: (1) what factors influence the quality of CI of English majored students the most? and (2) what are possible suggestions to improve CI skills for English majored students?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Consecutive Interpretation (CI)

CI was defined as "a process in which adequate information is orally presented and transferred into another linguistic and cultural system" (Hu, 2006). Gile (2009) proposed that there are two phases of CI namely the comprehension phase (or listening and note-taking phase) and the speech production (or reformulation) phase. This is shared by Taherian and Janfeshan (2021) that by performing CI, the interpreter listens to the speaker and after one segment she/he renders the speech into the target language.

CI is normally assumed to be so demanding with various skills and effort. Weihe (2007) indicated that professional interpreters need such skills as short-term memory, note-taking, theme identifying, reorganization of the target language, public speaking and so on. Among these skills, Lu and Chen (2013) emphasized on short-term memory and Harto (2014) showed on note-taking activity.

2.2. The Quality of CI

As to the quality of CI, it is quite difficult to define and bring to the light a unified norm although many language scholars have tried to establish acceptance criteria for interpreting assessment. Gazone (2002) agreed that different groups might have different perceptions for quality. Moser-Mercer (1996) stated that optimum quality is the complete and accurate rendition of the original and tries to capture all extralinguistic information. Kurz (2001) emphasized users' satisfaction through questionnaire in conference, for example, is the key to assess the quality of CI. This idea was shared by Grbíc (2008) who described the quality in CI as fitness for purpose. Furthermore, he also added two other dimensions to define quality in CI as exception and quality as perfection. It is clear that there are no universal criteria to define the quality of CI since it is dynamic and relative (Chunli et al., 2021).

2.3. Factors Influencing the Quality of CI

As to factors influencing the quality of CI, Youhua (2009) showed three aspects in his study including logic thinking, accent and intonation, and culture elements. According to Andrew Gilles (2019), there are fourteen factors relating to CI such as presentation, analysis of the source language, note-taking, reformulation, effort management in consecutive, protocols and practicalities, etc. In this study, the researchers tried to find out factors affecting the quality of students' CI by interviewing lecturers and reviewing students' interpretation in the final test of the 7th semester. The interview questions were adapted from the research by Chunli et al. (2021) and the review was based on interpreting assessment criteria proposed by Zwischenberger (2010) with three main criteria including content-related criteria, form-related criteria and delivery-related criteria used at Faculty of English Language (FEL), SLT as the marking scheme for interpretation subjects. Content-related criteria consist of sense consistency with original, logical cohesion and completeness. Form-related criteria is linked to correct terminology, correct grammar and appropriate style. Delivery-related criteria cover fluency of delivery, lively intonation, pleasant voice, synchronicity and native accent.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted with the participation of 4 interpretation lecturers at FEL, SLT who graduated with Master's Degree of English Linguistics from Hanoi University and University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi. Two of them have more than 10 years of teaching interpretation, the others have more than 5 years. One out of 4 has experience of conference interpretation and is now a freelance interpreter. The researchers initially planned to conduct a focus-group interview to obtain more interaction and discussion; however, this was impossible due to differences in their teaching timetables and personal schedules. As a result, individual interviews were made with 4 lecturers in turn, around 30 minutes each. Then, data was collected in accordance with procedures of data analysis in qualitative research. The researchers realized the limitation of the small-sized population of respondents which is less likely to generalize to the entire interpretation lecturers of other faculties of languages at SLT in particular and the ones at other educational institutions of language studies in general. To examine and judge the respondents' answers as well as to increase the reliability and value of the findings, the researchers reviewed common errors with an in-depth analysis in students' interpretation in the final test of the 7th semester when students completed 3 semesters of interpretation training in a row. Another reason for the review is that the researchers in this study are also interpretation lecturers who have been directly teaching and marking all interpretation final tests at FEL, SLT.

3.2. Research Instruments

A descriptive qualitative research method was applied with semi-structured interview and document analysis from students' interpretation audios in the final test of the 7th semester.

As for interview, the researchers adapted the interview questions from the study by Chunli et al. (2021). Participants labeled L1 to L4 were asked to find out their opinions on students' passion and motivation for learning interpretation as a subject; the quality of students' CI, factors influencing the quality of their CI the most and suggestions to improve CI skills for their students. Teaching methods and other elements such as students' self-study and learning conditions which are supposed to partly affect student's CI were not clearly mentioned in this study because they are discussed at weekly meetings among interpreting lecturers. Semi-structured interview was utilized since the researchers would like to guide participants with a flexible interview protocol and supplement them with follow-up questions, probes and comments or details to collect open-ended data as well as understand participants' thoughts, feelings and gain personal sharing in interpretation teaching and assessment. The semi-structured interview consists of 4 open-ended questions which were asked and discussed in around 30 minutes for each participant. The data was recorded and noted by the researchers at the same time.

The researchers reviewed and analyzed common errors in students' interpretation in the final test of the 7th semester which includes four 80-100-word news (2 in English; 2 in Vietnamese) assigned to students through the Smartclass system at multi-media rooms. They take the test in 24 minutes in total. To be more specific, students have to perform one interpreting task into target language within 6 minutes, following such steps as open the test with the assigned test code, listen, memorize and take-notes, analyze and decode the messages, record the interpreting version and complete the task. Students must be familiar with the system, show interpreting skills and save the best interpreting version for marking.

The authors based on the criteria for interpreting assessment proposed by Zwischenberger (2010) to collect the common errors, then made a comparison with the answers from the interview to find out the answer for the research questions.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers used audio recorders to collect data from the interview, then a soundscriber program to transcribe digitized sound files. During the interviews, the researchers did take notes of the key points and asked for further explanation and clarification from participants after the interview. Proofreading was done to clear any grammar errors and spelling mistakes.

As the main part in the procedures of data analysis, the following activities were carefully done: (1) transcribing data with the help of a soundscriber program; (2) proofreading to examine and correct mistakes; (3) labeling and coding relevant words and phrases like quality, factors, influence, improvement; (4) description and explanation from participants; (5) participants' point of view; (6) categorizing codes and data.

The review of common errors and an in-depth analysis in students' interpretation in the final test of the 7th semester was conducted with the marking scheme based on the criteria for interpreting assessment proposed by Zwischenberger (2010). Errors are counted, noted and categorized according to 3 main criteria in the marking sheet in which content-related criteria, form-related criteria, delivery-related criteria accounted for 60%, 20% and 20% respectively of the whole students' marks. This proportion is agreed and approved in the interpreting test specifications at FEL, SLT. A comparison between answers from the interviews and the review of common errors was made to reach the possible answers for the research paper.

4. Findings and Discussions

The paper shows the main factors directly and indirectly influencing the quality of students' CI at FEL, SLT and proposes some possible suggestions to improve students' CI skills.

Question 1: What factors influence the quality of CI of English majored students the most?

The researchers applied the descriptive data analysis from semi-structured interview (the first 3 questions) and students' interpretation audios in the final test of the 7th semester to find out the main factors influencing the quality of students' CI. The key factors include students' limited language competence of both English and Vietnamese; their poor interpreting techniques especially listening comprehension skills, memorizing, note-taking and decoding skills and re-expressing skills; and interpreting test anxiety. However, there is no doubt that interpreting is seen as a difficult job requiring many skills, techniques and experiences. Therefore, this may explain why students showed lack of passion and motivation or even a negative attitude towards interpretation subjects.

The above-mentioned factors are respectively represented as follows.

Language competence

Language competence plays a crucial role in interpreting fields. Interpreters are expected to be masters of both target language (TL) and source language (SL) in order to render oral translation accurately and naturally. This factor is mentioned in the answers of most respondents in the research. For the first question in the interview "*Do you think your students like a job as an interpreter*", most of the lecturers affirmed that students are not interested in this job. More interestingly, students' limited language competence unveiled the truth behind "their no passion" or "willingness for this job" (L2 and L4). It is important to explore whether students like to work as interpreters or not because passion will play a large role in the determination of job satisfaction and better productivity in the future (Westover et al ., 2010). "Students are quite not interested in in-class activities. I think they participate in the class with a must, not a passion. They may not want to work in the interpreting field" (L2) or "Interpreting seems not to be their dream job" (L3). It can be seen that students at FEL, SLT do not have enough passion as well as motivation to learn interpreting and are not willing to do that job in the future.

When it comes to the quality of students' CI in the second question in the interview, all participants indicated that the quality of students' CI in FEL, SLT is not really good. They even said students are not themselves when they perform interpreting tasks. They fail to express the whole message of SL into TL. L1 said "some students do not complete their interpreting tasks. They may lack ideas or miss information." Some students failed to interpret because they "catch wrong message, wrong information, especially gist, names, numbers, figures" (L2) or they "sometimes cannot catch the whole message" (L4). Students showed "rather limited language competence of both English and Vietnamese in interpreting assignment" because their voice, intonation and pronunciation is not attractive enough. "Their voices are not really smooth and fluent. It seems that they are reading words by words" (L1); "some common words are pronounced wrongly in their interpreting"; "words appear totally different and abnormal" (L3) and "lack of naturalness is noted with grammatical errors, poor speech delivery" (L4).

Language competence is considered the main factor that directly influences the quality of students' CI in this research. For the third question "*In your opinion, what factors do you think influence the quality of students' CI the most?*", L1 said that students at FEL, SLT have 5 terms to learn English skills but their language competence is still limited at all interpreting subjects "from basic to advanced levels" and "listening and speaking skills have direct influence on their interpreting ability. If they listen and speak well, not only English, but also Vietnamese, they are confident in performing interpreting tasks." This is agreed by L3 because students are "not very confident in speaking English and their pronunciation and grammar accuracy are not really good." L2 emphasized the importance of understanding in the interpreting process "Without understanding the message, interpreting seems to be nonsense." This showed that language competence of both SL and TL is essential in the interpreting tasks and students need to "accumulate knowledge of both English and Vietnamese languages, enrich vocabulary as well as gain grammar accuracy."

By reviewing students' CI in the final test of the 7th semester, the researchers noticed that among 3 criteria proposed by Zwischenberger (2010), students usually fail to get full marks (60% of the test) for content-related criteria. For confidentiality, students' interpretation versions in the test are not fully shown in detail in this research. Due to poor listening comprehension skills, students cannot catch the gist of the messages, then generate an acceptable and completed "story" in their interpreting version. Furthermore, many utterances in students' interpreting are not closely linked and logical. Numbers and figures are usually interpreted wrongly. The cardinal numbers and ordinal numbers are sometimes misinterpreted. This leads to some cases with correct numbers in notes but incorrect numbers or messages in their interpreting performances. For instance, "Nhân kỷ niệm quốc khánh ngày 2/9, …" was noted as "2/9" or "2-9" but interpreted as "on the 9th February"; "in the National Dependent Day" or "in the two of September", etc. Another problem is the misuse of the different words between notes and interpreting due to their rather similar pronunciation as "pollution" and "population", "product" and "produce", "experience" and "experiment", etc.

For form-related criteria, students often make grammatical mistakes on preposition of time, tenses or use inappropriate word choice. For example, the word "tổ chức" in "Ngày 7/8, Trường Cao đẳng… đã tổ chức tư vấn trực tuyến" is interpreted as "organize", "organizes", "has organized." The word "chance" and "develop" in "the chance that a man will develop lung cancer in his lifetime is…" are interpreted as "cơ hội" and "phát triển."

For delivery-related criteria, students were unlikely to show their fluency of delivery, lively intonation, pleasant voice in the interpreting performances. For Vietnamese-English interpretation, many students cannot deliver the whole message fluently and properly. The researchers noticed many interpreting versions with long pause (even more than 10 seconds) or with repetition of words, phrases, even sentences or whole messages. These criteria were noted better in students' Vietnamese-English interpretation.

It seems that students are not aware of what they are delivering. This showed students' limited language knowledge of both English and Vietnamese along with unprofessional interpreting techniques and anxiety during the test.

Interpreting techniques

Along with language competence, interpreting techniques are the factor that students need to apply flexibly and effectively in their interpreting tasks. This job "is quite difficult and challenging" and "requires many skills and experiences" (L2 and L4) that students "don't want to work in this field", don't see it as "their dream job" or are "willing to pursue." Respondents said that low quality of students' CI at FEL, SLT is partly attributed to lack of interpreting skills, especially memorizing, decoding, note-taking and re-expressing skills. Many "choose dictation before interpreting" because they are "afraid of losing details and interpreting wrongly" (L1). Students cannot clearly distinguish "the difference between interpreting and translation" so they are not "quick in mind and quick in speaking" as well as "catch the words that appear first in their mind and deliver it naturally" (L3).

Students at FEL, SLT are advised to regularly practice interpreting techniques from easy-to-difficult levels, from Vietnamese (their mother tongue) to English. However, due to lack of "daily learning and practice" (L4), many students apply no helpful skills for interpreters "note horizontally, rarely use symbols and abbreviations, some even note the full sentence with nonsense words" (L2). There is also a difference between the effectiveness of applying interpreting techniques to cope with English or Vietnamese news. For Vietnamese-English interpretation, students can "understand the whole message" but "don't know how to deliver it in English smoothly and naturally." For Vietnamese-English interpretation, they "can't follow the message" and "feel worried when missing words" so "they are not willing to do interpreting tasks without jotting down all words" (L2). Students seem to "convey information incorrectly or inadequately" from English to Vietnamese and their "level of naturalness is marked with grammatical errors, poor speech delivery" from Vietnamese to English (L4).

The researchers reviewed students' CI in the final test of 7th semester and noticed that poor application of interpreting techniques makes students unable to fulfill content-related criteria. They cannot find sense consistency with original messages or they cannot complete their interpreting tasks. The messages in the SL are interpreted wrongly or inadequately. The reason is mainly noted that students stick their minds on TL. They cannot memorize key words and messages and know how to analyze and decode the messages, what to paraphrase, what to omit. As a result their interpreted messages are somehow different or even inferior to the original message. For instance, "Humanity is set to enter a new era of transport" is interpreted as "Nhân loại được thiết lập tiến vào một thời kỳ giao thông mới" or "Tính nhân văn được đưa ra khi con người tham gia giao thông." Note-taking is also the technique that students often fail because they are likely to note horizontally instead of vertically, note without symbols or abbreviations, etc. More interestingly, the researchers found that the information in students' notes is closely linked to their listening comprehension and memorizing skills. Some students stop the audios regularly to dictate all words, so 6 minutes is not enough for them to fulfill one interpreting task. Students' notes during the test are also collected to serve for marking. To be more specific, students' interpreting points are deducted if notes with full dictation of SL or TL are noticed in their test papers. This regulation is given in order to make students apply interpreting techniques, especially note-taking skills in their interpreting test. In fact, note-taking supports memory skills, especially with numbers and figures. In the process of marking, the researchers found that incorrect notes can lead to bad interpreting. For example, "129" - the number of participants in an event is interpreted as 139, 159, 29, etc. With the numbers or figures with more digits, there are much more different versions in students' interpreting. On the other hand, some students cannot deliver the whole message into TL. They tried to get perfectionism in their test so that they rendered speech with a long pause to choose the best words, some recorded their voice several times without noticing the time allowance of 6 minutes for each interpreting tasks. This showed that students are unable to notice the nature of interpreting which is quick in mind and quick in speech.

Psychological elements

Interpreting is such a stressful and demanding job that most students at FEL, SLT are afraid of or not "willing to pursue" or do not consider it as their "dream job." This clearly leads to students' fear of interpreting jobs as well as learning it. During interpreting assignments, students may "feel worried when missing words" or "be afraid of losing details and interpret wrongly" (L1). They also "fear of time pressure and technical errors" There are some "silly mistakes" when recording the interpreting version such as forgetting "to click on record button" or clicking on "wrong test code" or even "ignoring the guidelines on topic they are going to interpret" (L2). L3 said that due to their poor pronunciation and grammar, they are "not very confident" and "fear a lot of things."

It is clear that most of the students at FEL, SLT are not suitable to work as interpreters because of internal and external reasons. The former may include lack of passion and motivation, limited language competence, and a negative attitude towards interpreting subjects (L1, L2). The latter may come from the fact that interpreting is seen as a difficult job requiring many skills, techniques and experiences. This reality explains why the number of graduates from FEL, SLT who work as interpreters is limited. In fact, interpreting requires learners not only to be good and experienced in two languages and cultures but also to have great passion for it (L3, L4). All respondents agreed with the point that students' language competence made a contribution to good or bad interpreting versions and that interpreting techniques greatly influenced the quality of students' CI. Of which, memorizing and note-taking skills, message decoding skills and re-expressing or delivery skills are clearly mentioned. In addition, students' psychology is an important element which was analyzed and shared by L1, L2 and L3.

From lecturers' explanations and reviewing students' interpretation in the final test of the 7th semester, there are 3 main factors influencing the quality of students' CI at FEL, SLT including language competence, interpreting techniques and psychological elements. It is clear that students' knowledge and language competence of both English and Vietnamese have great influence on their interpreting performances. Moreover, they need to practice more regularly the helpful skills for interpreters such as memorizing, note-taking skills as well as decoding and re-expressing skills to render the speech more naturally and beautifully. Students also need to prepare well psychologically to be ready in any interpreting assignment.

Question 2: What are possible suggestions to improve CI skills for English majored students?

The answers for the last question in the interview help the researchers find out suggestions for students at FEL, SLT to improve the quality of their CI. Students are advised to practice regularly and prepare well for interpreting assignments. Moreover, they should notice the differences between translation and interpretation to avoid perfectionism in re-expressing the messages into the TL.

Regular practice

All respondents shared a point that practice plays a vital role in improving students' quality of CI. L1 said that "practice makes perfect" and students cannot "interpret well if they do not practice helpful skills and techniques everyday even when they grasp all interpreting theory." L2 advised students to practice in order to "be ready and confident in interpreting assignments." L3 suggested that "students should practice a lot" because "regular practice helps students increase their interpreting speed and accuracy." This is shared by L4 that students should "practice every day, everywhere, by any means."

Respondents also suggested some useful techniques for students to apply on interpreting practice such as regular watching some programs or films with subtitles (L1 and L2), joining some international conferences at their school or in other universities (L3), applying shadowing techniques (L1), acting as instructors or assessors of interpreting tasks in groups (L4), or just simply making full use of interpreting tasks on LMS (L2 and L4) and repeating interpreting tasks many times (L4). They affirmed that these are useful and effective for students to practice interpreting every day to understand “more techniques like memorizing, note-taking, reorganizing and speech rendering techniques” and “the nature of interpreting” (L3). They may love interpreting more and “enrich their knowledge, entertain and study at the same time” (L2).

Avoid perfectionism

It is of importance that students have to understand the nature of interpreting, distinguish it from that of translation. L1 suggested that students should try shadowing to practice interpreting in order to “be quick in mind and speaking, avoid long pause or repetition to choose the most acceptable interpreting version.” This is agreed by L2 because “avoiding perfectionism” means “selecting suitable words or grammatical structures appears first” in students’ minds. By doing this, “speech and fluency” are ensured. L4 proposed students to act as assessors to “listen to many interpreting versions, practice more techniques” and “understand the nature of interpreting, stay away from selecting the best words.”

It is clearly seen that students should practice more and be themselves during interpreting tasks. They have to understand that utterance rendering helps people of two languages communicate to each other. This requires quickness, fluency and accuracy. As a result, there is no best interpreting, but acceptable one. By practicing regularly, their interpreting versions become more and more natural.

Good preparation

Interpreting is an art of rendering spoken utterances. In fact, rarely does a professional interpreter accept to interpret at an event without being provided necessary documents or related information. Preparation plays a decisive role in the success of interpreting assignments. L2 said that “good preparation helps students be more confident and comfortable” because they “understand the topic”, “equip themselves with terms and interpreting techniques.” Students can “enrich their knowledge” with some exercises like “watching famous English films” and “practice activities on LMS.” This idea was shared by other participants in this research. Watching TV programs like Talkvietnam, sharing Vietnam, and then TED talk, VOA, BBC News, BBC Breaking News English, etc. and applying the shadowing techniques enabled students to “improve not only English skills but also students’ language competence and knowledge on various topics” (L1). L3 suggested students join some international conferences to explore knowledge and techniques as well. L4 indicated that students should “prepare well for the topic” to perform successfully any interpreting task by playing the roles as assessors or instructors in group work activities at home and increasing self-study on LMS. It is obvious that preparation is one of the key factors for students to be confident and gradually master interpreting tasks. Good preparation decreases the level of fear among students because when they are well-equipped on the topics, especially terms and expressions, they can keep calm and act professionally as interpreters.

In short, none of the students can increase their language competence in both English and Vietnamese as well as master interpreting skills without practice. All respondents emphasized that students should prepare knowledgeably and psychologically for their interpreting assignments. Avoiding perfectionism which was proposed by L1, L3 and L4 is considered the solution for students to gain more natural interpreting versions as well as better psychology.

From the above lecturers' perspective along with the researchers' experiences in teaching and marking students' interpreting performances, there are some suggestions to help students improve the quality of CI. Firstly, practice is the key to make students improve the quality of CI quickly and effectively. By daily practice, students can enrich their knowledge, accumulate necessary skills and increase the level of naturalness in their interpreting assignments. Secondly, students should study individually, in pairs or in groups to prepare well for each lesson. Good preparation enables students to perform interpreting ability confidently and impressively. Finally, realizing the nature of interpreting, distinguishing it with translation theory also makes students avoid perfectionism in interpreting tasks. It is no exaggeration to say that interpreting is an art which requires learners to put great time and effort into grasping helpful skills, enriching knowledge and gaining more experiences.

5. Conclusion

The researchers tried to find out factors influencing the quality of students' CI by applying individual interviews with the review and analysis of students' interpretation audios in the final test of the 7th semester. The findings revealed that the quality of students' CI is greatly determined by interpreting techniques, psychological elements and language competence. To be confident and professional in rendering speech, students are advised to have good preparation, avoid perfectionism and practice more often.

This research paper is hopefully beneficial to scholars, lecturers and learners who are eager to master the art of interpreting as well as pursuing it as a dream job in the future. The results of the study take a closer look at the interpretation training field by clarifying factors which influence the quality of students' CI and summarizing useful suggestions from lecturers' perspective to improve the quality of students' CI.

However, some shortcomings from this study were anticipated due to the limitations of research instruments and participants. The researchers only collected data from lecturers' perspective, not from students. As a result, students' opinions on challenges, factors affecting the quality of their CI as well as their desires to learn CI better were not recorded and analyzed. Furthermore, the number of respondents in this research is limited with only interpretation lecturers at FEL, not interpretation lecturers from other faculties of language studies in SLT. Those limitations hopefully open doors to further research from the researchers themselves as well as other scholars in the coming time.

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Appendix 1

Semi-Structured Interview

1. Do you think your students like a job as an interpreter?
2. What's your opinion on the quality of consecutive interpretation of your students?
3. What factors do you think influence the quality of consecutive interpretation of your students the most?
4. What are your suggestions to improve consecutive interpretation skills for your students?

Appendix 2

Interview Transcription

1. Do you think your students like a job as an interpreter?

L1: No, I don't think so. Although many students like English and learn English from primary school, their English competence is quite limited. For some students, English linguistics is their second choice when they register for a university entrance exam. Some even haven't got any directions for their future jobs.

L2: I think only some in my classes. Because, you know, they do not finish their before-and-after-class-online interpreting tasks. They are quite not interested in in-class activities. I think they participate in the class with a must, not a passion. They may not want to work in the interpretation field.

L3: I think not many of my students like to work as interpreters. Actually, this job is quite difficult and challenging for them because it requires lots of skills and experience. As an interpretation lecturer for more than 10 years, I realized that there are less than 10 graduates from each intake at FEL, SLT actually works in translation and interpretation fields. Interpreting seems not to be their dream job.

L4: Well, you know, students now are quite practical. They might have had some part-time jobs when they were sophomores or juniors. They may find other suitable jobs as teachers, tour guides, receptionists, project assistants, secretaries, etc. Interpreting requires many skills and experiences that not any graduates are willing to pursue.

2. What's your opinion on the quality of your students' CI?

L1: Frankly speaking, not really good. Some students do not complete their interpreting tasks. They may lack ideas or miss information. Their voices are not really smooth and fluent. It seems like they are reading word by word. Sometimes, I feel no feelings or energy in their voice. However, I noticed that some students in each intake at FEL, SLT are good at interpreting and are able to pursue interpreting jobs in the future.

L2: Well, only some of my students showed ability in interpreting. Many admitted that it is hard to do interpreting tasks well because when they listen to Vietnamese news, they can understand the whole message but they don't know how to deliver it in English smoothly and naturally. However, for English-Vietnamese interpreting, they sometimes can't follow the messages, they feel worried when missing words so they are not willing to do interpreting tasks without jotting down all words. It is clear that they do not apply interpreting techniques and skills properly, especially memory skill and note-taking skill. Moreover, their language competence is limited as well. They catch wrong messages, wrong information, especially gist, names, numbers, figures.

L3: In my opinion, the quality is not good. I guess students are not really confident in their language competence, especially English. Their English pronunciation is bad, even some common words are pronounced wrongly in their interpreting audios. Sometimes, it makes me laugh to tears. If the words stand alone, they will pronounce it correctly. However, these words appear totally different and abnormal in their interpreting audios.

L4: I think the quality of students' CI is closely linked to their daily learning and practice. You know, practice makes perfect. My students admitted that they do not practice much at home so their quality of CI is not improved day by day. From my point of view, students do English – Vietnamese interpreting tasks better than Vietnamese – English Interpreting ones. For English - Vietnamese interpreting tasks, they sometimes cannot catch the whole message which leads to convey information incorrectly or inadequately. Proper names, numbers, figures are especially interpreted wrongly in many cases. For Vietnamese – English Interpreting assignments, the level of naturalness is marked with grammatical errors, poor speech delivery.

3. In your opinion, what factors do you think influence the quality of students' CI the most?

L1: I think they are language competence and interpreting techniques. Students at FEL, SLT have 5 terms to learn English skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Of which, listening and speaking have direct influence on their interpreting ability. If they listen and speak well, not only English, but also Vietnamese, they are confident in performing interpreting tasks. It is, however, undeniable that language competence of students at FEL, SLT is still limited when they come to interpreting subjects from basic to advanced levels. Moreover, interpreting techniques such as memorizing, note-taking, analyzing and deciphering messages are not paid great attention and practice. In my interpreting classes, I asked students to do it regularly but when it comes to the test, some of them choose dictation before interpreting. They were afraid of losing details and interpreting wrongly but they didn't know that dictation couldn't help them interpret well.

L2: Of course, interpreting techniques are key factors influencing the quality of students' CI. You know, some helpful skills such as memory, note-taking, analyzing and deciphering messages, but in the interpreting process, understanding is of much importance. Without understanding the message, interpreting seems to be nonsense. Students don't train themselves in memory and note-taking skills by exercises given by lecturers from the subject of Interpreting and Translation Theory. They still note horizontally, rarely use symbols and abbreviations, some even note the full sentence with nonsense words. They do not know how to connect ideas, gist from the news. Furthermore, I think psychology is an important part. My students fear of interpreting wrongly, fear of lacking time. Another one is fear of technical errors especially when students have to record their voice in the test. Sometimes, they make silly mistakes like forgetting to click on the record button or clicking on wrong test code or ignoring the guidelines on the topic they are going to interpret, etc.

L3: I think they are language competence and psychology. Even though students are in the 3rd year, they are still not very confident in speaking English. Their pronunciation and grammar accuracy are not really good. As a result, they fear a lot of things. Furthermore, they haven't clearly distinguished the difference between interpreting and translation. They spend much time on selecting the best words and structure during interpretation. They do not realize that interpreting requires them to be quick in mind and quick in speaking. Instead of choosing the best words or phrases, they had better catch the words that appear first in their mind and deliver it naturally.

L4: In my opinion, interpreting techniques or hints are the most important factors. After some years accumulating knowledge of both English and Vietnamese languages, enriching vocabulary as well as gaining grammar accuracy, students learn interpreting subjects. From the beginning, they are taught about interpreting theory, all techniques such as memorizing, note-taking, deciphering messages, etc. They must apply them on their interpreting performances which are of course, improved by daily learning and practice.

4. What are your suggestions to improve CI skills for your students?

L1: You know, practice makes perfect. This proverb is always true in any profession and interpreting is no exception. Students cannot interpret well if they do not practice helpful skills and techniques everyday even when they grasp all interpreting theory. Interpreting practice can be done in many ways from individual to pair-work or group work at home with the various interpreting sources on TV program, internet channels. I usually suggest to my students some common TV programs like Talkvietnam, sharing Vietnam. They should start practicing with the things around them, in Vietnam first. Then they increase their passion for English, curiosity about interpreting, and they can challenge themselves with some foreign programs like TED talk, VOA, BBC news, BBC Breaking News English, etc. Shadowing was proven to be a good technique to improve not only English skills but also students' language competency and knowledge on various topics. They can shadow a piece of news on TV, radio or internet and practice interpreting after that. This method also helps students realize the differences between translation and interpreting and be quick in mind and speaking, avoid long pause or repetition to choose the most acceptable interpreting version.

L2: In my opinion, students should prepare well for their interpreting tasks, from language delivery skills, interpreting skills to psychological elements. To be more specific, they need to show their understanding on the topics they are going to interpret. You know, the more they know about the topic, the better their interpretation is. Good preparation also helps students be more confident and comfortable during the interpreting assignments. On STL's learning management system, interpreting exercises are well-designed with before, -and-after-class activities. By practicing these tasks, students can equip themselves with terms, interpreting techniques to be ready and confident in interpreting assignments at lab rooms with face-to-face lessons with their lecturer. Students can also watch famous films in Vietnamese and English with subtitles to train themselves with interpreting or they can work in groups to share content of film once a week. This is quite effective to improve both speaking and interpreting skill, and students can enrich their knowledge, entertain and study at the same time.

L3: I suggest that students should practice a lot, of course. Practice is the key for them to be familiar with and gradually master the interpreting skills. However, recognizing the differences between translation and interpreting help students avoid perfectionism in their interpreting performances. This doesn't mean that they are advised to be careless in word choice or speech delivery but to be quick in mind selecting suitable words or grammatical structures appear first in their mind to ensure speech and fluency. Regular practice helps students increase their interpreting speed and accuracy. It is advisable for students to study with someone else, in pairs or in groups. They can learn from others and enrich their knowledge and techniques. One more interesting method is that students can join international conferences in Vietnam as participants. They can ask permission from their teachers or organizers. SLT, HaUI has recently been the organizer of many international conferences like VietTESOL, Asial CALL or EOP Education, etc.

L4: Students should practice every day, everywhere, by any means. Only by regular practice, are their interpreting skills and knowledge improved. SLT's lab rooms with internet connection and smart class software program for interpreting practice are available for them after class. They can interpret a piece of information many times until they feel satisfied with their interpretation. Before each face-to-face interpreting lesson with their lecturer, students should complete their interpreting assigned tasks on LMS, prepare well all terms and self-study to improve their interpreting skills. They should make full use of learning materials which are carefully designed for them. They can design interpreting tasks, play the role as instructors in the group for those interpreting tasks. By doing that, they have to search information carefully, then guide other group members and suggest the most acceptable notes and interpreting version. By acting as an instructor, students may be more responsible for interpreting tasks and prepare well for the topic that they are going to guide. This group activity also helps students listen to many interpreting versions, practice more techniques like memorizing, note-taking, reorganizing and speech rendering techniques as well as understand the nature of interpreting, stay away from selecting the best words.

CÁC YẾU TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG ĐẾN CHẤT LƯỢNG BÀI DỊCH NỐI TIẾP CỦA SINH VIÊN NGÀNH NGÔN NGỮ ANH TẠI CÁC PHÒNG HỌC ĐA PHƯƠNG TIỆN: NHÌN TỪ GÓC ĐỘ GIẢNG VIÊN

Nguyễn Thị Minh Thảo, Nguyễn Thị Huyền

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm ra những yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến chất lượng bài dịch nối tiếp của sinh viên ngành ngôn ngữ Anh Trường Ngoại ngữ - Du lịch, Đại học Công nghiệp Hà Nội. Dữ liệu của nghiên cứu được thu thập từ phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc được biên tập và chỉnh sửa từ nghiên cứu của Chunli và cộng sự, (2021). Các nhà nghiên cứu đã tiến hành phỏng vấn 4 giảng viên của Trường Ngoại ngữ - Du lịch, sau đó so sánh và đối chiếu với những lỗi mà sinh viên thường mắc trong bài kiểm tra phiên dịch cuối kỳ 7. Tiêu chí chấm của bài kiểm tra cuối kỳ dựa trên tiêu chí đánh giá phiên dịch được đưa ra trong nghiên cứu của Zwischenberger (2010). Kết quả của nghiên cứu này cho thấy năng lực ngôn ngữ, kỹ thuật phiên dịch cũng như tâm lý khi dịch có ảnh hưởng lớn đến chất lượng bài dịch nối tiếp của sinh viên. Những yếu tố như chuẩn bị kỹ càng, tránh cầu toàn khi phiên dịch và tăng cường thực hành là những yếu tố giúp sinh viên nâng cao chất lượng bài dịch nối tiếp. Nghiên cứu hy vọng mang đến cho độc giả sự hiểu biết sâu sắc hơn về dịch nối tiếp và thông tin hữu ích cho giảng viên và các nhà nghiên cứu về ngôn ngữ.

Từ khóa: chất lượng, dịch nối tiếp, phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc, lỗi

THE APPLICATION OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN TEACHING ENGLISH LISTENING SKILLS TO YOUNG LEARNERS: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF BENEFITS AND CONSTRAINTS

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Abstract: Digital storytelling has emerged as an alternative method to teach language skills to various types of learners due to its flexibility, engaging aspects, and linguistic features. Albeit its prevalence, the use of digital storytelling in English language teaching varies from one context to another. This study aimed to investigate English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of benefits and constraints in implementing digital storytelling to teach listening skills to young learners. Thirty EFL teachers conveniently sampled from a primary school in Bien Hoa City, Dong Nai province, Vietnam partook in answering a closed-ended questionnaire, and ten of them were invited for semi-structured interviews. The obtained data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively using descriptive statistics and content analysis, respectively. The findings indicated the possibility of applying digital storytelling to teach listening skills at the primary school as it could provide the students with adequate language knowledge, listening sub-skills, and a positive learning environment. However, the study revealed a number of difficulties in terms of the content, linguistic features, and grammar in digital stories that EFL teachers encountered in applying digital storytelling to teach listening skills to young learners.

Keywords: digital storytelling, English listening skill, young learners

1. Introduction

In recent years, the application of technology in education, particularly English language education has become prevalent in Vietnam (e.g., Duong et al., 2021; Tran & Duong, 2021; Tran & Duong, 2022; Tran & Hoang, 2022). Among the innovative technology-related teaching tools, digital storytelling has been considered one of the effective methods to teach listening skills to ESL/EFL learners thanks to their content variation and the interesting aspects they bring about. It is believed that digital storytelling helps students, even with limited ability in English, engage in rich and complex interpretations of texts (Early & Marshall, 2008), and they can provide visual and verbal interpretations, which extend the concept of literacy (Towndrow & Pereira, 2018). Digital storytelling has been applied in various English language teaching contexts as they are proven to assist students

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to develop their language abilities, academic performances (Yuksel et al., 2011), and linguistic features (Ribeiro, 2015).

It is argued that one of the skills which challenge both teachers and learners is the listening skill which requires learners to acknowledge the function of pronunciation, the stress, the intonation in the listening process; and the linking sounds system of the language to completely understand the speakers' attention or the contents of talks. Field (2008) claimed that listening is generally considered the most challenging language teaching and learning skill, particularly in English classes. Furthermore, in the context of Vietnam, many EFL students have identified listening skills as the most difficult skill among the four macro skills (Tran & Duong, 2020; Vu & Shah, 2016). In addition, in Vietnam, listening skills have not been paid attention to as supposed (Duong & Chau, 2019; Tran & Ha, 2022). Bui and Duong (2018) explained that most of the English curricula in Vietnam's education system are exam-oriented as they put an emphasis on grammar, reading, and vocabulary. Consequently, teachers appear to overlook listening skills in the teaching process (Hamouda, 2013).

Within the current research context, the application of digital storytelling to teach listening skills has proved its engaging characteristics as it creates a positive learning atmosphere where students wish to take part in the lesson actively. Normally, teachers tend to use digital storytelling as a way to teach students pronunciation and vocabulary by having them read aloud those stories and listen to the audio for correction. Based on informal discussions with the researchers, however, some teachers have expressed their uncertainty about the advantages of digital storytelling in teaching English listening skills due to different accents in the recording which may cause confusion among learners. Apparently, the effectiveness of the adaptation of digital stories in teaching English listening skills has still led to an argument among the teachers at the research site. Therefore, this study endeavors to explore English teachers' perceptions of prospects and challenges in the application of digital storytelling to teaching listening skills to primary school students. The research questions are drawn as follows:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the benefits of implementing digital storytelling to teach English listening skills to young students?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of possible constraints of implementing digital storytelling to teach English listening skills to young students?

2. Literature Review

Digital storytelling

Several scholars (e.g., Loniza et al., 2018; Ribeiro, 2015; Reynolds, 2014) believed that digital storytelling can be understood as the combination of the traditional way of storytelling, literacy work, and the modern method of transferring the story, through videos, pictures, and audio recordings. Instead of archiving stories on books by written literacy works, storytellers now can utilize continuously updated technology to make written content more understandable to digest. For example, readers can sit back and listen to a digital story read in a comfortable voice. In this way, digital storytelling emerges as a way to help readers feel more relaxed when they are in the process of digesting the story. In addition, digital storytelling can also be seen as an upgraded or alternative version of the original ones. That is to say, a digital story can be an adaptation of a well-known literary work, a sharpened transcript of an interview, or even a bibliography story of a person.

Digital storytelling can be beneficial in English language teaching in some ways.

Yuksel et al. (2011) pointed out that digital storytelling can help students to develop various language abilities and academic performances, and other aspects of development are mentioned, e.g., students learning with digital stories are able to improve their cognitive level, social interaction, and reflection skills. Additionally, digital storytelling for educational purposes addresses not only language features in the stories but also the content and implied value of such stories. In another sense, Ribeiro (2015) highlighted that digital storytelling is the integration of different skills in terms of literacy and language. That is to say, by using digital storytelling, students have opportunities to be exposed to a variety of linguistic features, which can enrich their language ability and knowledge.

However, there exist a few challenges of implementing digital storytelling in a language classroom such as limited facilities, legal matters, appropriate content of digital stories, students' low proficiency in technology, and an ability to assess learning performance. Yuksel et al. (2011) pointed out that the dearth of teaching facilities or conditions may prevent students from sufficiently experiencing digital storytelling. In another aspect, legal issues, suitable digital stories, and assessment skills are referred to as challenges to digital storytelling implementation (Beck & Neil, 2021). Regarding legalization, Harding and Hill (2011) proposed guidelines for ethical issues involving digital storytelling. Assessment criteria are one of the biggest concerns when digital storytelling is applied (Bromberg, 2013; Bui, 2015). In addition to worries about students' proficiency in technology and story selection, Bui (2015) raised other teachers' concerns over administrative affairs, teachers' honor, and ethical practice.

Listening skills and young learners

Listening is defined as a blend of hearing, understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating, and responding (Brownell, 2012). More specifically, listening is referred to as the message-receiving process (Tyagi, 2013) or the information acquisition (Walberg, 2004) in which a listener needs to absorb utterances produced by a speaker. Listening and reading are viewed as receptive skills, whereas speaking and writing are identified as productive skills (Brown & Lee, 2015). This means that listening is generally supposed to be a passive skill; however, Nunan (2015, p. 40) argued that this skill is an active process as "when we listen, we do a great deal more than decode the sounds that strike our eardrums into words, phrases, and sentences. Rather, we use contextual knowledge to construct a reasonable interpretation of what a speaker has said."

As regards the role of listening skills in language education, listening skills can be considered one of the key criteria to evaluate learners' language proficiency (Baurain, 2011; Linse, 2005; Tyagi, 2013). To teach listening and speaking skills to young learners effectively, a teacher needs to bear their characteristics in mind such as continuous exposure to the target language in an exciting way, limited attention span, high demand for physical movement, the ability to acquire a language through repetition and imitation, and opportunities to communicate in the purposeful and authentic learning environment (Kirkgöz, 2019). Likewise, Brown and Lee (2015) pinpointed five considerations to facilitate the children-teaching process, including intellectual development, attention span, sensory input, affective factors, and authentic and meaningful language.

Previous studies

There has been a small number of studies on the contribution of (digital) storytelling towards the development of ESL/EFL students' listening skills. Specifically, Loniza et al. (2018) conducted research on how digital storytelling-based materials influenced the listening skill development of very young learners. The study revealed that the listening competence of those who were taught by utilizing digital storytelling outperformed the listening skills of those instructed in a traditional way. The study conducted by Oduolowu and Oluwakemi (2014) explored the effect of storytelling on teaching listening skills to primary school students. The research examined if there were significant differences between male and female students. It was found that the female students had a tendency of developing listening skills more than the male ones. In the context of Vietnam, there is a scarcity of research on the use of digital storytelling in teaching English listening skills. Therefore, this study aims at exploring the application of digital storytelling in teaching listening skills to young students from EFL teachers' perceptions in the context of a primary school in Bien Hoa City, Dong Nai province, Vietnam.

3. Methodology

Research design

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in this study. The quantitative method concentrates on numeric data while the qualitative method aims to gain insights into participants' perspectives or thoughts (Creswell, 2009). The closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The quantitative method was used to investigate teachers' perceptions of the benefits of applying digital storytelling in teaching English listening skills to young learners, and the qualitative method was utilized to explore the constraints the teachers encountered during the teaching process.

Research setting and participants

The research was carried out at a primary school in Bien Hoa City, Dong Nai province, which is an international school. This school, established in 2010, has been offering more than 500 students an international learning environment such as qualified faculty, learning facilities and conditions, educational services, learning materials, and curriculum. To meet the requirements of an international school, this school focuses on providing students with an interactive and international learning environment. Therefore, English speaking and listening skills are the core of the teaching curriculum. Since 2020, digital storytelling has been adapted to the training program, especially for listening and reading comprehension. The digital stories used generally addressed figures, historical events, daily lives, and discoveries. Because the students in the research setting varied in proficiency levels, the topic was selected with careful consideration. As for listening skills, there were five periods for teaching listening skills through digital storytelling. In particular, pronunciation and vocabulary were taught in the first two periods to provide students with the necessary knowledge for upcoming listening tasks which were introduced in the next two periods. The last period focused on review and consolidation.

This research recruited a group of 30 EFL teachers (17 Vietnamese teachers and 13 foreign teachers) who were instructed to apply digital storytelling in listening lessons based on the convenience sampling method. They all experienced at least three years in applying digital storytelling to teach listening skills to young learners at all levels. Most of them were in their twenties, and two of them were middle-aged, so they mostly got exposure to technology with ease. Ten out of 30 teachers (7 Vietnamese teachers and 3 foreign teachers) were invited for the interviews. The interviewees were labeled from T1 and T10. These teachers were selected based on their willingness and availability.

Research instruments

A closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were employed for data collection. The former contains two main parts: Part A is about respondents' background information; Part B is the questionnaire content which was adapted from Chauhan and Maniar's (2017) study, and it includes 14 five-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) items addressing EFL teachers' perceptions of the prospects of the application of digital storytelling in teaching listening skills to young students (language knowledge (3 items), listening sub-skills (5 items), and learning environment (6 items)). The Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire was .84, i.e., the questionnaire is reliable. The latter concerns difficulties in applying digital stories in teaching English listening skills to young learners. To minimize any language barriers, the two versions of the questionnaire were simultaneously used for both groups of teachers, i.e., the Vietnamese version was delivered to the Vietnamese teachers, and the English one was administered to the foreign teachers.

Data collection and analysis procedures

With respect to data collection, before collecting data for the main study, we sent the questionnaire to two teachers working at this research site. It is noted that these teachers were excluded from the main study. Following this, we interviewed them about challenges they encountered during the digital storytelling-based listening teaching process. After the pilot, we made some minor modifications to the questionnaire and interview questions. For the main study, the questionnaire was administered to 30 EFL teachers in person, and it took them around 10 minutes to answer the questionnaire. Then, ten EFL teachers were invited based on their willingness to participate in the interviews which lasted about 20 minutes each. With the participants' permission, all the interviews were recorded for later data analysis.

As for the data analysis, the quantitative data generated from the questionnaire were processed by the SPSS software in terms of descriptive analysis (i.e., Mean: M; Standard deviation: SD). Meanwhile, the qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed through content analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

Results

As indicated in Table 1, the average mean score of the EFL teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the application of digital storytelling in teaching listening skills to primary school students is 3.83 (SD=.78) out of five. Regarding three components, it is noticed that the mean score of the learning environment is 3.89 (SD= .78), followed by that of the listening sub-skills (M=3.83; SD=.76) and the language knowledge (M=3.77, SD=.79). This shows the EFL teachers' positive perception concerning the application of digital storytelling in teaching English listening skills to primary school students as it could help students improve their language knowledge and listening sub-skills and provide them with a supportive learning environment.

Table 1

EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Merits of the Application of Digital Storytelling in Teaching Listening Skills to Young Students

Components	n=30	
	M	SD
Language knowledge	3.77	.79
Listening sub-skills	3.83	.76
Learning environment	3.89	.78
Average	***3.83***	***.78***

Turning to details, the results in Table 2 present that the EFL teachers agreed that digital storytelling could help students identify "words' pronunciation" (item 3: M=3.77; SD=.67) and "key structures" (item 2: M=3.73; SD=.94), and "provide useful vocabulary" (item 1: M=3.63; SD=.85) in learning listening skills. It can be observed that the mean values of language knowledge were insignificantly different. Among the three key areas of language, the contribution of digital storytelling to pronunciation development was highly valued, followed by the improvement in grammar structures and lexical items.

Table 2

Language Knowledge

Statement	n=30	
	M	SD
1. Digital storytelling provides useful vocabulary.	3.68	.85
2. Digital storytelling helps identify key structures.	3.73	.94
3. Digital storytelling helps identify words' pronunciation.	3.77	.67

As can be seen in Table 3, the EFL teachers reckoned that digital stories could help students "clarify stress and sounds" (item 8: M=4.03; SD=.71), "determine listening tasks' requirements" (item 8: M=4.00; SD=.64), and "identify details in texts" (item 5: M=3.83; SD=.80). Additionally, they also believed that digital stories could help students with "general information clarification" (item 4: M=3.70; SD=.75), and "provide students with clues to identify speakers' feelings" (item 6: M=3.60; SD=.93). This means that the teachers showed their agreement in the merits of digital storytelling towards these listening sub-skills. More specifically, the teachers showed a high agreement in developing pronunciation aspects (e.g., stress and sounds) and determining task requirements. However, some of them expressed neutrality towards the identification of speakers' feelings through clues in digital stories.

Table 3

Listening Sub-Skills

Statement	n=30	
	M	SD
4. Digital storytelling helps students with general information clarification.	3.70	.75
5. Digital storytelling helps students identify details in texts.	3.83	.80
6. Digital storytelling provides students with clues to identify speakers' feelings.	3.60	.93
7. Digital storytelling helps students clarify stress and sounds.	4.03	.71
8. Digital storytelling helps students determine listening tasks' requirements.	4.00	.64

Table 4 illustrates that the research participants strongly agreed that digital storytelling could "provide a communicative environment helping students to practice listening authentically" (item 9: M=4.23; SD=.70). Furthermore, they supposed that digital storytelling could provide "a collaborative environment helping students to work with peers" (item 10: M=4.00; SD=.87), "listening sources for further listening development" (item 12: M=3.93; SD=.70), and "appropriate learning sources for the listening learning process" (item 13: M=3.80; SD=.80). They also thought that digital storytelling could provide "a pressure-free learning environment" (item 11: M=3.87; SD=.73) and "an active learning environment" (item 14: M=3.67; SD=.80). Although the teachers admitted the benefits of digital storytelling in teaching English listening skills to young learners, their perceptions relating to the learning environment varied in levels of agreement. The communicative learning environment and collaborative learning environment that digital storytelling brings students were believed to be the most salient factors, whereas an active learning environment was the lowest-rated benefit of digital storytelling.

Table 4

The Learning Environment

Statements	n=30	
	M	**SD**
9. Digital storytelling provides a communicative environment helping students practice listening authentically.	4.23	.70
10. Digital storytelling provides a collaborative environment helping students work with peers.	4.00	.87
11. Digital storytelling provides a pressure-free learning environment.	3.87	.73
12. Digital storytelling provides listening sources for further listening development.	3.93	.70
13. Digital storytelling provides appropriate learning sources for the listening learning process.	3.80	.80
14. Digital storytelling provides an active learning environment.	3.67	.80

Besides the results concerning the teachers' perceptions of the possibilities of digital storytelling as a learning and teaching tool, the findings from interviews indicated that a majority of the participants confessed that one of the major difficulties in applying digital storytelling in teaching English listening skills to young students was the challenging content in the digital stories.

> Sometimes, students ask questions about the topic of the listening text because they find some familiar content. It is difficult to know all, so I have to search for a lot of things before teaching. (T7)

Additionally, the teachers found the linguistic items in the digital stories were quite limited. To deal with the requirement of the educational curriculum, many of them had to look for other sources for related linguistic items covered in the stories, which was really time-consuming.

> Occasionally, the students keep asking me about the meaning of terms used in the digital stories. It is quite hard for me to explain to them in English. (T3)

Another difficulty related to linguistic issues was the grammar that appeared in the digital stories. Obviously, the stories contained various complex sentences that were beyond what was taught to the students. For instance, one teacher mentioned:

> Eventually, during the teaching process, students often ask questions involving grammar points used in digital stories. With such questions, I

> have to answer without explaining the difference in linguistic functions. Sometimes, I find it challenging to explain the new grammar point to them because they are still young, and too much information may demotivate their learning. (T8)

In brief, the EFL teachers revealed three types of constraints (i.e., difficult content, linguistic terms, and grammar) in applying digital storytelling to teach English listening skills to young learners.

2.3. Discussion

This study endeavored to explore the EFL teachers' perceptions of the application of digital storytelling to teach English listening skills to young learners. After the data analysis, there were a few noticeable findings. The first major finding was that EFL teachers perceived that applying digital storytelling to teach English listening skills to young learners could be effective in providing students with language knowledge, listening sub-skills, and a learning environment. They believed that the content of digital storytelling conveyed a lot of valuable aspects which could help students develop their listening skills. This finding resonates with the claim by Chauhan and Maniar (2017) claiming that the features of digital storytelling could attract young learners' attention and offer a pressure-free learning environment, which could help students learn listening skills in an interesting way. Additionally, EFL teachers reckoned that digital storytelling offered many benefits for students' listening skills as students had an opportunity to practice listening skills in an authentic learning environment through digital storytelling. This finding is in alignment with Robin's (2006) and Ribeiro's (2015) viewpoints which state that digital storytelling is effective for students in the language learning process since it can function as meaningful and authentic language input. According to Kirkgöz (2019), young learners can learn a language by communicating in purposeful and real-life situations.

The second noticeable finding was that although the EFL teachers perceived the possibilities of the application of digital storytelling to teach listening skills to young learners, they still encountered some difficulties in applying digital storytelling to teach listening skills to young learners such as difficult content, linguistic terms, and grammar that students could not absorb with ease. Several researchers (Beck & Neil, 2021; Bui, 2015) shared similar opinions about content-related constraints. As a matter of fact, the content could be challenging for young learners due to cultural differences and authentic language as Brown and Lee (2015) affirmed that young learners find it hard to grasp abstract concepts. Strikingly, while Yuksel et al. (2011) and Ribeiro (2015) claimed that digital storytelling probably enhances students' language proficiency, the findings of this study indicated that linguistic terms and grammar in digital storytelling were teachers' hindrance to teaching listening skills to young students. This finding, however, was confirmed by Chauhan and Maniar's (2017) research which has shown that linguistic features in digital storytelling were one of the major difficulties for students to understand the content of the stories.

3. Conclusion

The study has indicated that although EFL teachers believed that digital storytelling is effective in developing young learners' English listening skills in terms of language knowledge, listening sub-skills, and learning environment, they still encountered some challenges relating to content selection, linguistic features, and grammar used in digital storytelling in teaching English listening skills.

Such conclusions suggest some pedagogical implications as follows. Firstly, EFL teachers should be active in consulting the administrators regarding the content of digital stories to be adapted to the teaching curriculum. Specifically, based on the clarified benefits as well as how they affect the students' listening skill development, teachers can make possible suggestions to revise or expand the positive aspects of the digital stories. Furthermore, it is necessary for teachers to discuss certain strategies for teaching listening skills by applying digital storytelling to reach a common teaching practice because of the aforementioned difficulties. In addition, digital storytelling is possibly useful in further listening progress, such as preparing for academic tests if appropriately modified. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers should focus on relevant features of digital storytelling and academic tests, e.g., IELTS or TOEIC. Secondly, the findings may offer opportunities for administrators to consider digital storytelling as an effective educational tool. To this end, the content of digital stories should be more selective, and teachers should be given more freedom to make a choice of digital stories based on their teaching practices. Digital stories should also be rigorously selected in terms of linguistic features. Digital stories are assumed to be useful sources of listening content to prepare for international exams such as Starters or Movers. Therefore, administrators should consider integrating the listening content of the examination with the content of digital stories to familiarize students with such tests. In addition, digital stories contain a massive amount of authentic language as well as comprehensible input for speaking skills, so it is advised to combine the speaking and listening lessons to maximize the effectiveness of the digital stories.

This study still limits itself in some ways. The sample size was quite small, and the study was conducted at one primary school. Therefore, recommendations for further research are given. Future research can be conducted with a bigger sample size involving both teachers and students from diverse research contexts. Moreover, the use of digital storytelling in relation to language efficiency and teaching strategies for both speaking and listening skills should be under investigation. Finally, the employment of various research instruments deserves a mention to ensure data triangulation. That is, more than one instrument should be used to address each research question.

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ỨNG DỤNG KỂ CHUYỆN SỐ TRONG GIẢNG DẠY KỸ NĂNG NGHE TIẾNG ANH CHO HỌC SINH TIỂU HỌC: NHẬN THỨC CỦA GIÁO VIÊN VỀ LỢI ÍCH VÀ THÁCH THỨC

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Tóm tắt: Kể chuyện số được xem là một phương pháp cải tiến để dạy các kỹ năng ngôn ngữ cho những đối tượng người học khác nhau nhờ vào tính linh hoạt, các khía cạnh tăng tính gắn kết của sinh viên và đặc điểm ngôn ngữ. Mặc dù phương pháp này khá phổ biến nhưng mức độ ứng dụng của nó khác nhau ở các bối cảnh. Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu nhận thức của giáo viên tiếng Anh về cơ hội và thách thức của phương pháp kể chuyện số để dạy kỹ năng nghe tiếng Anh cho học sinh tiểu học. Đối tượng khảo sát gồm có 30 giáo viên đang công tác tại một trường tiểu học quốc tế ở thành phố Biên Hòa, tỉnh Đồng Nai, Việt Nam. Tất cả các giáo viên này đã trả lời bảng khảo sát và 10 thầy/cô được mời tham gia các phiên phỏng vấn cá nhân sau đó. Dữ liệu định lượng được phân tích thông qua thống kê mô tả; dữ liệu định tính được phân tích dựa vào phương pháp phân tích nội dung. Kết quả chỉ ra tính khả quan của việc áp dụng kể chuyện số để dạy nghe tiếng Anh cho học sinh tiểu học tại bối cảnh này bởi vì nó cung cấp cho học sinh kiến thức về ngôn ngữ, kỹ năng nghe và môi trường học tích cực. Tuy nhiên, những giáo viên này cũng nêu lên những khó khăn liên quan đến nội dung của câu chuyện, đặc điểm về ngôn ngữ và những điểm ngữ pháp được dùng trong những câu chuyện đó.

Từ khóa: kể chuyện số, kỹ năng nghe tiếng Anh, học sinh tiểu học

BOOK REVIEW

THE PRAGMATICS OF POLITENESS

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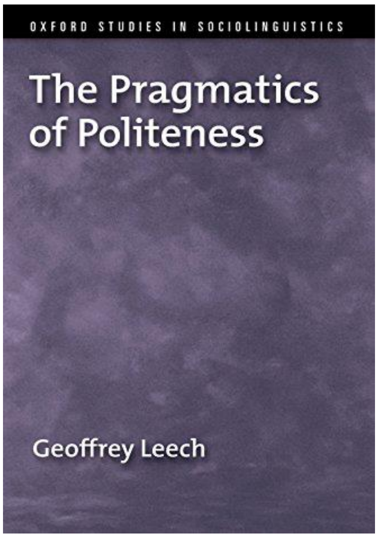

The study of "politeness" by sociolinguists is quite new and frequently cites Brown and Levinson's work from 1978 entitled "Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena". The article was modified and republished as a book in 1987 with the title *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Ever since, there has been a substantial explosion in the amount of research on "im/ politeness" in linguistics and related fields. Geoffrey Leech can be deemed one of the pioneering authors in the discipline of politeness studies, along with Robin Lakoff (1973), Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1978, 1987), and others. *The Pragmatics of Politeness* by Geoffrey Leech is a wonderful addition that serves to remind readers of the linguistic roots of this area of study. This book offers an overview of politeness and supports the idea that it is a form of communicative altruism. It describes a variety of English politeness phenomena and provides numerous instances of actual language use from reliable British and American sources to demonstrate its points. The book also presents a thorough examination of politeness in contemporary English, including all significant speech acts that are either positively or negatively linked with politeness, such as requests, apologies, compliments, offers, agreement, and disagreement. Chapters on impoliteness and the related concepts of irony (mock politeness) and banter (mock impoliteness) are also included. Additional chapters explore research techniques and learning English as a second language. The history of politeness in the English language, which spans more than a thousand years, is covered in the final chapter. Therefore, *The Pragmatics of Politeness* is intended to establish itself as a new benchmark in the study of (im)politeness.

Within the length of 337 pages, the book is divided into three main parts – Part 1 – Laying the Foundation, Part 2 –

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Politeness and Impoliteness in the Use of English, and Part 3 – Further Perspectives. In detail, **Part 1** (Laying the Foundations) includes the first three chapters, from Chapter 1 to Chapter 3. The basics of politeness are covered in **Chapter 1** (Introduction), with illustrations of eight aspects of politeness (pp. 4-9) and six fundamental distinctions (pp. 9-20) for a straightforward grasp of the topic. According to the chapter's argument, both social and psychological explanations are plausible, and the sociopsychological concept of *face* serves as a correlation between the two. **Chapter 2** (Politeness: Viewpoints) reviews earlier theories and models of politeness, including the most influential model, Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) model (pp. 33-34). The perspectives of other prominent scholars in the field are also highlighted, such as those of Robin Lakoff (p. 33), Gu (pp. 35-36), Ide (p. 36), Arndt and Janney (p. 38), Fraser and Nolan (pp. 37-38), Aijmer, Terkourafi (pp. 38-39), Eelen, Spencer-Oatey (pp. 39-41), and Watts (pp. 41-43). The claim is, despite the fact that earlier views of politeness have been presented as opposed to one another, they all add something to the general framework as it is laid out in this book. In order to reach pragmatic meaning, both the speaker and the hearer engage in problem-solving as part of the goal-oriented approach to communication described in **Chapter 3** (Pragmatics, Indirectness, and Neg-Politeness: A Basis for Politeness Modeling). It draws on the thought of Paul Grice and John Searle in particular to explain *indirectness* and *negative politeness*, returning to the roots of modern Anglo-American pragmatics. In **Chapter 4** (Politeness: The Model), which defines the Gricean idea of *maxim* as a goal-directed restriction, the book's model of politeness is presented briefly but very comprehensively.

Politeness is a social phenomenon, but it is a social phenomenon that is mostly expressed via language. Therefore, the relationship between language use and social behavior must be taken into consideration while studying politeness. It is customary to refer to this field of linguistic research as pragmatics. However, pragmatics, the study of language use and how interactants interpret it, is generally framed in terms of two interfaces: that between pragmatics and linguistic structure (also known as *pragmalinguistics*), and that between pragmatics and society (known as *sociopragmatics*) (p. ix). Right in the first chapter – Chapter 1, the author clarifies the distinctions between *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics* (pp. 13-15), *pragmalinguistic politeness* and *sociopragmatic politeness* (pp. 15-18). While not completely abandoning *sociopragmatics*, the book's author leans further towards *pragmalinguistics*, a field that has recently received less attention. Therefore, instead of having a broad perspective on how politeness connects to social conduct and society at large, this book highlights the necessity of an in-depth perusal of how language is utilized for politeness.

With the orientation towards *pragmalinguistics*, Leech's primary objective in this work is to present a full and explicit theoretical description of what he means by linguistic politeness and how this ties in with current semantics/pragmatics theory building. He performs an excellent job in this regard. Indeed, he presents the concept of *communicative altruism*, which is influenced by discoveries in evolutionary biology, evolutionary psychology, and game theory (pp. 21-23). Politeness, as the author put forward, is "to speak or behave in such a way as to (appear to) give benefit or value not to yourself but to the other person(s), especially the person(s) you are conversing with" (p. 3). However, Leech goes on to say that communicative altruism is not true altruism and should not be confused with it (p. 24). Politeness is the appearance of caring about others. It is about employing language that expresses concern for others. The question of whether that concern is genuine is another, and it is one that psychologists, not linguists, should be concerned about (p. 90).

The book's author specifies the subject matters of politeness in ten maxims (up from six from his 1983 book), namely (1) *Generosity*, (2) *Tact*, (3) *Approbation*, (4) *Modesty*, (5) *Obligation of Speaker (S) to Other people (O)*, (6) *Obligation of O to S*, (7) *Agreement*, *(8) Opinion reticence*, (9) *Sympathy*, and (10) *Feeling reticence* (p. 91). Each maxim, like in previous works, is tied to a certain type of speech events (e.g. Generosity typically pertains to Commissives, Tact to Directives, Approbation to Compliments, and so on). This time, however, there is a fundamental separation between *pos-politeness* maxims (those relating to raising O, which are maxims (1), (3), (5), (7), (9)) and *neg-politeness* maxims (those dealing with lowering S, which are maxims (2), (4), (6), (8) and (10)). Although the dichotomy between *pos-politeness* and *neg-politeness* is prompted by Brown and Levinson's comparable differentiation between *positive* and *negative politeness*, Leech utilizes these terms differently. As a result, he uses abbreviated terminology rather than full terms. Most importantly, the addition of pos-politeness is his attempt to combine the concept of face-enhancement alongside face-threat. This is because regarding pos-politeness, "we *magnify* or *strengthen* the expression of (positive) value", whereas "to increase the degree of politeness, we *diminish* or *soften* the expression of (negative) value in the transaction" in the instance of neg-politeness (p. 11). Despite the inclusion of face-enhancing acts (p. 99), the overriding impression is that neg-politeness, the type that "typically involves indirectness, hedging and understatement", is "the most important type" (p. 11). This argument, which resonates with similar claims made by Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 74), is justified on the basis that we "need, in studying neg-politeness, to develop a pragmatics of politeness that will handle the indirect speech acts and implicit meanings so characteristic of neg-politeness," whereas "the intensification of meaning characteristic of pos-politeness, on the whole, does not have such problems" (p. 55). This leads to a fascinating discussion of pragmatics as problem solving (from both the speaker's and the hearer's viewpoints), the relationship between syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels in utterance interpretation, and Neo-Gricean defaults in Chapter 3.

By attaching explicit semantic content to the maxims, Leech claims (as he did in 1983) that politeness is about maximizing the display of polite beliefs while diminishing the presentation of impolite beliefs (1983, p. 81). The current articulation of the general principle of politeness states that "in order to be polite, S expresses or implies meanings that associate a favorable value with what pertains to O or associate an unfavorable value with what pertains to S" (p. 90). While this makes the current scheme adaptable enough to accommodate for impoliteness (basically, it is doing the reverse of what the maxims prescribe; **Chapter 8**), it also makes politeness an issue of what we say, instead of how we say it, as is frequently stated. This distinction distinguishes Leech from others (including Lakoff, Brown and Levinson) who have attempted to determine the linguistic devices prevalently used to convey politeness based on their form (e.g. conditionals, deictic switches, the T/V pronominal system – familiar and polite/respectful second-person pronouns, the subjunctive, diminution, and so on) instead of their meaning.

The early "pioneering" research on politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987, 1978), Leech (1983), and others has drawn criticism. Leech is well aware of this. Much like most of the pragmatics in the 1970s and 1980s, it ignores significant, if not radical, variances across the diversity of language communities and is consequently geared toward Western, and more especially Anglo-American, culture. In an effort to avoid this flaw, Leech submits **Chapter 4** (where he presents his model) to representative readers of various cultures, who have been kind enough to provide him with feedback and illustrations, to demonstrate how an English-language-oriented account holds true or does not pertain to their own language/culture (p. xii). Leech (2007), upon which Chapter 4 is heavily based, offers Chinese, Japanese, and Korean instances and discussions to illustrate how the paradigm may be applied to Eastern languages and cultures.

Part 2 (Politeness and Impoliteness in the Use of English) covers the next four chapters, from Chapter 5 to Chapter 8. Using corpora, this part does a rigorous descriptive examination of politeness phenomena in English. In detail, **Chapter 5** (A Case Study: Apologies) centers on an instance of a specific speech event that demonstrates politeness: the apology. **Chapter 6** (Requests and Other Directives) puts emphasis on speech events with a competitive purpose: directives and, within that type, requests. Requests are evidently the most intriguing and researched of all the utterance kinds concerning politeness, specifically with respect to the English language. This book expands on its treatment of polite phenomena by addressing a variety of common speech events from a pragmalinguistic standpoint. Indeed, the topics covered in **Chapter 7** encompass offers, invitations, and undertakings (pp. 180-186), compliments and criticisms (pp. 186-196), thanks (pp. 196-201), agreement and disagreement, advice and recommendations (pp. 201-208), as well as congratulations, condolences, good wishes (pp. 208-212), greetings, and farewells (pp. 212-214). The model of politeness described in Chapter 4 can also be used to explain phenomena in **Chapter 8**, which in some ways clash with politeness. The four phenomena are *nonpoliteness* (pp. 216-219), *conversational irony* (pp. 232-238), *banter* (pp. 238-243), and *impoliteness* (pp. 219-232). All of these phenomena, in some respects, contradict politeness, but in diverse ways.

Although polite language and its utilization is emphasized, the author does not disregard impolite linguistic behavior, which has recently gained popularity as a subject of study. Chapter 8 of the book includes a discussion on this subject. However, since politeness is typically seen as the unmarked type of behavior, the author understandably focuses much of his attention on politeness in other chapters instead of impoliteness. This reflects his belief that politeness serves as a kind of behavioral norm in the vast majority of social situations and across a range of contexts, at least for British English speakers and also those of many other languages, while impolite behavior is apparently a marked form of speech and, as a result, pronounced when it occurs. Therefore, politeness is seen as unmarked and acting as the norm in most speech contexts, despite not being mandatory, in the author's opinion, in contrast to impoliteness, where illocution is far more rarely utilized intentionally to generate disharmony and as a result, draws attention to itself.

Part 3 (Further Perspectives) encompasses the last three chapters, Chapter 9 to Chapter 11. A summary of the approaches for conducting empirical research on politeness is given in **Chapter 9** (Methods of Data Collection: Empirical Pragmatics). On the one hand, there are techniques for obtaining native speakers' opinions or replicas of polite linguistic conduct. On the other hand, there are unconstrained data-collecting approaches, such as exploiting naturally available corpus data, as discussed in detail in Chapters 5-7 of this book. When looking for certain types of linguistic behavior such as compliments, the latter approaches can pose difficulties because they are unconstrained. The former methodologies entail options that are extremely confined (such as *multiple-choice tests* (pp. 250-251)). A spectrum ranging from fabricated, elicited comprehension-task data to uncontrolled, observed production data can be drawn between these methodologies. Commonly employed intermediate locations on this scale are *discourse completion tests* (DCTs) (pp. 252-253), which allow participants to develop linguistic responses to a contextually determined stimulus, and advancing to the unrestricted end are the *role plays* (pp. 253-254), where subjects converse with another speaker in a contextually specified conversation. Each data collection method has its own pluses and minuses. The focus of **Chapter 10** (Interlanguage Pragmatics and Politeness Across Languages and Cultures) is the study of how people develop pragmatic competence in a second language (L2). This topic falls under the umbrella of "interlanguage pragmatics" (ILP), which is a large field of research. Lack of or excessive politeness in learners might result from *pragmatic failure* (pp. 262-264), and the learners can be assessed as *underpolite* or *overpolite* accordingly. **Chapter 11** (Politeness and the History of English), the final chapter, provides a brief account of politeness in the English language. There has been relatively little research on this topic, and there are numerous gaps and undisclosed areas that continue to be examined.

The direction of current research on politeness is somewhat skewed by this book. We have observed the emergence of new perspectives that emphasize the complexity of politeness and impoliteness as they emerge over prolonged discourse. In some respects, this has been a good thing since it has made us face the many-faceted, constantly-evolving behavior of people in conversational discourse, workplace discourse, public discourse through the media, and so forth – often with intriguing and enlightening outcomes. Simultaneously, there has been an increase in abstractions, nuance, and terminological ambiguities. It is simple to become lost in the subtleties and specifics of discourse; concentrating on a long passage of dialogue can result in many contextual details that require explanation but cannot be applied generally. Seeing the bigger picture has proven to be challenging. Since pragmatics has its roots in linguistics, the book's author holds the belief that there is much to be gained by returning to its fundamentals. Consequently, the *pragmalinguistic* approach that starts by looking closely at language, as adopted in this book, can be rationalized once again.

Admittedly, that the book primarily concentrates on the English language is a major downside. This book fundamentally centers on two important regional dialects of the English language, namely British and American English, with British English (the author's variant) receiving more emphasis than American English. And while it is often believed that the comfortable middle classes have been the preserve of politeness since the eighteenth century and still are today, this has not been properly investigated, and the author has little to say about it. In this book, the study of politeness variation in the enormous cultural community of English language users has been largely ignored by Leech, who is still focusing on English in this work. Little attention has been paid to politeness according to sociocultural characteristics including geography, gender, age, and social class. How, for instance, are English-speaking communities in Singapore or the United States different from those in the UK in terms of politeness? How does the politeness used by male and female language users differ from one another? And while it is often believed that the comfortable middle classes have been the preserve of politeness since the eighteenth century and still are today, this has not been properly investigated, and the author has little to say about it. Other characteristics of variance, particularly gender disparities, have, on the other hand, been extensively investigated and discussed. As a result, the author advises that additional theoretical work be conducted on such concerns as the dissimilarity among the types of speakers of English, "just as there is a need for a sociopragmatic angle, to complement the pragmalinguistic angle that is more prominent here" (p. xiii).

The Pragmatics of Politeness is divided into eleven chapters; one of which gives a model of politeness (Chapter 4); another investigates pragmatics and politeness across many languages and cultures (Chapter 10), and one chapter explores politeness and the history of English (Chapter 11). As a result, this is a book that is both specific ("eight characteristics of politeness," "five explicande," "politeness: the model") and broad, with chapters on topics such as "Interlanguage Pragmatics and Politeness Across Languages and Cultures" (Chapter 10) and "Politeness and the History of English" (Chapter 11). This book's principal purpose is not to teach readers "how to be polite." Its main objective is to describe politeness phenomena in English. As a crucial component of that, it also establishes a framework for analysis – a model or theory of politeness as a trait of human conduct (p. x). This is no easy task, especially considering the range, depth, and even subtlety of (im)politeness characteristics. The book is also assumed to contribute to English pragmatics, as studies of English phonetics, phonology, and syntax are common, but accounts of English pragmatics are harder to obtain.

Leech has published a book that views politeness not as a study of social niceties, i.e., "the icing on the cake," but rather as "a needful ingredient of human society" (p. 27) and as something vital to that society's continuous progress. Although Leech recognizes that "no serious account of cross-cultural pragmatics can be attempted in this book" (p. xii), he expects that the book will provide "a serious contribution to the pragmatics of English," or, as he phrases it, a "pragmalinguistic angle" (p. xiii). *The Pragmatics of Politeness* accomplishes this in a substantial way, making a genuine and comprehensible contribution to a burgeoning and significant body of research on the pragmatics of English. This is extremely noteworthy because it is the effort of a linguist, a leading figure who has played an integral role in the development of the field of pragmatics.

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TEACHER RESILIENCE: MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY TO THRIVE IN THE CLASSROOM*

Author: Jamie Thom

Publisher: John Catt Educational, 2020

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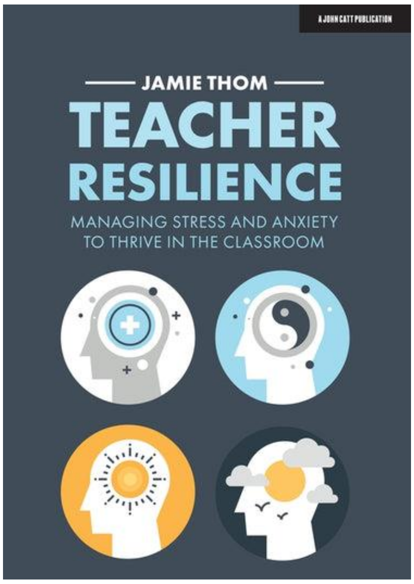

Teacher resilience has become a more significant concern for teachers and educators worldwide than ever before since the educational crisis in the 2020s when Covid-19 started. *Teacher Resilience: Managing Stress and Anxiety to Thrive in the Classroom* by Jamie Thom, published by John Catt Educational in 2020, has timely addressed the real issues facing teachers and provided strategies that can empower them to be more resilient and thrive in the daily demands of teaching. Through anecdotal sections that reflect personal experiences in surviving teaching practice and overcoming/alleviating stress and anxiety, the author provides a thoughtful outlook on teacher resilience and addresses teachers' mental health and well-being during a challenging time in education. This book is a toolkit with practical advice underpinned by well-established research. It is valuable for a more resilient mindset to help school teachers cope with the consequences of uncertainty and the demands of teaching and being their best.

This book is organised into five main parts, excluding the introduction and conclusion. The first part is about the importance of resilience, focusing on teaching challenges and the critical need to build this quality as a teacher. Part II looks into the nature of the mindset and highlights the value of self-talk, gratitude, supporting others, self-awareness, managing conflict and learning from mistakes. Teacher actions are the foci of Part III, in which the author provides practical advice regarding not only collaborative relationships, professional development, lesson observations, or

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becoming a digital minimalist but also teachers' physical and mental health matters, such as restorative sleep and self-regulation. In Part IV, from the teacher's perspective, the author clearly and persuasively addresses current issues and practical strategies which enable school teachers to deal with the unique challenges of everyday teaching in the classroom. Hands-on tips and techniques related to lesson planning, differentiation dilemmas, and collaborative feedback are presented in detail to promote teachers' teaching practice, in addition to authentic, sensitive strategies to deal with pushy parents and classroom bad behaviours. All these suggestions can be incorporated into a practical action plan to help school teachers alleviate stress and anxiety and stay resilient. The issues of empowering teacher resilience are elaborated on and discussed in light of leadership in Part V. In a letter format, followed by two case studies in which the details about how leaders build resilience in their staff are presented, the author highlights the vital role of school leaders, more than any other, in teacher resilience building.

Within approximately 200 pages, a thoughtful exploration of teacher resilience is presented and discussed in light of evidence-based research. I strongly believe that any school teacher will see themselves in the anecdotal scenarios and find the book worth reading. As presented in the promising title, the author has succinctly explored what teacher resilience is, its components, and the specific challenges of teaching practice teachers face. More importantly, practical strategies for managing stress and anxiety have been provided for schoolteachers to truly thrive in the classroom. The key message here is that teacher resilience can be developed over time, both at the individual and organisational levels. Of particular interest is the focus on the significant impact of teachers' autonomy and identity on resilience building to be prepared to cope with the demands of their jobs, especially during the uncertainty of the circumstances 2020 presented. While leadership support is critical for nurturing teacher resilience, pragmatic strategies regarding the regular practice of self-compassion, modelling the values of gratitude, self-awareness etc., should be considered core merits of the school community.

Looking closer into subsections, school teachers, especially those in their early careers, will find a practical toolkit that can be applied to their contexts. In addition to sensitive strategies for dealing with tricky parents or special-needs students, the author includes a bundle of tips that teachers could frequently use in the classroom. He emphasised how to define the objective of each lesson in accordance with the available resources, minimise the destructive impact of a comparative mindset during an assessment, or maximise the value of positive feedback for students' academic achievement and development. The effectiveness of some techniques, such as eliciting questioning, modelling, or scaffolding, to tailor to students' diverse needs and differentiation is also highlighted.

Another notable aspect of the book is its reader-friendly format, with authentic anecdotes at the beginning of most sub-sections, followed by the author's thoughtful discussion and advice, and a serene summary at the end. Readers, particularly school teachers, will feel a close connection with various scenarios reflecting the real daily challenges and anxiety they face. They will be reassured they are not alone when dealing with misbehaviours, differentiation dilemmas, or scrutinised observations. At the end of every section, the author recaps what has been presented. This way, readers can better understand the issue, grasp the takeaway idea, and trigger more ideas before moving to the next contextual challenge.

While the target of this book is to empower teachers' resilience in the teaching profession, teachers in various cultural contexts should consider their own circumstances to apply the author's advice and suggestions. For example, within the Vietnamese context, dominated by the hierarchy regarding authority or senior levels, some strategies, such as setting boundaries to maintain a healthy work-life balance or dealing with conflict in situations like interviews or observations, might need more consideration. Despite this, the suggested approach to nurturing resilience within the school community, in accordance with practical strategies, will help teachers step up to thrive. This book is also a must-read for educators, policymakers, and school leaders wishing to develop teacher resilience to flourish in teaching in their communities.

THỂ LỆ GỬI BÀI

1. **Tạp chí Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài** là ấn phẩm khoa học chính thức của Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội, kế thừa và phát triển *Chuyên san Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài* của Tạp chí Khoa học, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội. Tạp chí xuất bản định kỳ 06 số/năm (02 số tiếng Việt/năm và 04 số tiếng Anh/năm từ năm 2019 trở đi), công bố các công trình nghiên cứu có nội dung khoa học mới, chưa đăng và chưa được gửi đăng ở bất kỳ tạp chí nào, thuộc các lĩnh vực: *ngôn ngữ học, giáo dục ngoại ngữ/ngôn ngữ, quốc tế học hoặc các ngành khoa học xã hội và nhân văn có liên quan.*

2. Bài gửi đăng cần trích dẫn ÍT NHẤT 01 bài đã đăng trên Tạp chí Nghiên cứu Nước ngoài.

3. Bài báo sẽ được gửi tới phản biện kín, vì vậy tác giả cần tránh tiết lộ danh tính trong nội dung bài một cách không cần thiết.

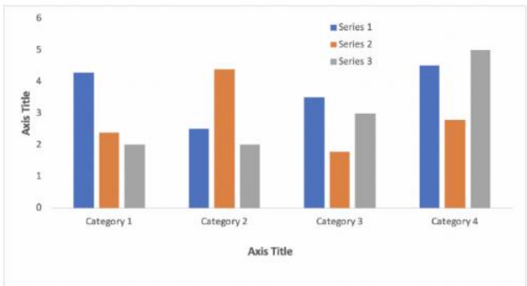
4. Bài báo có thể viết bằng tiếng Việt hoặc tiếng Anh (*tối thiểu* 10 trang/khoảng 4.000 từ đối với bài nghiên cứu và 5 trang/khoảng 2.000 từ đối với bài thông tin-trao đổi) được soạn trên máy vi tính, khổ giấy A4, cách lề trái 2,5cm, lề phải 2,5cm, trên 3,5cm, dưới 3cm, font chữ Times New Roman, cỡ chữ 12, cách dòng Single.

5. Hình ảnh, sơ đồ, biểu đồ trong bài viết phải đảm bảo rõ nét và được đánh số thứ tự theo trình tự xuất hiện trong bài viết. Nguồn của các hình ảnh, sơ đồ trong bài viết cũng phải được chỉ rõ. Tên ảnh, sơ đồ, biểu đồ trong bài viết phải được cung cấp trên ảnh, sơ đồ, biểu đồ.

Ví dụ:

Figure 1

Sample Figure Title



Note. A note describing content in the figure would appear here.

6. Bảng biểu trong bài viết được đánh số thứ tự theo trình tự xuất hiện trong bài viết. Tên bảng trong bài phải được cung cấp trên bảng. Yêu cầu bảng không có đường kẻ sọc.

Ví dụ:

Table 3

Sample Table Showing Decked Heads and P Value Note

Variable	Visual		Infrared		*F*	η
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Row 1	3.6	.49	9.2	1.02	69.9***	.12
Row 2	2.4	.67	10.1	.08	42.7***	.23
Row 3	1.2	.78	3.6	.46	53.9***	.34
Row 4	0.8	.93	4.7	.71	21.1***	.45

***p < .01.

7. Quy cách trích dẫn: Các tài liệu, nội dung được trích dẫn trong bài báo và phần tài liệu tham khảo cần phải được **trình bày theo APA7** (vui lòng tham khảo trang web: https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines hoặc hướng dẫn của Tạp chí trên trang web https://jfs.ulis.vnu.edu.vn/index.php/fs/about/submissions)

8. Bản thảo xin gửi đến website của Tạp chí tại https://jfs.ulis.vnu.edu.vn/. Tòa soạn không trả lại bản thảo nếu bài không được đăng. Tác giả chịu hoàn toàn trách nhiệm trước pháp luật về nội dung bài viết và xuất xứ tài liệu trích dẫn.

MẪU TRÌNH BÀY BỐ CỤC CỦA MỘT BÀI VIẾT

TIÊU ĐỀ BÀI BÁO

(bằng tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt, in hoa, cỡ chữ: 16,
giãn dòng: single, căn lề: giữa)

Tên tác giả (cỡ 13)*

Tên cơ quan / trường đại học (cỡ 10, in nghiêng)
Địa chỉ cơ quan / trường đại học (cỡ 10, in nghiêng)

Tóm tắt: Tóm tắt bằng tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt, không quá 250 từ, cỡ chữ: 11

Từ khóa: Không quá 5 từ, cỡ chữ: 11

Phần nội dung chính của bài báo thường bao gồm các phần sau:

1. Đặt vấn đề

2. Mục tiêu

3. Cơ sở lý thuyết

3.1. …

3.2. ….

4. Phương pháp nghiên cứu

4.1. …

4.2. …

5. Kết quả nghiên cứu

6. Thảo luận

7. Kết luận và khuyến nghị

Lời cảm ơn (nếu có)

Tài liệu tham khảo

Phụ lục (nếu có)

* ĐT.: (Sđt của tác giả liên hệ)
Email: (Email của tác giả liên hệ)