CONTENTS

MỤC LỤC

RESEARCH

THEME IN THE VIETNAMESE CLAUSE SIMPLEX: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTION

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Abstract: This article is a functional description of an aspect of textual grammar of Vietnamese. The theoretical framework adopted for the description is Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as developed by Halliday and other systemicists. The focus is on the description of Theme in the clause simplex. Two main questions which form the basis of this article are: (1) "what is Theme in the Vietnamese clause simplex and how is it recognised?"; and (2) "what are the delicate options available in the environment of **THEME** and how are they distinguished?" The study shows that Theme in Vietnamese is a system of the clause as a message; it can be defined as "the point of departure of the message" (Halliday (1967b, p. 212; 1970, p. 161; 1985b, p. 38), and can be recognized by first position in the clause; and the environment of **THEME** opens for a number of delicate options, and these options can be distinguished along the three metafuncions of language: the experiential, the interpersonal, and the textual. The study contributes to the application of SFG theory to the description of textual grammar of the Vietnamese clause, opening up potentials for a new approach to the description of a comprehensive SFG of Vietnamese for language teaching, learning, and research.

Keywords: Theme, Rheme, clause simplex, Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), Vietnamese

1. Introduction

Vietnamese graduate students of English applied linguistics often experience difficulties understanding Theme and, in particular, analysing for thematic structure in Vietnamese when they do research on comparing textual meanings of Vietnamese and English texts. The main reason for this is that Theme is not a univalent concept; it is understood and described differently in different languages by different grammarians of different linguistic traditions. A consequence of this is that students lack a common theoretical framework for their comparison. To make matters worse, what they often have to do is to follow either of the following ways: (1) they compare textual meanings of two texts in the two languages, using the categories defined in one theoretical framework which are employed to describe the base language with those falsely-felt comparable categories defined in another theoretical framework which are employed to describe the comparative language; or (2) they use what is commonly referred to as 'transfer comparison' (Halliday et al., 1964, p. 120), adopting uncritically the categories defined in the theoretical framework which are employed to describe the base language, and comparing them with those undescribed but falsely-felt comparable categories in the comparative language. Such unscientific approaches to

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comparative/ contrastive discourse analysis often produce unreliable findings. They constitute the gap which this study attempts to fill. As a first step toward a full understanding of textual meanings of texts for comparative studies, in this article an attempt is made to explore Theme in the Vietnamese clause simplex, using Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as the theoretical framework. There are two main reasons for our choice. First, SFG is a 'metatheory' – a theory of theories, many of whose general categories can be used to describe any language (Halliday, 1992; Matthiessen, 1995, p. 60; Fries, 1995b, p. 47; Hoang, 2012, p. 107). Secondly, SFG has been extensively used to describe Theme in English (e.g. Halliday, 1967b, 1970, 1985b, 1998; Fries, 1981, 1995a, 1995b, 1997; Eggins, 1994; Matthiessen, 1995; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; G. Thompson, 2014, and many others) and other languages, while in reviewing the literature, it is evident that almost no comparable research has yet been conducted to describe Theme in Vietnamese. Our research is organized around five main parts. Following Part one which introduces the topic of the research, Part two is concerned with a review of the literature on how Theme is conceptualized in the world as well as in Vietnamese linguistics. Part three presents the design and methodology of the research. Part four – the focus of the research – describes in some detail the notion of Theme, thematic structure, and different options available in the environment of **THEME** in the Vietnamese clause. And Part five provides a résumé of what has been explored and makes suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review

For the purposes of this study, the review of the literature on the study of Theme is organised around three sections: section one (2.1) provides a brief overview of the origin of the concept of Theme; section two (2.2) presents two alternative approaches to the definition of Theme; and section three (2.3) is concerned specially with the review of some studies of Theme in Vietnamese.

2.1. The Origin of the Concept of Theme

Theme as a grammatical category can be said to have a long but chequered history. What we know about Theme in linguistics today is that it is a complex notion which can be traced back to ancient times (see Robins, 1997, 2012; Halliday, 1977). Halliday (1977) points out that the concept of Theme has its origin from ancient Greek linguistic scholarship. It was derived from the two different approaches to linguistic study: the rhetoric and the logic whose representatives were the sophists and Aristotle respectively.

The sophists were concerned with teaching many subjects such as philosophy, music, athletics, mathematics, and language. In language teaching, they were concerned with rhetoric, with the nature of argumentation, and hence with the structure of discourse. Our knowledge about the sophists today is very indirect and piecemeal. They left no writing themselves, but based on what is reported in the writings and quotations of other ancient Greek scholars (e.g. Plato and Aristotle) we can know that in their time the sophists were already familiar with elementary grammatical categories of Indo-European languages like gender, number, and case. We can also know that in their analytical approach, the sophists treated a sentence as a piece of discourse which consists of two parts referred to respectively as όνομα (noun) and ρήμα (verb). Halliday (1977) aptly shows that this is the analysis of a unit of discourse considered as something that is arguable, something that can be confirmed, denied, contradicted, etc., something which is not concerned with truth value as conceptualized in logic. Answering the question, "What is the meaning of όνομα and ρήμα as seen from the point of view of the sophists?", Halliday (1977, p. 35) quotes Plato, a well-known ancient Greek philosopher: "There are two modes of the expression of existing things in sound… That which is the expression for actions we call ρήμα. The vocal sign for those who do the things is όνομα. And later, if we combine ρήματα with όνοματα, we are not only naming, we are doing something." Halliday (1977) shows that this latter meaning – 'we are doing something' – is precisely concerned with what is referred to in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the interpersonal metafunction of language, one of whose key concepts is **Subject** (see Halliday, 1977, 1985b, 1998; see also Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Also from the writings and quotations of

the other ancient Greek scholars, we can know that the sophists performed the next two analytical steps to formulate their views about language. In the first step, the sophists identified two grammatical classes based on categorical meanings: a verb expresses an action or event, and a noun expresses a doer of the action; a verb and a noun are the names of the classes (categories), but when they are combined, they are defined through their transitivity functions as actor, action, acted upon. This conceptualization of meaning yields what is referred to in SFL as the experiential metafunction of language, one of whose key concepts is (taking the material process as representative) **Actor** (see Halliday, 1977, 1985b, 1998, Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014 in relation to English; and Hoang, 2012 in relation to Vietnamese). In the second step, the sophists were concerned with discourse. In their view, discourse must be about something; so the noun must also function as what the discourse is about. And according to Halliday (1977), because Plato did not label this function, it was mistranslated into English by a translator named Jowett as "Subject", but, as Halliday aptly points out, it is not the subject in the traditional subject-predicate analysis; it is concerned with what is referred to in SFL as the textual metafunction of language, one of whose key concepts is **Theme** (Halliday, 1985b, 1998, Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Fries, 1981, 1995a, 1995b, 1997; see also Mathesius, 1939; Daneš, 1964, 1974; Firbas, 1982, 1987, 1992, see also Hoàng, 2007).

2.2. Two Approaches to the Definition of Theme

Since ancient Greece, the concept of Theme has not been seamlessly studied. It was not until the middle of the twentieth century that the study of Theme was taken up in mainstream linguistics (Davies, 2004, p. 54). The two scholars who are credited with reviving the study of Theme are the Czech linguist of the Prague linguistic school Vilém Mathesius (1939) and the eminent British-born Australian linguist Michael Halliday (1967a, 1967b, 1968, and elsewhere).

Inspired by the French grammarian Weil's (1844) book on word-order, Vilém Mathesius – the main architect of the Prague school of linguistics – outlined a new approach to the functional analysis of the sentence-utterance analysis commonly known in English as "functional sentence perspective". His own terminology in Czech "aktuaslní členění větné" (actual division of the sentence) suggests a clear distinction between the sentence as formal pattern – *langue* in de Saussure's (1983) formulation, and sentence as a means through which the speaker communicates information to the listener in a given situation – *parole* in de Saussure's (1983) formulation. Viewed in this light, the sentence should be analysed into two functional components called "Theme" and "Rheme". These terms are defined by Mathesius as follows:

> The Theme – východiště výpovědi (point of departure within the clause) is "that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation and from which the speaker proceeds"; and the Rheme – "járdo výpovědi" (the core of the utterance) is "that which the speaker is communicating about or what relates to the starting point of the utterance". (Mathesius, 1939, p. 171, as cited in Firbas, 1987, pp. 143-44)

Daneš (1964) points out that in Mathesius's discussion of Theme, he used three terms "východiště" (point of departure), "téma" (Theme), and "zásklad" (foundation). But he stated that the point of departure was not necessarily always identical with the Theme. And later, according to Firbas (1987), Mathesius dropped the term "východiště" and used the terms "téma" and "zásklad" interchangeably. Fries (1981, p. 1), on the other hand, is more explicit in pointing out Mathesius's (1939) conceptualization of Theme. He aptly observes that Mathesius approached the notion of Theme from two perspectives. The first perspective is precisely concerned with given information – information which is 'known or at least obvious in the given situation'; and the second one, with thematic information – information 'from which the speaker proceeds'. Fries (1981) shows that Mathesius's definition has been adopted by several European linguists, particularly those of the Prague school of linguistics (e.g., Daneš, 1964; Firbas, 1982, 1987; van Dijk, 1972; Dik, 1978; and many others). Those linguists believe that the two senses "that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation" and "[that] from which the speaker proceeds" together constitute the notion of Theme. As a result of this conceptualization, there is only one structural

layer referring to both senses of Theme in the sentence. Fries (1981, p. 2) and Hasan and Fries (1995, p. xxvi) call Mathesius's approach to Theme the 'combining approach'.

In contrast to Mathesius's combining approach, Halliday (1985b, 1998, 2012, and elsewhere) abstracts out Mathesius's second function for Theme, separating it from the first. He argues that the second function "that from which the speaker proceeds" brings about the thematic structure of the sentence (the 'clause' in his terminology) which consists of two functional components: 'Theme' and 'Rheme'; and the first function "that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation" brings about the information structure which consists of two functional components: 'Given' and 'New'. Halliday draws attention to the fact that thematic structure is a structure of the clause, while information structure may be not. He claims that in English and probably in all languages too, thematic status is signaled by initial position. Theme is "the point of departure of the message; it is that which the clause is concerned" (Halliday, 1985b, p. 38; 1998, p. 37). In contrast, information structure is not directly a structure of the clause, but of the information unit. Halliday, in relation to English, suggests that information units are signaled in the spoken language by the tone group ('sense unit' in the older terminology). Each tone group has some section which expresses information presented as New information. The tonic foot (the location of the so-called sentence accent) defines 'the culmination of what is New: it marks where the new element ends.' (Halliday, 1985b, p. 275; 1998, p. 296). In addition to information which is presented as New, information units may contain information which is presented as Given. Halliday's view of Theme has been widely adopted by systemic functional linguists (e.g. Matthiessen, 1992, 1995; Fries, 1981, 1995a, 1995b, 1997; Hasan & Fries, 1995; Eggins, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; G. Thompson, 2014; and many others). Those linguists believe that each of the two functions "that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation" and "[that] from which the speaker proceeds" defines a different aspect of the textual meaning of the clause. As a result of this conceptualization, there are two structural layers each realizing one function of

Theme in the clause as message: the thematic structure – the focus of our study – and the information structure. Fries (1981, p. 2) and Hasan and Fries (1995, p. xxvii) refer to Halliday's approach to Theme as the 'separating approach'.

In his application of SFG theory to the description of Theme in English, Halliday makes three important premises. First, he assumes that "in all languages the clause has the character of a message: it has some form of organization giving it the status of a communicative event. But there are different ways in which this may be achieved. In English, as in many other languages, the clause is organized as a message by having a distinct status assigned to one part of it. One part of the clause is enunciated as the Theme; this then combines with the remainder [the Rheme] so that the two parts together constitute a message" (Halliday, 1985b, p. 38, 1998, p. 37). Secondly, he distinguishes the notion of Theme in the Theme-Rheme structure from the notion of Topic in the Topic-Comment structure as used by other non-systemic functional linguists such as Chafe (1976), Li and Thompson (1976) and Dik (1978). He argues convincingly that some grammarians have used the terms Topic and Comment instead of Theme and Rheme, but the Topic-Comment terminology carries different connotations: Topic usually refers to only one particular kind of theme; and in SFG it tends to be used as a cover term for the two concepts that are functionally distinct, one being that of Theme in the thematic structure, and the other being that of Given in information structure (Halliday, 1985b, p. 39, 1998, p. 38). And thirdly, he provides a general guiding principle for identifying Theme in the clause which reads as follows:

> In some languages, which has a pattern of this kind, the Theme is announced by means of a particle: in Japanese, for example, there is a special postposition -wa, which signifies that whatever immediately precedes it is thematic. In other languages, of which English is one, the Theme is indicated by position in the clause. In speaking or writing English we signal that an item has thematic status by putting it first. No other signal is necessary, although it is not unusual in spoken English for Theme

to be marked off also by intonation (Halliday, 1985b, p. 38; 1998, p. 37).

Proceeding from these premises, Halliday (1985b, 1998, and elsewhere) and then Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) come to explore various aspects of Theme and the thematic structure of the clause, usually using English as the language of illustration. Although there are some minor changes in the wording of the headings of Halliday's (1985, 1998) and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) descriptions of Theme, the following general categories seem to remain unchanged: Theme and Rheme, simple Themes, Theme and mood, multiple Themes, and clauses as Themes, unmarked Theme, and marked Theme.

2.3. Studies of Theme in Vietnamese

Studies of Theme in Vietnamese vary in both nature and scope of research. They range from book chapters or parts of book chapters (e.g. Lý, 2002; Diệp, 2004, 2013; Cao, 1991/2004; Thai, 2004) to research journal articles (e.g. Hoàng, 2007, 2008), and to unpublished doctoral dissertations (e.g. T. H. Nguyễn, 1994; T. M. Đỗ, 2007; T. H. V. Nguyễn, 2015). In those studies, however, the concept of Theme has been approached quite differently by different researchers. Lý (2002), for example, introduces in passing the notion of Theme as conceptualized in the Prague school linguists' theory known as 'functional sentence perspective'. Diệp (2004, 2013), on the other hand, being sympathetic with SFG theory, describes briefly Theme and its exponents in the Vietnamese sentence. Hoàng (2007, 2008) draws on insights from SFG theory to interpret the notion of Theme in the Vietnamese clause simplex and clause complex, but within the scope of two short research articles, the issue of Theme in Vietnamese in those grammatical units is not sufficiently addressed. In a book chapter entitled *Metafunctional profile of the grammar of Vietnamese*, Thai (2004) explores Theme in Vietnamese clause, using SFG as the theoretical framework. But, due to the fact that his study is concerned with a number of other aspects, the issue of Theme is not adequately treated. In a more recent doctoral research, T. H. V. Nguyễn (2015) makes an attempt to look at Theme in the Vietnamese

clause (she calls 'câu đơn' [the 'simple sentence']), using SFG theory as the descriptive framework. Her research has yielded some significant results. However, due to the fact that she is strongly influenced by Vietnamese traditional grammars, an exhaustive application of SFG theory to the description of Theme in Vietnamese seems to be impossible.

Among the studies of Theme in Vietnamese, *Tiếng Việt: Sơ thảo ngữ pháp chức năng* (Vietnamese: An Outline of Functional Grammar) by Cao Xuân Hạo is perhaps the most notable monograph which deserves some detailed examination. Cao's monograph was first published in 1991 under the title *Tiếng Việt: Sơ thảo ngữ pháp chức năng, quyển 1* (Vietnamese: An Outline of Functional Grammar, Book 1). In 2004, the book was reprinted under the title *Tiếng Việt: Sơ thảo ngữ pháp chức năng* (Vietnamese: An Outline of Functional Grammar). It is organized into two parts. The first part discusses general theoretical issues of different formal and functional approaches to language study such as the notion of functional grammar, three-level approaches to syntax, the definition of sentence, the subject-predicate structure in the formal grammar paradigm, the Theme-Rheme structure in modern linguistics, the semantic structure of the sentence, and some issues about pragmatics. The second part presents an application of Cao's functional framework to the description of the Vietnamese sentence. It consists of three chapters: chapter one explores the basic syntactic structure of Vietnamese, focusing in particular on Theme, its grammatical properties, and the markers used to isolate Theme from Rheme in the sentence; chapter two looks at different types of sentence structure in text/discourse; and chapter three is concerned with the classification of the sentence based on illocutionary force and representational meaning. Of these chapters, Chapter one is of immediate interest and will be taken for review.

Functional grammar, for Cao, is "a theory and a system of methods which are built upon the view that sees language as a means for exercising communication between human beings" (Cao, 2004, p. 11)[1].

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[1] This passage appears in the Vietnamese original (page 3) as follows:

một lý thuyết và một hệ thống phương pháp được xây dựng trên quan điểm coi ngôn ngữ như một phương tiện thực hiện sự giao tiếp giữa người và người.

In evaluating the formal approach to grammar, Cao suggests that it would be unfair to say that grammarians of the formal paradigm do not pay attention to meaning in language study. He claims that they really do. However, meaning in this approach is relegated to a secondary status. It is considered only when it is found necessary; that is, to serve the purpose of studying the formal aspects of language. This drawback of the formal approach, according to Cao (2004), is inevitable considering that their main goal is to investigate the structures of the linguistic signs in their static forms or *état de langue* (to use de Saussure's 1983 terminology). Contrasting his own view with the formal approach, Cao states:

> Functional grammar sets for itself the task of investigating, describing, and explaining the rules that govern the operations of language on both the formal and the content level in their functional relationship (i.e., in the relationship between means and ends) through observing and using language in real communicative situations not only for establishing and identifying systems and sub-systems of linguistic units but also for observing how language operates through its vivid manifestations when it is used (Cao, 2004, 15)[2].

And to clarify his functional view of language, Cao further states:

> The structure-constructing rules of the basic discourse unit – the sentence – are represented and explained in functional grammar on the basis of the close relationship between language and thought in structuring and linearizing the states of affairs which are reflected and reported in the interactive environment between different situational and contextual factors with the participation of conscious and subconscious objectives of the speaker under the control of the co-operative contracts between the participants (Cao, 2004, p. 16)[3].

As the above quotes show, the task which Cao sets for his functional grammar is rather ambitious. It encompasses not only linguistics in the sense of the Saussurean *état de langue* but also several other disciplines such as pragmatics, discourse analysis, and psycholinguistics. Apart from these, his grammar has to take account of a number of fundamental issues such as the relations between form and meaning in language; *langue* and *parole* in the Saussurean sense; language, reality and thought in the Whorfian sense; and language and social context in the Firthian and Hallidayan sense.

Discussing the different three-level approaches to syntax, Cao claims that most of the three-level models of syntax are derived from the semiotic theory introduced by Charles Morris (1938) who assumes that in every semiotic system, there are three levels: (i) syntactic, (ii) semantic, and (iii) pragmatic. Cao points out that the level that seems to cause the most disagreement among scholars is the third. Here one may find that different functionalists use different terms with different connotations to refer to the nature of this level: 'textual function' (Halliday 1967b, 1968, 1970, 1975, 1978, 1985b, 1998, and many other

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[2] This passage appears in the Vietnamese original (page 15) as follows:

Ngữ pháp chức năng tự đặt cho mình cái nhiệm vụ nghiên cứu, miêu tả và giải thích các quy tắc chi phối hoạt động của ngôn ngữ trên các bình diện của mặt hình thức và mặt nội dung trong mối liên hệ có tính chức năng (trong mối liên hệ giữa những phương tiện và những mục đích) thông qua việc quan sát cách sử dụng ngôn ngữ trong những tình huống giao tế hiện thực không phải chỉ để lập những danh sách đơn vị và xác định những hệ thống và tiểu hệ thống đơn vị ngôn ngữ, mà còn để theo dõi cách hành chức của ngôn ngữ qua những biểu hiện sinh động của nó trong khi được sử dụng.

[3] This passage appears in the Vietnamese original (page 16) as follows:

Những quy tắc xây dựng cấu trúc của đơn vị ngôn từ cơ bản – câu – được ngữ pháp chức năng trình bày và giải thích trên cơ sở những mối quan hệ khăng khít giữa ngôn ngữ và tư duy trong việc cấu trúc hoá và tuyến tính hoá những sự tình được phản ánh và trần thuật, trong môi trường tác động của những nhân tố đa dạng của những tình huống và văn cảnh, với sự tham gia của những mục tiêu hữu thức hay vô thức của người nói dưới sự chi phối của những công ước cộng tác giữa những người tham dự hội thoại.

places), 'pragmatic' (Dik, 1978), 'the organization of utterance' (Daněs, 1964, 1974), and 'logico-informative' (Gak, 1981).

With regard to the basic structure of Vietnamese, Cao rejects the idea popularly adopted amongst most Vietnamese grammarians of the formal paradigm that Vietnamese is a subject-predicate language. He explicitly states that Theme-Rheme/Topic-Comment is the basic structure of Vietnamese. He provides evidence to support his claim. The first evidence is based on an analysis of some examples in French and their Russian counterparts. These examples are reproduced below as (1) - (6):

(1) *J'ai lu ce livre*. (I read this book.)

(2) *(Quant à) Ce livre, je l'ai lu*. (This book, I read [it].)

(3) *?? Ce livre a été lu par moi*. (This book was read by me.)

(4) *Я читал эту книгу*. (I read this book.)

(5) *Эту книгу я читал*. (This book, I read [it].)

(6) *Что кажается этой книги, я его читал*. (As for this book, I read it.)

(Cao, 2004, pp. 58-9)

By providing these examples in French and Russian and analysing the thematic structure of sentence (2) in French and of sentence (5) in Russian, Cao wishes to demonstrate that French, which is a language of fixed word order, prefers what he calls 'external Theme' while Russian, which is a language of free word order, prefers 'internal Theme'. The conclusion he actually arrives at is that in (2) the Theme *Ce livre* (This book), which is not the subject of the sentence, is placed outside the syntactic structure of the sentence. The following part *je l'ai lu*, which is marked off from *Ce livre* by a clear pause when spoken, is a complete sentence in which *Ce livre* is replaced by the pronoun *je*. In contrast, in the Russian counterpart (5), the Theme *Эту книгу* (this book), which is not the subject of the sentence either, is placed inside the syntactic structure of the sentence. However, what proves that *Эту книгу* (this book) is inside the syntactic structure of the sentence is not apparent from Cao's analysis. Cao claims that this feature (that Theme is placed inside the syntactic structure of the sentence) of inflectional languages such as

Russian is similar to that of isolating or non-inflectional languages such as Chinese and Vietnamese.

The second evidence Cao provides in support of his claim that the basic structure of Vietnamese is Theme-Rheme/Topic-Comment is derived from Chafe (1976) and, in particular, Li and Thompson (1976). In their study on language typology, Li and Thompson (1976, pp. 457-89) group all languages of the world into four main types: (i) languages that are subject-prominent (e.g., Indo-European, Niger-Congo, Fino-Ugric, etc.), (ii) languages that are topic-prominent (e.g., Chinese, Lahu, Lisu, etc.), (iii) languages that are both subject-prominent and topic-prominent (e.g., Japanese, Korean, etc.), and (iv) languages that are neither subject-prominent nor topic-prominent (e.g., Tagalog, Illocano, etc.). Cao (2004, p. 60) claims without giving any further evidence that Vietnamese is a topic-prominent language.

Thematic structure has been one of the foci which is extensively explored in different functional approaches to language. Drawing on Halliday (1985b), Cao discusses the issue by first pointing out the confusion of the formal paradigm between grammatical subject, logical subject, and psychological subject. He suggests that the dichotomy between Theme and Rheme should not be seen as a static picture of reality, but rather, it should be regarded as an oriented manipulation of thought. When re-organising reflected reality, thought divides it into two parts by choosing a point of departure for establishing the relationship between these two. Cao claims that the part that is chosen as the point of departure functions as Theme (subjectum, thema) and the part that realizes the manipulation functions as Rheme (praedicatum, rhema). In his opinion, the Theme-Rheme structure in the sentence is a phenomenon which belongs to what he refers to as 'the logico-discursive domain'. It is 'logico' in the sense that it is linearized in discourse, and it is 'discursive' in the sense that it reflects the judgement impact of thought (for more detail, see Cao, 2004, pp. 66-67).

With regard to the order of Theme and Rheme in the sentence, Cao observes that like most languages, the usual or unmarked Theme-Rheme order in the Vietnamese sentence is that the Theme precedes the Rheme. However, there

are instances where this order is inverted. He provides a number of examples to prove the point. One of his examples on page 173 is

(7) [CXH, p. 193]

Đẹp	*biết*	*bao*	*những*	*lời*	*chân thực*	*ấy!*
beautiful	how	much	plural marker	word	sincere	those
Rheme			**Theme**			

How beautiful those sincere words are!

According to Cao, the Theme-Rheme order in the above sentence is inverted. He explains that this inversion usually occurs in exclamatory sentences. He even goes further to suggest that in similar situations this inversion of Theme-Rheme order may be universal across languages. Unfortunately, his analysis does not seem to conform to the principle he has established for identifying the Theme-Rheme order:

When uttering out a sentence, the speaker produces a Theme and says

(8) [CXH, p. 152]

Anh	*Nam*	*ấy*	*à?*	*Tôi*	*vừa*	*gặp*	*anh*	*ấy*	*ở*	*trường*	*xong*
brother	Nam	that	inter. particle	I	just	meet	brother	that	at	school	finish
Topic/Theme?				**Comment/Rheme?**							

(Did you mention) Nam? I've just met him at school.

(9) [CXH, p. 152]

Chị	*ấy*	*mà,*	*chị*	*cần*	*nghĩ*	*kĩ*	*về*	*việc*	*vừa qua.*
sister	that	particle	sister	need	think	careful	about	work	past
Topic/Theme?			**Comment/Rheme?**						

As for you [sister], you should think carefully about what you have done.

By contrast, an internal Theme is one that falls inside the syntactic structure of the sentence. It is divided into frame Theme and topic Theme. A frame Theme is "the sentence component that specifies the conditions that make up a frame of situation such as time and

reproduced as (7) below (the analysis of the sentence into Theme and Rheme is my own).

something about that Theme or within the range of that Theme (Cao, 2004, p. 151).[4]

Cao classifies Themes into (i) external Theme and (ii) internal Theme. An external Theme is one that "falls outside of the syntactic structure of the sentence, having no normal syntactic function in the sentence" (p. 152), it [external Theme] is "a peripheral and uncommon grammatical phenomenon, occurring only in some untypical situations" (p. 154). For example:

space in which the thing said in the Rheme is valid. By contrast, a topic Theme is the sentence component that indicates the object mentioned in the Rheme, the topic of the judgment."[5] (Cao, 2004, p. 156). Below are some examples of frame Theme and topic Theme in Cao's formulation:

(10) [CXH, p. 154]

Trong	*cái*	*bình*	*này*	*nhiệt độ*	*lên*	*đến*	*39^0*
in	generic classifier	container	this	temperature	rise	up	39^0
Topic/Theme?				**Comment/Rheme?**			

In this container, the temperature rises up to 39^0.

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[4] This passage appears in the Vietnamese original (page 151) as follows:
  Khi nói một câu người ta đưa ra một cái đề, rồi nói một điều gì về cái đề đó hoặc trong khuôn khổ của cái đề đó.
[5] This passage appears in the Vietnamese original (page 156) as follows:
1. Khung đề, là thành phần câu nêu rõ những điều kiện làm thành cái khung về cảnh huống, thời gian, không gian trong đó điều được nói ở phần thuyết có hiệu lực, còn
2. Chủ đề, là phần câu chỉ đối tượng được nói đến trong phần thuyết, cái chủ thể của sự nhận định.

(11) [CXH, p. 154]

Cái	*bình*	*này*	*nhiệt độ*	*lên*	*đến*	*39⁰*
generic classifier	container	this	temperature	rise	up	39^0
Topic/Theme?			**Comment/Rheme?**			

In this container, the temperature rises up to 39^0.

(12) [CXH, p. 154]

Chân thành	*thì*	*ai*	*cũng*	*quý*
sincere	isolating particle	who/everyone	also	like
Topic/Theme?	**Comment/Rheme?**			

Sincerity is what everyone likes.

(13) [CXH, p. 154]

Anh	*Nam*	*thì*	*ai*	*cũng*	*quý*
brother	Nam	isolating particle	who/everyone	also	like
Topic/Theme?		**Comment/Rheme?**			

Everyone likes Nam/As for Nam, everyone likes him.

According to Cao, in sentences (10) and (11) both *Trong cái bình này* (in this container) and *Cái bình này* (this container) express the range within which the statement *nhiệt độ lên đến 39⁰* (the temperature rises up to 39^0) is applicable. Similarly, in sentences (12) and (13), *Chân thành* (sincerity) and *Anh Nam* (Nam) also express the range within which the statement *ai cũng quý* (what/who everyone likes) is applicable. Thus despite other more delicate differences, each of these functions as internal Theme (for more detail, see Cao, 2004, pp. 155-6).

One of the most interesting but highly debatable points concerns Cao's principle for identifying Theme and Rheme in the sentence. Cao claims that to identify the boundary between these component parts, we can use two test words or 'isolating particles' (to use L. C. Thompson's (1985, p. 261) terminology): *thì* and *là*. It thus follows from Cao that the boundary between Theme and Rheme in a sentence can be recognised by the presence of either of these two markers or by inserting either of them without changing the basic structure and the meaning of the sentence. According to Cao, *thì* is a special word that is used to mark the boundary between Theme and Rheme in the sentence and *là* is a multifunctional word but its main function is to mark the Theme-Rheme boundary. However, *là* differs from *thì* in that while *thì* is used to mark

the thematic component, *là* is used to mark the rhematic one. He points out that the most important function of *là* is to signal the rhematicity of the syntagms which are not rhematically typical such as noun phrases, prepositional phrases, proper nouns, personal pronouns. Cao establishes a testing principle which reads as follows:

> The boundary between Theme and Rheme in a sentence is or may be marked by the presence of *thì* or *là* (p. 234).[6]

Cao's principle for determining the boundary of Theme and Rheme in the Vietnamese sentence sounds a good one, but surely it cannot be applied to all cases. This explains why it is precisely this principle for which Cao is subjected to criticisms by a number of Vietnamese scholars. H. C. Đỗ (1992), for example, argues that the particles *thì* and *là* have a variety of uses; it is, therefore, unjustified to say that their function is to mark the boundary of Theme and Rheme in the sentence. In fact, H. C. Đỗ (1992, pp. 10-11) goes so far as to suggest that Cao's testing principle does not reflect the reality of Vietnamese language and is thus not a valid criterion for sentencehood. The main reason, as H. C. Đỗ explains, is that most of the examples Cao provides for establishing the principle are context-free. When they are considered in

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[6] This passage appears in the Vietnamese original (page 234) as follows:

Biên giới đề thuyết của câu đặt ở chỗ nào có hoặc có thể có THÌ hay LÀ.

context (or when they are context-bound), *thì* and *là* cannot work as test words, i.e., they cannot be filled without either changing the meaning of the sentence or making it sound odd or unnatural (p. 11). Agreeing with H. C. Đỗ's position, Lưu (1993, p. 25) also claims that: "... chẳng phải ranh giới đề-thuyết nào cũng có thể đặt chúng vào được. ("... not all Theme-Rheme boundaries can be filled in by *thì* and *là*.")". He claims that the Theme-Rheme boundary is determined by a particular context. Cao's functional views and his Theme-Rheme principle are also criticised by Hồ (1993) who points out that Cao's approach to Theme-Rheme distinction is inconsistent; his distinction between internal and external Themes is not clear; and the distinction between frame Theme and adverbial phrases is not clear either. Hồ (1993) concludes that because of these weaknesses, some of Cao's analyses appear to be too complex and in many places they are inappropriate (for more detail of this critique, see Hồ, 1993, pp. 52-3).

It can be said in summary that *Tiếng Việt: Sơ thảo ngữ pháp chức năng* by Cao is the first descriptive study to address the issues of Vietnamese grammar from a functional perspective. It is one of the very few functional grammars of Vietnamese which is of both theoretical and practical significance (Đinh, 1993). The merits of Cao's grammar, in my view, rest on at least four counts. First, his grammar can be considered a ground-breaking study of Vietnamese grammar from a functional perspective. Secondly, it introduces in a relatively systematic way some major functional views of language currently existing in world linguistic scholarship. Thirdly, it attempts to use insights from various functional approaches to describe and interpret the Vietnamese sentence. Fourthly, and perhaps more importantly, it generates ideas for debates and discussions among Vietnamese linguistic scholars.

Despite the merits, limitations still pertain. First, as Cao claims that Vietnamese is a topic-prominent language and the syntactic structure of the Vietnamese is Đề + Thuyết, his grammar represents a mono-functional approach to language. Secondly, through his description and interpretation of the thematic structure of Vietnamese, Cao seems to follow the 'combining approach' to Theme; thus resulting in some confusion between Theme-Rheme and Given-New analysis. Thirdly, the unit of Cao's thematic analysis is not always clear: in a number of cases, one cannot tell which of the three units subsumed under the term sentence is the unit of Cao's thematic analysis: the simple sentence, the complex sentence, or the compound sentence (see, for example, (87b), p. 202; (88a), p. 202; 173b, p. 259). Fourthly, whether Cao's basic structure of Vietnamese is Topic-Comment as conceptualized by some North-American linguists (e.g. Chafe, 1976; Li & Thompson, 1976) or Theme-Rheme as conceptualized by SFL and the Prague school scholars is not explicated in his study; this is evident in his use of different pairs of terms which, as Halliday (1985b, 1998) has pointed out, carry quite different connotations: Đề-Thuyết (Theme-Rheme), Sở đề-Sở thuyết or Sở đề-Thuật đề (Topic-Comment). (That explains why in my analysis of Cao's examples, I put a question mark after every Topic/Theme and Comment/Rheme to indicate that I am not sure whether Cao wants to refer to the structure of Vietnamese as Topic-Comment or Rheme-Rheme). And finally, except the introduction of *thì* and *là* as the test words for identifying the boundary of Topic and Comment in sentences, no further statements are made about the boundary between these constituents. These remarks bring us to the next section where we will present research design and methodology – the focus of our study.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Questions

This study is intended to address the following questions:

1. What is Theme in the Vietnamese clause simplex and how is it recognised?

2. What are the delicate options available in the environment of **THEME** and how are they distinguished?

3.2. Data Collection

Two points should be made here before we deal with the collection of data for our research. First, because the description of Theme in Vietnamese presented in this study is written

in English and, more importantly, is based on the SFG framework, reference is made, in particular, to the works of Halliday. Apart from this, the writings of other SF grammarians such as Matthiessen (1992, 1995), Martin (1992), Eggins (1994), Lock (1996), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), and others are also taken as points of reference. And secondly, since all these studies are written in English and about the grammar of the English language, and I am myself writing this research in English, an inevitable corollary is that in describing the grammar of Vietnamese, instead of coining new terms, I will be employing the terminologies or labels which Halliday and his colleagues have used to describe the grammar of English. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the grammatical categories which English systemicists set up for describing the grammar of English are identical in all respects to those employed for the description of Vietnamese in this study. This is because "each language has its own semantic code" (Halliday, 1998, p. xxx); and "any grammatical category that is established for the systemic functional description of a language is, of necessity, language-specific, since it is an abstraction based on the interrelations and oppositions found in the grammatical organisation of the language being described" (Shore, 1992, p. 209). And, in a strict sense, one would be justified in arguing that the grammatical categories of no two languages can be regarded as identical since the grammatical distinctions and oppositions that are made in any language are unique to that language (see Hasan & Fries, 1995). It follows that when borrowing a term or a label from one language to name a grammatical category of another language, one has to be very careful. However, it should be remembered that the category which is assigned the same label in the "borrower language" (Vietnamese in this case) is not necessarily equivalent to that in the "lender language" (English in this case) (for detail of these points, see Hoang, 2012).

The illustrating materials collected for this study are text-based, with the examples taken from natural texts (both written and spoken). Ideally, every example should be the whole text; but in practice, this ideal is unattainable. So, in order to exemplify, I often

scour short extracts or passages from complete texts, which are understandable even apart from their contexts and contain one or a number of examples in point. To ensure authenticity and variety, the illustrating materials are collected from a wide variety of sources which cover a large number of text types: novels, short stories, journals, grammar books, folk tales, poems, Vietnamese riddles, and field notes of spontaneous conversations. Details of these sources of data are provided in the Appendix.

Some of the examples are my own. This was made necessary for the reason that grammar is concerned not just with the actual but with the possible as well (see Chomsky, 1957, 1965). When a number of related examples need to be provided together with the original one, often it is extremely difficult to find all these variants or agnates in a given collection of texts, no matter how large it may be. This does not mean that they cannot occur, but simply because of 'the vast complexity of language' (Palmer, 1980, p. 8), it would take a grammarian a lifetime to scour the texts for the desired agnate examples – a kind of work which seems to take the use of authentic examples to unnecessary extremes. However, to ensure the validity of the made-up examples, I often have them cross-checked with my colleagues who are Vietnamese linguists.

As most of the examples are authentic, they sometimes contain elements which are irrelevant to the point under discussion and sometimes are elliptical; i.e., certain elements have to be retrieved with the help of context. In some instances, in order to avoid overload of information not needed immediately, what I have done is (i) to 'tidy up' the original example by removing the irrelevant elements such as false starts, stutters and so on or by reducing a highly complex nominal group to a single noun or proper name, and (ii) to expand the elements of an elliptical example, so as to remove ellipsis. It is hoped that these 'editing' steps, taken minimally, in no way invalidate the suitability of the examples, especially where the grammar of Theme in the clause is concerned.

3.3. Scope of Description

This study is confined to the description of Theme in the clause simplex. Clause simplex is not a univalent concept even in Systemic

Functional Linguistics. It can refer to an independent clause, a dependent clause, a major clause, a minor clause, a full clause, an elliptical clause, a clause simplex, a clause complex, and so on. This study takes major independent clauses defined by Halliday (1985a, 1985b, 1998), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), and Hoang (2012) as the units to describe Theme: those clauses that can stand by themselves and can be analysed for Transitivity, Mood, and Theme. Thus major independent clauses such as *Bà thẩm phán đặt tay lên một góc tờ giấy* (The judge lady put her hands on a corner of the paper.) [PDT, p. 20], *Hãy làm cho nó được nổi tiếng!* (Make him become famous!) [NĐC, p. 112], and *Bố muốn đi chơi đâu bây giờ?* (Where do you want to go now, dad?) [NĐC, p. 72] are within the scope of this study. Major dependent clauses such as *Khi chúng tôi ra tới nơi* (When we arrived there)*,* in *Khi chúng tôi ra tới nơi, thành phố đang ngất trời bom đạn* (When we arrived there, the city was towering with smoke from bombs and bullets.) [BN, 1944, p. 175], and *Nếu chú chẳng chịu giúp* (If you cannot help) in *Nếu chú chẳng chịu giúp, thì họ ta vẫn phải mời luật sư* (If you cannot help, our clan will still have to hire a lawyer) [LNM, p. 125]; and minor clauses such as *Tuân ơi!* (Tuan!), *Này*! (Hey!), *Tất nhiên!* (Of course), *Được*. (OK), *Tội nghiệp!* (Poor you!), etc. will be left out of account.

This study adopts Halliday's definition of Theme because "it fits within a general model of the nature of language" (cf. Fries, 1995b, p. 47). In Halliday's SFL model, language is conceptualized as having three metafunctions: experiential metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and textual metafunction. Each of these metafunctions activates the choice of a set of structural system on language. Thus, the experiential metafunction activates the choice of the **TRANSITIVITY** system concerning process types such as material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential, their associated participants, and their incumbent or attendant circumstances. The interpersonal metafunction activates the choice of the **MOOD** system realized by mood functions such as Subject, Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct. And the textual metafunction activates the choice of two related types of system which concern the organization of information in text:

The **THEME** system and the **INFORMATION** system. The **THEME** system divides the information being conveyed in the clause into Theme and Rheme, while the **INFORMATION** system divides the information being conveyed into Given and New information. As our study is concerned with the **THEME** system, the **INFORMATION** system will be out of consideration.

Some systemic functional studies by such scholars as Matthiessen (1995), Eggins (1994), Thai (1998, 2004), G. Thompson (2014), and the seminal work *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* and its repeated editions by Halliday (1985b, 1998) and then by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) foreground either the 'systemic' or the 'functional' aspect of grammar. This study attempts to keep a balance between these two: both system networks representing systemic choices and structures realizing these systemic choices are explored and provided.

Finally, it should be noted that Halliday's and other systemic functional scholars' descriptions of Theme are based on English. Some of their descriptive categories presented in their IFGs are specific to English and thus are not relevant to Vietnamese. This suggests that in our description of Theme in Vietnamese, we should be selective, describing only those categories which are applicable and specific to Vietnamese.

3.4. *Presentation of Illustrative Examples*

Two notes of caution should be taken before we introduce how an illustrative example is presented. First, as mentioned, in the SFL model the clause is recognized as a simultaneous representation of three strands of meaning: experiential, interpersonal and textual, realized at once in the systems of transitivity (experiential), mood (interpersonal), and theme (textual). This suggests that in describing the system of **THEME** in Vietnamese, we have to presuppose the existence of the systems of **MOOD** and **TRANSITIVITY** so that at some point when there is a need to bring out more clearly a feature concerning the category of Theme, some reference will be made to them. To date, only the system of **TRANSITIVITY** in

Vietnamese has been explored (see Hoang, 2012), so while recognizing the shortcoming of taking the system of **MOOD** for granted, we have generally assumed that functions such as Subject, Predicator, Complement, Adjunct at least at the primary level of delicacy resemble those in English. And secondly, because the description of Theme in this study is written in English, it should be presented in a way so that not only Vietnamese but also readers of English can understand it. To fulfil this goal, glosses and symbols used in the study are presented as follows:

- In the descriptive and explanatory text, the initial letter of the names of functions is capitalized, e.g., Theme, Rheme, Subject, Predicator.
- When these functions are introduced for the first time, they appear in boldface type, e.g. **Theme**, **Rheme**, **Subject, Predicator**; and when there is not enough space, they are abbreviated, e.g. **Th**, **Rh**, **Subj, Pred**.
- Names of systems are capitalised throughout: **THEME** for the system of **THEME**, **TRANSITIVITY** for the system of **TRANSITIVITY**, and **MOOD** for the system of **MOOD**.

(14) [NĐC, p. 114]

Ngày	*xưa*	*có*	*một*	*người*	*thợ săn*	*trẻ*
day	old	have	one	person	hunter	young
Theme			**Rheme**			

Once upon a time, there was a young hunter.

3.5. *Aspects of Description*

Drawing on insights from SFG framework, the description of Theme in the Vietnamese clause simplex will focus on the following aspects:

- The notion of Theme and thematic structure in the clause,
- The boundary between Theme and Rheme in the clause,
- Simple Theme v. multiple Theme,
- Unmarked Theme v. marked Theme,
- Theme interpreted from the point of

The presentation of an illustrative example is organised as follows:

- Each individual example is numbered in Arabic numeral which is enclosed in round brackets (…). This is followed by the source of data or the origin of the example including an abbreviation of the author's name and the page from which the example is taken; these are enclosed in square brackets […] (see the Appendix).
- The first line, which is italicised, provides the Vietnamese wording.
- The second line gives English inter-glosses.
- The third (sometimes the fourth or the fifth) line provides the configuration of functions of the elements in the clause and appear in boldface type.
- The final line gives an idiomatic translation into English. For non-Vietnamese speakers so far as the grammar is concerned, it is the inter-glosses that are more relevant as the idiomatic translation is an attempt to convey the meaning and not the grammatical relations within the clause.

Below is an instance of how an illustrative example is presented:

view of Mood.

4. Theme in the Vietnamese Clause Simplex

4.1. *The Notion of Theme and Thematic Structure in the Clause*

Let us start with three material clauses below: (15a) is the original clause, and (15b) and (15c) are agnates. To facilitate discussion, these clauses are analyzed in terms of Transitivity, Mood and Theme; and the elements that function as Theme are in boldface type.

Figure 1

An Analysis of Transitivity, Mood and Theme of (15a), (15b) and (15c)

(15a) [THL, p. 161]

	Ông Xê	*trở về*	*quê hương*	*sau*	*gần*	*năm mươi*	*năm*	*lưu lạc*
	Mr Xe	return	home country	after	near	fifty	year	wander
Trans.	**Actor**	**Process: material**	**Range**	**Circumstance**				
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Complement**	**Adjunct**				
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**						

Mr. Xe came back to his home country after nearly fifty years' wandering abroad.

(15b)

	Sau	*gần*	*năm mươi*	*năm*	*lưu lạc*	*ông Xê*	*trở về*	*quê hương*
	after	near	fifty	year	wander	Mr Xe	return	home village
Trans.	**Circumstance**					**Actor**	**Process: material**	**Range**
Mood	**Adjunct**					**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Complement**
Theme	**Theme**					**Rheme**		

After nearly fifty years' wandering abroad, Mr. Xe came back to his home country.

(15c)

	Quê hương,	*ông Xê*	*trở về*	*sau*	*gần*	*năm mươi*	*năm*	*lưu lạc*
	home village	Mr Xe	return	after	near	fifty	year	wander
Trans.	**Range**	**Actor**	**Process: material**	Circumstance				
Mood	**Complement**	**Subject**	**Predicator**	Adjunct				
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**						

His home country, Mr. Xe came back [to it] after nearly fifty years' wandering abroad.

We will consider Theme in relation to Transitivity first because it is the aspect "where the most highly structured configurations are found" (Halliday, 1998, p. 337). Our Transitivity analysis of (15a), (15b), and (15c) brings out two points. First, each of the three clauses is composed of four constituents: the nominal group *Ông Xê* (Mr Xe), the verbal group *trở về* (returned), the nominal group *quê hương* (home country), and the prepositional phrase *sau gần năm mươi năm lưu lạc* (after nearly fifty years' wandering abroad). Secondly, in whatever order these constituents are positioned in these clauses, *ông Xê* still functions as **Actor**, *trở về* as **Process: material**, *quê hương* as **Range**, and *sau gần mười năm lưu lạc* as **Circumstance**. It can be said, as a result, that the experiential world being described or represented in these clauses is the same. What seems to be different lies in the way the world is organized and presented in them – the textual world. Our Theme analysis shows that *Ông Xê* which functions as Actor in transitivity receives focal attention in (15a), while *Sau gần năm mươi năm lưu lạc* which functions as Circumstance receives focal attention in (15b), and *Quê hương* which functions as Range receives focal

attention in (15c). When they are put in initial position of these clauses, they receive special status: they set up 'the local context in which each clause is to be interpreted' (Matthiessen, 1995, p. 531; see also Hasan & Fries, 1995, p. xxvii; Fries, 1997, p. 231; Bell, 1991, p. 127). Following the SFG terminology, we shall use the term **Theme** as the label for this function, and the term **Rheme** as the label for the function of the remainder of the message or the part in which the Theme is developed. Thus, a Vietnamese clause as a message consists of a **Theme** combined with a **Rheme,** and the configuration Theme + Rheme constitutes the **thematic structure** of the clause (see Halliday, 1985b, 1998; see also T. H. Nguyễn, 1994; T. M. Đỗ, 2007; T. H. V. Nguyễn, 2015).

4.2. The Boundary Between Theme and Rheme in the Clause

Defining what theme is is one thing; identifying the boundary between Theme and Rheme in a clause is quite another. In fact, identifying the boundary between Theme and Rheme often causes problems for students of language. In our analysis of the thematic structure of (15a), (15b), and (15c), we have

selected rather arbitrarily the transitivity element that occupies the first position in these clauses as Theme. The question of where the Theme ends and the Rheme starts in a clause needs some further clarification. Halliday (1985b, 1998), Matthiessen (1992, 1995), and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) made an important observation about the nature of the experiential, the interpersonal, and the textual aspects of the clause. They found that the mode of expression of the experiential metafunction is particulate, its experiential selections are realized by constituency configurations of a process, participants and/or circumstances; the mode of expression of the interpersonal metafunction is prosodic, its interpersonal selections are typically realized by pitch contours (phonological prosody), modal prosodies, and so on, giving value to the relative sequence of the Mood functions of Subject, Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct; and the textual mode of expression is periodic or wave-like, realized by sequence of prominence, giving value to the initial position (in the case of Theme-Rheme information) and the final position (in the case of Given-New information). Modelling Theme-Rheme information as wave suggests that a prominence (the peak of the wave) is at the beginning of the clause and a non-prominence (the trough of the wave) is at the end of the clause. But it also suggests that the differentiation between Theme and Rheme is not discrete. For purposes of textual analysis, however, "we have to create experiential-like discreteness by drawing constituency boundaries between Theme and Rheme" (Matthiessen, 1992, p. 50). But even when we accept this analytical strategy, we still have to answer the question, "Where does the Theme end in a clause?" In this regard, recourse has to be had to the experiential metafunction which tells us that the boundary between the Theme and the Rheme can be drawn after the first experiential element in the Transitivity structure (cf. Halliday, 1985b, 1998; Matthiessen, 1992, 1995; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Thus, *Ông Xê* – Actor in *Ông Xê trở về quê hương sau gần năm mươi năm lưu lạc*, *Sau gần năm mươi năm lưu lạc* – Circumstance in *Sau gần năm mươi năm lưu lạc ông Xê trở về quê hương*, and *Quê hương* – Range in *Quê hương, ông Xê trở về sau gần năm*

mươi năm lưu lạc are Themes. This observation allows us to establish a general guide for identifying the boundary between Theme and Rheme that can capture the variation in the choice of Theme in the Vietnamese clause simplex with respect to the different Transitivity functions in the clause as follows:

> **General guide 1**
>
> The Theme of a clause is the first constituent from the experiential metafunction: if in a clause, a participant, say Actor, occurs in initial position, then that participant is Theme; if in a clause, a Circumstance occurs in initial position, then that Circumstance is Theme; and if in a clause, a Range occurs in initial position, then that Range is Theme; everything else, i.e. all that follows this initial constituent in such clauses, will automatically fall into Rheme.

4.3. Simple Theme v. Multiple Theme

Functional scholars of the combining approach to Theme (e.g. Mathesius, 1939; Daneš, 1964, 1974; Firbas, 1982, 1987, 1992; van Dijk, 1972; and Dik, 1978) do not seem to discuss the internal structure of Theme. The prominent Vietnamese functionalist Cao (1991/2004), who follows the combining approach to Theme, does not seem to discuss the internal structure of Theme either. Apart from the concepts he proposes to discuss the two types of Theme which he calls "external theme" and "internal Theme", what Theme looks like or how Theme is structured in the sentence is not explicated in his description.

A functional scholar of the separating approach who makes the most significant contribution to the study of Theme in general and of the internal structure of Theme in particular, is perhaps Michael Halliday. Through his various studies of the textual meaning of the clause, many interesting features about the internal structure of Theme are revealed. According to Halliday (1985b, 1998, and elsewhere), THEME as a system is the entry point of two systemic choices which he refers to respectively as 'simple Theme v. multiple Theme' and 'unmarked Theme v. marked Theme'. These systemic choices can be applicable to the description of the internal structure of Theme in Vietnamese.

4.3.1. Simple Theme

Simple Theme in Vietnamese falls into three choices (subcategories): (1) group or phrase simplexes as simple Theme, (2) group or phrase complexes as simple Theme, and (3) rank-shifted clauses as simple Theme.

4.3.1.1. Group or Phrase Simplexes as Simple Theme

We can distinguish a group from a phrase. A group, according to Halliday (1985b, 1998, p. 180) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 362), is a 'WORD COMPLEX' (*capitals in original*) or a 'group of words' such as *Cây gạo* (silk-cotton tree or *bombax ceiba*), *cột mốc* (landmark), *làng Kiều* (Kieu village) and *những làng xung quanh* (surrounding villages) in *Cây gạo như là cột mốc để phân biệt làng Kiều với những làng xung quanh* (The silk-cotton tree serves as a landmark to distinguish Kieu village from the surrounding ones) [THL, p. 162]. In contrast, a phrase consists of a preposition plus a nominal group such as *Từ trên Đèo Ngang* (From Deo Ngang Pass) in *Từ trên Đèo Ngang, Liễu Hạnh đã biết có hoàng tử đến tìm mình* (From Deo Ngang Pass, Lieu Hanh already knew that the prince came to find her) [NĐC, p. 106]. In other words, the difference between a group and a phrase is that while a group is an expansion of words, a phrase is a contraction of a clause.

Following is a short extract taken from a short story to illustrate how the choice of simple Themes functions to organize the thematic structure of the messages. The boundary between Theme and Rheme is shown by the sign +, the clause boundary is shown by the sign ||, the Themes are italicized, the Themes realized by prepositional phrases are underlined; and the English translation is provided immediately below the original extract.

Extract 1

(16) ***Thằng Cọt*** + ngồi trên chiếc ghế gỗ, || (17) ***đôi mắt*** + chừng ngó ra ngoài vườn. || (18)

Trên đầu nó, + mái hiên chùa im mát rợp bóng. || … || (19) ***Tất cả*** + sạch sẽ, tinh tươm, thanh tịnh. || (20) ***Trên cái nền ấy***, + thằng Cọt nổi bật nên như một vật kỳ dị, lạc lõng. <*sic*> [TTM, p. 347]

Cot sat on a wooden chair, his eyes peered out into the garden. On top of his head, the shady silent porch of the pagoda was shading… All was clean, pure, tidy, and silent. Against that background, Cot stood out as a strange and out-of-place figure.

As can be seen, all the Themes in the above extract are simple ones. Whether they are realized by a nominal group or a prepositional phrase, they serve to set local contexts for the clauses themselves. Here we can see *Thằng Cọt* (Cot) – a nominal group – functioning as Theme in (16), *đôi mắt* (his eyes) – a nominal group – functioning as Theme in (17), *Trên đầu nó* (On top of his head) – a prepositional phrase – functioning as Theme in (18), *Tất cả* (All) – a nominal group – functioning as Theme in (19), and *Trên cái nền ấy* (Against that background) – a prepositional phrase – functioning as Theme in (20).

4.3.1.2. Group or Phrase Complexes as Simple Theme

The criterion we set for identifying Theme in Principle 1 appears simple: Theme equals clause initial constituent. Based on this criterion, all the Themes in Extract 1 are simple Themes in the sense that each consists of one constituent from the experiential metafunction. However, in naturally occurring texts, a clause may consist of two or more elements occurring concurrently in initial position, forming a single complex, and having the same experiential function. Consider clauses (21), (22), (23), and (24) which are extracted from different texts. To facilitate discussion, these clauses are analysed in terms of Transitivity and Theme. To save space only the onsets of the Rhemes are shown in (22), (23) and (24).

(21) [NĐC, p. 100]

	Hoàng hậu	*và*	*phi tần*	*hết sức*	*lo sợ*
	queen	and	concubine	very	afraid
Transitivity	**Carrier**		**Carrier**	**Attribute**	
Theme	**Theme?**			**Rheme**	

The Queen and the concubines were very afraid.

(22) [NQT, p. 31]

	Các	*khác biệt*	*và*	*tương đồng*	*trong*	*lòng tin*	*được*	*trình bày*	*…*
	plural marker	difference	and	similarity	in	trust	particle	present	
Transitivity	**Goal**		**Goal**				**Process: material**		
Theme	**Theme?**						**Rheme**		

The differences and similarities in social trust of men and women are presented in Table 2.

(23) [T.T.Kh.]

	Một	*mùa thu*	*trước*	*mỗi*	*hoàng hôn*	*nhặt …*
	one	autumn	past	each	twilight	pick
Transitivity	**Circumstance**			**Circumstance**		
Theme	**Theme?**					**Rheme**

At each twilight in a last Autumn, [when I] picked up …

(24) NĐC, p. 66]

	Ngày	*xưa*	*ở*	*một*	*vùng*	*nọ*	*có…*
	day	old	in	one	area	that	have
Transitivity	**Circumstance**		**Circumstance**				**Process: existential**
Theme	**Theme?**						**Rheme**

Long long ago, in an area, there was…

I put a question mark after the Theme in each of the above clauses to indicate that the recognition for Theme according to the above examples poses some analytical problems. Clauses (21) and (22) each has two successive participant elements of equal status; each is realized by a nominal group, and they are connected by the conjunction *và* (and): *Hoàng hậu* (The Queen) and *phi tần* (concubines) in (21), and *Các khác biệt* (The differences) and *tương đồng* (similarities) in (22). Clause (23) has two successive temporal circumstantial elements, each is realized by a nominal group: *Một mùa thu trước* (In a last Autumn) and *mỗi hoàng hôn* (at each twilight). And Clause (24) also has two successive circumstantial elements, but one is a temporal element realized by a nominal group: *Ngày xưa* (Long long ago), and the other is a spatial element realized by a prepositional phrase: *ở một vùng nọ* (in an area). How should these group and phrase complexes be treated in these clauses? Should they be treated as constituting a simple or a complex Theme in each? There may be two solutions to this problem: one is to treat the first element as Theme, and the other is to treat both elements as Theme. In our analysis, we adopt the second position, treating them as simple Themes. The reason is that although each of the elements in these complexes may be realized differently,

they have the same transitivity function: Carrier in (21), Goal in (22), and Circumstance in (23), and (24), and thus forming what Halliday (1985b, p. 41; 1998, p. 40) refers to as "a single complex element". Now, we can establish a general guide for identifying the Theme which is realized by group or phrase complexes as follows:

General guide 2

The Theme of a clause consists of everything up to the first constituent from the experiential metafunction: if in a clause, two or more participant elements related to each other by means of paratactic relation occur in initial position, then those participants serve as simple Theme; and if in a clause, two or more circumstantial elements occur in initial position, then those circumstantial elements serve as simple Theme.

4.3.1.3. Rank-Shifted Clauses as Simple Theme

All the Theme elements in the preceding discussion, either consisting of one or more than one element, are realized by a group or phrase rank constituent. A clause simplex may contain Theme which is realized by a rank-shifted clause – one which is downgraded to function as a constituent of a clause. (25), (26), (27) and (28) are the examples in point.

(25) [NK, p. 30]

	Nó	*đi*	*xa*	*là*		*nhà*	*vắng*	*hẳn*
	he	go	far away	be		house	deserted	complete
Transitivity	**Carrier**			**Process: relational**		**Attribute**		
Theme	**Theme**			**Rheme**				

The house was deserted whenever he went away.

(26) [NĐC, p. 107]

	Các	*vị*	*đến*	*đó*	*sẽ*	*có …*
	plural marker	gentleman	arrive	there	aspectual marker	have …
Transitivity	**Circumstance**				**Process: existential**	
Theme	**Theme**				**Rheme**	

When you gentlemen arrive there, there will be lodgings available and people ready to serve.

(27) [THL, p. 161]

	Ông	*về,*	*người*	*làng*	*Kiều*	*có*	*kẻ*	*biết người không.*
	Mr	return	people	village	Kieu	have	someone	know…
Transitivity	**Circumstance**		**Senser**					**Process: mental**
Theme	**Theme**		**Rheme**					

When he [Mr Xe] came back, some of Kieu villagers knew it; others didn't.

(28) [HVV, 2012, p. 56]

	Cách mạng	*tháng tám*	*thành công*	*đem lại*	*độc lập*	*tự do …*
	revolution	august	succeed	bring back	independence	freedom…
Transitivity	**Actor**			**Process: material**	**Goal**	
Theme	**Theme**			**Rheme**		

The victory of the August Revolution brought independence and freedom to the nation.

As can be seen, all the Themes in (25), (26), (27), and (28) are realized by a clause: *Nó đi xa* (literally, 'he went far away') in (25), *Các vị đến đó* (literally, 'you gentlemen arrived there') in (26), *Ông về* (literally, 'he returned') in (27), and *Cách mạng tháng tám thành công* (literally 'the August Revolution succeeded'). When entering into a syntactic relation with other constituents, these elements still retain their clause structure, but they are down-ranked (rank-shifted) to function as a constituent in the clause: Actor in (25), Carrier in (26), Circumstance in (27), and Actor in (28). Simple Theme in Vietnamese and its more delicate options can be represented in the following system network.

Figure 1

Simple Theme in the Vietnamese Clause Simplex

Simple Theme ┬ group or phrase simplex as Theme
├ group or phrase complex as Theme
└ rank-shifted clause as Theme
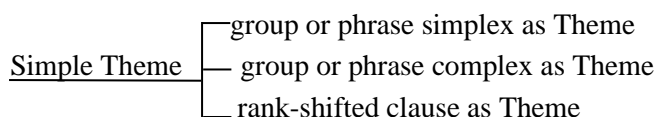
4.3.2. Multiple Theme

So far, we have introduced different instances of simple Themes and considered them mainly in relation to their respective transitivity functions: participant/Theme or circumstance/ Theme, occurring either in one or more than one group/phrase. Following Halliday (1985b, 1998, and elsewhere), we can refer to them as **topical Theme**. In naturally occurring texts, however, we may come across clauses which do not contain simple topical Themes as such. Instead, we may find a number of elements preceding the topical Theme which are obligatorily thematic.

The distinction between simple Theme and multiple Theme as systemic choices is related to the internal structure of Theme.

Halliday (1985b, 1998, and elsewhere) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) claim that any element occurring in the thematic portion contributes to the creation of text: if it does not contribute directly to the textual meaning-building of the clause, it contributes to the construction of text in the wider textual environment. A Theme is simple when the thematic element is represented by just one constituent: a nominal group, an adverbial group, a prepositional phrase, or a clause rank-shifted to function as a constituent of the clause; or when the thematic element consists of two or more participant elements occurring concurrently in initial position and having the same experiential function. In contrast, a Theme is multiple when it has a further internal structure of its own: it not only contains the constituent from experiential metafunction but can be extended to contain elements having interpersonal and textual metafunctions as well (for more detail, see Hoang, 2018, pp. 9-10).

The recognition of multiple Theme in the clause is derived from the multifunctional nature of language: the ideational function, the interpersonal function, and the textual function. Since all these functions operate simultaneously in one and the same clause, this opens for the possibility of more than one element of Theme

to occur in it (Halliday, 1985b, 1998; Hasan & Fries, 1995; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Extracts (29) and (30) taken from two different text types will suffice for the present purpose. The clauses in point are italicized; and the elements of Theme are in boldface type.

(29) Khi vua Uy Mục lên ngôi thi hành bạo chính, đảo lộn cương thường, người trong nước hết thảy đều oán giận. …***Có lẽ cũng vì vậy mà ông "vua quỷ" này** đã không tác oai tác quái được quá 5 năm.* [NN, p. 22]

When King Uy Muc ascended to the throne, he exercised violent policies and reversed the common rules; the people in the country were all resentful. …*Perhaps because of this reason that that "demon king" could not lord over the country for no more than five years.*

(30) Lan: Hân ơi, Anh Nam gọi điện đến bảo là đang có khách. [HVV, 2008, p. 21]

Hân: ***Ừ, nhưng thế thì Lan ạ nhất định anh Nam** sẽ không đến.*

Lan: Han, (brother) Nam called, saying that he's having a guest.

Han: *Yeah, but if so Lan, it's certain that he (brother Nam) will not come.*

Let us look at (29) first. The thematic analysis of this clause is something as follows:

(29) [NN, p. 22]

Có lẽ	*cũng*	*vì*	*vậy*	*mà*	*ông "vua*	*quỷ"*	*này*	*đã ...*
perhaps	also	because	this	which	Mr king	monster	this	
modal	adverbial	conjunctive		conjunctive	Thing	Classifier	Deictic	…
interpersonal Theme	**textual Theme**				**topical Theme**			
multiple Theme								**Rheme**

Perhaps because of this reason that that "monster king" could not lord over the country for no more than five years.

The analysis of (29) shows that the elements constituting the Theme in this clause is fairly complex. From the remotest item on the left *Có lẽ* (perhaps) to the head nominal group *ông "vua quỷ" này* (literally, 'this monster king'), we come across six elements, five of which (*Có lẽ, cũng, vì, vậy*, and *mà*) are themselves not parts of the proposition. Drawing on insights from Halliday's metafunctional theory, we can interpret them in some more detail as follows (although it is not always possible to translate all our concerns of them into the metalanguage):

Có lẽ is a modal element indicating that something may be true, but the speaker/writer is not sure.

Cũng is an adverbial element used to affirm the similarity of a phenomenon, a state, or an activity, or a characteristic already mentioned in the previous text (Khi vua Uy Mục lên ngôi thi hành bạo chính, đảo lộn cương thường, người trong nước hết thảy đều oán giận… [When King Uy Muc ascended to the throne, he exercised violent policies and reversed the common rules; the people in the country were all resentful…]).

Vì is a conjunction used to give a reason for something; *vậy* is a demonstrative determiner indicating something as given, because it was mentioned in the previous text. When *vì* and *vậy* are collocated, the conjunctive *vì vậy* indicates what is going to be said has a reason from what has already been said.

Mà is a conjunction used to indicate what is going to happen as a result of what has been already said.

Ông "vua quỷ" này is a nominal group (which consists of the generic classifier *ông* and the noun *vua*) functioning as Thing, *quỷ* – a noun functioning as Classifier, and *này* – a demonstrative pronoun functioning as Deictic.

Considering the textual functions of these six elements, we can see from the analysis that *Có lẽ* functions as **interpersonal Theme**, the combination *cũng vì vậy mà* functions as **textual Theme**, and the nominal group *ông "vua quỷ" này* functions as **topical Theme**. Taken together, these elements constitute what can be referred to as **multiple Theme**.

In the same way, the Theme of (30) can be analysed as follows:

(30) [HVV, 2008, p. 21]

Ừ	nhưng	thế thì	Lan ạ	nhất định	anh Nam	sẽ không đến.
yeah	but	so then	Lan	certain	brother Nam	will not come
continuative	structural	structural	vocative	modal	nominal	
textual Theme			**interpersonal Theme**		**topical Theme**	
multiple Theme						**Rheme**

Yeah, but if so Lan, it's certain that he (brother Nam) will not come.

The analysis of (30) shows that like (29), the organization of the thematic sequence of this clause is equally fairly complex: from the remotest item on the left *Ừ* (Yeah) to the nominal group *anh Nam* (brother Nam), we also come across six elements, five of which (*Ừ*, *nhưng*, *thế thì*, *Lan ạ*, *nhất định*) do not contribute directly to the textual meaning-building of the clause. A closer inspection of these six elements will reveal that.

Ừ is an adverbial particle used as a response to say that something which the first speaker (Lan) has said (*Anh Nam gọi điện đến bảo là đang có khách* [Nam called, saying that he's having a guest]) is true, or that the second speaker (Hân) agrees with what the first speaker has said. Another feature of *Ừ* here is that its occurrence in the clause signals a move in the discourse. In this context, it is a continuative element.

nhưng is a conjunction used to indicate what the speaker is going say will be contrary to the expectation set up before (*Anh Nam sẽ đến*). In this context, it is a structural element.

thế is a pronominal used to indicate something which has just been mentioned. When collocated with the conjunctive particle *thì*, the combination becomes a conjunctive Adjunct, and constitutes a structural element.

Lan is a proper name used as a vocative; *ạ* is a particle used to call someone's attention. When *Lan* is collocated with *ạ*, the combination is a vocative element.

nhất định is a modal element indicating that the degree of probability of Nam's not coming is high.

anh Nam is a proper noun or personal name. In this context it is a nominal element.

Considering the textual functions of these elements, we can see from the analysis that the three elements *Ừ*, *nhưng* and *thế thì* constitute textual Theme, *Lan ạ* and *nhất định* constitute interpersonal Theme, and *anh Nam* is topical Theme. Taken together, these elements constitute **multiple Theme**.

The analysis of (29) and (30) reveals five noticeable features of multiple Theme.

First, no matter how many elements occur in the thematic part, there is always a topical or experiential element occurring in the final position, and its occurrence is obligatory.

Secondly, the position of the topical Theme is fixed, but the position of the elements in the interpersonal and textual Theme may vary: (29) begins with a modal Adjunct *Có lẽ* functioning as interpersonal Theme, while (30) begins with a continuative element *Ừ* functioning as part of textual Theme.

Thirdly, among the elements constituting the interpersonal and textual Themes, the order of the vocative and modal element is more flexible: In (30) the vocative element *Lan ạ* can follow the elements *Ừ nhưng thế thì* as in *Ừ nhưng thế thì **Lan ạ** nhất định*, and the continuative element *Ừ* as in *Ừ **Lan ạ** nhưng thế thì nhất định*; it can occur at the beginning of the clause before *Ừ* as in ***Lan ạ**, ừ nhưng thế thì nhất định*, and it can occur even at the end of the clause as in *Ừ nhưng thế thì nhất định anh Nam sẽ không đến*, ***Lan ạ***. And the modal element *nhất định* can occur within the Theme part immediately after the vocative element *Lan ạ* as in *Ừ nhưng thế thì Lan ạ **nhất định** anh Nam sẽ không đến*; but it can also occur inside the experiential structure of the clause immediately after the topical Theme *anh Nam* as in *Ừ nhưng thế thì Lan ạ anh Nam **nhất định** sẽ không đến*.

Fourthly, of the five non-topical Theme elements in (30), the continuative *Ừ*, the conjunction *nhưng* and the conjunctive Adjunct *thế thì* are inherently thematic in the sense that if they are present in the clause at all, they usually come at the beginning before the topical Theme. It is not possible to say *nhưng thế thì Lan ạ nhất*

*định anh Nam **ừ** sẽ không đến** or *Ừ thế thì Lan ạ nhất định anh Nam **nhưng** sẽ không đến** or *Ừ nhưng Lan ạ nhất định anh Nam **thế thì** sẽ không đến**.). Apart from what has been discussed, the constraints on the specific order of these non-topical Theme elements in the clause seem to be too complex to be gone into here.

And finally, the relatively flexible order of interpersonal and textual Themes allows for four possible choices/combinations of multiple Theme: (1) textual Theme + interpersonal Theme + topical Theme as in (29) and (30); (2) interpersonal Theme + textual Theme + topical Theme as ***Thế thì Lan ạ anh Nam*** in ***Thế thì Lan ạ anh Nam*** *nhất định sẽ không đến* (So then Lan [brother] Nam will certainly not come); (3) textual Theme + topical Theme as ***Dạ, em*** in ***Dạ, em*** *không có điều gì băn khoăn ạ.* (No, I don't have anything to worry about.) [PDT, 1994, p. 19]; and (4) interpersonal Theme + topical Theme as ***Anh Bắc ơi, lần này*** in ***Anh Bắc ơi, lần này*** *anh phải ở nhà chờ chị ấy.* (Bac, this time you should stay at home to wait for her.) [NQTh, 1994, p. 125].

Figure 2 represents the system network of multiple Theme in Vietnamese.

Figure 2

Multiple Theme in the Vietnamese Clause Simplex
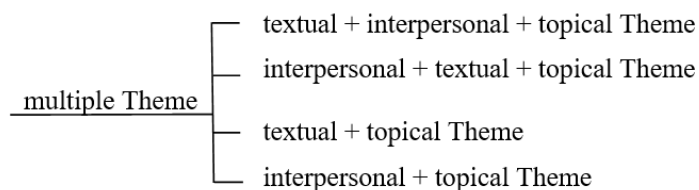
4.4. Unmarked Theme v. Marked Theme

The second systemic choice involves the distinction between unmarked Theme v. marked Theme. It should be noted here that the contrast "unmarked" v. "marked" is interpreted quite differently by different scholars. Richards et al. (1999, p. 220), for example, talk about "unmarked" v. "marked" in terms of 'more basic, natural, and frequent' [unmarked] v. 'less basic, natural, and frequent' [marked]. Crystal (2008, pp. 295-6), on the other hand, in discussing different theories of markedness, talks about "unmarked" v. "marked" in terms of 'presence' [unmarked] v. 'absence' [marked]; 'more specific' [unmarked] v. 'less specific' [marked]; 'unrestricted' [unmarked] v.

'restricted' [marked]; 'more general tendency' [unmarked] v. 'less general tendency' [marked].

The terms "unmarked Theme" and "marked Theme" were first introduced in SFG by Halliday (1985b, 1998, and elsewhere). But unlike the criteria proposed by the above scholars, Halliday seems to distinguish "unmarked Theme" from "marked Theme" on interpersonal metafunction ground. He argues that the main criterion for distinguishing an unmarked Theme from a marked one lies in the possibility of Theme being conflated with Subject in the Mood structure: in a declarative clause, when topical Theme maps on to or is conflated with Subject, it is an unmarked Theme; in contrast, when topical Theme does not map on

to or is not conflated with Subject, it is a marked Theme (see Halliday, 1985b, 1998; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Thus in *Ông Xê trở về quê hương sau gần năm mươi năm lưu lạc* (Mr. Xe came back to his home country after nearly fifty years' wandering abroad) in (15a), ***Ông Xê*** is an unmarked Theme because it is conflated with Subject: Theme/Subject; in contrast, in *Sau gần năm mươi năm lưu lạc ông Xê trở về quê hương* (After nearly fifty years' wandering abroad, Mr. Xe came back to his home country) in (15b), ***Sau gần năm mươi năm lưu lạc*** is a marked Theme because it is conflated with Adjunct: Adjunct/Theme; and in ***Quê hương***, *ông Xê trở về sau gần năm mươi năm lưu lạc* (His home country, Mr. Xe came back [to it] after nearly fifty years' wandering abroad) in (15c), ***Quê Hương*** is a marked Theme because it is conflated with Complement: Complement/Theme.

The unmarked Theme v. marked Theme contrast can be represented in the following system network:

Figure 3

Unmarked Theme v. Marked Theme in Vietnamese
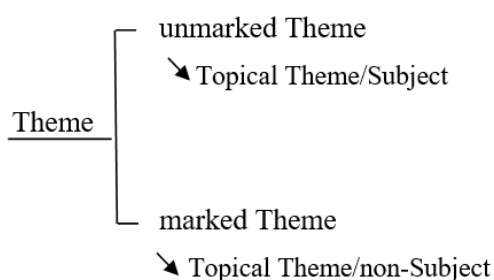
In several text types, particularly in narrative, the elements most likely functioning as unmarked Theme in a declarative clause are personal pronouns *tôi* (I), *chúng tôi* (we), *bạn* (you), *ông ấy/anh ấy* (he)/*chị ấy* (she), *nó* (it), *họ* (they). The following extract taken from a short story will serve to prove the point. (The Themes are in boldface type; the ellipses of the personal pronouns are retrieved with the help of context and are put in square brackets. For reasons of space, only the translations of the personal pronouns are given in round brackets).

Extract 2

|| (31) ***Tôi*** (I) + *quen ông Quải không do ai giới thiệu cả*, || (32) *tình cờ* [***tôi***] (I) + *gặp ông chăn một cặp bò phối giống có bộ lông màu cánh gián tuyệt đẹp ở vạt cỏ cạnh đường* || (33) [***tôi***]

(I) + *liền đứng ngắm* || (34) *rồi* [***tôi***] (I) + *bắt chuyện với người chăn.* || (35) ***Ông ta*** (He) + *hay chuyện* || (36) *mà* ***tôi*** (I) + *lại đang thèm chuyện,* || (37) [***chúng tôi***] (we) + *đứng với nhau một lúc lâu chưa hả* || (38) [***chúng tôi***] (we) + *lại hẹn gặp nhau tại nhà để nói cho hết chuyện.* || [NK, p. 20]

I knew Mr. Quai quite by chance. Seeing him raising a pair of inseminated cows with beautiful brown hair near the road side, I immediately stopped to behold the cows, and talked with him (the raiser). He was fond of talking and I was also craving for talk. We chatted for a while; but feeling that our story would be unfinished, we decided to meet at his home to finish it.

As can be seen from the above extract, in all eight clauses, the unmarked Themes are personal pronouns: *tôi* (I) in (31), [*tôi*] (I) in (32), [*tôi*] in (33), [*tôi*] (I) in (34), *Ông ta* (He) in (35), *tôi* (I) in (36), [*chúng tôi*] (we) in (37), and [*chúng tôi*] (we) in (38). They represent the author of the story and his interlocutor. Their alternate presence in the passage helps to push the text forward.

4.5. Theme Interpreted From the Point of View of Mood

Another way to explore Theme in the clause is to consider it in terms of Mood. Mood is the grammaticalization of the semantic system of speech function in communication, assigning interactive roles into pairs such as speaker/writer or listener/reader. In these pairs of speech roles, the speaker/writer may confirm ('có [yes]' or 'không [no]') with the listener/reader in a statement called declarative mood; the speaker/writer may require the listener/reader to do something referred to as imperative mood; or the speaker/writer may ask the listener/reader to provide information known as interrogative mood (for detail, see Halliday, 1985b, 1998, 2012; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Kress, 1981; Matthiessen, 1995; Matthiessen et al., 2010). What we have presented in 4.1 to 4.4 are all concerned with Theme in declarative clauses. In what follows, we will look at Theme in imperative and interrogative clauses.

4.5.1. Theme in Imperative Clauses

In an imperative clause, the speaker or writer indicates that he or she wants some action

or situation to result from his or her words. The semantic content of an imperative clause thus comprises a notional component – the verb – and an indication of the role of the speaker who issues the command or the appeal to the listener to execute the command. In Vietnamese, imperative clauses occur in a variety of forms to achieve different communicative purposes. An imperative clause can be a command, an instruction, a request, or a suggestion. A detailed account of these imperative forms and their meanings would be useful, but would go beyond the scope of a journal article as such. For the purposes of the present study, the discussion of

Theme in imperative clauses will centre around examples (39) to (48). Note that (40) to (44) are agnates of (39). To facilitate discussion, these clauses are analysed in terms of Transitivity, Mood, and Theme.

(39) [ĐB, p. 62]

	Vào!
	Come
Transitivity	**Process: material**
Mood	**Predicator**
Theme	**Theme: unmarked**

Come in!

(40)

	Cứ	*vào*	*đi!*
	imperative particle	come	imperative particle
Transitivity		**Process: material**	
Mood		**Predicator**	
Theme	**Theme: unmarked**		

Do come in!

(41)

	Xin	*hãy*	*vào*	*đi!*
	beg	imperative particle	come	imperative particle
Transitivity			**Process: material**	
Mood			**Predicator**	
Theme	**Theme: unmarked**			

Come in please!

(42)

	Xin	*mời*	*vào*	*đi!*
	beg	invite	come	imperative particle
Transitivity			**Process: material**	
Mood			**Predicator**	
Theme	**Theme: unmarked**			

Come in please!

(44)

	Tuân,	*vào*	*đi!*
	vocative	come	imperative particle
Transitivity		**Process: material**	
Mood		**Predicator**	
Theme	**Theme: unmarked**		

Tuan, come in!

(45)

	Tuân	*ơi,*	*cứ*	*vào*	*đi!*
	vocative	call	imperative particle	come	imperative particle
Transitivity				**Process: material**	
Mood				**Predicator**	
Theme	**Theme: unmarked**				

Tuan, do come in!

(46) [NĐC, 1993, p. 30]

	Con	*đừng*	*khóc*	*nữa.*
	son	not	cry	more
Transitivity	**Behaver**	**Process: behavioural**		**Circumstance**
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**		**Adjunct**
Theme	**Theme: marked**	**Rheme**		

Don't cry any more, my son!

(47) [THL, p. 16]

	Chú	*cứ*	*về!*
	junior uncle	imperative particle	come back
Transitivity	**Actor**		**Process: material**
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**	
Theme	**Theme: marked**	**Rheme**	

Come back home, my younger brother!

(48) [NĐT, p. 16]

	Chiều	*nay*	*lên*	*Trung đội*	*chỉ huy!*
	afternoon	this	up	platoon	command
Transitivity	**Circumstance**		**Process: material**	**Goal/Range**	
Mood	**Adjunct**		**Predicator**	**Complement**	
Theme	**Theme: marked**		**Rheme**		

This afternoon, come to the Commanding Platoon!

Examples (39) – (48) are intended to bring out the following characteristics of imperative clauses in Vietnamese:

(1) An imperative clause can contain only the Predicator: *Vào* (39).

(2) An imperative clause can contain imperative elements of various delicate functions preceding the Predicator: *Cứ* (40), *Xin hãy* (41), *Xin mời* (42), *Xin mời cứ* (43), *Tuân* (44), and *Tuân ơi* (45).

(3) An imperative clause can contain a Subject: *Con* (46) and *Chú* (47), or an Adjunct preceding the Predicator: *Chiều nay* (48).

(4) An imperative clause can contain an imperative particle following the Predicator: *đi* in (40) to (45).

(5) In an imperative clause, the presence of the Predicator is obligatory.

The question that arises here is "How can Theme be identified in these imperative clauses?" Based on the characteristics pointed out above, we can make the following statements for identifying Theme in imperative clauses in Vietnamese as follows:

(1) When the Predicator occurs alone in an imperative clause, the Theme is the Predicator, and it is an unmarked choice of Theme (unmarked Theme). It is not difficult to explain here, because the basic message of an imperative clause is 'I want you to do something' (Halliday, 1998, p. 47); and the imperative is the only type of clause in which the Predicator is regularly found to occur in the first position (Halliday, 1998, p. 47; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 103).

(2) When elements such as imperative particles, vocatives, or calls precede the Predicator, the Theme is these elements plus the Predicator, and it is still an unmarked choice of Theme. The reason is that these elements do not have a function in Transitivity.

(3) When an imperative particle occurs following the Predicator, this element automatically falls within the Theme as *đi* in *Cứ vào đi* (40).

(4) When an element having a Transitivity function precedes the Predicator such as *Chú* (Actor) in *Chú cứ về* in (47), or *Chiều nay* (Circumstance) in *Chiều nay lên Trung đội chỉ huy* in (48), the Theme is this element; but it is ta marked choice of Theme (marked Theme).

4.5.2. Theme in Interrogative Clauses

Halliday states:

The typical function of an interrogative clause is to ask a question; and from the speaker's point of view asking a question is an indication that he wants to be told something. The fact that, in real life, people ask questions for all kinds of reasons does not call into dispute the observation that the basic meaning of question is a request for an answer. (Halliday, 1998, p. 45)

Halliday distinguishes two basic choices of interrogative clause which are also applicable to Vietnamese: polar interrogative v. non-polar interrogative, illustrated in the following examples:

(51) *Có phải sự thở có ý nghĩa với hô hấp không?* [HVV, 2017, p. 44]

Does breathing have significance to respiration?

(52) *Sự thở có ý nghĩa gì với hô hấp?* [NQV, 2016, p. 65]

What significance does breathing have to respiration?

Each of these choices of interrogative clauses are examined in some detail below.

4.5.2.1. Theme in Polar Interrogative Clauses

Polar interrogative clauses can be instanced by examples (53) to (55); (53) is the original, and (54) and (55) are agnates.

(53) [LNM, 1994, p. 126]

	Có	*phải*	*ông ấy*	*là*	*đại biểu*	*Quốc hội*	*không?*
	yes	correct	Mr that	be	member	parliament	no
Trans			**Carrier**	**Process: relational**	**Attribute**		
Mood			**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Complement**		
Theme	**Theme**			**Rheme**			

Is he a member of the National Assembly?

(54)

	Ông ấy	*có*	*phải*	*là*	*đại biểu*	*Quốc hội*	*không?*
	Mr that	yes	correct	be	member	parliament	no
Trans	**Carrier**			**Process: relational**	**Attribute**		
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**			**Complement**		
Theme	**Theme**			**Rheme**			

Is he a member of the National Assembly?

(55)

	Ông ấy	*là*	*đại biểu*	*Quốc hội,*	*có*	*phải*	*không?*
	Mr that	be	member	parliament	yes	correct	no
Trans	**Carrier**	**Process: relational**	**Attribute**				
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Complement**				
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**					

He's a member of the National Assembly, isn't he?

A cursory look at clauses (53) - (55) and comparing them with any major independent declarative clause in Vietnamese will show that the structural pattern of a polar interrogative clause in Vietnamese is similar to that of a declarative one: both are realized by the configuration of +**Subject ^** +**Predicator** (where the sign + indicates the presence of the element is obligatory and the sign ^ indicates the sequence of the elements). What makes them differ from each other is that apart from having the Subject + Predicator structure, a polar interrogative clause is realized by what has been commonly referred to in Vietnamese linguistic scholarship as interrogative particles, among which three are most commonly found: *có* (yes), *phải* (correct), and *không* (no). These particles are used to ask for information about the whole clause and require the answer '*có* (yes)/*có phải* (yes correct)' or '*không* (no)/*không phải* (not correct)' (see Hoang, 2020, p. 132).

A closer inspection of these examples reveals that the place of these interrogative particles in the clause is indeterminate: they can float around in the clause rather freely depending on the speaker's communicative or pragmatic purpose. In (53) ***Có phải*** *ông ấy là đại biểu Quốc hội* ***không?***, the positive particles *Có* (yes) and *phải* (correct) occur in initial position before the Subject *ông ấy*, and the negative particle *không* (no) occurs in final position of the clause. In (54) *Ông ấy* ***có phải*** *là đại biểu Quốc hội* ***không?***, the positive particles *có* and *phải* occur in the position after the Subject *Ông ấy*, and the negative particle *không* occurs in the final position. And in (55) *Bác là đại biểu Quốc hội,* ***có phải không?***, all the three particles ***có phải không*** occur in the final position of the clause. The fact that interrogative particles can occur in different positions in a polar interrogative clause raises a question: "What is Theme in polar interrogatives in Vietnamese and how can it be recognized?" General Guide 1 'the Theme of a clause consists of everything up to the first constituent from the experiential metafunction' still works here. Thus the Theme of clause (53) is *Có phải ông ấy*: interrogative particles + Carrier/Subject, and the Themes of (54) and (55) are *Ông ấy*: Carrier/Subject.

4.5.2.2. Theme in Non-Polar Interrogative Clauses

Non-polar interrogative clauses in Vietnamese cover a very rich but fairly complex textual domain. This is due to the fact that in daily communication, people ask their interlocutors not only to confirm or deny a proposition but also to provide any piece of missing information they want: they might want to know the missing piece about **who** a person is, **what** a thing is; **what**, **when** and **where** a person or a thing does; and **how** and **why** an action or an event happens, and so on and so forth. Now the question is "How can Themes be recognized in non-polar interrogatives in Vietnamese?" Before answering this question, it would be useful to look at how Themes are recognized in non-polar interrogatives in English.

Non-polar interrogatives are commonly referred to in English as WH-questions. With regard to Themes in WH-questions in English, Halliday and Halliday and Matthiessen have this to say:

In a WH-question, which is a search for a missing piece of information, the element that functions as Theme is the element that requests this information, namely the WH-element. It is the WH-element that expresses the nature of the missing piece: *who*, *what*, *when*, *how*, etc. So in a WH-interrogative, the WH-element is put first, no matter what other function it has in the mood structure of the clause, whether Subject, Adjunct or Complement. The meaning is 'I want you to tell me the person, thing, time, manner, etc.' (Halliday, 1998, pp. 45-6; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp. 101-2)

Halliday and Halliday & Matthiessen go on to explain why the WH-elements usually function as Themes in non-polar interrogatives in English as follows:

Interrogative clauses, therefore, embody the thematic principle in their structural make-up. It is the characteristic of an interrogative clause in English that one particular element comes first; and the reason for this is that that element, owing to the very nature of a question, has the status of a Theme. The speaker does not choose each time this element first; its occurrence in first position is the regular pattern by which the interrogative is expressed. It has become part of the system of the language, and the explanation for this lies in the thematic significance that is attached to first position in the English clause; the natural theme of a question is 'I want to be told something; the answer required is either a piece of information or an indication of polarity. So the realization of interrogative mood involves selecting an element that indicates the kind of answer required, and putting it at the beginning of the clause. (Halliday, 1998, p. 46; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp. 101-2)

As can be seen from the above quotes, the principle for recognising Themes in non-polar interrogative clauses in English is rather simple: Theme equals WH-element. But when it comes to Vietnamese, the problem seems to be very complex. Let us consider examples (56) to (67) which are analysed in terms of Mood and Theme.

(56) [NĐC, p. 222]

	Ai	*têm*	*trầu*	*này?*
	who	prepare	betel	this
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Complement**	
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**		

Who prepared this betel?

(57) [CĐ]

	Cái gì	*cao lớn*	*lênh khênh*
	what	tall	lanky
Mood	**Subject**	**Complement**	
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**	

What is the thing that is high and lanky; [it falls right away when it stands without leaning]?).

(58) (NĐC, p. 111)

	Ngươi	*là*	*ai?*
	you	be	who
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Complement**
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**	

Who are you?

(59) [PDT, p. 20]

	Bà ta	*làm*	*gì*	*thế nhỉ?*
	she	do	what	interrogative particle
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Complement**	
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**		

What is she doing?

(60)

	Bác	*đi*	*được*	*bao nhiêu*	*cây [số]*	*rồi?*
	uncle	go	gain	how many	kilometre	already
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Complement**		
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**			

How many kilometres have you covered/walked?

(61)

	Chị	*cần*	*bao nhiêu*	*tiền?*
	sister	need	how much	money
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Complement**	
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**		

How much money do you want?

(62)

	Họ	*đã*	*đi*	*được*	*bao lâu*	*rồi?*
	they	aspectual marker	go	gain	how long	already
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**			**Adjunct**	
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**				

How long ago did they leave?

(63) [ĐB, 1994, p. 63]

	[Vậy thì] anh	*đi*	*đâu?*
	[so] brother	go	where
Mood	**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Adjunct**
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**	

[So], where do you go?

(64) [HP, p. 33]

	Nhà	*chị*	*ở*	*đường*	**nào?**
	house	sister	at	road	what
Mood	**Subject**			**Complement**	
Theme	**Theme**			**Rheme**	

In what street is your house located? / What street is your house in?

(65) [LCT, p. 241]

	Bao giờ	*chị*	*đi*	*chợ?*
	when	sister	go	market
Mood	**Adjunct**	**Subject**	**Predicator**	**Adjunct**
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**		

When are you going to market?

(66) [NĐC, p. 7]

	[Thế] thầy	*anh*	*giao*	*hàng*	***thế nào?***
	[so] father	brother	deliver	goods	how
Mood	**Subject**		**Predicator**	**Complement**	**Adjunct**
Theme	**Theme**		**Rheme**		

How does your father deliver goods?

(67) [YB, p. 190]

	Sao	*mẹ*	*lại*	*khóc?*
	why	mother	particle	cry
Mood	**Adjunct**	**Subject**		**Predicator**
Theme	**Theme**	**Rheme**		

Why are you crying, mum?

The analysis of (56) to (67) reveals a number of interesting observations. First, non-polar interrogatives in Vietnamese represent various pieces of missing information that need to be supplied; and the information needed to be supplied can be conflated with Subject as *Ai* in (56) and *Cái gì* in (57); Complement as *ai* in (58) and *gì* in (59); spatial extent Adjunct as *bao nhiêu [cây số]* in (60) and *bao nhiêu [tiền]* in (61), temporal extent Adjunct as *bao lâu* in (62); spatial location Adjunct as *đâu* in (63) and *[ở đường] nào* in (64), temporal location Adjunct as *Bao giờ* in (65), manner Adjunct as *thế nào* in (66), and cause Adjunct as *Sao* in (67). Secondly, the question words/phrases are put exactly in the place where the missing information is required to be supplied. Thirdly, of the eleven non-polar interrogative clauses, four have question words/ phrases put in initial position and have the status of Theme: (56) and (57) where the question words *Ai* and *Cái gì* function as Subject, and (65) and (67) where the questions words *Bao giờ* and *Sao* function as temporal Adjunct and cause Adjunct respectively; all the remaining seven other clauses have the question words/phrases put in the place where the missing information is required, giving the Subjects the status of Theme: (58), (59), (60), (61), (62), (64), and (66). And fourthly, of the eleven non-polar interrogative clauses, nine have Subject put in initial position (accounting for 82%). This allows us to say that unlike English in non-polar interrogative clauses, Vietnamese prefers to thematise the Subject.

5. Concluding Remarks

5.1. Summary

In this article, we have made an attempt to explore the notion of Theme in the Vietnamese clause simplex. We began by tracing the history of the study of Theme in world linguistics, and showed that the study of Theme had its origin from ancient Greek linguistic scholarship. After more than twenty thousand years' disappearing from the scene, it was taken up in the middle of the 20th century first by the Czech scholar Vilém Mathesius and other

scholars of the Prague school linguists, and then by the world-renowned British functional scholar Michael Halliday and other SF linguists. The review of their research has shown that Mathesius and Halliday are similar in seeing Theme as a fundamental discursive concept, but they differ in how they approach it. While Mathesius assigns two distinct functions of Theme by defining it as (i) "that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation" which yields the information structure of Given + New and (ii) that "from which the speaker proceeds" which yields the thematic structure of Theme + Rheme, Halliday abstracts out Mathesius' second function for Theme, separating it from the first, and thus making it easier to describe and analyse two layers of Theme in discourse. Then we turned to look at how Theme was studied in Vietnam, reviewing in particular the work *Tiếng Việt: Sơ thảo ngữ pháp chức năng* by the Vietnamese prominent linguist Cao Xuan Hao (1991/2004). The review of Cao's work has shown that Cao seems to characterize the basic structure of the Vietnamese sentence as Topic + Comment as conceptualized by some North-American scholars such as Chafe (1976) and Li and S. Thompson (1976) rather than that of Theme + Rheme as conceptualized by Mathesius and Halliday. The review of other related research on Theme in Vietnamese, either descriptive or comparative, clearly indicated that the term "Theme" has been employed in various senses, making an exhaustive application of the SFG framework to the description of Theme in Vietnamese impossible.

Having examined the history and development of the study of Theme in world linguistic scholarship, and the related literature in the study of Theme in Vietnam, I turned to explore Theme in Vietnamese. Drawing on the SFG framework, and based on the specificities of Vietnamese language, I described Theme in the Vietnamese clause simplex and its delicate options in the environment of **THEME**. I began by examining Theme and the thematic structure of the Vietnamese clause simplex, identifying the boundary between Theme and Rheme, distinguishing between simple and multiple Theme, and unmarked and marked Theme. Then I looked in some detail at Theme as seen from the point of view of Mood, describing Theme in

imperative clauses, and Theme in interrogative clauses. At this point, our research can be summarised in the following points:

1. Theme in the Vietnamese clause simplex can be defined as 'the point of departure of a message'; and can be distinguished as that element which comes in first position in the clause.

2. The Theme of a clause consists of everything up to the first constituent from the experiential metafunction; everything else that follows this initial constituent will automatically fall into the Rheme.

3. In declarative clauses, Theme can be conflated with one or another of the three transitivity functions Participant, Circumstance, or Process.

4. In imperative clauses, Theme is typically conflated with Predicator.

5. In polar and non-polar interrogative clauses, Theme is typically conflated with Subject.

6. A Theme can be simple or multiple:

6.1. A Theme is simple when the thematic element is represented by just one constituent: a nominal group, an adverbial group, a prepositional phrase, or a rank-shifted clause; a Theme can also be treated as simple when the thematic element is represented by two or more elements occurring concurrently in initial position, forming a single complex element, and having the same experiential function.

6.2. A Theme is multiple when it has a further internal structure of its own. Here we can distinguish between topical Theme, interpersonal Theme and textual Theme. A topical Theme is one that is conflated with an experiential element of the clause: it can be, taking material clause as representative, Actor, Goal, or Circumstance. An interpersonal Theme may contain (i) a modal element (e.g. *có lẽ* [perhaps]), (ii) the definite element in the case of có/không (yes/no), and (iii) a vocative (e.g. *Hân ơi*). And a textual Theme represents the meaning that is relevant to context, both co-text (of text) and context (of situation). It may have any combination of three textual elements: (i) a continuative element (e.g. *ừ* [yes]), (ii) a structural element (e.g. *nhưng* [but]), and (iii) a conjunctive element (e.g. *vì* [because]).

7. A Theme can be unmarked or marked.

An unmarked Theme is one that is conflated with Subject, whereas a marked Theme is a constituent functioning as some element of the rest of the Mood clause including Predicator, Complement, or Adjunct.

Below is a tentative system network showing thematic potential of the Vietnamese clause simplex as far as we have taken in this research.

Figure 3

Theme in the Vietnamese Clause Simplex: A Tentative Network
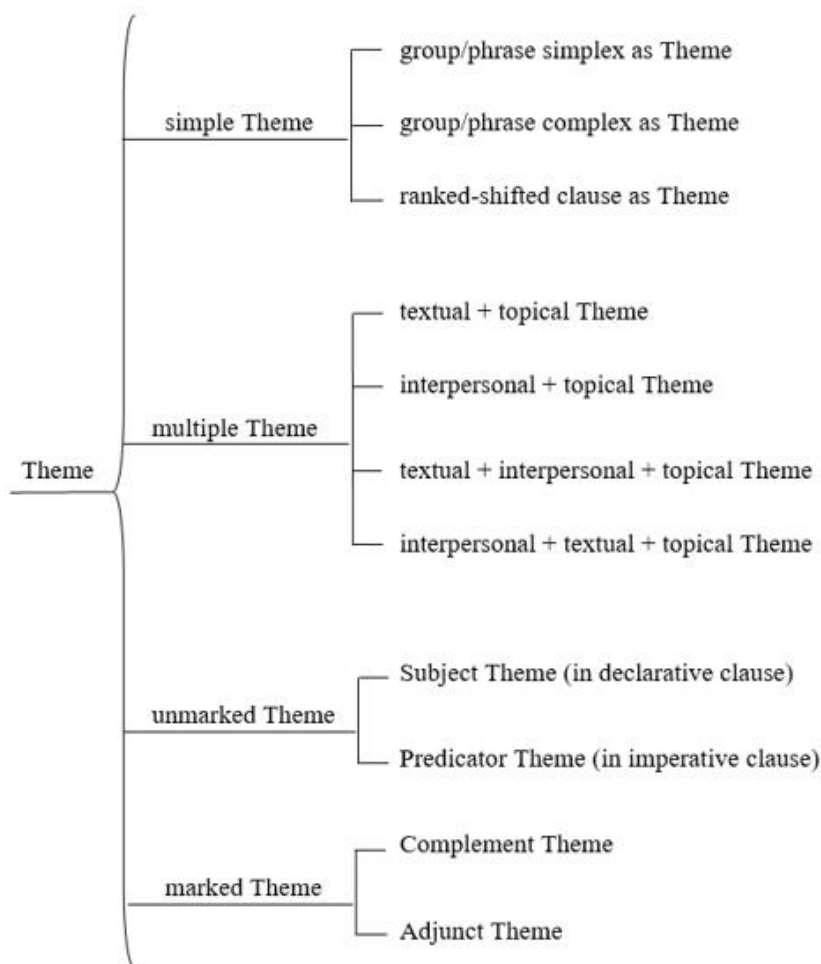
5.2. Suggestions for Future Research

This study is confined to only one aspect of Theme, examining it from the aspect of "that from which the speaker proceeds" realized in Theme + Rheme structure. This suggests that to have a full picture of the textual grammar of the clause, the other aspect of Theme "that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation" realized in Given + New structure in the Vietnamese clause simplex should be a topic for the next study.

This study is confined only to the study of Theme and thematic structure in the clause simplex. This suggests that future research should focus on studying Theme and thematic structure in clause complexes, and in texts/discourses.

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Appendix

Sources of data for illustration

[BN]	=	Bảo Ninh (1994). Khắc dấu mạn thuyền. Trong *Truyện ngắn chọn lọc 1992-1994* (tr. 174-87).
[CĐ]	=	Câu đố.
[ĐB]	=	Đức Ban (1994). Miếu làng. Trong *Truyện ngắn hay 1993* (tr. 53-63). Nhà xuất bản văn học.
[HP]	=	Học Phi (2002). Bóng người xưa. Trong *Truyện ngắn hay 2002* (tr. 32-43). Nhà xuất bản văn học.
[HVV, 2008]	=	Hoàng Văn Vân (2008). Về vị trí và tổ chức của Đề ngữ trong cú đơn và cú phức nhìn từ góc độ ngôn bản. *Ngôn ngữ*, *4*(227), 19-27.
[HVV, 2012]	=	Hoàng Văn Vân (2012). *An experiential grammar of the Vietnamese clause*. Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục.
[HVV, 2017]	=	Hoàng Văn Vân (2017). Ngôn ngữ của sách giáo khoa học phổ thông: Khảo sát đặc điểm ngữ pháp-từ vựng của 7 bài học (ngôn bản) trong *Sinh học 8* từ bình diện liên nhân. *Ngôn ngữ*, *9*(340), 28-54.
[LCT]	=	Laurence C. Thompson (1985). A Vietnamese reference grammar. *Mon-Khmer Studies Journal*, *13-14*, 1-367.
[LNM]	=	Lê Ngọc Minh (1994). Đi bầu thành hoàng. Trong *Truyện ngắn hay 1993* (tr. 120-39). Tuần báo văn nghệ.
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[NQT]	=	Nguyễn Quý Thanh (2016). *Tạp chí Khoa học Xã hội và Nhân văn*, 2(1), 26-38.
[NQTh]	=	Nguyễn Quang Thiều (1994). Hai người đàn bà xóm trại. Trong *Truyện ngắn chọn lọc 1992-1994*. Nhà xuất bản Công an nhân dân.
[PDT]	=	Phạm Duy Tương (1994). Một quãng đời và cả cuộc đời. Trong *Truyện ngắn chọn lọc 1992-1994: Hồi ức binh nhì* (tr. 19-32). Nhà xuất bản Quân đội nhân dân.
[NQV]	=	Nguyễn Quang Vinh et al. (2016). *Sinh học 8*. Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục.
[VR]	=	Vietnamese riddle
[THL]	=	Trần Hữu Lạn (2002). Cố Hương. Trong *Truyện ngắn hay 2002* (tr. 161-171). Nhà xuất bản văn học.
[TTM]	=	Trần Thùy Mai (2002). Lửa của khoảnh khắc. Trong *Truyện ngắn hay 2002* (tr. 347-378). Nhà xuất bản văn học.
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[YB]	=	Y Ban (1994). Bây giờ con mới hiểu. Trong *Truyện ngắn chọn lọc 1992-1994: Hồi ức binh nhì* (tr. 188-194). Nhà xuất bản Quân đội nhân dân.

ĐỀ NGỮ TRONG CÚ ĐƠN TIẾNG VIỆT: MÔ TẢ THEO QUAN ĐIỂM CHỨC NĂNG HỆ THỐNG

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Tóm tắt: Bài viết này mô tả một khía cạnh của ngữ pháp văn bản tiếng Việt theo quan điểm chức năng. Khung lí thuyết sử dụng để mô tả là Ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống do Halliday và các nhà ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống khác phát triển. Trọng tâm của bài viết được đặt vào việc mô tả Đề ngữ trong cú đơn. Hai câu hỏi chính làm nền tảng cho bài viết là: (1) Đề ngữ là gì trong cú đơn tiếng Việt và Đề ngữ được nhận diện như thế nào?; và (2) những lựa chọn tinh tế nào có sẵn trong môi trường **ĐỀ NGỮ** và chúng được phân biệt như thế nào? Nghiên cứu cho thấy **ĐỀ NGỮ** trong tiếng Việt là một hệ thống của cú với tư cách là một thông điệp; nó có thể được định nghĩa như là "xuất phát điểm của thông điệp" (Halliday (1967b, tr. 212; 1970, tr.161; 1985b, tr. 38), và có thể được nhận diện bởi vị trí đầu tiên trong cú; môi trường **ĐỀ NGỮ** mở ra một số lựa chọn tinh tế và những lựa chọn này có thể được phân biệt theo ba siêu chức năng ngôn ngữ: siêu chức năng trải nghiệm, siêu chức năng liên nhân, và siêu chức năng văn bản. Nghiên cứu góp phần vào việc vận dụng lí thuyết Ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống vào việc mô tả ngữ pháp văn bản của cú tiếng Việt, mở ra những tiềm năng cho một cách tiếp cận mới trong việc mô tả toàn diện ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống tiếng Việt phục vụ cho giảng dạy, học tập và nghiên cứu ngôn ngữ.

Từ khoá: Đề ngữ, Thuyết ngữ, cú đơn, Ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống, tiếng Việt

CHALLENGES IN LITERARY TRANSLATION:
A CASE IN ENGLISH-VIETNAMESE TRANSLATION
OF "THE GREAT GATSBY"

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Abstract: The present study aims to analyze challenges that the translator confronts in the English-Vietnamese translation of "The Great Gatsby". The major method adopted in the study is comparative descriptive approach, which enables the researcher to describe the difficulties in the English-Vietnamese translation of "The Great Gatsby". The findings unravel a number of constraints associated with linguistic and cultural differences between the source and the target language. Several recommendations to overcome the hindrances are also proposed.

Keywords: challenges, English-Vietnamese translation, literary translation

1. Introduction

The 21st century fosters nations around the world to come together in tremendous vigor to promote socio-economic development; thus, translators have been entrusted with the role of bridging the gap between people coming from various cultures. As a result, a surging number of novels have been translated into diverse languages. Among those, "The Great Gatsby", a masterpiece by F. Scott Fitzgerald first published in 1925, has also been made available for the readership all over the world. With a unique writing style and profound insights into American values, Fitzgerald has been greatly regarded as one of the most influential representatives of American literature in the 1920s (Perkins, 2004).

Following its fame, the novel has been translated into Vietnamese. Among the translated versions, the translation of Trịnh Lữ (2009) has indeed attracted a myriad of contending reviews from translators (Đỗ, 2010). Therefore, the researcher aims to conduct the minor study entitled "Challenges in literary translation: a case in English-Vietnamese translation of The Great Gatsby".

2. Challenges in Literary Translation

According to Catford (2000), instances of untranslatability can arise from two major sources, including language and culture.

Linguistic translation problems emerge due to structural differences between the Source Language (SL) and the Target Language (TL). Linguistically, each language has its own metaphysics that determines the spirit of a nation and its behavioral norms. Since words or images may vary considerably from one group to another, the translator needs to pay attention to the style, language, and vocabulary peculiar to the two languages in order to produce an adequate translation of the SL text.

Culture and language are closely interrelated. It is widely known that language is an integral aspect of culture. Nida and Taber (1982) also mentioned that words have meanings

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only in terms of the total cultural setting. Seeing eye to eye with other scholars, Newmark (1995) defined the culture as the way of life and manifestation that are peculiar to a community that uses a peculiar language as its means of expression. Culture includes and affects language; it is the ground from which language grows and develops.

According to Cui (2012), challenges for literary translators can be material culture, traditional culture, religious culture, and historical culture. First, different nations are in different places and will have distinct images for the same thing. For example, Vietnamese culture has "áo dài, bánh chưng, nhà sàn" and so forth. Western culture may have "pizza, sushi, continental breakfast". It would be a huge challenge to deal with those culture-specific materials. Second, people live together in one country or region and will form their own traditions; these traditions will be passed from generation to generation. In other countries or regions, people may not have those traditions, thus making these traditions possibly untranslatable. For instances, in Quan ho Bac Ninh folk songs, there are some traditional customs such as "tục kết chạ, tục ngủ bọn" which merely exist in Vietnamese culture. Third, the history of a nation is the record of social development. Idioms and legends provide ready support in this respect. An idiom or fixed expression may have no absolute equivalent in the TL.

By and large, during the process of translating literary texts, there are linguistic and cultural challenges due to the cultural gaps between the SL and the TL. It is not adequate for the translators to know what words are used in the TL. It is even more vital for the translators to make the readership understand the sense as it is understood by the readership of the SL.

3. Methodology

Given the afore-mentioned research aims, this research encompassed the comparative descriptive design in order to compare and contrast the original with its translation.

The novel "The Great Gatsby" is selected in this study. The researcher collected comprehensive data from nine chapters of both the source text – the whole novel "The Great Gatsby" (1993) by F. Scott Fitzgerald of Wordsworth Editions Publisher and the target text – "Đại gia Gatsby" (2009) by Trịnh Lữ of Nhã Nam Publisher.

"The Great Gatsby" is selected as a case of this study because it is regarded as one of the greatest American masterpiece written by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Perkins, 2004). The novel was published in 1925; however, it was not until thirty years after its first publication that the novel finally found its remarkable position in American literature. This fact appears intriguing to many researchers; thus encouraging them to explore the reasons underlying the late-coming and everlasting popularity of this novel. "The Great Gatsby" has appeared in various reviews, articles, and studies. In the book *The Fictional Technique of Scott Fitzgerald* by Miller (1949), the author considered it "one of the finest pieces of American literature".

Following its fame, "The Great Gatsby" has been translated into numerous languages in the world, including Vietnamese. The translation "Đại gia Gatsby" by Trịnh Lữ was selected as the case of this study because it was the updated version among three translated versions published by Nhã Nam Publisher in 2009. More significantly, the translation "Đại gia Gatsby" has received a huge number of mixed reviews and contending commentaries from the readership; hence, it would be meaningful in order to examine the "The Great Gatsby" and its translation "Đại gia Gatsby".

4. Challenges in English-Vietnamese Translation of "the Great Gatsby"

4.1. Challenges in Translating Proper Names

In "Đại gia Gatsby", the translator adopts non-translation in dealing with proper names. Nonetheless, it is inarguable that "The Great Gatsby" is prominent for its use of distinctive language (Liu, 2010). The author meticulously selected names to convey a message and lace with symbolism to give the characters more meaning.

For instance, *Gatsby*'s name is a typical example of Fitzgerald's amazing choice of words. The real name of Gatsby is James Gatz.

"Gatz" is a name of German origin. He changes it to Jay Gatsby after he meets Dan Cody on his yacht and leaves with him to travel the world at the age of 17. The name Gatsby is a play on words. "Gat" is a slang term for gun that is ironic since Gatsby was shot with a gun at the end of the novel.

Another example is the name "Buchanan". The name **Buchanan** is a name for someone wealthy, pretentious, snobby, and sophistication auras are emitted from this name (Luft & Dilworth, 2010). This name connects to the American Dream because it represents someone wealthy, which is a part of the dream for most.

Regarding **Daisy Buchanan**, Daisy's first name is a flower. The name fits with Daisy's beauty and superficial purity. On the surface, Daisy, the protagonist of the novel, seems to be very naïve and pure from Gatsby's perspective, but in fact she is totally empty.

Tom Buchanan also fits the role of someone called Buchanan. He is a former university athlete from an established family. His first name also perfectly fits his character. It describes his lack of personality. The name Tom is common and uninteresting just like Tom himself.

Nick is a neutral name. It can be a name of someone who is immensely wealthy or someone coming from extreme poverty. Fitzgerald wished to convey the unbiased and neutral nature of Nick. He is the narrator in the middle of the whole story and stands with both words without being able to decide where he belongs. In the beginning of the novel, he even admits that he is "inclined to reserve all judgements" (p. 5).

On the whole, the meaningful names in "The Great Gatsby" align with the findings of the previous studies (Manini, 2014; Phạm & Phạm, 2018) in which proper names in a literary text carry contextual meanings and provoke cultural connotations.

Despite carrying contextual meanings, the names remain non-translated. The adoption of non-translation strategy can be attributed to two main reasons. Firstly, proper names are deemed untranslatable due to linguistic and cultural differences between two languages and

cultures. As justified by Catford (1965), Faseng (2002) and Cui (2012), translators confront linguistic and cultural hindrances during the translation process. Cultural untranslatability means that a situational feature, which is functionally relevant for the SL text, is wholly absent from the TL culture. Secondly, the non-translation of proper names serves to preserve the American cultural exoticism of the SL. In line with the age of globalization, translation serves as an instrumental medium of cultural communication among different cultures. Accordingly, SL-oriented translation of the literary proper names would guide the Vietnamese readers through American culture. For that reason, non-translation of proper names motivates the Vietnamese readers to pronounce alien names and explore exotic English-speaking cultures and their naming practices.

From a different angle, one might argue that as these literary names carry contextual meanings, they should have been translated into Vietnamese. Therefore, to compromise on the linguistic and cultural barriers, the following translation techniques have been proposed. Early in the literature, Newmark (1995) recommends the use of "footnotes" to tackle the rendition of proper names. Though divergent in wording, Faseng (2002), Jinfang (2004), and Cui (2012) reach the consensus about adopting translator's notes, non-translation plus additional explanation. More recently, Manini (2014) agrees that selecting an interpretation is an essential element in translation, which nevertheless entails risks for translators. Therefore, "if explanatory footnotes serve the translators' purpose, they can be inserted with relative ease into a work of narrative fiction to inform the reader about what had to be left out" (Manini, 2014, p. 173). Additionally, Manini (2014) suggests that "the use of explanatory notes or other forms of meta-textual comment such as the translator's preface can perfectly well be envisaged to compensate for the semantic loss that occurs when loaded names are not translated" (p. 173).

4.2. Challenges in Translating Alliteration

One of the reasons why "The Great Gatsby" is considered a masterpiece is its excellent use of language (Arthur, 1963;

Kathleen, 1988; Ronald, 2003). Along with Ernest Hemingway and William Faulker, Scott Fitzgarald is regarded as one of the three great American prose writers with its most distinctive style (Ronald, 2003). In this novel, Fitzgerald strived to develop a unique language creating an emotional response not only through its content but also its sound and rhythm to appeal all the senses. The language in the novel is characterized by the use of figurative language, namely alliteration.

Nonetheless, due to the linguistic differences between Vietnamese and English, it is a huge challenge for the translator to convey that unique feature. For instance, in the title "Great Gatsby", the sound "g" in two words is repeated to generate a sound effect on the readership, but its translation "Đại gia Gatsby" cannot express the alliteration. Similarly, in "she smiled slowly", the sound "s" is repeated to create rhythm, but it is impossible to convey the rhythmic style of the original in the translation "bà chậm rãi mỉm cười". More examples are illustrated in the following table.

Table 1

English-Vietnamese Translation of Alliteration in "The Great Gatsby"

bond **b**usiness (p. 7)	buôn trái phiếu
we **w**alk (p. 7)	chúng tôi đi qua
high **h**allway (p. 7)	dãy hành lang cao
breeze **b**lew (p. 7)	một cơn gió ùa qua
blown **b**ack (p. 7)	thổi dạt
people **p**layed **p**olo (p. 10)	người chơi polo
a low **w**hite **w**ashed railroad fence (p. 28)	một dãy hàng rào hoả xa thấp quét vôi trắng
Evidently some **w**ild **w**ag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens (p. 20)	Hiển nhiên là một gã bác sĩ mắt điên khùng đã dựng chúng ở đó hòng làm béo bở cho nghề nghiệp của gã ở quận Queens.
she **s**miled **s**lowly (p. 30)	bà chậm rãi mỉm cười
cream-**c**olored **c**hiffon (p. 30)	hàng chiffon màu kem
At least once a fortnight a **c**orps of **c**aterers **c**ame down with several hundred feet of **c**anvas and enough **c**olored lights to make a **C**hristmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, **g**arnished with **g**listening hors-d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. (p. 32)	Ít nhất nửa tháng một lần, một tốp người phục vụ lại đến với hàng trăm mét vải bố và đủ số đèn màu để biến khu vườn mênh mông của Gatsby thành một cái cây Giáng sinh. Trên những bàn thức ăn tự chọn lấp lánh các món khai vị đẹp mắt, nhiều món thịt muối bỏ lò được bày chen chúc với những đĩa rau trộn trang trí sặc sỡ và các loại bánh thịt lợn thịt gà nướng như được phù phép thành vàng ròng sẫm màu.
A dead man passed us in a **h**earse **h**eaped with blooms. (p. 52)	Một người chết đi ngược chiều với chúng tôi trong chiếc xe linh cữu chất đầy hoa.
"**s**un-**s**trained eyes" (p. 63)	đôi mắt xám nheo nheo vì nắng
While we admired he brought more and the **s**oft rich heap mounted higher **s**hirts with **s**tripes and **s**crolls and plaids in coral	Chúng tôi còn đang thán phục thì ông đã lại mang thêm ra và cái đống mềm mại phong phú ấy cứ cao lên mãi – sơ mi kẻ sọc, in hoa

and apple-green and lavender and faint orange, and monograms of Indian blue. **S**uddenly, with a **s**trained **s**ound, Daisy bent her head into the **s**hirts and began to cry **s**tormily. (p. 71)	và carô đủ màu san hô, xanh táo, tím hồng, da cam nhạt, cái nào cũng thêu chữ lồng màu lam Ấn Độ. Đột nhiên, thốt lên một tiếng nghẹn ngào, Daisy gục đầu vào đống áo ấy và bắt đầu khóc như mưa như gió.
I heard a car **s**top and the **s**ound of **s**omeone **s**plashing after us over the **s**oggy ground. (p.131)	Tôi nghe có tiếng ô tô đỗ lại rồi đến tiếng chân bì bõm trên mặt đất sũng nước chạy theo chúng tôi.
And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of **Daisy's dock**. (p. 136)	Và khi ngồi đó trầm tư về cái thế giới xưa xa lạ, tôi nghĩ đến niềm xúc động đầy kinh ngạc của Gatsby khi lần đầu ông thấy đốm sáng xanh ở cuối **bãi thuyền nhà Daisy**.
So we **b**eat on, **b**oats against the current, **b**orne **b**ack ceaselessly into the past. (p. 136)	Chúng ta cứ thế dấn bước, những con thuyền rẽ sóng ngược dòng, không ngừng trôi về quá khứ.

According to Liu (2010), the structure of language commonly shows the characteristics of the language, these characteristics can only be found in relative language, the similar transfer is difficult to find in non-relative language, for it needs to change the code completely. It is generally agreed that each language has its own special phonemic system (Lâm, 2013), which cannot be replaced by another language. No translation language can reproduce the same sequence of sounds as the language of the original, simply because the two languages are not totally the same from the standpoint sound. In the case of "The Great Gatsby" and its translation, there are linguistic differences between English and Vietnamese; therefore, it is understandable that the translator of "The Great Gatsby" may sacrifice the sound and rhythm effect in order to achieve meaning.

4.3. Challenges in Translating Complex Structures

Fitzgerald's syntactic structures are vividly illustrated through his use of clause complexes. This style is pertinent in describing emotional changes and highlighting the inner complex feelings of the narrator towards the Jazz Age in the 1920s. Moreover, the narrator of the novel Nick presents himself as a learned man with Yale University education, which can be seen from his use of language, particularly the use of both coordination and subordination.

However, in the translation of "The Great Gatsby", clause complexes were simplified into short and simple ones. Several instances are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

English-Vietnamese Translation of Complex Structures in "The Great Gatsby"

ST	TT
I bought a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities, and they stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from the mint, promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas and Morgan and Maecenas knew.	Tôi mua hàng chục tập sách về ngân hàng, tín dụng và chứng khoán đầu tư. Chúng đứng xếp hàng trên giá, bìa đỏ chữ mạ vàng, tinh khôi như tiền mới đúc ra lò, hứa hẹn sẽ khai mở những bí mật sang ngời mà chỉ các thần tài cỡ Midas, Morgan và Maecenas mới biết được.
I looked back at my cousin, who began to ask me questions in her low, thrilling voice.	Tôi quay lại với cô em họ. Nó bắt đầu hỏi han với cái giọng trầm lôi cuốn đầy cảm xúc.

Slenderly, languidly, their hands set lightly on their hips, the two young women preceded us out onto a rosy-colored porch, open toward the sunset, where four candles flickered on the table in the diminished wind.	Mảnh mai, uể oải, tay đặt nhẹ trên hông, hai người đàn bà dẫn chúng tôi ra ngoài hiên nhà toàn màu hồng hướng về phía hoàng hôn. Bốn ngọn nến đang cháy chợp chờn trên bàn trong gió lúc ấy đã dịu hẳn.

As mentioned above, each language has its own structures (Lâm, 2013). In order to deal with syntactic differences, Newmark (1995) proposed a translation procedure named shift or transposition. In his opinion, shift or transposition means a change in the grammar from the SL to the TL. The change in grammar can be from singular to plural; from gerund to verb-noun; from subordinate clause to infinitive; from verb to noun/ adverb; from complex sentence to simple sentence and so on. This procedure is applicable because when an SL grammatical structure does not exist in the TL or where literal translation is grammatically possible but may not accord with natural usage in the TL to give natural expressions in the TL. Therefore, it is understandable that Trịnh Lữ adopted shift or transposition in separating clause complexes into simple ones in order to achieve naturalness Vietnamese.

4.4. Challenges in Translating Conjunction Words

Excessive conjunctions convey the intentional discrepancy of the writer between East Egg and West Egg. In the novel, the most popular conjunctives were additive *"and"*. Fitzgerald purposely employs conjunction "and" in order to vividly depict how different and "grotesque" West Egg is compared to the cultured, high society that exists in the East Egg (Liu, 2010). Fitzgerald desired to stress on the differences between East Egg and West Egg in his novel. The writer repeatedly used "and" to emphasize that there are many important differences between people living in the East Egg and those living in the West Egg.

Besides, Fitzgerald strived to develop a unique language creating an emotional response not only through content but also through its sound and rhythm (Ronald, 2003). This feature is characterized by the use of repetition, namely the repetition of additive "and".

Several examples are illustrated in the following table.

Table 3

English-Vietnamese Translation of Conjunctions in "The Great Gatsby"

ST	TT
He didn't say any more, but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that.	Ông không nói gì thêm, nhưng cha con tôi vẫn luôn hiểu nhau theo một kiểu kiệm lời khác thường, nên tôi biết ý ông dặn là hơn thế nhiều.
And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit.	Nhưng sau khi đã huênh hoang như thế về tính bao dung của mình, tôi phải công nhận rằng nó cũng có giới hạn.
The practical thing was to find rooms in the city, but it was a warm season, and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town, it sounded like a great idea.	Thực tế ra thì phải tìm chỗ ngay ở trong thành phố, nhưng lúc ấy trời còn đang ấm áp, mà tôi thì vừa mới ở quê ra vẫn còn nhớ cảnh cây cỏ than quen rộng rãi, nên khi có một anh chàng ở văn phòng bảo muốn thuê chung với tôi một cái nhà ở chỗ nào ngoài thành phố mà vẫn tiện đi làm hàng ngày được thì tôi ưng ý ngay.
He found the house, a weather-beaten card-	Anh ta đã tìm được một chỗ - một căn nhà một

board bungalow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington, and I went out to the country alone.	tầng khung gỗ vách bìa cứng dầu dãi nắng mưa với giá 80 đô la một tháng, nhưng đến phút chót thì công ty lại bắt anh chàng phải chuyển đến Washington nên tôi dọn đến đó một mình.
And so it happened that on a warm windy evening I drove over to East Egg to see two old friends whom I scarcely knew at all.	Thế là, một chiều lộng gió ấm áp, tôi lái xe sang East Egg thăm hai người bạn cũ mà thật ra là chả biết gì về họ mấy.
At any rate, Miss Baker's lips fluttered, she nodded at me al- most imperceptibly, and then quickly tipped her head back again	Không hiểu tại sao, đôi môi cô Baker bỗng run run, cô gật đầu với tôi, gần như không thấy trước được, sau đó lại vội vàng ngửa đầu ra như cũ.
"Well, it's a fine book, and everybody ought to read it.	À, vì đó là một cuốn sách hay, mọi người ai cũng phải đọc.
I looked outdoors for a minute, and it's very romantic outdoors.	Em vừa ra ngoài xem một tí, ở đó rất lãng mạn anh ạ.
Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where.	Thế này nhé, nó mới chưa đầy một tuổi mà Tom thì có trời biết là đang ở đâu.
Sitting on Tom's lap Mrs. Wilson called up several people on the telephone; then there were no cigarettes, and I went out to buy some at the drugstore on the corner.	Vừa ngồi trên lòng Tom, bà Wilson vừa gọi phôn cho nhiều người; thế rồi không có thuốc lá, nên tôi phải xuống chỗ hiệu thuốc góc phố mua một ít.
"And Daisy ought to have something in her life," murmured Jordan to me.	Daisy cũng phải có được cái gì đó trong cuộc sống của mình anh ạ," Jordan thầm thì.
He was pale, and there were dark signs of sleep-lessness beneath his eyes.	Ông ta tái nhợt, mắt thâm quầng vì thiếu ngủ.
His eyes glanced mo-mentarily at me, and his lips parted with an abortive attempt at a laugh.	Ông liếc vội sang tôi, môi hé mở định cười nhưng lại thôi.

It can be seen from the translation that "and" was translated as "nên", "nhưng", "mà" and so forth. According to Oxford dictionary (2015), the conjunction "and" has a total of eight layers of meaning as follows:

- Be used to connect words or parts of sentences and have the same meaning as "also, in addition to"

- Have the same meaning as "added to"

- Have the same meaning as "then, following this"

- Have the same meaning as "go, come, stay, try" and be used before a verb instead of "to" to show purpose such as "go and get me a pen please".

- Be used to introduce a comment or a question such as "We talked for hours. And what did you decide?"

- Have the same meaning as "as a result" such as "Miss another class and you will fail".

- Be used between repeated words to show that something is repeated or continuing such as "He tried and tried but without success".

- Be used between repeated words to show that there are important differences between things or people of the same kind such as "I like city life but there are cities and cities".

Therefore, it is rational that "and" can be translated into different ways such as "nên", "nhưng", "mà" and so on. For example, additive "and" in the sentence "He didn't say any more, but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, **and** I understood that he meant a great deal more than that." was translated as "**nên**" "Ông không nói gì thêm, nhưng cha con tôi vẫn luôn hiểu nhau theo

một kiểu kiệm lời khác thường, **nên** tôi biết ý ông dặn là hơn thế nhiều." Similarly, "and" was translated as "nhưng" and "mà" in other afore-mentioned examples.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The present minor study delineates challenges in an English-Vietnamese translation of "The Great Gatsby". Through qualitative descriptive approach, the difficulties in the English-Vietnamese translation of the Great Gatsby are unraveled. The findings reveal a number of constraints associated with linguistic and cultural distinctions between the SL and the TL.

The findings of the study also yield several implications. Firstly, the findings of the study serve as a beneficial reference for literary translators. It is essential for literary translators to master the writing style of the SL author so that a proper selection of lexical, syntactic and textual means can be done. This will assist literary translators in creating the same effect of the translation on the TL readers and the SL readers.

Secondly, it can be inferred from the study that the SL-oriented kind of translation should be considered for the translation of literary works, especially well-known timeless masterpieces. In an SL-oriented translation, the original is tied in a specific manner to the SL community and its culture, and is often specifically directed at source culture addressees. In literary translation, it is significant to convey distinctive features and styles of the SL author; therefore, SL-oriented translation should be considered for the translation of literary texts.

Although this study has yielded several insights into challenges in English-Vietnamese translation, during the research implementation, it might not avoid the following limitation. The reasons underlying the translation strategies adopted by the translator are matters for future research. The choices of translation strategies undertaken by the translator deserve research attention. It is recommended for further research that interviews with the translator would be conducted in order to dig deeper into the underlying reasons affecting the choices of translation strategies.

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THÁCH THỨC TRONG DỊCH VĂN HỌC:
NGHIÊN CỨU TRƯỜNG HỢP DỊCH ANH – VIỆT
TRONG TÁC PHẨM "ĐẠI GIA GATSBY"

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này phân tích các thách thức mà người dịch đối mặt trong quá trình dịch Anh-Việt tác phẩm Đại gia Gatsby. Phương pháp nghiên cứu chính được áp dụng là phương pháp mô tả so sánh đối chiếu giữa bản dịch và bản gốc. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy người dịch đối mặt với những rào cản, thách thức liên quan đến sự khác biệt về ngôn ngữ, văn hoá giữa bản dịch và bản gốc. Dựa trên kết quả nghiên cứu, tác giả đề xuất một số chiến lược dịch xuyên văn hoá.

Từ khoá: thách thức, dịch Anh - Việt, dịch văn học

AN SFL ANALYSIS OF PROCESS AND MOOD TYPES
IN ENGLISH JOURNAL ARTICLES ON FINANCE

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Abstract: Journal articles written by Vietnamese authors have received strong criticism against their weaknesses, one of which is their failure to comply with international requirements (State Council for Professorship, 2016-2017). What are common international requirements for journal articles is therefore an essential subject of research, and the analysis in this paper from Systemic Functional Linguistics perspective is one of such attempts. A total of 50 articles randomly selected from 10 Scopus-indexed journals on finance and finance-related fields published in English are analyzed in order to answer the following specific questions: (1) what types of process and mood are used in English journal articles on finance?, and (2) what are they used for? This critical knowledge of processes and moods and their functions in English journal articles on finance will help Vietnamese authors to improve the quality of their articles for international publication.

Keywords: SFL, process, mood, journal articles, finance

1. Introduction

To date, in the country, apart from academic writing in English and some other foreign languages, training on academic writing in the Vietnamese language has not been offered as an official, compulsory course at most, if not all, educational institutions, especially higher education. Furthermore, comprehensive theoretical and practical guides on Vietnamese academic writing remain absent, although limited discussion on academic writing scatters in a few works, for instance, Dinh Trong Lac (1999, 1994), Dinh Trong Lac and Nguyen Thai Hoa (1993), Tran Ngoc Them (1999), Diep Quang Ban (2002, 2005), Huu Dat (2011). A few other doctoral theses focus on a small number of aspects in academic writing, e.g. the doctoral dissertation by Nguyen Thi Huyen Trang (2018) comparing means of hedging in Vietnamese and English academic writing, the article by Nguyen Thi Minh Tam and Ngo Huu Hoang (2017) on

structures of abstracts in English and Vietnamese journal articles, and another paper by Lam Quang Dong (2017) on the language of Vietnamese academic writing. One major observation from these works is their common strong criticism against the weaknesses of journal articles written by Vietnamese authors, one of which is their failure to comply with international requirements (State Council for Professorship [HĐCDGSNN], 2016-2017). It was concluded in the official dispatches of HĐCDGSNN that "compared to common international requirements and standards in terms of content, academic quality, format and presentation, our country's [i.e. Vietnam] journals and articles must be further improved so as to approach international practices" (ibid.).

Given the present imperative push of international publication imposed on Vietnamese researchers, the questions now are how to improve their academic writing, and what

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common international requirements for journal articles they have to observe. These questions necessitate research, and the analysis in this paper from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspective is one of such attempts. Specifically, the following research questions are raised in this study: (1) what types of process and mood are used in English journal articles on finance?, and (2) what are they used for?

2. A Brief Literature Review

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a model of language which was developed by Halliday (1994). He suggests two basic functions of language: *making sense of our own experience* and *acting out our social relationships*. Language construes human experience, providing lexico-grammatical resources to construe meanings and to perform various functions, including the ideational meta-function, which is classified into experiential and logical meta-functions. Also, language helps enact our personal and social relationship with others, that is the interpersonal meta-function, which makes language both interactive and personal. Furthermore, to facilitate the two meta-functions above, it is essential to build up sequences of discourse and organize them in a logical way by using cohesive and coherent devices. This is known as the textual meta-function. Meanwhile, mood is the major interpersonal system of the clause; it provides interactants involved in dialogue with the resources for giving or demanding a commodity, either information or goods-&-services – in other words, with the resources for enacting speech functions (speech acts) through the grammar of the clause: statements (giving information), e.g. *Bears eat honey. Bears don't eat honey*; questions (demanding information), e.g. *Do bears eat honey?* or *What do bears eat?*; and commands (demanding goods-&-services), e.g. *Eat! Let's eat!*

In SFL, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Eggins (2004) also talk about the system of transitivity with different process and mood types, which include:

- *Material process*: the process of doing and happening. It might be action or event such as kicking, beating, running, walking, etc.,

e.g. *We are all eating now; The lion caught the tourist.*

- *Behavioural process*: the process of physiological and psychological behaviour such as breathing, crying, drinking, etc.,

e.g. *She's laughing; Hold your breath!*

- *Mental process*: the process of sensing such as thinking, loving, wanting, hoping, etc. It is concerned with our experience of the world of our own consciousness,

e.g. *He saw the car; Mary liked the gift.*

- *Verbal process*: the process of saying such as saying, telling, speaking, talking, etc.,

e.g. *John said 'I'm hungry'; They praised her to her parents.*

- *Relational process*: the process of being, having, becoming, in which a participant is characterized, identified, or situated circumstantially. There are three main types of relation: *intensive*, *possessive* and *circumstantial*,

e.g. *Pat is the richest; Peter has a piano.*

- *Existential process*: the process of existing, indicating that something or some natural force exists,

e.g. *There was a storm; On the wall there hangs a picture.*

Our study presented here will use such classifications in our search for answers to the research questions.

In the country, process and mood types have been analyzed in some studies regarding the linguistic features of medical journals, or museum texts (Nguyen Thi Quynh Hoa, 2017), experiential meanings in English journal articles on economics (Nguyen Thuy Phuong Lan, 2021) or linguistic features of English for pharmacology (Vo Thi Be, 2019). However, journal articles on finance have not been dealt with, both in English and Vietnamese. This paper, therefore, sets out to partially fill out this gap with the preliminary results of our study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Quantitative and Qualitative Descriptive Method

Statistical methods are used to determine the number and frequency of occurrence of each process type in English journal articles on finance, which consist of material process, relational process, mental process, behavioural process, existential process and verbal process. Accordingly, the outstanding results are presented to state basic linguistic properties and characteristics. Also, description, analysis, synthesis, and generalization are used to draw out outstanding linguistic features of process and mood types in English journal articles on finance.

3.2. Sampling and Data Collection

Data for this study are collected from English journals on finance in different financial fields such as corporate finance, tax, import and export, etc. These journals were chosen because they are indexed in prestigious journals, e.g. *Journal of Corporate Finance, Journal of Banking & Finance, International Review of Financial Analysis, Review of Finance*. The 50 journal articles chosen as data for this study were confined to the latest issues up to the time when this study began. From these journal articles, 1,324 clauses are examined to identify their types of process and mood, and their functions, and the analytical unit was the clause.

4. Findings

4.1. Processes

Using Halliday's functional framework in its analysis, the study finds that English journal articles on finance use various types of processes as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Distribution of Process Types in English Journal Articles on Finance

No.	Process Types	Number	Percentage
1	Material Process	543	41%
2	Relational Process	611	46%
3	Existential Process	42	3%
4	Verbal Process	113	8.5%
5	Behavioural Process	6	0.8%
6	Mental Process	9	0.7%
	Total	1,324	100%

As can be seen, relational process occurs with the highest percentage, accounting for 46% (611/1,324), which is followed by material process with 41% (543/1,324) whereas behavioural and mental processes account for 0.8% (6/1,324) and 0.7% (9/1,324) respectively.

4.1.1. Material Process

Material clauses in English journal articles are represented by material process with Actor and Goal as the participants. This process is formularized as follows:

Actor-Material Process-Goal

For instance,

(1) This viewpoint (*Actor*) **documents** (*Process: Material*) emerging evidence that the conceptual and practical shift away from adaption finance - towards what is more accurate term "resilience finance" - influences the objectives of policy, and perhaps most importantly, the actors privileged by policy *(Goal)*.

(2) This article (*Actor*) seeks to ***respond*** (*Process: Material*) to certain epistemological challenges which are posed to the traditional methods of inquiry used in finance by the emergence of sustainable finance (*Goal*).

These examples show that material process is used to state the objectives of journal articles with the use of such verbs as *document, respond to, focus*. Also, material process is used to generalize the studies and achievements in finance with the use of the particular verbs *summarize* and *emphasize*, etc., e.g.

(3) Brealey (*Actor*) **summarized** (*Process: Material*) some of these findings in a publication on the benefits of PF in infrastructure investment *(Goal)*.

(4) This paper *(Actor),* by contrast, has sought to **emphasize** *(Process: Material)* the constitutive, generative character of financial speculation *(Goal).*

Furthermore, material process helps present the theoretical framework for studies on finance, or generalize the studies and achievements in finance, e.g.

(5) The discussions above *(Actor)* ***identified*** *(Process: Material)* a paradox whereby financial academics and researchers rely on neoclassical investment theory, whereas practitioners make little use of it *(Goal).*

(6) Brown *(Actor)* ***provides*** *(Process: Material)* empirical support for this hypothesis, based on panel data of 16 European countries from 1995 to 2007 *(Goal).*

(7) This paper *(Actor)* ***suggests*** *(Process: Material)* that Minsky's work can be read in a very different way: for Minsky all investments were to some degree speculative in the sense that their market price does not reflect an underlying fundamental value but is shaped by the interactive logic of valuation *(Goal).*

4.1.2. Relational Process

Relational process consists of two types: Identifying and Attributive, and their formulas are as follows:

Type 1: The Identifying

X be A

-X: Identified

-be: Simple Present

A: Identifier

Type 2: The Attributive

X be A

-X: Carrier

-be: Simple Present

-A: Attribute

Type 1, *the Identifying*, is used to define financial terms, e.g.

(8) Productivity growth *(Identified)* ***is*** *(Process: Relational)* the main contributor to rising prosperity *(Identifier).*

(9) Project finance (PF) *(Identified)* ***is*** *(Process: Relational)* an organizational form with the sole purpose of executing a project with the use of non-recourse debt.*(Identifier).*

Meanwhile, *the Attributive* is used to describe the quality of the issues in finance, e.g.

(10) The Enterprise Surveys *(Carrier)* are *(Process: Relational)* ***also very good*** *(Attributive)* because they provide a set of objective measures of the business environment.

(11) The value of new debt *(Carrier)* ***is*** *(Process: Relational)* endogenous *(Attributive)* and can be derived using the zero-profit condition for creditors.

4.1.3. Existential Process

Although they merely account for 3.2% of the processes in English journal articles, existential process is used to acknowledge an existing entity. This process is illustrated with the verb phrases ***there be*** and ***to have.*** The existential process is formalized as follows:

Type 1: There be A

There: Carrier

Be: Simple present

A: Existent entity

Type 2: X have A

X: Carrier

A: Existent entity

The examples below help illustrate the 2 formulas above:

(12) In contrast to the much advancement in understanding how the structure of PF addresses various project-specific risks, ***there*** *(Carrier)* ***is*** *(Process: Existential)* little research on whether and how political risk affects the basic contract form and the public-private partnership governance structure of PF *(Existent Entity).*

(13) The government *(Carrier)* often ***has*** *(Process: Existential)* a keen interest in the quality of the project *(Existent Entity).*

Existential process is also used to present research gaps in finance.

4.1.4. Verbal Process

Though assuming not a high percentage, verbal process plays a key role in English journal articles on finance. This process is illustrated with the following formula:

Sayer-Verbal verbs-Verbiage

For instance,

(14) Zingales *(Sayer)* has **argued** *(Process: Verbal)* that the classification adopted by Fazzari et al. (1998) tends to assign firms incorrectly, and after re-classification they find substantial differences in the degree of sensitivity of investment to financial constraints between firms *(Verbiage)*.

In this example, verbal process is used to state the author's viewpoint about the issue in question.

(15) Table 1 *(Sayer)* **reports** *(Process: Verbal)* summary statistics of key variables from our samples *(Verbiage)*.

Table 1 is the subject of the verbal process and *summary statistics of key variables from our samples* is the verbiage by *Table 1*. Also, verbal process is used to present the research findings and conclusions in journal articles.

4.1.5. Behavioural Process

Although it accounts for a small percentage (0.8%), behavioural process is used in English journal articles on finance to show writers' physiological and psychological behaviour toward research findings. This process is formularized as follows:

Behaver-Behavioural verbs-Behaviour

The following examples provide illustration of the formula above:

(16) *We (Behaver)* **observe** *(Process: Behavioural)* that the upward movement in the exchange rate coincides with an increase in the wright of chartists in the market *(Behaviour)*.

The pronoun *"We"* referring to the writer is used to cause a behaviour with the use of the verb **"observe"** and *the upward movement in the exchange rate coincides with an increase in the wright of chartists in the market* is the behaviour caused by the subject *we*.

(17) *We (Behaver)* find *(Process: Behvioural)* that the error correction coefficients are low in both equations *(Behaviour)*.

The pronoun *"We"* referring to the writer is used to cause a behaviour with the use of the verb **" find"** and *the error correction coefficients are low in both equations* is the behaviour caused by the subject *we*.

4.1.6. Mental Process

Similarly, although mental process accounts for only 0.7%, it is used in English journal articles on finance with sensory verbs to show the writer's opinion about a certain perspective or a research finding, as seen in the following pattern.

Sensor-Mental verbs-Phenomenon

For example, prediction and impression are represented through mental process,

(18) In this regard, we *(Sensor)* **predict** *(Process: Mental)* that financially motivated projects obtain more government concession to improve the financial returns while giving up the control to the government *(Phenomenon)*.

(19) When the political risk is high, the private sponsor *(Sensor)* will **prefer** *(Process: Mental)* offtake agreement as an incentive to undertake the project to government concession which entails added government control *(Phenomenon)*.

4.2. Mood

Analysing representations of mood in English journal articles on finance, the study finds a small number of types as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Distribution of Mood Types in English Journal Articles on Finance

No.	Mood types		Number	Percentage
1	Declarative	Affirmative	1,298	98%
2		Negative	26	2%
3	Interrogative and Command		0	0
	Total		**1,324**	

The table shows that English journal articles only use the declarative which consists of affirmative and negative, and almost all of them is the affirmative – 98% (1,298 / 1,324) while the negative assumes a very modest proportion of 0.2% (26/1,324).

As a kind of academic writing, English journal articles on finance use the declarative mood to exchange information between the writer and the reader. This mood type is formularized as follows:

Subject-Finite-Residue

e.g.

(20)   Central to the political economy critique of mainstream economics *(Subject) is (Finite)* an emphasis on the speculative character of finance *(Residue)*.

Central to the political economy critique of mainstream economics is the subject of the clause with the use of the verb "to be" and *an emphasis on the speculative character of finance* is the explanation of *central to the political economy critique of mainstream economics* in the affirmative.

(21)   Thorton's appreciation of the importance of the central bank's lender-of-last-resort function was thus motivated by a concern that it *(Subject) is not (Finite)* in fact possible to exogenously regulate the dynamics finance in a way that brings them in line with fundamental value *(Residue)*.

The pronoun *it* is the empty subject of the clause with the use of the verb " to be" and *in fact possible to exogenously regulate the dynamics finance in a way that brings them in line with fundamental value* is the explanation of the subject which is not mentioned directly in the negative.

(22)   Project finance *(Subject) lends (Finite)* a uniquely clean setting for the analysis of institutional effects on the governance and performance of foreign investments *(Residue)*.

Project finance is the subject of the clause with the use of the verb ***"lends"*** and *a uniquely clean setting for the analysis of institutional effects on the governance and performance of foreign investments* is the object

of *project finance* in the affirmative.

These examples show that the declarative is used to state writers' points of view on financial issues.

5. Discussion

The findings clearly show that various process and mood types are used to reflect experiential and interpersonal meaning in English journal articles on finance. In terms of process, authors focus on descriptions and analyses of issues in finance. Specifically, relational process is used to define financial terms, give comments on financial issues or affirm a scientific point of view while material process is used to present the aims of the study, describe the achievements in finance, state the research methods and results or propose the suggestions and solutions to existing financial problems. With regard to mood types, authors tend to use the declarative, particularly the affirmative, to present their viewpoints on issues in finance.

The analysis in the paper also demonstrates to Vietnamese authors the importance of proper use of processes and moods for particular linguistic functions expressed by certain verbs and their collocations in English because English collocations remain a challenge to them (Nguyen, 2020; Vu, 2013). Examples of such collocations have been shown in the paper, e.g. *documents emerging evidence* in which *documents* is used as a verb while it is more commonly used as a noun; or *seeks to respond to...* which can be confused with the corresponding noun *response* and its related phrase *in response to*.

6. Conclusion

Having examined a fairly large amount of clauses from 50 journal articles on finance in terms of process and mood from functional perspective, this study identifies various types of processes and moods and their uses for expressing different functions. These partially contribute to linguistic requirements that authors of such an academic genre as journal articles in the field of finance have to observe. Accordingly,   the   study   definitely   helps

Vietnamese scholars and researchers in this field to have better awareness of these linguistic requirements and choose the right language for their articles in order to meet international standards and have more of their valuable works published internationally.

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CÁC KIỂU QUÁ TRÌNH VÀ THỨC TRONG BÀI BÁO CHUYÊN NGÀNH TÀI CHÍNH TIẾNG ANH DƯỚI GÓC NHÌN CỦA NGÔN NGỮ HỌC CHỨC NĂNG HỆ THỐNG

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Tóm tắt: Bài báo của tác giả Việt Nam thường bị phê phán về nhiều nhược điểm, trong đó có việc chưa tuân thủ các yêu cầu quốc tế (HĐCDGSNN, 2016-2017). Do vậy, những yêu cầu chung của quốc tế đối với bài báo là gì là một chủ đề cần nghiên cứu, và phân tích trong bài viết này theo góc nhìn của Ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống (SFL) được thực hiện theo hướng đó. 50 bài báo lựa chọn ngẫu nhiên từ 10 tạp chí tiếng Anh trong danh mục Scopus về tài chính và một số lĩnh vực liên quan được phân tích nhằm trả lời 2 câu hỏi nghiên cứu sau đây: (1) bài báo chuyên ngành Tài chính tiếng Anh sử dụng các kiểu quá trình và thức nào? Và (2) chúng được sử dụng nhằm chức năng gì? Những hiểu biết cốt yếu này về các kiểu quá trình và thức cũng như chức năng của chúng trong bài báo tiếng Anh chuyên ngành Tài chính sẽ giúp các tác giả Việt Nam nâng cao chất lượng bài báo của mình để có thể công bố quốc tế.

Từ khóa: Ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống, quá trình, thức, bài báo tạp chí, tài chính

DIFFICULTIES FACING NOVICE TEACHER-RESEARCHERS IN TERMS OF WORKING CONDITIONS AND THE SUPPORT THEY NEED

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Abstract: The present study explores the difficulties that novice lecturers at one faculty in a university in Hanoi might face in conducting research as part of their job, especially those related to working conditions and further support they might need in this practice. The study used qualitative method of interview with six novice teachers. The outcomes show that the working conditions received mixed responses, with positive ones towards the availability of facilities/resources, information about research opportunities and negative ones towards research pressure, lack of time and lack of mentoring from experienced colleagues. Further support was then called for in the form of more financial aids and personal mentoring as well as reconsideration in research requirements on novice teachers by the school.

Keywords: teacher's professional development, teacher's research, teacher's working conditions

1. Introduction

This study is a follow-up of one previous study that I conducted on six novice English teachers' confidence level and motivations in doing research (Lan, 2020). As a novice teacher struggling with research requirements myself, I become curious as to whether other novice teachers have been facing the same problem. That is the main reason why I decided to do research into the research practice of novice teachers at one university Faculty. In my previous study, it has been found that the six participant novice teachers had medium to low level of confidence in doing research with certain negative emotions towards research doing. These teachers oriented towards extrinsic motivations such as requirements by the school despite acknowledging the positive impacts research might have on their teaching practice. Exploring the same novice teachers' research

practice, I conducted one further study into the difficulties these teachers might face and the support they need to improve the quality of their research practice. The two research questions for this study are:

Research question 1: What difficulties in terms of working conditions do the novice teachers face in conducting research?

Research question 2: What support do novice teachers need to conduct their research more effectively?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher-Researcher

Teachers' ability to conduct research in order to understand the complexity of their working environment and reflect on their teaching practice is considered an important competence that teachers, especially university teachers, must possess. Teachers are no longer

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expected to be an inactive stakeholder in educational reforms, but they must take on the role of reflective practitioner and collaborative member of the educational community of inquiry (Hammersley, 1993; Gray & Campbell-Evans, 2002). Studies have reached the general consensus that teachers who read and do research on a regular basis make research-based pedagogical decisions which in turn positively benefit both teaching and learning (Hargreaves, 2001; Kincheloe, 2003; Lyle, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; Chow et al., 2015).

2.2. Research Requirements at the University

The chosen university in this study is one of the leading universities in the country and is stepping up its efforts to raise its status on the educational scene of Asia. Accordingly, the university has an ambitious goal of entering the top 100 universities in Asia and top 500 universities in the world by the year 2020. With an aim to create its trademark as a research institution, the university and its member universities have required that any in-service teacher must conduct more than 600 hours of research per year. Nevertheless, as for a number of teachers, especially novice teachers with limited experience in both teaching and researching, this requirement could pose a great challenge.

2.3. Novice Teachers and Their Difficulties

The first years of novice teachers have always been a topic of great concern. Studies generally show that novice teachers – or teachers with less than five years of experience on the job encounter enormous challenges in the induction period of their career. These include classroom management struggles, unsupported working environments, inadequate preparation time, lack of administrative support (Dickson et al., 2014). Generally speaking, studies into difficulties faced by novice teachers have focused on their role in instructional or class-room based activities only. Meanwhile, novice university teachers are also required to conduct research but may encounter great difficulties due to a lack of experience and orientation in such a complicated and highly demanding academic practice (Keyes, 2000).

2.4. Working Conditions and Their Effects on Research Activities

Working condition has been found to be a significant factor influencing teacher's attitude, commitment, retention as well as the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Weiss, 1999; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Leithwood, Lewis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Ladd, 2011; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Working conditions for teachers include a variety of aspects such as facilities, resources, workload, out-of-classroom duties, pay, compensation, leadership, administrative support for professional development, teacher participation in decision making, autonomy, opportunities of collaboration, planning time with colleagues, school safety, school orderliness, student readiness to learn, and public respect for teachers (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Smith, 1996; Jacobson, 2005; Hirsch & Emerick, 2007, Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007).

For teacher-researchers, working conditions can also greatly affect the quality of their research practice. Borg (2006) presented 10 conditions that affect teacher research, namely

i.   Awareness
ii. Motivation
iii. Knowledge and skills
iv. Choice
v.   Mentoring
vi. Time
vii. Recognition
viii. Expectations
ix. Community
x.   Dissemination potential. (p. 23)

These ten conditions seem to encompass both internal factors (awareness, motivation, knowledge, skills, choice, expectations) and external factors (time, recognition, community). For this current study, basing mainly on the works of Leithwood and McAdie of Canadian Education Association (2007) and Smith (2016) at U.S. Department of Education, I choose to look into working conditions or external conditions that have an impact on teacher research practice. I come to see these working conditions as a combination of

i.   physical factors such as availability of information, facilities, material, resources, financial support,

ii. non-physical factors such as workload, time, school/authority support for teachers, relationships and support among colleagues.

That teacher-researchers are restricted by constraints of working conditions is well documented in literature. An early study published on the British Journal of In-service Education by Hancock (1997) found that teachers' reluctance to assume the role of researcher stemmed from four major difficulties including their professional status as merely knowledge provider and instructor rather than teacher-researcher; their unsupportive working conditions; their lack of confidence; and problems in engaging with outsider's research methodologies. British teachers in Hancock (1997)'s paper also reported a "less than professional condition" with too large a class size and teachers being left with no time and energy, commitment to even "contemplating" research activities. However, this paper was not a study but rather an article offering Hancock's observations and opinions.

Borg (2009) asked 150 Iranian EFL teachers and found moderate to low levels of teachers' reading and doing research. The participant teachers attributed this limited research engagement to a lack of time, knowledge, and access to material. In this quantitative study, the difficulties were listed out in the questionnaire and the participants only had to tick the ones that match with their situation rather than offering their own difficulties.

Potter's (2001) study with five teacher-researchers shows that they face the barriers of time constraints, relationships among colleagues, accountability, pressure from the system and a lack of confidence as well as experience in the research field. Nevertheless, due to the limited number of participants in the study, the results remain rather restricted.

Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz (2010) pointed out that a specific group of teachers – the teacher-educators at two universities in the UK faced several barriers to research, including a tough transition to research culture of universities; a lack of time due to intensive teaching load, family responsibilities, unsustained time for completing substantial

research; low self-confidence and unclear research identity. A study by Ellis and Loughland (2016) which compared experiences of teachers in Singapore and New South Wales University (Australia) concluded that teachers suffered from scarcity of time, pressure of completing the syllabus and inadequate training as researchers along with limitations in school leadership and supportive academic partner. Both these studies are also small scale comparing the situation in two universities, so the results tend to be very specific to these particular groups.

Allison and Carey (2007) conducted surveys and interviews with 22 teachers at a university language centre in Canada who reported to be constrained in their research ability due to lack of time; encouragement and incentive. Ulla (2018) reported on the experience of Philippines high school teachers in implementing classroom research projects and found four similar main areas of difficulties faced by these teachers namely lack of financial support, heavy teaching load, inadequate research skills and knowledge, lack of materials and resources. However, as this research was conducted in a specific area in Canada or the Philippines, their results are also distinct to the situation in these regions.

Overall, these studies look into difficulties facing different groups of teachers such as high school teachers, experienced university teachers, teacher-educators in very specific areas or groups; whereas, little research has been done into the difficulties that novice university teachers encounter in establishing themselves in the academia sphere, especially in the context of Vietnam. Grey and Campbell-Evans (2002)'s study suggests four major obstacles in promoting the role of teacher-researcher among beginning teachers:

i. incorporating teacher and researcher roles,
ii. creating chances for teachers to recognise and develop practical research abilities,
iii. removing the barriers of discourse in published research papers,
iv. ix. boost teachers' confidence and skills to critically review education policies.

In Vietnam's context, according to Lê Thị Lý (2015), young researchers face numerous barriers in their working conditions, including the widely differing researching conditions and environments between Vietnam and other countries, lack of cooperation, complicated administrative process, inappropriate reward/appraisal policies, and lack of experts in research review.

Hiep (2006) investigated the research culture in English Language Teacher Education in Vietnam and found that English teachers in Vietnam often have low research aspirations due to dissatisfaction with evaluation regulations, conventions and formats of reporting research outcomes; lack of time; lack of materials and opportunities to disseminate results; and lack of training.

Apart from this study, there remain few studies into the difficulties faced by novice teacher-researchers at universities in Vietnam. Perceiving this gap, I decided to conduct a qualitative research into the challenges that beginning university teachers at one university faculty in Hanoi have to face in conducting research in relation to working conditions.

2.5. Support That Teachers Need in Research Practice

One major concern of this study is the support that novice teachers need to better conduct their research. House (1983) proposes a model of four types of support or what he calls social support for teachers including (1) emotional support such as liking, love, empathy; (2) instrumental support (services or goods), (3) informational support (information) and (4) appraisal support (p. 39). Within the scope of this study, the term "support" refers to all forms of support, emotional, instrumental, informational or appraisal, that novice teachers may receive from school administrators and other stakeholders as an incentive to help them improve their research practice.

Griffiths et al. (2010) asked a group of teacher educators and their mentors at two universities how to develop teacher research practice. Their recommendations include

i.   Better communication about research opportunities, information about journals

ii.   Introduction of statutory study leave

iii. Changes in promotions criteria

iv.   Dedicated research time

v.   Balance between teaching and research

vi.   Promotion of teachers' research ambitions

vii. Formal training and induction in research for beginning researchers

viii. Structured and regular supervision, guidance and feedback from research mentors for beginning researchers

ix.   Structured peer support of research mentors and co-ordinators for more experienced researchers

x.   Collaborative working on research or research buddying for both groups

xi.   Collaboration between researchers and teacher-researcher.

Mohr (2004) proposed six forms of support that are crucial for better teacher research namely

i.   An experienced teacher-researcher leader who would help new researchers in research process, facilitate group meetings, oversee administrative tasks

ii.   Opportunities for collaboration within and across school groups

iii. Time for teacher researchers to convene by reduced teaching duties

iv.   Support for writing and publishing (revising, editing research reports, clerical support and funding sources for printing and publishing reports)

v.   Recognition of teacher research (through chances for teachers to present their findings)

vi.   Support of the principal (recognising the time, effort and devotion of teachers to research practice). (p. 4)

Mohr (2004) even put forward a project proposal to boost research activities at school which include three components:

i.   School-based Teacher Researcher Group with an experienced teacher researcher as leader

ii.   The planning group who would oversee the project and make decisions

iii. The Teacher-Researcher Network to help teachers publicise their work, promote system-wide support and help guide policies. (p. 5)

Few studies have been conducted into

the support needed for better research practice in Vietnam. Hiep (2006) believed the following changes need to be made to promote the research culture in Vietnam.

i. Scholars must be encouraged to conduct quality research rather than superficial projects

ii. Research projects need to be reviewed objectively (i.e. by international academics)

iii. Researchers need to be consulted in designing appropriate formats for research reporting and presentation

iv. Universities need to offer more practical research courses and seminars

v. There should be more collaboration between western-trained researchers and locally trained teachers

vi. Schools and governments should encourage and support teachers to attend seminars and conferences at institutional and international level through financial support

vii. Local journals need to be promoted. (pp. 15-16)

Therefore, this study is conducted to contribute to a better understanding of the specific support that novice teacher-researchers at one university faculty in Hanoi need to improve the quality of their research.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Scope of Study

This multiple-case study employs interview as a way to look into the working conditions of novice teachers at one university faculty in Hanoi in relation to their research practice. Working conditions cover physical (facilities, resources,…) and non-physical conditions (workload, time, support from colleagues,…) These factors have been coded into specific questions in the interview that are presented in the next section. Accordingly, the study also concerns itself with support from school administrators and other stakeholders that teachers need to improve their research practice.

3.2. Research Methods

3.2.1. Research Sampling Method

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

i. Being a university teacher;

ii. Having had at most five years' teaching experience;

iii. Having conducted at least one study;

iv. Agreeing to take part in this study on a voluntary term.

3.2.2. Description of Samples

After I sent invitations to novice teachers in the university through Facebook groups and individual chat, six teachers agreed to be interviewed and participate in the study. The six novice teachers with under five years of teaching experience who are currently teaching at one Faculty. Most of them had bachelor degrees and were pursuing master program or were master graduates during the data collection phase of this study. Profiles of these participants at the time of research can be found below.

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

There were five female and one male teachers who took part in this study. At the time of this study, most of them have had between 1.5 to 4 years of work experience. The participants have conducted at least two studies and at most five studies during their career, some of which

are their graduation papers from bachelor degree or master degree courses, whereas others are conducted when they work as a lecturer.

3.2.3. Data Collection Instrument

The study employed face-to-face semi-structured interview with each teacher individually with each interview lasting for between 15 and 30 minutes. All the interviews were recorded with consent of the participants. A set of questions and prompts were prepared in advance but interviewees were asked to give further details and explanations for their answers. The interviews were all conducted in Vietnamese.

The interview questions contain two major sections. The first section covers questions about difficulties that the novice teachers face in doing research concerning different aspects of their working conditions. The last part focuses on their suggestions for further support needed for better researching practice.

The interview question log is as follows

Question 1. Do you find your current working condition supportive to your research practice? Why/Why not?

Question 2. What difficulties in terms of working conditions do you face when doing your research?

Prompts for question 2

- Do you have enough time to do research aside your class instructional time?
- Do the authorities in your faculty/school encourage you to do research?
- Are you provided with enough physical facilities/resources needed to do research?
- Are you provided with enough grants/financial support to do research?
- Are you provided with information about research projects/opportunities?
- Do the authorities in your faculty/school provide specific mentoring and instructional programs for you in doing research?
- Are you provided with regular instruction/ feedback on your research work?
- Do your school / faculty encourage collaboration among teachers in doing research?

- Is the research atmosphere in your school encouraging?
- Do the authorities in your faculty/school acknowledge your achievements in doing research?
- Do you receive support from colleagues, students or outsiders in doing research?

Question 3. What kind of support do you need in order to conduct your research more effectively?

3.2.4. Data Analysis

Firstly, I transcribed all recordings into written texts through Microsoft Word onto the computer and filed into a common database. After that, I translated the data from Vietnamese into English. The translated draft was later sent to the teachers themselves so that they could check the accuracy. Next, content data analysis was used during the data analysis phase. For research question 1, I used thematic analysis in which I analysed the data gathered according to pre-set themes of working conditions namely (1) time, facilities, resources, financial aids; (2) authority's encouragement and acknowledgement, (3) information, mentoring and feedback, (4) collaboration, research atmosphere and support from outsiders. As regards research question 2, I generated emerging themes from teachers' comments. Finally, a report was written to summarise findings on both research questions. I have also sent the report to an experienced teacher-researcher and received feedback and recommendations for correction.

4. Results

4.1. Research Question 1: Novice English Teachers' Difficulties Related to Working Conditions in Doing Research

One of the most effective ways to better understand novice teachers' difficulties in doing research is to get an overview of their specific working conditions. First, the teachers were asked to give a general comment on how well their working conditions support the practice of researching. This time, most of the teachers generally agreed that their conditions of work did support their research, some even said it was very supportive. However, going into details,

their answers seemed to vary to quite a certain extent. Specifically, I went further to investigate the specific aspects of working conditions that may affect novice teachers' research practice including the available time, facilities & resources, financial aids and grants; authority's encouragement and acknowledgement; mentoring, feedback and information; collaboration among teachers, research atmosphere and support from outsiders.

4.1.1. Available Time, Facilities, Resources and Financial Aids for Research

As regards time factor, all six participants claimed that should they teach within the university only they would have enough time to conduct research. According to them, each teacher is assigned to teach between 12 to 16 periods/week which means they only spend on average 10 to 48 hours at school. In reality, however, most of them are required to teach extra classes at centers or at home to make ends meet, thus they did not think they had enough time to devote themselves to doing research.

> If I just teach in school, I'd have time. But then I'd not have enough money to survive to do research. Of course, I need to balance my time for teaching outside school and at school too, to have enough time to do research. I'd prefer I have more time to read the materials. We need to read like 100 materials before we can produce one material - An

Those who do not teach outside the school (Thanh and Binh) also noted that they themselves had enough time but for teachers who had extra classes, it would not be enough.

In terms of available facilities and resources for doing research, the teachers in the study showed a relatively positive attitude as they have enough access to needed materials for research through the school library or online websites. Phuong showed her great gratitude to the school for being allowed to use some expensive translating devices in the laboratory during her research. However, all the teachers specifically noted that they did all of this on their own without support from anyone. The only person who was not quite satisfied with the resources provided is Ha who said:

> I want more. Like I want to have access to different kinds of online libraries. But here I have to make use of free sources of information. I don't have an account like a library for books or documents, sometimes they require an account or a certain amount of money.

Finally, the teachers also offered their opinion on the financial aids from the school in doing research. Five out of six participants claimed that the current amount of grants given by the school was not enough and they needed further financial support.

> As far as I know, I only have 700.000 thousand (VND) for a presentation at an international conference, I think it'd be a really small amount of money regarding the fee and travel expense that I have to waste on each presentation – Binh.

> All the research I have conducted is on my own money not from the faculty, the school. Although I hope the school have some funds to support the teacher doing research, or as a novice teacher maybe because of my lack of experience in researching, until now I haven't received any financial support from the school. - Phuong

Only Hoang shared he was glad that at least there is some support and he had "no other choice."

4.1.2. Authority's Encouragement and Acknowledgement

Next, the teachers commented on the encouragement and acknowledgement they received from the faculty or school's authority. The majority of the teachers agreed that the faculty did encourage them through the requirements of 600 research hours per year, as said by Binh.

> […]. They (the authority) consider it as… an obvious duty, we should consider research as an inherent part of doing our job. By that, I know if we don't do enough research, we'd be criticised by the authorities. They encourage us to do research that way.

In Binh's words, rather than being encouraged intrinsically, she seemed to

understand the requirement of research as something she would be "criticised" if she did not do enough. Some other participants found the encouragement from the faculty seemed a little bit "strict" or involved "forcing."

> No, I don't find any motivation or inspiration (from the authorities), just something others are forcing you to do. – Thanh

When it comes to whether the school/faculty acknowledge their research achievements and efforts, the teachers had similar answers that the only acknowledgement they received was in form of the research scores by the end of the school year.

> […]. There's no reward, one teacher can have some rewards from the university/faculty only when that teacher has about 800 or 1000 research grades for a year. If we only meet the basic requirements of the university, we only survive, that's it and we get nothing – Binh

Some also believed their lack of experience and the low credibility of their research outcomes were possible reasons why they may not receive other kinds of rewards for now.

> I think the school only acknowledge us on the scores. Even as the one who conducts it, I still doubt the significance of my own research. Why, how can the faculty pay attention to my research? In terms of quantity they care, but not in terms of quality. I don't think that they care. As long as I have something to show. - An

4.1.3. Information, Mentoring and Feedback

Regarding the available information about research opportunities, the teachers all concurred that they had received enough, even sometimes too much information via email by the faculty. However, it is noted that the information focuses most on the upcoming conferences in the country or abroad so that teachers could submit their papers and make presentations or posters.

To answer the question about the mentoring they have received for doing research,

the participants again had a common response that they appreciated the workshop series for novice researchers organized by the faculties in the last two years. However, it was admitted they had not taken most advantage or had gained little from those research workshops.

> They did have some kind of training session, some workshops to help the teachers familiarise with doing research. But just some of them are effective, I've attended 3 workshops and I think only one (last year) was really helpful, gave me some benefits. I don't like the recent one – Thanh

Again, Hoang seemed to be the only person who had a different thought and stressed the importance of self-reliance.

> Uhm, I think I've received quite enough (mentoring). Actually we need to gain knowledge by ourselves, rather than waiting on others. Like the workshop by Ms. L, there is a series of that which give instruction on each step. That is quite good and supportive already. - Hoang

With respect to regular feedback for novice teachers during the research process, all the participants claimed that they had none to very little feedback on their work.

> I can ask, but not really. Often when I have problem and questions, I figure it out by myself instead of asking others. I don't know who to ask, except for my co-workers. – Thanh

> Probably no, when we have done a research and found out some results, we submit and whether we get admitted or not depends on us. Nobody is there to help us. – Hoang

> I think it depends on our proactiveness. I'm not proactive, I didn't ask a lot of researchers about my research. I didn't have a lot of feedback on my research, somehow I'm afraid that I may inconvenience them. – Binh

4.1.4. Collaboration Among Teachers, Research Atmosphere and Support From Outsiders

The next question revolves around the possibilities of collaboration in research efforts

among teachers. The participants claimed that there had been little explicit effort from the authorities to foster teachers' cooperation in doing research. However, all of them appeared to see the benefits of collaboration and stressed the pro-activeness of teachers themselves in teaming up with each other while doing research.

> The faculty didn't do a lot in that (encouraging collaboration), I think. But because of the pressure of 600 hours of research, some teachers will pair up together and conduct the research together, maybe to reduce the time and pressure together. They did it on their own. – Phuong

Judging the general research atmosphere in the faculty and the school, the teachers came up with both positive and negative responses. On the one hand, Hoang, An and Binh believed that the atmosphere is "dynamic," "rushed," "stimulating," and "encouraging" as

> Yeah, it was really encouraging as I can see a lot of people really passionate about doing research. They invest a lot of time and money to conduct research. They are really good models of researcher, I find it stimulating, encouraging. – Binh

> It's a very dynamic research atmosphere. Everyone's talking about going to conferences now. The main discourse when teachers meet each other is about 'Have you completed the 600 hours? Are you doing any research now?' – An

However, Thanh and Ha chose to differ on this particular topic, showing an opposite attitude towards the atmosphere of research in the school, considering the research environment "boring," "not really healthy," "really forcing."

> I'm not sure (about the research atmosphere). I would say it's kind of boring. You know what, I even saw some people I know, they actually cheated. One researcher asked to share a research with someone just to have enough hours, or many people only do it in a sloppy way to deal with the requirements. – Thanh

> In my school, there're a lot of teachers doing research but it's like because we are forced to do it, it's not a really healthy environment, like really forcing. – Ha

Finally, the teachers were asked whether they had received any support from outsiders in their efforts to conduct research. Most of the teachers expressed gratefulness to their students who were always available and willing to participate in their research. Also, many talked about how they had been greatly assisted by their colleagues in and outside the school who were highly supportive all the time.

> I receive support from my students. […]. One good thing I can think about is my colleagues. They are always friendly and actually they try to be useful if I ask them something in doing research. - Phuong

To sum up, despite agreeing that the working condition does support their research doing, the teachers have a more diverse response towards specific aspects of working conditions. In details, they had generally positive attitude about the provision of facilities, resources, and information about research opportunities. However, an opposite reaction is recorded when it comes to the available time, financial aids and grants, mentoring and feedback, encouragement and acknowledgement from authorities. The other aspects of the overall research atmosphere and collaboration among teachers generated neutral response.

4.2. Research Question 2: Support That Novice Teachers Need to Conduct Research More Effectively

Another important question in the research is what kind of support each novice teacher thought they need in order to better conduct their research. The teachers shared one common suggestion that they wish to have more financial support from the school as it is quite expensive sometimes to present their paper in international conferences.

> I think there could be a lot of types of support, the most important one'd be financial support. […]. I have to attend 1 academic conference and deliver, it'd cost a lot of money, I have to pay for the attendance fee and also the travelling

fee, some international conferences have high costs. For example, Thai TESOL'd cost 4 million. - Binh

Furthermore, one important way that the teachers think they could be better supported is through the mentoring and consultation from more experienced teacher-researchers in the school.

Because I'm a young teacher and I didn't have any history in conducting research, I actually need a lot of support. Firstly, it's about the knowledge, maybe some guiding because I really need someone who has more experience in research they can guide me, at least talk to me to share their point of view, their motivation, or sometimes guiding for the questions, the steps how to do it, how to deal with it. – Phuong

I need one-on-one support or we can be co-authors. I want to do the research with senior teachers, so that I can learn from them. I want to work with teachers who have deep insights on the topic that we wanna do, they can locate some of the topic areas, so we don't need to spend much time finding the topic and be so misleading on what we are finding. – An

My research field is all action research. Now I want to try to do linguistics but I don't know where to start. […]. If there's someone doing research in that field, I want to learn from their experience like how to do it. – Hoang

On the topic of how workshops should be held, Binh and An proposed some changes to the way workshops such as having small-scale workshops or workshops that allow one-on-one support.

Maybe we could have some kinds of small group of workshops. Like, we've got a lot of workshops, a lot of attendees at the workshop, there's not many chances for each and every participant to raise their voice and talk about their problem. So we have small groups of workshop. – Binh

We have a lot of workshops on research. What I really need is one-on-one support, not general mentoring. I don't feel that's meaningful to me. I'm feeling

like I'm swimming in the sea on my own. – An

However, Binh also carefully noted that she would feel pressurized if supervised by someone. Rather, she would prefer to have a research consultant.

The problem would be resolved if I have a mentor/supervisor when conducting a research, but I feel a little bit worried about mentoring at the same time. Because I've gone through 3 years of mentoring, and I find it kind of stressful. It'd be nice if we have a consultant, a research consultant. They'd, how to say, we could approach them when we have some problems, when we need some advice, but they would not be really a supervisor, then I'd be really stressed. - Binh

In addition, many teachers also think that the requirements of 600 hours of research for teachers is too much and should be reduced or restructured.

From the faculty, the school I think that it's to reduce the pressure. Until now, not only me, other teachers, they always conduct the research because of the pressure of 600 hours a year. I think 400 hours is enough. – Phuong

I think it's better for the novice teachers if the faculty authority can reduce the amount of required hours for novice teachers. When they're new to the environment, they've to take time to get accustomed to the program, the course, material, and have to struggle with mentoring program, it'd be stressful for them to fulfill 3 duties at the same time: teaching, doing research, and material adaptation. - Binh

Binh also put forward the idea to change the requirement of 600 hours into two school years.

When I attended a faculty meeting, I heard someone suggest conducting the research like once every two years. This year, the teacher focuses on teaching duty only, next year, they focus on research, the school should have a policy to reduce the requirement. – Binh

Finally, An hoped to be provided with

more information about international conferences and how to publish papers in reliable journals and articles. Meanwhile, Ha herself needed easier access to materials and resources for her research.

> I need some kind of accounts to online library when I need the material I don't know where to find, and I have to ask some of my friends who are studying abroad to give it to me. It's really inconvenient. – Ha

By and large, the kinds of support that novice teachers suggested seem to be mainly instrumental support in the form of more financial aids from the school and more individual mentoring and consultation on different stages of doing research as well as reducing the research requirements each year for teachers.

5. Discussion of Results and Implications

5.1. Discussion of Results

5.1.1. Research Question 1

In general, despite agreeing that the working condition did support their research doing, the teachers had diverse response towards specific aspects of working conditions. In details, they had generally positive attitude about the provision of facilities, resources, and information about research opportunities. The other aspects of encouragement and acknowledgement from authorities, collaboration among teachers, and the overall research atmosphere of the school generated a neutral response.

However, a more negative reaction was recorded when it came to the available time, financial aids and grants, mentoring and feedback. The finding that teachers suffered from scarcity of time aligns with previous studies (Potter, 2001; Hiep, 2006; Ellis & Loughland, 2016; Ulla, 2018). Teachers in general, especially novice teachers often find problems managing their time among various tasks such as teaching, managing the students, dealing with administrative requirements (Veenman, 1984; Gordon, 1991; Carpenter, 2002; Farrel, 2003; Souder, 2005; Griffiths, 2010). These workload and lack of time may

reduce teachers' effectiveness in their work as well as affect their emotional well-being (Carpenter, 2002; Flores & Day, 2006; Intrator, 2006; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008).

Importantly, the novice teachers in the current study mentioned the lack of mentoring and feedback on their work. This has also been found by several previous studies in which beginning teachers need but often do not receive adequate support from administration and co-workers (Carpenter, 2002; Farrel, 2006; Leslie, 2010; Blannan & Bleisten, 2012). Particularly, one teacher in this study cited their own hesitation in approaching senior teachers in fear of "inconveniencing" them. This is indeed a common mindset that novice teachers share in the induction period of their career in which they are afraid of causing inconveniences to more experienced teachers. This indicates a gap that the novice teacher sees between themselves and more experienced colleagues and a need for a stronger collaborative community of inquiry within the faculty and school.

One new finding from this current study compared to previous literature into constraints facing young teacher-researchers is that the six participants particularly reiterated the lack of financial aids for research doing. The shortage of financial aids for research doing has not been mentioned in any available studies into teachers' difficulties in conducting research which reported other difficulties related to time, energy, research identity, confidence, etc. (Hancock, 1997; Potter, 2001; Allison & Carey, 2007; Griffiths, Thompson & Hryniewicz, 2010; Ellis & Loughland, 2016; Ulla, 2018, Hiep, 2006). This gap is not surprising as most novice teachers in the current study referred to financial aids needed for paying registration fees and travel cost to conferences; whereas, normally teachers could submit their study for publication in journals without having to pay any money. However, the novice teachers' concerns about financial support also cover the necessary fee for the procedures of literature reviewing, data collecting and analysis such as buying books, printing materials, which are legitimate.

5.1.2. Research Question 2

With respect to support they need, the beginning teachers in this study asked for more

financial aids, personal mentoring and consultation from experienced researchers as well as lower requirement of research hours, all of which fall into the category of instrumental support. These suggestions are partly in keeping with Mohr's (2004) list of six support types that teacher researchers need, namely an experienced teacher-researcher leader, opportunities for collaboration, time, support for writing and publishing, recognition of the teacher-researcher.

In terms of financial support, it is acknowledged that the study was conducted in between the school year, so the teachers in the studies might not have received any support for their study. According to the issued policies of the university, teachers could receive between 5 million to 16 million VND (approximately 200 dollars to over 600 dollars) for an article being published on internationally prestiged journals or conferences, depending on the credibility of the published platform. Teachers with the highest number of research hours in the school will also be rewarded with the Principal's Certificate of Merits, between 3 to 10 million VND (from about 130 to 400 dollars) along with reduction of teaching hours between 5 and 20% for the following school year. However, apparently, this study shows that the novice teachers seemed dissatisfied or unclear of the financial aid policies.

Concerning the mentoring program, most of the teachers in the study would appreciate more chances to receive personal support from predecessors who have experience in the same field of research interests. One form of support is mentoring or the "nurturing process in which a skilled or more experienced person teaches, sponsors, encourages, and counsels a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development" (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, p. 40). Studies have also confirmed the positive relationship between mentoring programs and novice teachers' confidence and success during and after induction process (Huling-Austin, 1992; Weinstein, 1988; Mann & Tang, 2002; Odell & Huling, 2004; Hobson et al., 2012; Branna & Bleistein, 2012; Farrel, 2012). Beginning teachers are found to benefit from mentors who are approachable, willing to listen, willing to

share material and advice, encouraging collaborative learning and reflective practice (Carter & Francis, 2001; Marable & Raimondi, 2007; Lofstom & Eisenschmidt, 2009). Mentors should (1) assist in setting up a general framework for the conduct of the research, (2) help teachers find a focus and (3) commenting on teacher's attempts of data collection and analysis (Borg, 2006, p. 24).

Currently in the faculty, novice teachers have been given mentoring programs but mainly in their teaching practice in class. In fact, acknowledging the difficulties novice teachers may face, their faculty authority has organized some workshops related to action research with speakers being experienced teacher-researchers in the faculty itself. This is due to the result of an informal survey conducted by the Faculty themselves at the beginning of this school year among all teachers at the faculty to which 28 teachers responded. Among them, almost 70% of respondents showed they want to have monthly workshops to help them with accomplishing 600 hours of research. However, in the year, there have been only two workshops related to research provided, and despite certain appreciation of the workshop, it is a great pity that few of the teachers in this study have been able to take full advantage of such a workshop or find it helpful for their personal research effort. The Faculty has also formed a support group in order to support teachers in research activities, yet the group's presence has been rather vague so far.

More importantly, from the perspective of participant teachers in this study, they need support more in the form of personal mentoring through collaboration in specific research. This is also closely aligned with proposals by Mohr (2004) that collaboration within the school and across the school is a fundamental factor in boosting educational research quality. Findings from the informal survey of the Faculty in 2019 also confirm this need of the teachers. In this survey, many teachers at the faculty asked for more assistance from the faculty to organize group collaboration among beginning teachers themselves as well as with experienced teacher-researchers in the Faculty. A lot of opinions even requested to become research assistants for experienced researchers or receive personal supervision from the experienced researcher in

their own research projects. Even though the school has publicly encouraged such partnership among teachers especially between experienced and inexperienced teachers in research efforts, according to the participants of the current study, they had few chances to be involved in such projects. It is thus important that the faculty and the school have schemes to have structured collaborative research projects that involve both experienced and beginning teacher-researchers.

Many studies (Potter, 2001; Grima-Farrel, 2017; Man & Tang, 2012) found that collaborative research is a crucial method to support teacher's research practice to inform their own teaching. Devos, Durpiez and Paquay (2012) even found that frequent collaboration with experienced teachers and quality-mentoring support promotes higher self-efficacy and low depression in novice-teachers. However, types and method of support that experienced teachers provide for their beginning colleagues also need to be considered with care. It has been found that inappropriate support involving insensitiveness, unsolicited advice, judgment and opinions may actually further burden the teachers in need of support (Sarros & Sarros, 1992). Griffiths et al. (2010) emphasized the importance of structured support and collaboration between beginning and more experienced teacher-researchers. Mohr (2004) also strongly favors the idea of school-based research groups which is led by an experienced teacher-researcher who could assist newer teacher-researchers through the process, oversee and coordinate the groups' research projects.

According to House (1983), apart from instrumental aids, there are three more kinds of support that can be provided namely emotional concern, information and appraisal. Particularly, this study found that the teachers believed they had received adequate information about research opportunities, so it is understandable why this type of support was not mentioned by the participants. Though the novice teachers did not explicitly call for more appraisal of their work, they shared their feelings that they had little to no acknowledgement of their research due to their shortage of experience and quality of research outcomes. Acknowledgement from school authorities of researching efforts is also considered an important type of support for teacher-researchers that should not be overlooked (Mohr, 2004).

The fact that the beginning teachers attributed the lack of appraisal to their own shortcomings also reflects their low level of self-confidence, as also found in my previous study (Lan, 2020). Griffiths et al. (2010) recommended that attention be paid to building a research identity for teacher-researchers to boost their confidence and autonomy. The need for building teachers' research identity is also particularly prominent as one participant in this study shared that many of her colleagues only did a sloppy job in researching so as to satisfy the requirements while not caring about the research outcomes at all, which she deemed a great pity. This is also in keeping with findings in previous studies. Doan and Nguyen (2005) found that teachers in Vietnam did research only because they had no other choices. Hiep (2006) also believed that many teachers did research only to "satisfy institutional requirements" (p. 3) and called for Vietnamese universities to motivate scholars to conduct "real and quality research rather than superficial projects" (p. 15).

My previous study also shows that the novice teachers oriented toward extrinsic motivations (Lan, 2020). Available studies have come up with mixed results as regards the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in doing research. Some have shown that intrinsic motivations in doing research correlates highly with research productivity (Blackburn et al., 1978; Fulton, 1978), others claim that intrinsic motivations has little impact and extrinsic ones such as promotion prospect are needed (Blackburn et al., 1991; Glass et al., 1996; Tien et al., 1996). Thus, it is crucial that besides financial support, rewards and other encouragements, the faculty and the school should help teachers establish a research identity. This research identity will help teachers realise the intrinsic rewards and significance of doing research so that they feel inspired to do research properly rather than just trying to meet the demands of 600 hours. Again, support from peers, supervisors and mentors are imperative in this construction of research identity for beginning teachers.

Some teachers in this current study proposed that the school reconsider the requirement of the 600 hours of research for novice teachers. In reality, beginning teachers at

the university in this study are exempted from doing research for the first year of the induction process to allow them more time to familiarise themselves with the workload and working environment. Therefore, they only start to have 600 hours of research requirement from the second year onwards. Yet, this study findings show that some novice teachers believe having to complete 600 hours of research is still a source of pressure.

5.2. Implications

In the light of the discussion presented above and literature, I would propose the following courses of action to be taken by the school and faculty to provide better support to novice teacher-researchers

(1) Surveys should be conducted to identify novice teachers' perceptions of appropriate financial aids in doing research or better inform novice teachers on this policy;

(2) Personal mentoring programs for novice teachers in terms of research practice should be introduced in which the experienced research mentors provide assistance to the novice teacher-researcher by
   a. Helping them set up a framework for the research,
   b. Helping them identify a focus,
   c. Commenting on data collection and analysis processes. (Borg, 2006, p. 24)

(3) The school should have a structured and clear rewards policies for experienced teacher-researchers when mentoring less experienced ones
   a. providing adequate training to everyone involved,
   b. increasing ownership and accountability of experienced researcher,
   c. giving credits for experienced teachers for their efforts,
   d. encouraging emergent research from teachers' fields of interest rather than university's agenda,
   e. providing adequate time and support for initial phase of question formulation,
   f. promoting data-collection strategies that include students'

perspectives. (Levin & Rock, p. 148)

(4) The school should re-evaluate their rewards and appraisal policies to make sure novice teachers feel included;

(5) The school should help build a research identity for teacher-researchers through encouraging stronger peer support and collaborative environment in research.

6. Conclusion, Limitations and Further Research

To summarise, as regards their working conditions, the teachers in this study have a rather positive attitude toward availability of facilities, resources, and information of research opportunities. However, aspects such as time, financial support and mentoring seem to be considered lacking by the teachers. Therefore, it is suggested that more support is provided in the form of financial aids, re-adjustment of research requirements to promote intrinsic motivations in research activities, and especially personal mentoring or collaborative research projects between novice and more experienced teacher-researchers in the institution.

I hope that this study has shed some light on the difficulties novice teachers have and the support they need in doing research, so that proper courses of action by the school authorities to adjust the working conditions could be taken promptly. As data was collected from teachers' self-report through interviews, the research outcomes are inevitably prone to subjectivity. Also, personally, as a novice teacher-researcher myself, I started the study as a way to see whether other novice teacher-researchers faced similar problems to myself. Therefore, I have to admit I may have had a certain bias regarding the research questions at the beginning. Yet, during the process of data collection and data analysis, I made extra efforts to assume the role of an objective researcher and let the data speak for itself. I did so by asking the participants themselves to comment on my question log in the interview and made adjustments accordingly. I also sent them the translated version of the data to triangulate the data. After writing the report, I also sent it to one experienced teacher-researcher for feedback and made changes according to her feedback. However, my own lack of experience in doing qualitative research still may have

reduced the credibility and reliability of the study in certain ways beyond my control.

The small number of participants in this study also indicates that these results may not reflect the opinion of the larger population of novice teachers at other universities in Vietnam. However, I hope that some universities in Vietnam, if encountering similar problems with a low rate of research among their novice staff members, may also gain certain insights from this study. Afterwards, they could conduct further research in their own institutions to strengthen their research culture, which may not only benefit themselves but also serve to partly elevate the research practice among young practitioners in our country as a whole.

Moreover, this study was conducted in the middle of the school year, whereas financial aids from the school are often provided at the end of the school year. As a result, the teacher's concern related to such a problem could be partly due to the timing of research. Further study should be done to explore in-depth the effectiveness of mentoring or collaborative schemes in research projects between novice and experienced teacher-researchers. A suggestion of building a learning community or network for novice teacher-researchers rather than one-on-one mentoring is also a topic worthy of further investigation.

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KHÓ KHĂN VỀ MÔI TRƯỜNG LÀM VIỆC MÀ GIẢNG VIÊN TRẺ GẶP TRONG CÔNG TÁC NGHIÊN CỨU KHOA HỌC VÀ HỖ TRỢ HỌ CẦN

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu tìm hiểu về những khó khăn liên quan đến môi trường làm việc mà các giảng viên trẻ dạy tiếng Anh ở một khoa thuộc một trường đại học ở Hà Nội gặp phải trong công tác nghiên cứu khoa học và những hỗ trợ họ cần. Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp phỏng vấn trực tiếp với sáu giảng viên trẻ trong tại khoa để thu dữ liệu định tính. Kết quả cho thấy các giảng viên đánh giá tích cực đối với cơ sở vật chất/dữ liệu phục vụ nghiên cứu, thông tin về cơ hội nghiên cứu nhưng đánh giá tiêu cực về áp lực nghiên cứu cao, việc thiếu thời gian và thiếu sự hướng dẫn từ những giáo viên có kinh nghiệm hơn. Các giảng viên trẻ mong muốn được hỗ trợ thêm về tài chính và được hướng dẫn một – một trong nghiên cứu cũng như được điều chỉnh yêu cầu về số giờ nghiên cứu.

Từ khoá: phát triển giáo viên, nghiên cứu khoa học, môi trường làm việc của giáo viên

FREQUENCIES AND FUNCTIONS OF REPORTING VERBS
USED IN TESOL RESEARCH ARTICLES
BY VIETNAMESE WRITERS

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Abstract: How to ensure proper reporting verbs (RVs) to be used in academic writing remains a difficulty to Vietnamese research writers. Nguyen and Pramoolsook's (2015) study findings reveal that Vietnamese TESOL students inappropriately use RVs in their master's theses in terms of function, voice and tenses. This corpus-based study aimed to investigate the frequencies and functions of RVs in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers based on RMIT University Study and Learning Center's (2012) categorization of RVs in terms of position or evaluation. The corpus consisted of 35 TESOL research articles collected from a PDF book of TESOL international conference proceedings. The data were processed using Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. The findings revealed that TESOL research Vietnamese writers had a tendency to use groups of RVs with neutral position or evaluation. The results of the functional analysis of RVS indicated eleven functions of RVs including agreement, argument/persuasion, believing, conclusion, disagreement/questioning, discussion, emphasis, evaluation/examination, explanation, presentation, and discussion. The results provide TESOL research Vietnamese writers, research scholars as well as students from all disciplines at higher education with more knowledge of RVs that they can use for their future academic writing and international publishing.

Keywords: corpus, frequencies, reporting verbs, international publishing, academic writing

1. Introduction

It is observed that using RVs in academic articles is confusing. This requires writers to master a good knowledge of RVs used in scientific papers to cite other people's works or present their own research's findings (Amrullah et al., 2017). These authors also suggest that learning how to cite other people' works is one of the ways to avoid plagiarism. Therefore, proper use of RVs in academic discourse is considered to be essential for in-text citation when authors refer to and acknowledge others' works or studies.

To serve a writer's purpose, different kinds of RVs are used to function such as

presentation, evaluation, examination, conclusion, and suggestion (Yilmaz & Erturk, 2017). Moreover, Charles (2006) mentions that employing RVs appropriately indicates the writer's position/evaluation about other author's ideas. Nevertheless, Yeganeh and Boyhayeri (2015) report that non-native writers usually forget to use RVs appropriately in their academic writing. It can be supposed that non-native writers like Vietnamese ones find RVs difficult to use correctly in academic writing (Bloch, 2010). This is also supported by Hyland (2002) when he insists that the variation of using RVs in research articles serves various functions and communicative purposes. It is agreed that there are a lot of differences in the way research

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writers utilize RVs. Hence, the appropriate selection of RVs is an important part of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) because RVs have impacts on the writer's claims and reader's comprehension.

Previous studies have been conducted to investigate the use of RVs in academic articles. Bloch (2010) found that the writers utilise RVs repeatedly in their academic research articles and do not notice the effectiveness of RVs used in their research articles. Later, Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2015) investigated RVs used in 24 TESOL Master Thesis Literature Review chapters which were written by Vietnamese postgraduate students. Their findings were the same with Hyland's (2002) research, and their findings showed that a group of Vietnamese writers had a tendency to randomly employ RVs without paying attention to their rhetorical functions. Later, Davis (2017) examined RVs in 13 medical research articles. His findings revealed that novice second language writers of medical research articles had challenges with reporting others' works and persuading readers.

It is noticeable that although numerous studies have investigated the frequencies and functions of RVs from many various theoretical frameworks and perspectives, theoretical frameworks of RMIT University Study and Learning Center (2012) about the taxonomy of RVs and the one of Adelaide University Writing Center (2014) about the categorization of functions of RVs have been not been thoroughly examined. This motivates this study to be carried out to shed light on the frequencies and functions of RVs used in research articles.

In addition, there have been a great number of research addressing the usage of RVs by non-native writers; however, few studies on RVs used in TESOL research articles by Vietnamese writers have been under investigation. Therefore, this study was carried out to scrutinise the employment of reporting verbs in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese authors in terms of frequencies and functions with the aim of helping Vietnamese writers choose RVs properly with their functions. In other words, this helps Vietnamese writers evaluate the strength of their claims or others' ones as well as improve the writers' arguments. To achieve these objectives, two

research questions are designed as follows:

1. What are the frequencies of RVs used in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers?

2. What are the functions of RVs used in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of RVs

Researchers have defined RVs differently. Nordquist (2019) defines that a RV is a verb employed to show that discourse is quoted/cited or paraphrased. Later, Hyland (2001) explains that RVs are used to help writers evaluate prior researches and present one's own findings by using proper tense. According to Student Services Center of University of Technology Sydney, these attitudes can be positive, negative or neutral. This center suggests that writers should consider choosing proper RVs to show their position or viewpoint on cited or paraphrased information. Selecting RVs functionally is not only an important academic skill but develops the writers' critical thinking skills. From these definitions of RVs, it can be inferred that in academic writing, writers use RVs to refer to the origin of cited information and express their attitude/evaluation towards sourced information.

Grammatically, it should be noted that the perspective of tense used with RVs in research articles is rather controversial. Some authors agree to use present tense with RVs while others disagree on that. Instead, they tend to use past tense. Therefore, it depends on the meaning and purpose of the citation or statements so that the article author can choose present or past tense for the citations and statements. Most importantly, Charle (2006) found that the most frequently used tense is present tense in the form of '*X argues that…*'. According to Writing Center of University of Adelaide (2014), using what kind of tense for RVs in articles also "depends on the style guide" which means that "some styles prefer present tense while others prefer past tense". Moreover, Nanyue (2013) carried out a case study to examine two Chinese students who were observed for the development of using RVs in

their essay writing during the one-semester course. The two students had problems with the choice of correct RVs, tense and syntax of RVs for citation. Nanyue (ibid) showed that the students randomly used RVs without noticing the contexts in which RVs were used. Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2015) investigated the RVs used in 24 TESOL master's theses and found that present simple tense was used the most with 51.26%, followed past simple tense with 46.80% and present perfect tense with 1.94%. Moreover, these two authors observed that the active voice was used with a higher ratio (97.95%) than the

passive voice (2.05%). Therefore, it is essential for TESOL research Vietnamese writers to use correct RVs with appropriate tense and syntax according to different contexts.

Moreover, according to Writing Center of University of Adelaide (2014) RVs can be followed by a noun phrase or a "that" clause. Some RVs can combine with a noun phrase, while others are followed by "that" clause. However, there are also a great number of RVs that can be followed by a noun phrase or 'that' clause.

Table 1

RVs Followed by a Noun Phrase or a "That" Clause (Adapted From Online Writing Center of University of Adelaide, 2014)

RVs followed by a noun phrase	**RVs followed by a "that" clause**
analyse, *applaud*, appraise, *assess*, *attack*, *consider*, *contradict*, *critique*, *debate*, *describe*, *discard*, *disclaim*, *discount*, *discuss*, *dismiss*, *disregard*, *evaluate*, *examine*, *explore*, *express*, *extol*, *forbid*, *highlight*, *identify*, *ignore*, *illustrate*, *investigate*, *justify*, *list*, *oppose*, *outline*, *praise*, *present*, *question*, *refute*, *reject*, *restate*, *scrutinise*, *study*, *support*, *underscore*, *use*, *validate*, *verify*	*accept*, *acknowledge*, *add*, *admit*, *advise*, *advocate*, *agree*, *alert*, *allege*, *announce*, *argue*, *articulate*, assert, *assure*, *believe*, *boast*, *claim*, *clarify*, *comment*, *complain*, *concede*, *conclude*, *confirm*, *feel*, *find*, *forget*, *guarantee*, *guess*, *hope*, *hypothesise*, *imagine*, *imply*, *indicate*, *infer*, *inform*, *insist*, *justify*, *know*, *maintain*, *note*, *observe*, *persuade*, *point out*, *posit*, *postulate*, *promise*, *propose*, *prove*, *question*, *realise*, *reason*, *reason*, *recognise*, *recommend*, *remark*, *remind*, *report*, *reveal*, *show*, *speculate*, *state*, *stress*, *suggest*, *suspect*, *tell*, *theorise*, *think*, *understand*, *urge*, *warn*

2.2. Categories of RVs

A great number of research have investigated RVs in the field of English for EAP. However, various authors have different approaches towards classification of RVs. Thompson and Ye (1991) categorised RVs into three kinds including textual verbs, mental verbs and research verbs. Moreover, Francis et al. (1996) classified RVs into four kinds such as **Argue** group, **Find** group, **Show** group and **Think** group. Later, Hyland (1999, 2002) divided RVs into three types such as discourse acts, cognition acts and research acts. In

particular, the research acts comprise three subtypes, namely factive verbs, counter-factive verbs and non-factive verbs. According to RMIT University Study and Learning Center (2012), RVs are grouped into three categories such as tentative, neutral and strong RVs. Similarly, Writing Center of University of Adelaide (2014) postulates three sorts of RVs with different names which are weak, neutral and strong RVs.

Previous studies regarding categorization of RVs are synthesised in Table 2 to easily distinguish various authors' classification of RVs with illustrated RVs.

Table 2

Categorization of RVs

Authors	Categories of RVs	RVs
Thompson and Ye (1991)	Textual verbs	*state, indicate*
	Mental verbs	*believe, think*
	Research verbs	*find, explore*
Francis et al. (1996)	Argue group	*argue, claim, indicate, point out, suggest*
	Find group	*discover, establish, find, observe, realise*
	Show group	*demonstrate, reveal, show*
	Think group	*assume, believe, feel, think, hope*
Hyland (1999, 2002)	Discourse acts	*discuss, report, state*
	Cognition acts	*assume, believe, conceptualise*
	Research acts	
	Factive verbs	*demonstrate, establish, show*
	Counter-factive verbs	*fail, ignore, overlook*
	Non-factive verbs	*investigate, identify, observe*
RMIT University Study and Learning Center (2012)	Tentative position	*admit, caution, consider, guess, hypothesise, imply, moot, postulate, propose, question, recommend, speculate*
	Neutral position	*assume, categorise, comment, compare, contrast, define, demonstrate, describe, document, discuss, examine, explain, explore, focus on, found, identify, indicate, interpret, list, mention, note, observe, point out, present, reflect, regard, report, reveal, show, state, study, take into consideration, use, view*
	Strong position	*acknowledge, advocate, affirm, argue, assert, assume, believe, challenge, condone, concede, confirm, conclude, contend, disagree, deny, declare, determine, dismiss, dispute, disregard, doubt, emphasise, endorse, establish, highlight, ignore, infer, insist, maintain, misinterpret, negate, object to, oppose, presume, recognise, recommend, reject, refute, stress, substantiate, support the view that*
Writing Center of University of Adelaide (2014)	Weak position	*admit, confuse, comment, doubt, hope*
	Neutral position	*accept, analyse, believe, disagree, discuss, find, recognise, report, suggest*
	Strong position	*argue, complain, convince, emphasise, recommend, warn*

As seen from Table 2, RVs have been approached in various ways. Previous studies have been conducted to apply these categories of RVs from different perspectives. Yeganeh and

Boghayeri (2015) studied the frequency and functions of RVs used in the introduction and literature review of research articles which were written by native Persian and English writers. They used two corpora of 60 research articles produced by native English researchers and Persian ones. The findings showed some differences in the employment of RVs between the two corpora. More RVs of Argue group were found in English authors' research articles than those of Persian authors although both groups of writers used the RVs of the Argue group the most. Grammatically, they (2015, p. 586) proposed the order of subject and verb for both of the corpora which had the form as "an integral citation, a human subject and a present tense [Argue] verb". It can be inferred that research writers need to master a variety of RVs and learn how to use them functionally in their research papers.

From the above synthesized table about the taxonomy of RVs, this study used RMIT University Study and Learning Center's (2012) categorization of RVs to investigate the frequencies of RVs used in TESOL research articles because this theoretical framework is detailed and provides the classification of 85 RVs into three groups including RVs with tentative position, RVs with neutral position, and RVs with strong position.

2.3. Functions of RVs in Academic Articles

Knowing how to use RVs correctly in TESOL research articles helps Vietnamese writers distinguish the difference of functions of RVs and choose appropriate RVs for their cited claims. Therefore, the writers can partly express their positions or evaluations. Bloch (2010) suggests that "the choice of reporting verbs in citation involve a great deal of exactness in order to establish the credibility of both the writer and the claims so that the reader will accept the position the writer is taking" (p. 223). Thus, RVs help carry certain meaning for academic writing.

According to Writing Center of University of Adelaide (2014), RVs are divided into thirteen various functions as presented in Table 3. This study used this center's detailed categorization of RVs functions because the theoretical framework clearly pinpointed how RVs were used functionally to serve communicative purposes of the research article.

Table 3

Function of RVs (Adapted From Online Writing Center of University of Adelaide, 2014)

No.	Functions	RVs
1	addition	*add*
2	advice	*advise*
3	agreement	*admit*, concede, *accept, acknowledge, agree, concur, confirm, recognise, applaud, congratulate, extol, praise, support*
4	argument and persuasion	*apologise, assure, encourage, interpret, justify, reason, alert, argue, boast, contend, convince, emphasise, exhort, forbid, insist, prove, promise, persuade, threaten, warn*
5	believing	*guess, hope, imagine, believe, claim, declare, express, feel, hold, know, maintain, profess, subscribe to, think, assert, guarantee, insist, uphold*
6	conclusion	*conclude, discover, find, infer, realise*
7	disagreement and questioning	*doubt, question, challenge, debate, disagree, question, request, wonder, accuse, attack, complain, contradict, criticise, deny, discard, disclaim, discount, dismiss, dispute, disregard, negate, object to, oppose, refute, reject*
8	discussion	*comment, discuss, explore, reason*
9	emphasis	*accentuate, emphasise, highlight, stress, underscore, warn*

10	evaluation and examination	*analyse*, *appraise*, *assess*, *compare*, *consider*, *contrast*, *critique*, *evaluate*, *examine*, *investigate*, *understand*, *blame*, *complain*, *ignore*, *scrutinise*, *warn*
11	explanation	*articulate*, *clarify*, *explain*
12	presentation	*confuse*, *comment*, *define*, *describe*, *estimate*, *forget*, *identify*, *illustrate*, *imply*, *inform*, *instruct*, *list*, *mention*, *note*, *observe*, *outline*, *point out*, *present*, *remark*, *remind*, *report*, *restate*, *reveal*, *show*, *state*, *study*, *tell*, *use*, *announce*, *promise*
13	suggestion	*allege*, *intimate*, *speculate*, *advise*, *advocate*, *hypothesise*, *posit*, *postulate*, *propose*, *suggest*, *theorise*, *assert*, *recommend*, *urge*

2.4. Previous Studies

Previous studies have investigated RVs from different approaches. Weissberg and Buker (1990) categorize two types of in-text citation including information prominent citation and author prominent citation. The former focuses on giving information more than mentioning the author with the citation at the end of the sentence; for example, several studies revealed that… (Nguyen, 2015). The latter gives priority to the author over the information with the author's name placed in the subject position in the sentence; for example, Nguyen (2015) argues that… Therefore, two RVs such as 'revealed' and 'argues' in the above examples convey some important meanings for citation.

Additionally, Jafarigohar and Mohammadkhani (2015) examined the employment of RVs in 63 TESOL articles and Applied Linguistics by native and non-native writers. Their findings indicated significant differences in types of RVs by these two groups.

Additionally, Yilmaz and Erturk (2017) compared the frequencies, functions, and positions of RVs from two corpora of 160 English Language Teaching research articles written by Turkish and native English writers. Their study findings revealed that more RVs were used by non-native authors than native ones. Functionally, frequently used RVs had functions of presentation, evaluation, examination, conclusion and suggestion. They also found that three RVs such as "reveal, indicate and observe" were repeatedly used by non-native writers. Concerning positional analysis, it was indicated that both groups of researchers only used RVs in neutral position,

but only one strong RV found in the native writers' corpus.

Recently, Duong and Tran (2021) compared the employment of RVs in TESOL research articles by non-native and native writers from various perspectives of frequencies, function and position. They used two corpora consisting of 30 articles written by non-native writers and those written by native writers. Their findings revealed that RVs of Argue group were used the most by both of the non-native and native writers in comparison with the other groups (e.g., Find, Show and Think). They also pointed out that the common functions of RVs were related to presentation, evaluation and examination. Finally, they found that the analysed RVs were used to mainly express neutral position. However, this study failed to investigate a diversity of RVs in four groups (e.g., Argue, Find, Show and Think) in terms of functions of RVs.

In short, the prior studies have addressed the use of RVs in EAP articles from three different perspectives such as frequencies, functions and positions. Nevertheless, there is still a theoretical and methodological gap that encourages this study to inherit the research findings of previous studies and keep making contributions to the study of RVs in TESOL research articles in Vietnam. This study utilised the thorough categorization of RVs by RMIT University Study and Learning Center (2012) as a theoretical framework to investigate the frequencies of three groups of RVs with tentative, neutral and strong positions. This study also used the framework of Writing Center of University of Adelaide (2014) to examine functions of three types of RVs (e.g., tentative,

neutral and strong) in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers to find out frequencies and functions of these RVs.

Moreover, some previous studies have not explored RVs deeply and systematically. So, it is sometimes confusing for Vietnamese writers to use them in their academic articles. For example, Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2015)

investigated 128 RVs which were used in 24 TESOL master's theses and based on Hyland's (2002) categorization of RVs regarding denotative and evaluative potentials. Nevertheless, they just presented a frequency list of 128 RVs in one table of four columns without grouping the RVs into two groups such as denotative and evaluative potentials clearly and systematically.

Table 4

Nguyen and Pramoolsook's (2015) Study on RVs

Nguyen and Pramoolsook's (2015) study on RVs					
1. state	23. indicate	45. consider	66. recognise	87. work	108. name
2. define	24. show	46. study	67. apply	88. call	109. stipulate
3. suggest	25. examine	47. admit	68. have	89. pose	110. address
4. claim	26. mention	48. introduce	69. warn	90. contend	111. estimate
5. find	27. discover	49. summarise	70. design	91. advance	112. attack
6. say	28. present	50. see	71. base	92. provide	113. invent
7. conduct	29. note	51. divide	72. offer	93. accept	114. reconfirm
8. argue	30. emphasise	52. make	73. notice	94. draw	115. survey
9. believe	31. think	53. suppose	74. give out	95. reflect	116. denote
10. describe	32. classify	54. treat	75. establish	96. conceptualize	117. assess
11. report	33. prove	55. view	76. analyze	97. associate	118. speculate
12. add	34. investigate	56. express	77. mean	98. (not) deny	119. designate
13. propose	35. list	57. pinpoint	78. postulate	99. predict	120. attest
14. assert	36. assume	58. maintain	79. underline	100. realise	121. judge
15. conclude	37. discuss	59. review	80. acknowledge	101. interview	122. write
16. point out	38. refer	60. determine	81. confess	102. declare	123. illustrate
17. use	39. compare	61. explore	82. observe	103. demonstrate	124. repeat
18. develop	40. remark	62. coin	83. put	104. tackle	125. reaffirm
19. confirm	41. carry out	63. content	84. imagine	105. uncover	126. ensure
20. explain	42. do	64. categorise	85. convince	106. comment	127. advise
21. affirm	43. support	65. agree	86. distinguish	107. speak	128. defend
22. identify	44. stress				

3. Methodology

This study employed the quantitative method to examine the frequencies and functions of three categories of RVs (tentative, neutral and strong positions). The corpus of this study included 35 TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese authors. The articles were collected from the PDF proceedings of TESOL international conference held in Ho Chi Minh in 2020. The proceedings consisted of 44 articles in which there were about 35 TESOL-related articles written in English and other 9 articles related to teaching Chinese and Japanese. Therefore, the TESOL articles written in English by Vietnamese TESOL writers were chosen for the study and entered into a Microsoft Word file used for analysis. The authors of these TESOL research articles were teachers of English from universities and colleges in Vietnam. Furthermore, for the scope of the study, the study focused on analyzing RVs used in these 35 TESOL research articles to investigate which groups of RVs were frequently used by Vietnamese writers and whether they used a variety of RVs groups for different functions.

The TESOL research articles were gathered based on some criteria: (1) they were written by Vietnamese writers, and (2) they contained some integral sections of an academic articles such as abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, results and discussion and conclusion. he frequencies of RVs were statistically calculated based on the taxonomy of RMIT University Study and Learning Center (2012), and functions of RVs were analysed based upon the categorization of Adelaide University Writing Center (2014). It is worth noticing that only the main sections (e.g., abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and discussion, and conclusion) of the articles were selected to make sure the accuracy of chosen data. The function Find of Microsoft Word and calculation of Microsoft Excel were used to calculate the frequencies and percentages of RVs used in the articles, which helped address the two research questions of this study. To assure the reliability of findings, the author double-checked the figures, frequencies and percentages when the data were collected and analysed by using Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel.

4. Results

4.1. The Frequencies of RVs Used in TESOL Research Articles Written by Vietnamese Writers

Based on the classification of RVs of RMIT University Study and Learning Center (2012) there were totally 85 RVs which were classified into three groups including tentative position, neutral position, and strong position as can be seen in Table 5. In detail, the first groups of RVs with tentative position consisted of 12 RVs from number 1 to 12; the second group of RVs with neutral position included 34 RVs from number 13 to 46; and the third group of RVs with strong position comprised 39 RVs from number 47 to 85. It means the number of RVs in the third group was greater than that of the first and second groups. It can be inferred that there is a variety of RVs that Vietnamese writers can choose to express different levels of evaluation (e.g., tentative, neutral and strong) appropriate for particular contexts when they cite other works and ideas.

As can be seen from Table 5, the first group of RVs with tentative position showed the frequencies and percentage of its RVs respectively such as *admit* (17, 0.53%); *caution* (0, 0%); *consider* (141, 4.43%); *guess* (23, 0.72%); *hypothesise* (1, 0.03%); *imply* (20, 0.63%); *moot* (0, 0%); *postulate* (0, 0%); *propose* (40, 1.26%); *question* (0, 0%); *speculate* (0, 0%); and *suggest* (98, 3.08%). Based on the findings of the first group of RVs with tentative position, Vietnamese writers tended to use RVs such as *consider*, *suggest*, *propose*, *guess*, *imply* and *admit*. The rest of RVs in this first were not often used by Vietnamese writers. This can be explained by the fact that Vietnamese writers get used to employing some familiar RVs in their academic writing and they avoid using other unfamiliar RVs (e.g., *caution*, *hypothesise*, *moot*, *postulate*, *question* and *speculate*) for in-text citations. It is observed that native writers use a diversity of RVs in academic writing; therefore, Vietnamese writers should be aware of a diversity of RVs used in academic articles and try to use all of them to make their articles be natural and similar to the native's ones in

selecting appropriate RVs to achieve communicative purposes.

Moreover, the second group of RVs with neutral position comprised *assume* (12, 0.38%); *comment* (10, 0.31%); *contrast* (35, 1.10%); *demonstrate* (40, 1.26%); *document* (0, 0%); *examine* (58, 1.82%); *explore* (52, 1.64%); *find* (76, 2.39%); *indicate* (53, 1.67%); *list* (38, 1.19%); *note* (45, 1.42%); *point out* (9, 0.28%); *reflect* (58, 1.82%); *report* (67, 2.11%); *show* (240, 7.55%); *study* (124, 3.90%); *use* (298, 9.37%); *categorise* (14, 0.44%); *compare* (51, 1.60%); *define* (34, 1.07%); *describe* (28, 0.88%); *discuss* (41, 1.29%); *explain* (78, 2.45%); *focus on* (155, 4.87%); *identify* (47, 1.48%); *interpret* (49, 1.54%); *mention* (72, 2.26%); *observe* (37, 1.16%); *present* (245, 7.70%); *regard* (113, 3.55%); *reveal* (81, 2.55%); *state* (89, 2.80%);

and *take into consideration* (10, 0.31%). From Table 5, the findings revealed that almost all of the RVs except for *document* in the second group of RVs with neutral position or evaluation were used in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers. This can be inferred that Vietnamese writers preferred to use RVs in the second group to cite others' works and ideas because these RVs help them evaluate the cited information neutrally, not too tentatively and strongly. The neutral evaluation results in objectiveness for academic articles to some extent. The RVs with neutral position had high times of occurrence in the analysed data. Vietnamese writers had a tendency to employ the common RVs in the second group with neutral position such as *use*, *present*, *show*, *focus on*, *study*, *regard*, *state*, *reveal*, *explain*, *find* and *mention* to cite other author's works and ideas.

Table 5

Frequency of RVs Used in TESOL Research Articles Written by Vietnamese Writers

No.	Positions of RVs	RVs	Frequency	Percentage
1	**Tentative**	*admit*	17	0.53%
2		*caution*	0	0%
3		*consider*	141	4.43%
4		*guess*	23	0.72
5		*hypothesise*	1	0.03%
6		*imply*	20	0.63%
7		*moot*	0	0%
8		*postulate*	0	0%
9		*propose*	40	1.26%
10		*question*	0	0%
11		*speculate*	0	0%
12		*suggest*	98	3.08%
13	**Neutral**	*assume*	12	0.38%
14		*comment*	10	0.31%
15		*contrast*	35	1.10%
16		*demonstrate*	40	1.26%
17		*document*	0	0%
18		*examine*	58	1.82%

19		*explore*	52	1.64%
20		*find*	76	2.39%
21		*indicate*	53	1.67%
22		*list*	38	1.19%
23		*note*	45	1.42%
24		*point out*	9	0.28%
25		*reflect*	58	1.82%
26		*report*	67	2.11%
27		*show*	240	7.55%
28		*study*	124	3.90%
29		*use*	298	9.37%
30		*categorise*	14	0.44%
31		*compare*	51	1.60%
32		*define*	34	1.07%
33		*describe*	28	0.88%
34		*discuss*	41	1.29%
35		*explain*	78	2.45%
36		*focus on*	155	4.87%
37		*identify*	47	1.48%
38		*interpret*	49	1.54%
39		*mention*	72	2.26%
40		*observe*	37	1.16%
41		*present*	245	7.70%
42		*regard*	113	3.55%
43		*reveal*	81	2.55%
44		*state*	89	2.80%
45		*take into consideration*	10	0.31%
46		*view*	25	0.79%
47	**Strong**	*affirm*	0	0%
48		*assert*	12	0.38%
49		*believe*	36	1.13%
50		*condone*	0	0%
51		*confirm*	45	1.42%
52		*contend*	3	0.09%

53	*declare*	6	0.19%
54	*dismiss*	0	0%
55	*disregard*	0	0%
56	*emphasise*	28	0.88%
57	*ignore*	10	0.31%
58	*insist*	2	0.06%
59	*misinterpret*	1	0.03%
60	*object to*	0	0%
61	*presume*	1	0.03%
62	*recommend*	25	0.79%
63	*refute*	0	0%
64	*stress*	27	0.85%
65	*support the view that*	0	0%
66	*advocate*	0	0%
67	*argue*	20	0.63%
68	*warn*	5	0.16%
69	*challenge*	4	0.13%
70	*concede*	1	0.03%
71	*conclude*	24	0.75%
72	*deny*	1	0.03%
73	*determine*	20	0.63%
74	*dispute*	0	0%
75	*doubt*	1	0.03%
76	*endorse*	1	0.03%
77	*highlight*	30	0.94%
78	*infer*	13	0.41%
79	*maintain*	10	0.31%
80	*negate*	0	0%
81	*notice*	81	2.55
82	*oppose*	0	0%
83	*recognise*	46	1.45%
84	*reject*	3	0.09%
85	*substantiate*	0	0%
	Total	3180	100%

Finally, the third group of RVs with strong position consisted of *affirm* (0, 0%); assert (12, 0.38%); *believe* (36, 1.13%); *condone* (0, 0%); *confirm* (45, 1.42%); *contend* (3, 0.09%); *declare* (6, 0.19%); *dismiss* (0, 0%); *disregard* (0, 0%); *emphasise* (28, 0.88%); *ignore* (10, 0.31%); *insist* (2, 0.06%); *misinterpret* (1, 0.03%); *notice* (81, 2.55%); *object to* (0, 0%); *presume* (1, 0.03%); *recommend* (25, 0.79%); *refute* (0, 0%); *stress* (27, 0.85%); *support the view that* (0, 0%); *advocate* (0, 0%); *argue* (20, 0.63%); *challenge* (4, 0.13%); *concede* (1, 0.03%); *conclude* (24, 0.75%); *deny* (1, 0.03%); *determine* (20, 0.63%); *dispute* (0, 0%); *doubt* (1, 0.03%); *endorse* (1, 0.03%); *highlight* (30, 0.94%); *infer* (13, 0.41%); *maintain* (10, 0.31%); *negate* (0, 0%); *oppose* (0, 0%); *recognise* (46, 1.45%); *reject* (3, 0.09%); *substantiate* (0, 0%); and *warn* (5, 0.16%). From the findings in Table 4, it can be inferred that Vietnamese writers considered using this groups of RVs for in-text citations. Particularly, some RVs of this third group (e.g., *notice, recognize, confirm, believe, highlight, emphasise, stress, recommend, conclude, determine, assert, infer, maintain*) were used with low frequency in comparison with the RVs in the second groups by Vietnamese writers, whereas other RVs of the third group (e.g., *affirm, condone, dismiss, disregard, object to, refute, support the view that, advocate, dispute,*

negate, oppose, and *substantiate*) were not found in the analysed data. Hence, Vietnamese writers should consider using common RVs with strong evaluation of this third group to cite others' works and ideas.

Figure 1 presents the comparison of three groups of RVs. The second group of RVs with neutral position made up the highest percentage (74.97%) in comparison with the third group of RVs with strong position (14.34%) and first group of RVs with tentative position (10.69%). From the findings, it can be said that Vietnamese writers tend to use the second group of RVs with neutral position in their TESOL research articles. Employing the RVs with neutral position helped the Vietnamese writers present their citations, statements, research findings, assumptions, suggestion, reports, and so forth neutrally and objectively. It means that the Vietnamese writers avoided providing subjective positions in their TESOL research articles to get rid of their own bias/prejudice for academic purposes. In academic writing, objectivity is essential for writers to give one's opinion/ideas and present study results without any subjectivity. Therefore, Vietnamese writers should choose the second group of RVs with neutral position or evaluation, then select the third group of RVs with strong position and the first group of RVs with tentative position in their TESOL research articles.

Figure 1

Comparison of Three Groups of RVs
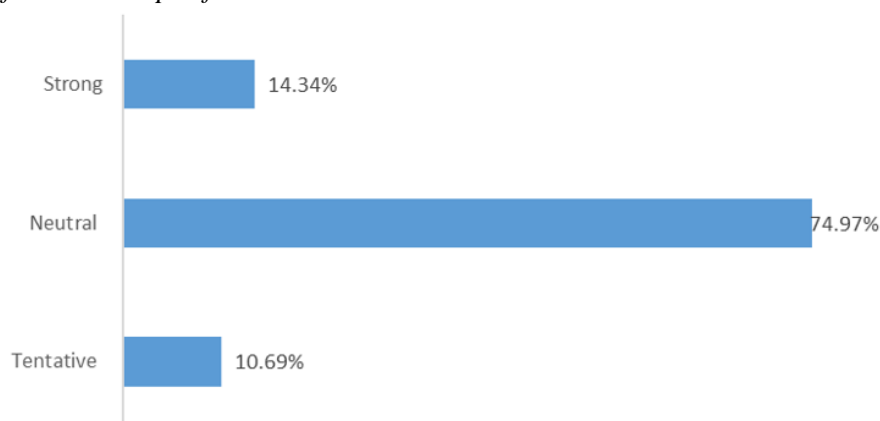
Table 6 presented the frequencies of the RVs used in TESOL research articles by Vietnamese authors from the highest to the lowest. The RVs from number 1 to 54 utilised the most comprised *use* (298, 9.37%); *present* (245, 7.70%); *show* (240, 7.55%); *focus on* (155, 4.87%); *consider* (141, 4.43%); *study* (124, 3.90%); *regard* (113, 3.55%); *suggest* (98, 3.08%); *state* (89, 2.80%); *notice* (81, 2.55%); *reveal* (81, 2.55%); *explain* (78, 2.45%); *find* (76, 2.39%);

mention (72, 2.26%); *report* (67, 2.11%); *examine* (58, 1.82%); *reflect* (58, 1.82%); *indicate* (53, 1.67%); *explore* (52, 1.64%); *compare* (51, 1.60%); *interpret* (49, 1.54%); *identify* (47, 1.48%); *recognise* (46, 1.45%); *note* (45, 1.42%); *confirm* (45, 1.42%); *discuss* (41, 1.29%); *propose* (40, 1.26%); *demonstrate* (40, 1.26%); *list* (38, 1.19%); *observe* (37, 1.16%); *believe* (36, 1.13%); *contrast* (35, 1.10%); *define* (34, 1.07%); *highlight* (30, 0.94%); *describe* (28, 0.88%); *emphasise* (28, 0.88%); *stress* (27, 0.85%); *view* (25, 0.79%); *recommend* (25, 0.79%); *conclude* (24, 0.75%) ; *guess* (23, 0.72%); *imply* (20, 0.63%); *argue* (20, 0.63%); *determine* (20, 0.63%); *admit* (17, 0.53%); *categorise* (14, 0.44%); *infer* (13, 0.41%); *assume* (12, 0.38%); *assert* (12, 0.38%); *comment* (10, 0.31%); *take into consideration* (10, 0.31%); *ignore* (10, 0.31%); *maintain* (10, 0.31%); and *point out* (9, 0.28%). These were RVs that Vietnamese writers tended to employ in their TESOL research articles from the highest frequency to the lowest frequency. From the findings in Table 6, it is suggested that Vietnamese writers should have a good background knowledge of RVs so that they can make their research articles abundant with a variety of RVS with different purposes. Knowing and applying a lot of RVs into their papers is also a good way to avoid using the repeated usage of RVs.

Table 6

The Order of RVs Used Most and Least According to Frequency

No	RVs	Frequency	Percentage
1	*use*	298	9.37%
2	*present*	245	7.70%
3	*show*	240	7.55%
4	*focus on*	155	4.87%
5	*consider*	141	4.43%
6	*study*	124	3.90%
7	*regard*	113	3.55%
8	*suggest*	98	3.08%
9	*state*	89	2.80%
10	*notice*	81	2.55%
11	*reveal*	81	2.55%
12	*explain*	78	2.45%
13	*find*	76	2.39%
14	*mention*	72	2.26%
15	*report*	67	2.11%
16	*examine*	58	1.82%
17	*reflect*	58	1.82%
18	*indicate*	53	1.67%
19	*explore*	52	1.64%
20	*compare*	51	1.60%
21	*interpret*	49	1.54%
22	*identify*	47	1.48%
23	*recognise*	46	1.45%
24	*note*	45	1.42%
25	*confirm*	45	1.42%
26	*discuss*	41	1.29%
27	*propose*	40	1.26%
28	*demonstrate*	40	1.26%
29	*list*	38	1.19%
30	*observe*	37	1.16%
31	*believe*	36	1.13%
32	*contrast*	35	1.10%
33	*define*	34	1.07%
34	*highlight*	30	0.94%
35	*describe*	28	0.88%
36	*emphasise*	28	0.88%
37	*stress*	27	0.85%
38	*view*	25	0.79%
39	*recommend*	25	0.79%
40	*conclude*	24	0.75%
41	*guess*	23	0.72%
42	*imply*	20	0.63%
43	*argue*	20	0.63%
44	*determine*	20	0.63%

45	*admit*	17	0.53%
46	*categorise*	14	0.44%
47	*infer*	13	0.41%
48	*assume*	12	0.38%
49	*assert*	12	0.38%
50	*comment*	10	0.31%
51	*take into consideration*	10	0.31%
52	*ignore*	10	0.31%
53	*maintain*	10	0.31%
54	*point out*	9	0.28%
55	*declare*	6	0.19%
56	*warn*	5	0.16%
57	*challenge*	4	0.13%
58	*contend*	3	0.09%
59	*reject*	3	0.09%
60	*insist*	2	0.06%
61	*hypothesise*	1	0.03%
62	*misinterpret*	1	0.03%
63	*presume*	1	0.03%
64	*concede*	1	0.03%
65	*deny*	1	0.03%
66	*doubt*	1	0.03%
67	*endorse*	1	0.03%
68	*caution*	0	0%
69	*moot*	0	0%
70	*postulate*	0	0%
71	*question*	0	0%
72	*speculate*	0	0%
73	*document*	0	0%
74	*affirm*	0	0%
75	*condone*	0	0%
76	*dismiss*	0	0%
77	*disregard*	0	0%

78	*object to*	0	0%
79	*refute*	0	0%
80	*support the view that*	0	0%
81	*advocate*	0	0%
82	*dispute*	0	0%
83	*negate*	0	0%
84	*oppose*	0	0%
85	*substantiate*	0	0%
	Total	3180	100%

However, as can be seen at the bottom of Table 6, the RVs from number 55 to 85 were used the least. Even, some RVs were not used in TESOL research articles by Vietnamese writers. The least used RVs included *declare* (6, 0.19%); *warn* (5, 0.16%); *challenge* (4, 0.13%); *contend* (3, 0.09%); *reject* (3, 0.09%); *insist* (2, 0.06%); *hypothesise* (1, 0.03%); *misinterpret* (1, 0.03%); *presume* (1, 0.03%); *concede* (1, 0.03%); *deny* (1, 0.03%); *doubt* (1, 0.03%); *endorse* (1, 0.03%); *caution* (0, 0%); *moot* (0, 0%); *postulate* (0, 0%); *question* (0, 0%); *speculate* (0, 0%); *document* (0, 0%); *affirm* (0, 0%); *condone* (0, 0%); *dismiss* (0, 0%); *disregard* (0, 0%); *object to* (0, 0%); *refute* (0, 0%); *support the view that* (0, 0%); *advocate* (0, 0%); *dispute* (0, 0%); *negate* (0, 0%); *oppose* (0, 0%); and *substantiate* (0, 0%). These RVs were used at a low rate in the analysed data. This can be explained by the fact that there are too many RVs in English and they are approached from different perspectives by different authors. Interestingly, among the 31 least used RVs there were only 6 (19.35%) RVs with tentative position and 2 (6.45%) RVs with neutral position, whereas there were 23 (74.19%) RVs with strong position in Table 6. This can be inferred that TESOL research Vietnamese authors rarely used the group of RVs with strong position to report other people' works and present statements, which helps them express the author's voice neutrally and objectively, but not subjectively in academic writing. Similarly, the groups of RVs with tentative position were sometimes utilised because they did not give the author's voice strong enough to convince readers about their reported statements.

Figure 2

The Number of the Least Used RVs in Three Groups
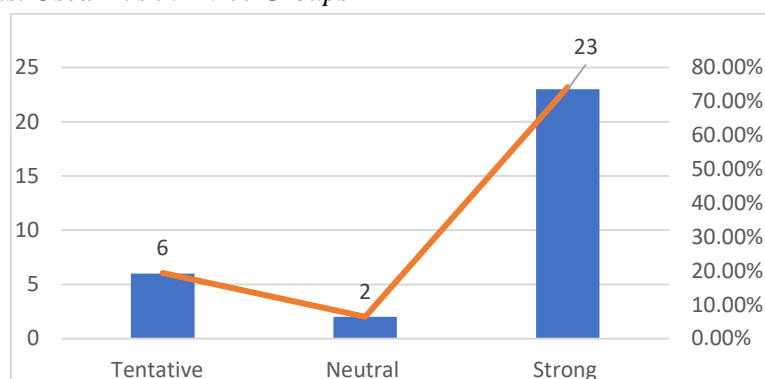
4.2. Functions of Three Groups of RVs Used in TESOL Research Articles by Vietnamese Writers

Based on the categorization of Adelaide University Writing Center (2014), the findings revealed that the classification of 85 RVs according to functions comprised 11 categories. These categories facilitated Vietnamese writers to use RVs functionally properly in their TESOL research articles. It means that they can use RVs for (1) *agreement*, (2) *argument/persuasion*, (3) *believing*, (4) *conclusion*, (5) *disagreement/ questioning*, (6) *discussion*, (7) *emphasis*, (8) *evaluation/ examination*, (9) *explanation*, (10) *presentation*, and (11) *suggestion*.

Table 7

Functions of RVs

No.	Functions	RVs	No. of RVs
1	agreement	*admit, concede, confirm, recognise*	4
2	argument and persuasion	*interpret, argue, contend, insist, warn, affirm, assume, condone, determine, disregard, moot, substantiate, support the view that, take into consideration, view, caution, misinterpret*	17
3	believing	*guess, declare, maintain, assert, believe, presume*	6
5	conclusion	*conclude, find, infer*	3
6	disagreement and questioning	*doubt, question, challenge, dismiss, dispute, negate, object to, oppose, refute, reject, deny, ignore*	12
7	discussion	*comment, discuss, explore, report*	4
8	emphasis	*emphasise*, highlight, stress, focus on, notice	5
9	evaluation and examination	*compare, consider, contrast, examine, demonstrate, endorse*	6
10	explanation	*explain*	1
11	presentation	*define, identify, imply, list, mention, note, observe, point out, present, reveal, show, state, study, use, categorise, document, indicate, reflect, regard, describe*	20
12	suggestion	*speculate, advocate, hypothesise, propose, suggest, recommend, postulate*	7
	Total		**85**

Figure 3 illustrates the number of RVs used in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers according to the taxonomy of 11 functions.

Figure 3

The Different Functions of 85 RVs

As can be observed in Figure 3, 85 RVs were functionally variously used in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers. The number of RVs used for *presentation* were 20. This group of RVs used for *presentation* consisted more RVs than other groups with different functions. The numbers used for *argumentation/persuasion* and *disagreement/ questioning* were 17 and 12, respectively. Furthermore, 7 RVs used for *suggestion* were ranked the fourth. RVs used for believing had the same figure (6) as those used for *evaluation* and *examination*. The number of RVs used for emphasis was 5. RVs used for *agreement* also had the same figure (4) as those used for *discussion*. Finally, RVs used for *conclusion* and *explanation* ranked the lowest with the number of 3 and 1, respectively. According to the aforementioned findings, the two research questions of this study are addressed. First, The Vietnamese authors prefer to employ the group of RVs with neutral position/evaluation with the highest percentage (74.97%) to the two remaining groups of RVs with tentative (10.69%) and strong (14.34%) positions/ evaluation. The findings of this study are similar to other authors' studies (Duong & Tran, 2021; Yilmaz & Erturk, 2017). These authors confirmed that research authors avoided using tentative/weak and strong RVs in their studies. This can be explained by the fact that TESOL research Vietnamese writers tended to employ neutral RVs to lessen the weakness or strength of statements caused by using tentative and strong RVs respectively. The results also gave a detailed list of the RVs used most and least in the TESOL research articles to show Vietnamese writers how to choose proper RVs for their future research. In addition, as regards functional analysis, the results of this study are likely different from Duong and Tran's (2021) findings. The two authors found that the RVs used with a diversity of nine functions, viz. *agreement*, *argument*, *conclusion*, *disagreement*, *emphasis*, *evaluation*, *explanation*, *presentation*, and *suggestion*; however, the findings of this study indicated that there were a variety of eleven functions including *agreement*, *argument/persuasion*, *believing*, *conclusion*, *disagreement/ questioning*, *discussion*, *emphasis*, *evaluation/ examination*, *explanation*, *presentation*, and *suggestion*. As a sequence, there was a difference in the findings among the studies on RVs' functions.

Interestingly, this study's findings on functions are not aligned with Yilmaz and Erturk's (2017) study on function. They found that the RVs frequently had functions of presentation, evaluation, examination, conclusion and suggestion; however, this study showed that the RVs were often used with some main functions of presentation, argument/ persuasion, disagreement/questioning and

suggestion as seen in Figure 3. They also observed that three RVs such as *reveal, indicate* and *observe* were repeatedly used by non-native writers while this study's findings indicated that three RVs (e.g., *see, present and show*) were repeatedly employed in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers as seen in Table 6. Regarding positional/evaluative analysis, they pinpointed that the writers mainly used the RVs with neutral position/evaluation and only one strong RV found in the native writers' corpus, whereas this study's findings demonstrated that 27 among 39 RVs in the third group with strong position were used in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers as seen in Table 5.

In short, the findings of this study share some similarities and differences with the previous studies. However, this study's findings demonstrate that Vietnamese writers tend to use some common RVs and they do not use a variety of RVs in their TESOL research articles. This is the reason why a great number of RVs in the above table 6 were not used in the 35 TESOL research articles. The unused RVs in these articles include *caution*, *moot*, *postulate*, *question*, *speculate*, *document*, *affirm*, *condone*, *dismiss*, *disregard*, *object to*, *refute*, *support the view that*, *advocate*, *dispute*, *negate*, *oppose*, and *substantiate*. Therefore, it is recommended that TESOL research writers should employ a diversity of RVs used in their academic papers to avoid using the same RVs in the whole research articles and serve communicative purposes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This corpus-based study included a corpus of 35 TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers. The data were analysed by means of Microsoft Word's FIND function and Microsoft Excel, and two main findings are reported as follows. First, it is explored that the TESOL research Vietnamese writers have a tendency to utilise more neutral RVs than tentative and strong ones. The Vietnamese writers should be aware of the most and least used RVs to include them in their research articles. Furthermore, they should employ RVs functionally. That is to say, RVs should be used for appropriate purposes to give author's voice to citations, referencing, statements, claims and so forth.

Particularly, some main findings of this study addressed the two research questions. As regards the first research question about the frequencies of RVs used in the TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers, it can be observed that the Vietnamese writers have a tendency to use the second group of 34 RVs with neutral position/evaluation (74.97%) followed by the third group of 39 RVs with strong position (14.34%) and the first group of 12 RVs with tentative position (10.69%). This is significant for Vietnamese writers to select proper RVs to present their attitude and voice towards cited or paraphrased information according to various purposes. What's more, concerning the second question about the function of RVs used in the TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers, they tend to utilise the RVs which have eleven functions of *agreement*, *argument/ persuasion*, *believing*, *conclusion*, *disagreemen*t/ *questioning*, *discussion*, *emphasis*, *evaluation/ examination*, *explanation*, *presentation*, and *suggestion.* This is beneficial to Vietnamese writers who can have a variety of choices for RVs with various functions used in different sections of TESOL research articles.

From the findings of the study, some implications can be given. First, it is hoped that the results of this study can raise the significance of RVs among TESOL research Vietnamese writers and research scholars, and serve as guidance for Vietnamese writers to use RVs in their academic writing effectively. Using RVs for citation and referencing other people's ideas is considered as one of the most essential perspectives of academic writing, but Vietnamese writers find it hard to remember and use them properly in their academic articles. Second, the results will be beneficial to TESOL research Vietnamese writers who can become more confident in their using RVs in academic articles for international publishing. Finally, it is suggested that RVs should be instructed to learners of all levels at higher education because this facilitates their academic writing skills in future.

This study bears some limitations. This study focused on RVs used in TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers. Future studies should investigate RVs used in different disciplines. Besides, this study only employed

the RVs classification of RMIT University Study and Learning Center (2012) to examine the frequencies and functions of RVs in TESOL research articles by Vietnamese writer; therefore, future research should combine various categorization of different authors and organisations to have a more thorough understanding and application of RVs into writing academic articles and international publishing. Finally, the corpus size is small with 35 TESOL research articles, and the scope of study concentrates on RVs used in TESOL academic articles written by Vietnamese writers. Consequently, the results are unlikely to generalise how Vietnamese writers employ RVs in their academic writing papers. As a result, future studies are recommended to extend the corpus size, use a mixed method, and investigate how RVs are used in cross-disciplinary academic articles to have better understandings of RVs used for academic writing and EAP. Furthermore, future studies should investigate grammatical perspectives (e.g., tense and pattern) of RVS used TESOL research articles written by Vietnamese writers.

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TẦN SUẤT VÀ CHỨC NĂNG CỦA ĐỘNG TỪ TƯỜNG THUẬT TRONG CÁC BÀI BÁO NGHIÊN CỨU VỀ GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG ANH CỦA TÁC GIẢ VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Việc sử dụng động từ tường thuật (RVs) phù hợp trong viết học thuật được xem là rất khó khăn đối với các tác giả viết nghiên cứu người Việt Nam. Kết quả nghiên cứu của Nguyễn và Pramoolsook (2015) chỉ ra học viên cao học ngành TESOL sử dụng sai động từ tường thuật ở ba khía cạnh: chức năng, thể và thì. Nghiên cứu khối liệu này nhằm mục đích khảo sát tần suất và chức năng của RVs được sử dụng trong các bài báo nghiên cứu về giảng dạy tiếng Anh dựa trên sự phân loại động từ tường thuật của Trung tâm Học tập và Nghiên cứu thuộc Đại học RMIT (2012). Kho khối liệu gồm 35 bài báo nghiên cứu về giảng dạy tiếng Anh được thu thập từ quyển sách kỷ yếu hội thảo quốc tế về giảng dạy tiếng Anh dạng pdf. Dữ liệu được xử lý bằng việc sử dụng Microsoft Word và Microsoft Excel. Kết quả cho thấy các tác giả người Việt Nam viết nghiên cứu về giảng dạy tiếng Anh có khuynh hướng sử dụng nhóm động từ tường thuật trình bày quan điểm trung lập. Kết quả phân tích chức năng của RVs cũng chỉ ra 11 chức năng của RVs, bao gồm đồng tình, tranh luận/thuyết phục, tin tưởng, kết luận, không đồng tình/chất vấn, thảo luận, nhấn mạnh, đánh giá/kiểm tra, giải thích, trình bày và đề nghị. Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ cung cấp thêm kiến thức về RVs cho các tác giả người Việt Nam nghiên cứu về giảng dạy tiếng Anh, các học giả nghiên cứu cũng như sinh viên thuộc các chuyên ngành khác nhau ở đại học, và kết quả nghiên cứu cũng sẽ giúp họ sử dụng RVs trong các bài viết học thuật và xuất bản quốc tế trong tương lai.

Từ khóa: khối liệu, tần suất, động từ tường thuật, công bố quốc tế, viết học thuật

THE MEANING TRANSFERENCE FROM SPATIAL TO NON-SPATIAL MEANINGS OF *BELOW*

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Abstract: This paper analyses the transference from spatial to non-spatial meanings of *below* as a preposition, an adverb, and a particle within the 2017 Corpus of Contemporary American English, genre: fiction. In light of the Multimodal Image Theory and Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the data analysis shows that the prototypical meaning of *below* has two variants in its Visual space, and two non-spatial meanings namely *Less* and *Inferior*. The mechanism of meaning transference is mappings in which salient aspects of absence of contact, force, and occlusion between the Trajector (TR) and Landmark (LM) are retained in construing the non-spatial scenes associated with the word.

Keywords: below, meaning transference, Multimodal Image Theory, Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory

1. Introduction

Our previous studies (Long, 2019, 2021; Long & Vu, 2020) have shown the appropriateness of a combination between Multimodal Image Theory (Deane, 2005) and Extended Conceptual Metaphor (Kövecses, 2017, 2020)[1] in accounting for the transference from spatial to non-spatial meanings of *over, above,* and *under*. The following remarks are withdrawn from the previous studies:

(i) The spatial meanings of prepositions like *over, above, under* generate among three spatial modalities: Visual space, Maneuver space, and Kinetic space. Each preposition has a prototypical meaning encoded by a pair of image complexes and in each space, it has different variants. The Visual space treats the static meaning while the Kinetic space treats the dynamic meaning. The Maneuver space serves as an allocentric frame of referent in which the clearance between the TR and LM when rotated

is taken into consideration.

(ii) The non-spatial meanings of the four words are attached to a range of conceptual metaphors which are activated in a four-layered direction from mental spaces to frames/ domains and image-schemas.

(iii) The semantic continuity of prepositions like below has not been shown clearly, and the links among different image-schemas denoted by prepositions are loosely presented.

This study initiates from the above remarks to provide an account for the meaning transference of *below* within the chosen corpus in which *below* is a preposition, an adverb, and a particle while the use of *below* as a prefix or an adjective as far as that part of speech of *below* is concerned.

One important assumption of the study is non-spatial meanings of *below* are spatially grounded (Lakoff, 1987; Tyler & Evans, 2003),

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[1] Hereafter, MIT and ECMT.

and the study applies the two above-mentioned conceptual frameworks to account for the meaning transference of *below* and then discusses the nature of human construal processes associated with its meaning transference. The above objective is realized by the following two research questions:

1. What spatial and non-spatial meanings of *below* are generated in its contexts of use?

2. How does *below* transfer from spatial to non-spatial meanings in its contexts of use?

2. Basic Tenets in Construing a Scene

Croft and Cruse (2004) identify that the human construal processes would normally undergo the following procedure with *one-to-one* step:

Table 1

The Human Construal Processes

| 1. Attention/ salience	3. Perspective/ situatedness
Selection	Viewpoint
Scope of attention	Deixis
Scalar adjustment	Subjectivity
Dynamic attention	
2. Judgement/ comparison	**4. Constitution/ Gestalt**
Categorization	Structural schematization
Metaphor	Force dynamics
Figure-ground alignment	Relationality (entity/ interconnection)

The above procedure is in agreement with the notion of *conceptual structuring system* which is based upon a limited number of large-scale *schematic systems* introduced by Talmy (2000). There are four key schematic systems within the conceptual structuring systems: the Configurational system, the Perspectival system, the Attentional system, and the Force-dynamic system.

Table 1 shows that humans would normally use their visual capacity or auditory capacity to select/ detect the salient aspects/ features of the scene(s) and then compare those aspects/ features in reference to their situatedness to create a whole picture (the gestalt representation). This process is also similar to s*chematization* described by Talmy (2000), in which certain aspects are selected while others are neglected. The following graphic representation provides a lot of clues for people to utter different sentences.

Figure 1

The Graphic Representation of "You are Also Approximately Twenty-One Meters Below Surface Level."
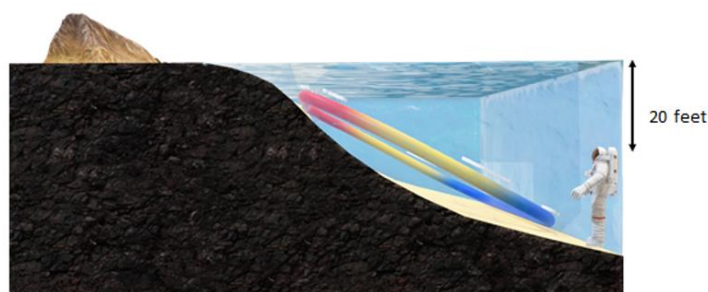
In the scene, focusing on the position of the man and the relative distance from his head to the surface, it is noted that the man is appropriately twenty feet below the surface level, represented by the following utterance:

(1) The man is approximately twenty feet below surface level.

The TR in the sentence is "The man",

but it should be noted that the exact part is the head of the man while his feet are deeper in the ocean. In this case, the construal of below is purely spatial, and it is easy to understand that if other parts of the scene were to be taken into view, other utterances would be created.

A scene is part of a bigger concept called *domain* or *frame*. In Kövecses's sense, a scene is at the individual level, where speaker and hearer (metaphorically) conceptualize objects and

events online in a fully contextualized fashion (Kövecses, 2017). A scene can contain different *mental spaces* because mental spaces can be introduced thanks to the emergence of *space builder expressions*. Domains activate *image-schemas* and image-schemas themselves activate *metaphors* when the four items are metaphorically used. All in all, those levels of construal can be represented by the following figure.

Figure 2

Activation From Mental Spaces to Frames, Domains, and Image Schemas (Kövecses, 2020)
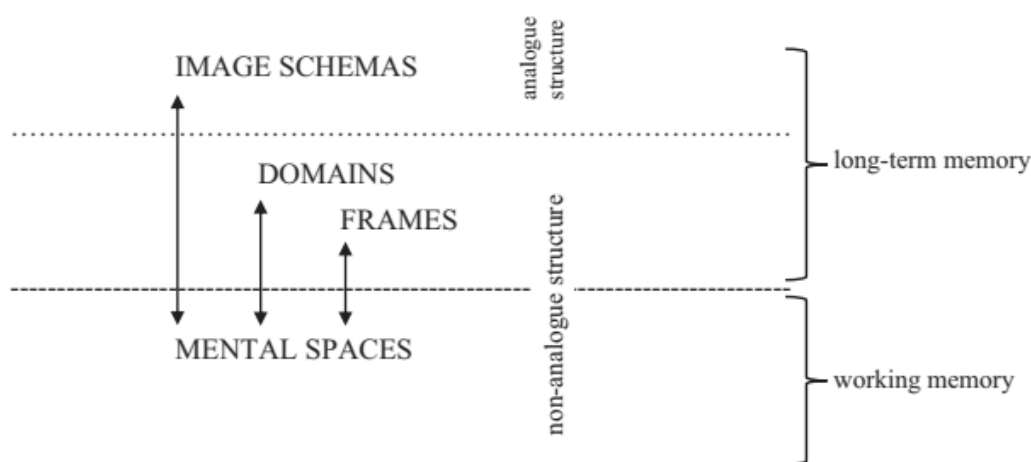
Based on the information about human construal process presented in table 1, it can be seen that a scene can be either spatial or non-spatial. Tamly (2000) breaks up a spatial scene, part of the SPACE domain, and ascribes certain concepts like Trajector (TR), Landmark (LM), etc. to the involved elements. A non-spatial scene also entails the concepts of TR and LM; however, the TR and LM are virtual. The LM serves as a reference for the TR, and they have all features presented in table 1 besides the spatial information. Particularly, a spatial scene involves *concrete* entities which bear certain *spatial* relations with each other. These entities are termed TR or LM, basing on their functions in the scene. The spatial relations denote *image-schemas*. Additionally, the notion of image-schema is also found in a non-spatial scene, part of other domains rather than SPACE domain, which requires construers to deduce from contexts. As discussed earlier, the four words also entail metaphorical understandings; therefore, such a case would shape at least two ways of construal: (i) *spatial & metaphorical*;

(ii) *non-spatial & metaphorical*. All in all, there are three ways of construal: (i) *spatial & metaphorical*; (ii) *non-spatial & metaphorical;* (iii) *spatial & non-metaphorical.* Furthermore, spatial meanings of the four items are found in SPACE domain while non-spatial meanings are found in non-space domains. In the following examples, below is used metaphorically:

(2) If the eavesdropping level is below a certain threshold, the communication is absolutely secure.

(3) "I know what a dipshit like Fleischermann can afford. You 're selling yourself below market. Schnabel told me.

The TR-LM configurations in sentences (2) and (3) are virtual; however, the TR and LM could still be construed. In the sentence (2), the LM is "a certain threshold level" while the TR is the value ascribed for the eavesdropping level. The LM and TR in the sentence (3) are conceptualized as "the standard/ usual price", "the sold price". In the above sentences, the TR is construed lower in terms of values than the LM.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Conceptual Framework

In fact, the model adopted in this study to treat the semantic continuity of *below* is novel in the aspect that it does not solely list image-schemas associated with the word, it shows how those image-schemas are related, or derived from the image- complexes denoting the prototypical meaning. It is superfluous to analyze all aspects of the proposed frameworks to account for the meaning transference of *below*; however, it is crucial to explain the reason why a combination of MIT and ECMT were exploited. First and foremost, MIT treats a

spatial marker like *below* as a radical category in which extended meanings are variants of the prototypical meaning in the Visual and Kinetic spaces. The Maneuver space serves as an allocentric frame to calculate the clearance between the TR and LM. Spatial meanings of the word are decoded by visual and functional information of the word with its image-schemas. Non-spatial meanings of *below* are also associated with a range of conceptual metaphors which were activated by a four-layered level from mental spaces, frames/ domains to image-schemas. It is proposed that the mechanism of meaning transference is mappings. All in all, the frameworks can be presented by the following figure.

Figure 3

A Hybrid Conceptual Framework to Account for Meaning Transference of Below
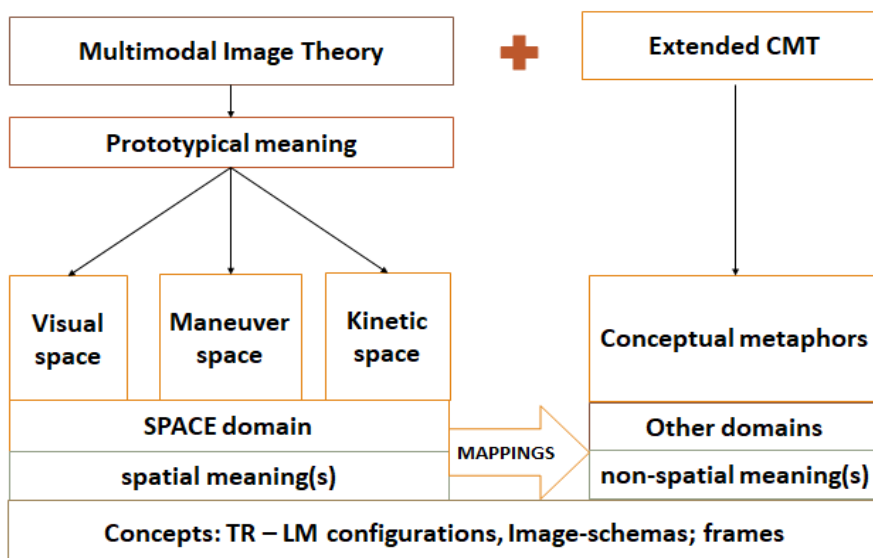
3.2. Data and Processing

This study extracted the data from 2017 Contemporary American English Corpus (COCA), genre: fiction. The corpus contains approximately four million words and the data for the analysis were taken from works of fiction published in American English in the year 2017. There are three main reasons why COCA was chosen. Firstly, COCA is currently the largest corpora in linguistics with more than 560 million words of text in five genres: spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers and academic texts. Only in the year of 2017, more than 20 million words had been added. Hence, in reference to the thesis of usage-based model, COCA is appropriate. More importantly, the

corpus shows its unique features with chart listings and collocates searching of up to ten words right or left the node word; re-sortable concordances and comparisons between genres and time periods (Davies, 2010). This makes it easier for linguists to categorize the collocates and structures associated with each word. Last but not least, COCA has never been exploited to treat the word so far.

In order to extract the needed data, the software AntConc (64-bit, version 3.5.7) was exploited by the researcher who is fluent in English and has in-depth understanding of the frameworks to find the appropriate concordance of *below* in the corpus with 170 instances of use. The data were processed in the following procedure:

Stage 1: identifying a metaphorical and non-metaphorical usage

This stage concerns the classification of instances in which *below* is metaphorically used. The identification process is termed "Metaphorical Identification Procedure[2]" introduced by Pragglejaz Group (2007).

Additionally, the researcher also labelled the instances when the scene is spatial or non-spatial. Finally, all instances are classified into three groups: (i) *spatial and non-metaphorical*, (ii) *spatial and metaphorical*; (iii) *non-spatial and metaphorical.* The researcher applied MIP as follows (adapted from Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3).

Table 2

Metaphorical Identification Procedure (adapted from Pragglejaz Group, 2007)

Step 1	Read the entire text–discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning. Separating the TR and LM in the sentence.
Step 2	Determine the lexical units in the text–discourse
Step 3	(a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit. The focus is the use of *below*.
	(b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For the purpose of the data analysis, basic meanings tend to be:
	More concrete; what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste.
	Related to bodily action.
	More precise (as opposed to vague)
	Historically older.
	Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit. Basic meanings are typically the prototypical meanings.
	(c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current–contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.
Step 4	If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical. If no, mark the lexical unit as non-metaphorical.

Stage 2: all the spatial usages of *below* were analyzed in the light of *MIT* and metaphorical usages of the four words were analyzed in respect to *ECMT*. Each of usages was put into one of the following groups: spatial configurations (static or dynamic) and non-spatial configurations. The visual and functional information of *below* in such a group is categorized, basing on which the meanings were nominally termed.

Stage 3: the image-schemas of *below* from MIT and ECMT were compared to show the metaphors emerged from each of the three spatial spaces of *below*, basing on which the mappings from DOMAIN space to other domains were to be found.

4. Findings and Discussion

In the following analysis, the spatial meanings of *below* were presented first, basing on which its non-spatial meanings and meaning transference are discussed.

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[2] Hereafter MIP.

4.1. Below as a Spatial Marker

Below can be traced back to the root *biloogh (in a lower position)*, from Anglo-Saxon **be-** "by, about" + *logh*, *lou*, *lowe* "low", Old Norse *be + lagr* (cf. Tyler & Evans, 2003, p. 127, and Etymology Dictionary online). *Below* designates the TR-LM functional configuration that excludes the contact between the TR and LM, presented as follows.

4.1.1. The Visual Space Images of *Below*

The stationary scenes denoted by *below* could be seen in the following example:

(4) The courtyard outside and below Adare's window was a chaos of activity.

Apparently, there is no contact between the TR, *the courtyard*, and the LM, *Adare's window*, in the above spatial configuration, and our encyclopedic knowledge of building helps us confirm such usage because by convention, a window is built several feet higher than the floor level. Additionally, the perspectival aspect of the frame denoted in the sentence is perhaps from "an insider" due to the emergence of the word "outside". Other examples are:

(5) Women dance naked in the strip club below his studio, the Mob has vested interests, deals…

(6) I stepped inside. Spines pressed into the skin below my eyes, rip-tongued branches curled against…

It can be seen that the LM and TR in those instances are conventionally separated. In sentence (2), *his studio* (LM) is one floor higher than *the strip club* (TR); and in sentence (6) *my eyes* (LM) are uniquely different from *the skin* (TR) below them. In other words, the separation between the TR and LM associated with *below* is apparent regardless of the gravity of the Earth. Ideally, the spatial scene involved with *below* whether being seen in a low or high resolution, expresses a clear gap between the TR and LM. The spatial configuration associated with *below* in its Visual space can be represented as follows.

Figure 4

The Image-Schema Associated With Below in its Visual Space
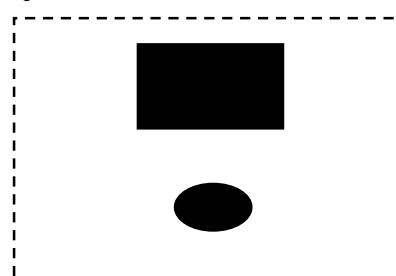
Figure 4 is underspecified. This means that the scene does not require the TR to be located within the scope of the LM, the salient aspect is that the LM is *geographically higher* than and *distinct* from the TR.

All in all, the prototypical meaning of *below* is supposed to be coded by the following pair of images.

Table 3

The Prototypical Meaning of "Below"

The prototypical meaning of *below* is defined by a pair of images:
a. From the side at high resolution: the TR is separated from the LM by a vertical gap.
b. From the side at low resolution: the TR is separated from the LM by a vertical gap.
The gap between TR and LM is significant from the side at low resolution.

In view of the vertical gap between the TR and LM in sentence (1), this vertical gap facilitates the construal that the LM is geographically higher than the TR. The instances are related to the location of buildings, rivers, etc.

(7) a steamer with supplies, at some convenient point below Powder River…

"Powder River" does not refer to the whole river in general; it only refers to a particular part of the river where the steamer is supposed to be located. Background knowledge tells us that *Powder River* (LM) is higher than *some convenient point* (TR) in reference to the sea level, i.e., to the *north* of the Earth. This usage of *below* is supposed to create the "*Topographical Distance*" meaning supposed by Tyler and Evans (2003).

Figure 5

The Representation of "at Some Convenient Point Below Powder River"
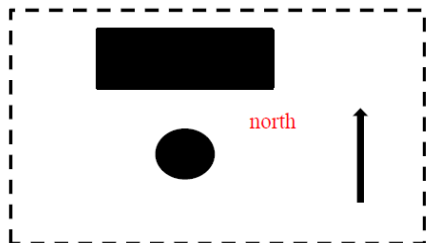
The above figure can also be applied for the spatial scene denoted in the following instance without arrow to show direction:

(8) You are also approximately twenty-one meters below surface level.

From the above analysis, it is supposed that *Topographical Distance* meaning (Tyler & Evans, 2003) is in fact the prototypical meaning of *below* in its Visual space. The emergence of *below* in such sentences like (8) is also the result of experiential correlation of human construal

(Tyler & Evans, 2003); however, as the image-schema remains unchanged while other significant elements such as forces does not contribute to the construal of the scene, the meaning of *below* in this case does not guarantee a distinct meaning.

Back to the construal of sentence (5), Tyler and Evans would advocate a distinct meaning from the prototypical meaning termed *"Next-one-down"*. However, in this study it is supposed that the image-complex coded by this usage is only a variant of the prototypical meaning. What should be taken into consideration is that in this case, the TR is occluded by the LM and the LM and TR are in a line from high above. Noted that the TR and LM are clearly separated regardless of high or low resolution.

In short, it is better to conclude that two above usages of *below*, i.e., "Next-one-down" and "Topographical Distance", are variants of *below* in its Visual space.

Table 4

The Visual Space of "Below"

Visual space images	The images represented in this space are locative and stationary, besides the prototypical meaning of *below,* there are two other pairs of images. **Pair 1:** a. From the side at high resolution: there is a gap between the LM and TR. b. From the side at low resolution: the gap between the LM and TR is still clear. c. From the top of the scene: the LM occludes the TR **Pair 2:** a. From the side at high resolution: the TR is unique to the LM b. From the side at low resolution: the TR is lower than the LM in reference to the sea level.

Up to now, the prototypical meaning of *below* and its Visual space have been discussed. Describing a spatial scene in which the LM is geographically higher than the TR and there exists no contact between the two entities, *below* is a better preposition than *under* is.

4.1.2. The Maneuver and Kinetic Space Images of "Below"

Rotating the prototypical spatial scene involving *below* results in the image-schema denoted by *below* as in figure 5. With a line drawn from the nearest point of the TR parallel to the LM, another line can be seen from a certain point of the LM that is perpendicular to

the earlier line. This again means that the gap after rotation remains significant.

Figure 6

Rotating the Prototypical Image-Schema Denoted by "Below"
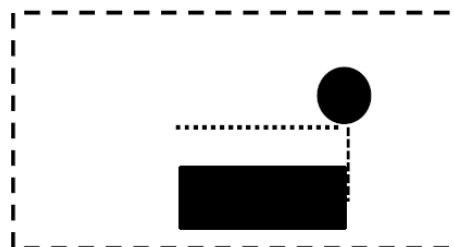
Tyler and Evans (2003) find that the TR and LM associated with *below* are never in contact. One may ask whether the LM of *below* could be the prototypical ground. If so, the TR must be on the surface of the Earth, or in other words, the TR is occluded by the LM. In the *Distinctiveness Principle* in the Visual space of prepositions, two prepositions cannot be applied with the same spatial scene. Our previous analysis shows that *under* is acceptable in such a case; therefore, *below* must be excluded. Additionally, if the LM occludes but does not interact with the TR, the LM, if it is big enough, cannot be conceptualized as covering the TR. The two above reasons perhaps make it clear why the meanings of *below* are fewer than those of *under*.

In the following sentences, *below* is used with motion verbs:

(9) "Thank you." He watched her turn

and go below, carefully placing stocking feet onto slippery road.

(10) The sheet draped from the overhead rod fell to below her chin, blocking off her view…

(11) Then nylon rustled and something heavy landed in the footwell below my head: the backpack that Ma had kept…

Sentence (9) shows a movement of a woman from a building to a road. Therefore, the space in the spatial scene is separated; or to be exact, the TR (her) moves from a close space to an open one. The hidden LM1 and LM2 are unique. Similarly, there are two unique LMs in sentence (10), one of which is *the chin* while the other is *overhead rod*. Sentence (11) is similar to sentence (9) when denoting a force dynamic which makes the TR move from LM1 to LM2. The direction of the TR is downwards to the ground, summarized in the following figure.

Figure 7

The Direction of TR of Below in its Kinetic Space
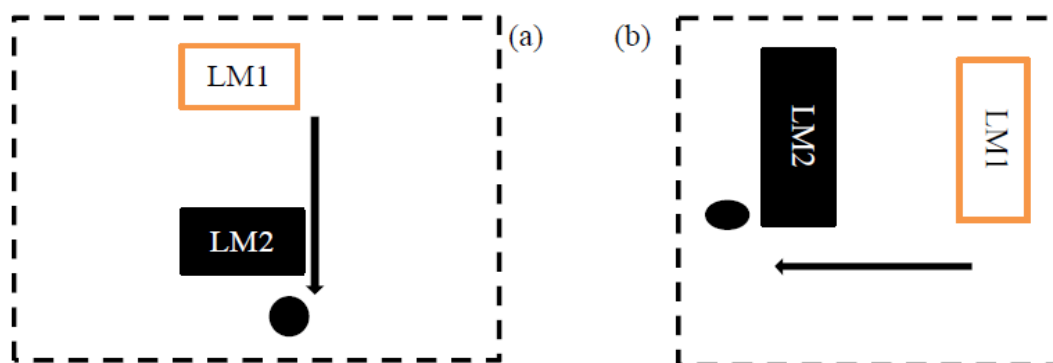
Figure 7(a) ideally fits the spatial configuration in sentence (10) and (11) while its rotated version fits the configuration denoted in sentence (9). The following table summarizes the Maneuver and Kinetic Space of *below*:

Table 5

The Maneuver and Kinetic Space of "Below"

Maneuver space images	a. Initial position: there is significant clearance between the TR and the LM, with the LM oriented parallel to the ground.
	b. Image after rotation: the clearance remains significant.
Kinetic space images	Kinetic Image Sequence:
	a. The LM forms part of the base on the locomotor surface; the TR is in open or close space, has force-dynamic impetus parallel to the base.
	b. Resultant state: the TR is on the far side of the LM from its initial position.

LM1 is typically the initial position of the TR while LM2 helps to localize where the TR is.

In short, *below* as a spatial marker designates unique TR and LM without any contact, and the LM is geographically higher than the TR.

4.2. Non-Spatial Meanings and the Meaning Transference Processes From Spatial to Non-Spatial Associated With "Below"

(1) MORE IS UP; LESS IS DOWN.

This metaphor emerges from the Visual space of *below* in which the vertical extension stands for growth in general (*part for whole*). This *metaphonymy* can be seen in the domains of NUMBER, TEMPERATURE, etc. Here are two examples:

(12) He was cruising at just below seventy miles per hour.

(13) Once you get past twenty degrees below zero, it's just about the same.

In sentence (12), the TR is hidden (*the speed of the vehicle that man was using*) and the LM is *seventy miles per hour*. However, sentence (13) explicitly denotes the TR, *minus twenty degrees* (-20), and the LM, *zero degree*. Presenting the TR and LM in two above sentences, we have the following figure.

Figure 8

The First Image-Schema Transformation Associated With "Below"
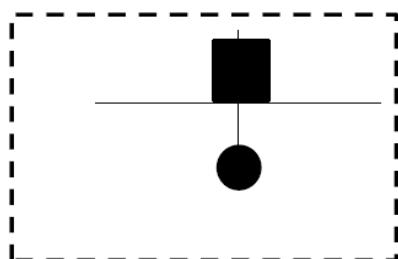
In the domains of NUMBER or FINANCES, it is easy to ascribe numeric values to the TR and LM, making it clear that the LM is often conceptualized as a standard for the TR to be compared with. Sometimes, the LM is rather abstract:

(14) ...to Winsome this year, and temperatures were well below normal.

(15) we'll be able to bring the population below the sustainable level in this particular union...

(16) Another one of these below standard reviews and they 're going to...

Though numbers in general or temperature in particular are easy to describe, *normal temperatures*, the LM in sentence (14), in a place at a period of time in a year, have relative and conventionalized values. The experiences from the sensory systems provide input for such a comparison. The LM in sentence (15) refers to a number priorly mentioned in the text due to the emergence of the article "the".

It can be seen that all the LMs function as the measuring standards, and the lines are purposefully displayed from the TR and LM in order to show that the LM and TR can be presented on a scale.

In light of the constraints set in the conceptual framework, when abstract concepts are construed as concrete entities, there emerge *ontological metaphors*. Look at two following sentences:

(17) Outside the sun dropped below the ridgeline and the shadows slithered in to...

(18) Yeah. I 'm below the Mendoza line.

Sentence (17) denotes a spatial scene in which the TR, *the sun*, is ideally conceived to set below the LM, *the ridge line*. The LM is seen as a line, which is also denoted in sentence (18): *the Mendoza line*. Historically, *Mendoza line* refers to a poor performance of a baseball gamer called Mendoza, and when a player exposes his deficiency as a hitter below 0.215. The second image-schema transformation of *below* can be presented as follows.

Figure 9

The Second Image-Schema Transformation of "Below"
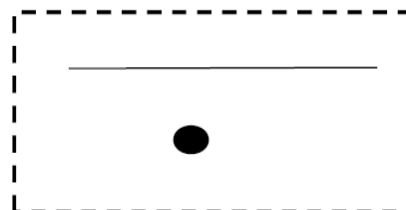
As can be seen, the LM is treated as a line, different from the former version when it is

conceived of as an indeterminate object. Another abstract example is:

(19) He hummed the tune below his breath- and then louder and fuller...

Typically, sound can be measured in decibel, shown in a vertical scale; however, scientists show that sounds travel as a line with changing in pitch, making its graphic illustration ideally look like a sine graph with a horizontal axis.

The mapping of *below* from spatial to non-spatial meanings is summarized in the following table.

Table 6

The Mapping of Below Associated With "MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN"

SPACE domain	Other domains (NUMBER, FINANCE, SOUND)
The TR is lower than and distinct from the LM.	The LM is conceptualized as a par for the TR to be compared with. The TR is lower than the LM in terms of values.

The two words "under" and "below" are also associated with the metaphor "MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN", so what is the difference in such metaphorical usages between them? Supposedly, the answer lies in the way how the LM is construed. The LM of *below* is seen as a "par", a kind of "standard value" for the TR to be compared and contrasted with. In the domain of TEMPERATURE, for example, the phrase "below zero" is quite frequently used. In fact, the *zero Celsius degree* (0°C) is the point below which water turns into ice from liquid. Another example is "below the Mendoza line", discussed earlier. On the contrary, although *under* also emerges in the domain of TIME (AGE), NUMBER, the LM is purely conceptualized as a reference point.

In view of the visual and functional information of *below* associated with the metaphor "MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN", the construal of *below* in this case makes a distinct meaning, termed *Less*. This is in agreement with Tyler and Evans (2003). In short, a non-spatial and metaphorical meaning of *below* (Less meaning) is ignited when humans construe the metaphor "MORE IS UP; LESS IS DOWN".

(2) HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN.

Again, when one entity is presented priorly or higher than another entity, it is construed higher and of greater importance. This is the basic spirit of social status which is also conceived as a ladder. Additionally, this metaphor has its ground basis when a person of lower rank is supposed to express his submission to those of higher rank by bowing, or kneeling down:

(20) Esau Steadman chose a life mate considerably below his family's means and social standing...

In the above sentence, *the wife of Esau Steadman* (TR) is in a lower class than he who belongs to *a family of upper class* (LM). To be more precise, the social status of the marital spouses are contrasted. The frame/domain is SOCIAL HIERARCHY, and the meaning in this case is non-spatial and metaphorical. This usage of *below*, according to Tyler and Evans (2003), facilitates the *Inferior* meaning. The nominal phrase "inferior" denotes the difference in the connotational meaning of this metaphor associated with *under* and *below*. As mentioned, the LM of *under* exerts force on the TR due to the potential contact between the two entities while in case of *below*, there is no such direct force. Perhaps, the lack of contact and the uniqueness between the TR and LM of *below* make the word a better candidate than *under* to denote *social gap*. It is also observed that the LM of *under* associated with this metaphor is construed of potential power/ force on the TR. The mapping of *below* associated with this metaphor is summarized in the following table.

Table 7

The Mapping of Below Associated With "HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN."

SPACE domain	SOCIAL HIERARCHY
The TR is lower than and distinct from the LM.	The TR is lower than the LM in terms of social positions/ power.

(3) TOWARDS THE BEGINNING OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS UP; TOWARDS THE END OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS DOWN.

This metaphor is also mapped from the Visual space of *below*, shown in the following sentence:

(21) The lines below the recipient's name, that which is called…

In this sentence, the LM is *the recipient's name*, which is located closer to the beginning of the domain of WRITTEN DISCOURSE. The use of *below* in the sentence is *spatial* and *metaphorical*. It is spatial because it designates the location of the TR and LM in a

concrete text. It is metaphorical because it denotes an orientational metaphor. However, it is not uncommon to find spoken utterances using *below* like this usage.

As discussed earlier, with regard to *below* in its Visual space, the TR and LM are in no contact; therefore, the TR and LM in a written discourse need not to be located on the same page. This is also a remained salient aspect of *below*.

Again, it is the separation between the TR and LM of *below* that facilitates the meaning in the written discourse domain, and it can be obviously deduced that *under* could not be used in this case.

Table 8

The Mapping of Below Associated With "TOWARDS THE BEGINNING OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS UP; TOWARDS THE END OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS DOWN."

SPACE domain	WRITTEN DISCOURSE
The TR is lower than and distinct from the LM.	The TR appears later than the LM in the discourse.

Three metaphors in which *below* is used both spatially and non-spatially have been presented. In in the third metaphor "TOWARDS THE BEGINNING OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS UP; TOWARDS THE END OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS DOWN", the spatial origin of the usage of *below* can still be traced back. With the first and second metaphor, the virtual LM serves as a standard for the TR to be compared with, thus the degree of abstractness is not complex.

In the following analysis, we present one more conceptual metaphor associated with *below*.

(4) TRUTH IS A HIDDEN OBJECT.

Based on the contextual information from sentence (6) in the discussion of *below* as a spatial marker, it can be seen that *below* can participate in cases where the vision is occluded:

(22) The sheet draped from the overhead rod fell to below her chin, blocking off her view…,

In the above sentence, the TR is *her chin* while the LM is *the sheet* which dynamically moves downwards to occlude the vision of the woman. Our background tells us that the size of the sheet must be big enough to cover the eyes of the woman at least for several seconds. In this

case, the LM and TR are in contact, but the salient aspect is the separation between the chin of the woman (LM) and the sheet (TR), i.e., the bottom of the sheet. Such an occlusion can be seen in the following sentences:

(23) He'd seen dark currents swirling below her polite expression and…

(24) but we both knew what was crackling just below the surface of our conversation…

(25) unsteady breathing and meaning the trembling just below the surface of her calm exterior…

The scene is conceived with *a surface LM configuration* in those sentences. Particularly, the LM in sentence (23) is *her polite expression* while the TR is *dark currents*. Comparing the image-schema in sentence (9) and (23) are to be compared a similar occlusion in which the TR is covered by the LM can be conceptualized. Perhaps, the emergence of the phrase "below the surface of…" in sentences (24) and (25) makes the virtual occlusion meaning of *below* easier to be construed.

Up to now, the analysis in this paper has shown that the non-spatial uses of *below* are more complex than the nominal terms that Tyler

and Evans (2003) advocate. It is again reaffirmed that *an image-based approach* shed light on the meaning transference of the marker, and the spatial meaning of *below* is its prototypical meaning with variants in spaces, two non-spatial meanings of *below* are *Less* and

Inferior.

5. Conclusion

The construal of non-spatial meanings of *below* is summarized in the following table.

Table 9

A Summary of Meaning Transference From Spatial to Non-Spatial of Below

Spatial modalities	Conceptual metaphors	Meanings
1. Visual space		
1.1. The prototypical image complexes	MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN.	Non-spatial meaning
	HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN.	Non-spatial meaning
	TOWARDS THE BEGINNING OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS UP; TOWARDS THE END OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS DOWN.	Spatial and metaphoric meaning
1.2. The first variant when the LM is seen as a line.	TRUTH IS A HIDDEN OBJECT.	Non-spatial and metaphorical meaning

The transference from spatial to non-spatial meanings of *below* can be summarized as follows:

(i) *Below*, as a spatial marker, has one prototypical meaning coded by a pair of image complexes in which the TR is lower than the LM, and there is no contact between them. The first variant in the Visual space is when the LM is seen a surface which occludes the TR. The second variant refers to a topographical distance, which could be presented in a map. The Maneuver and Kinetic Space of *below* designate a clearance in the gap between the TR and LM; and the TR in its movement tends to be further from the LM.

(ii) As a non-spatial marker, *below* is associated with four conceptual metaphors: MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN; HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN; TOWARDS THE BEGINNING OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS UP; TOWARDS THE END OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE IS DOWN; and TRUTH IS A HIDDEN OBJECT.

Of the four metaphors, the construal of the three first metaphors can be processed via the

virtual image-schema without much complexity; however, the construal of the fourth metaphor requires the grounding experience and embodiment. First, the listener must understand denotational meaning of the noun in the prepositional phrase, and then adopt an image-schema based frame to construe the whole prepositional phrase. The degree of abstractness increases from the first to the fourth metaphors.

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CHUYỂN DI TỪ NGHĨA KHÔNG GIAN SANG NGHĨA PHI KHÔNG GIAN CỦA "BELOW"

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Tóm tắt: Bài báo này phân tích hiện tượng chuyển di từ nghĩa không gian sang nghĩa phi không gian của *below* với tư cách là giới từ, trạng từ, và tiểu từ trong khối liệu Anh Mĩ đương đại năm 2017, thể loại: tiểu thuyết. Sử dụng khung kết hợp Hình ảnh đa phương thức và Ẩn dụ tri nhận mở rộng, chúng tôi đã chỉ ra điển nghĩa của *below* có hai biến nghĩa ở thức Hình ảnh và hai nghĩa phi không gian là *ít hơn* và *kém hơn*. Cơ chế của chuyển di nghĩa là ánh xạ mà ở đó những đặc điểm nổi trội thiếu tiếp xúc, lực, và che lấp giữa đạo tử (TR) và vật mốc (LM) được lưu giữ khi kiến giải cảnh phi không gian gắn với *below*.

Từ khóa: below, chuyển di nghĩa, Hình ảnh đa phương thức, Ẩn dụ tri nhận mở rộng

FOSTERING EFL STUDENTS' AUTONOMOUS LEARNING SKILLS THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AT A BILINGUAL SCHOOL

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Abstract: It is universally acknowledged that learners are encouraged to construct their own knowledge through project-based learning as this teaching method reinforces their critical thinking, active learning, independent work, and/or collaboration. This paper, therefore, aimed to investigate how ninth graders at a Ho Chi Minh City-based bilingual school self-evaluated their autonomous learning skills during the use of project-based learning in a Media course. Thirty-five students were involved in responding to a questionnaire and writing diaries, and six of them participated in semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics in terms of mean and standard deviation was opted for processing the quantitative data from the questionnaire while content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data garnered from the interviews and diaries. The quantitative results showed quite high mean scores, i.e., the surveyed students were able to conduct autonomous learning skills during the project-based Media class. The findings further indicated the development of autonomous learning skills (e.g., making plans for project fulfillment, self-overcoming the learning challenges, expressing more ideas, and self-assessing their learning capacity) rated by the participants. However, other skills such as goal setting and self-monitoring remained unchanged.

Keywords: autonomous learning skills, learner autonomy, project-based learning

1. Introduction

It is proven that learner autonomy is one of the best practices in the world of language education. The concept of learner autonomy was described by Holec (1981) as the ability to take charge of one's own learning. It is evident that learners' participation in decision-making process makes the learning more focused and purposeful, and thus entails the immediate and long-lasting effectiveness (Dickinson, 1987; Little, 1991). According to Littlewood (1997), that the traditional teaching approaches which have constrained the students' learning can be minimized when the learners are responsible for their own studies. Additionally, Sun (2013)

asserted that one of the ideal solutions to the assurance of learner differences in case of limited class time and fixed curricula is to equip learners with autonomous learning skills.

Several researchers have viewed project-based learning (PBL) as a key strategy to promote learner autonomy and students' language skills. As a matter of fact, PBL allows students to join learning activities as active and confident participants (Krajcik et al., 1994; Krajcik et al., 1999). With PBL, learners are likely to be more responsible for their own learning and finding solutions to problems regarding real-life contexts. Solomon (2003) and Simpson (2011) pointed out that PBL, as a student-driven and engaging approach to

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learning, helps cultivate students' confidence, autonomous learning and language competence.

Acknowledging the value of learner autonomy in 21st century education, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of Vietnam has attempted to apply different educational policies that have placed a focus on producing more autonomous learning with more active and responsible learners. However, it is found that Vietnamese secondary school students, particularly those at the research setting, have been given little chance to conduct autonomous learning skills in reality. To enhance learner autonomy, hence, PBL is taken into consideration to help students foster their autonomous learning. The current study aimed at investigating the students' self-evaluation of their autonomous learning skills during the use of PBL in a Media course. The research question is formulated as follows.

How do ninth graders at a bilingual school perceive their autonomous learning skills during the project-based Media course?

The current research hopefully cultivates language students' and teachers' awareness of the importance of learner autonomy, especially autonomous learning skills to students' future success. Accordingly, both teachers and students can clearly define their roles and responsibilities in the teaching and learning process. On a broader scale, based on the research findings, school leaders may have a clearer picture of how autonomous learning skills are perceived by students and how they appreciate PBL. They then make a plan for teachers to gain knowledge and skills of such vital issues and have the curriculum reviewed or updated to meet the demands of the present education.

2. Literature Review

Learner Autonomy and Autonomous Learning Skills

Learner autonomy has become influential as a goal of global education for the past decades. Promoted by Holec (1981), learner autonomy refers to the learner's ability to take charge of his or her own learning. The author also confirmed that autonomy is not an innate attribute of learners, and it can be acquired through the systematic and purposeful learning process. Dickinson (1987) adopted Holec's (1981) viewpoint and identified students' responsibility as well as capacity in a similar way. Nevertheless, his given definition is assumed to describe learner autonomy at a higher degree. More clearly, this level of autonomy requires the learners to define their learning objectives and self-evaluate their learning process and goal-attainment without the constraints of formal education. Similarly, Crabbe (1993) stated that "the individual has the right to be free to exercise his or her own choices in other areas, and not become a victim (even unwitting one) of choices made by social institutions" (p. 443). Young (1986) and Freire (1996) followed the same path stating that autonomy refers to not only the capacity of learners but also their freedom to generate the learning possibilities and to carry out choices for the construction of knowledge with no suppression from the others.

Little (1991) defined autonomy as a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action. Alongside students' capacity to carry out their learning independently, psychology also plays a crucial part in this sense. Accordingly, an autonomous learner is one who is aware of his or her role in learning and has the capacity to make independent learning choices, which may be approached then by many metacognitive-focused definitions. As an example, Wenden (1991) concluded that true learner autonomy relates to how students reflect on their learning and how they realize they have effective learning situations. In the same vein, Dam (1995) claimed that autonomous learning cannot be promoted if learners are unaware and unwilling to accept their responsibility for learning. Learner autonomy can be only acquired in case both ability and willingness exist, affirmed by Littlewood (1996).

A number of scholars have attempted to clarify the notion of learner autonomy by identifying the skills which an autonomous learner is capable of. There is a general consensus among the scholars that learner autonomy is the learners' capability of implementing the following four skills or strategies: generating the learning goals,

planning, monitoring and self-evaluating (Dickinson, 1993; Hedge, 2000; Holec, 1981). Together with this indication, autonomous learning skills have been illustrated variously. For instance, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Duong (2020) classified autonomous learning strategies into three primary categories, namely cognitive, metacognitive, and affective or social. The cognitive strategies put an emphasis on learners' memorization and perception whilst the metacognitive relate to their setting goals, planning, monitoring, implementing and evaluating. The affective or social strategies concern the students' participation in communicative interactions such as peer collaboration for task completion.

To increase learner autonomy, learners need to improve a wide range of skills involving goal setting, planning, information searching, organizing and transforming, problem-solving, seeking assistance, monitoring, motivation, self-evaluation, and attention control (Duong et al., 2020; Effeneya et al., 2013; Punhagui, 2019). Such skills are called autonomous learning skills in some studies (Alkandari & Al-Failakawei, 2022; Chiu, 2012; Duong, 2021). Within the scope of this study, autonomous learning skills such as goal-setting, planning, monitoring, self-evaluation, motivation, and attention control are under investigation on the basis of Duong et al.'s (2020) and Duong's (2021) frameworks.

Project-Based Learning

The application of PBL has a long history dating back to the 1890s and 1900s. Moss and Van Duzer (1998) considered PBL an innovative teaching method which engages students in investigating solutions to a problem or developing a product. In the same vein, Thomas (2000) gave a brief definition of PBL that is a model of organizing learning around projects. In other words, PBL underlines a way of learning by the exploration of real-world situations through plural tasks being student-centered, interdisciplinary and integrated, and these features make it different from the traditional methods (Solomon, 2003; Willie, 2001). In another aspect, Bell (2010) claimed that independent thinkers and learners could be created thanks to this crucial strategy. An inquiry is the core idea of this student-driven and teacher-facilitated approach to learning. From

this perspective, learners explore a meaningful question, produce outcomes and build knowledge through different work stages such as designing investigations, planning, implementing appropriate learning strategies, collecting and analyzing data, and sharing ideas. To conclude, PBL is a learner-centered approach that engages the learners in discovering purposeful questions through a process of collaboration and investigation, from which they are able to gain profound knowledge.

There have been a variety of principles for applying PBL which include addressing driving questions to motivate learning, targeting significant learning goals, using projects to promote learning and dedicating sufficient time to PBL (Condliffe et al., 2017). First of all, a high-quality driving question must be feasible, worthwhile, contextualized, meaningful, and ethical. The second principle is associated with determining primary learning aims. That is, a well-designed project necessitates exposing students to key learning concepts and in-depth understanding, and enabling them to promote success skills such as critical thinking, self-reflection and collaboration. The third principle – using projects to promote learning – implies that projects should be central, not peripheral to the curriculum. Regarding the time dedicated to PBL, it is explained that extended and comprehensive investigations need a good deal of time to be conducted, so they should be administered over an extended period for expected outcomes (Ravitz, 2010).

Previous Studies

In order to explore and implement the new educational approaches in the teaching and learning process, many researchers have concentrated more on PBL as an efficient means to help students become more active and independent in learning. Numerous studies (Bell, 2010; Fried-Booth, 2002; Skehan, 1998; Yuliani, 2017) investigated the influence of PBL on learner autonomy. Furthermore, most of the results showed that the use of PBL makes a great contribution to the increase of students' autonomous learning.

Ilhan (2014) carried out a study in a social studies class with the purpose of discovering the efficiency of PBL to primary school students. The participants were required

to deliver an oral presentation on the topic they had learnt. The results of the study revealed that the students exercised their responsibility more often and learned to work as an independent participant. The students exhibited a high level of motivation and were engaged to enhance self-regulation, self-evaluation and social studies understanding as well. In another study conducted by Díaz Ramírez (2014), during the semester, the students produced a magazine with the focus on environmental issues. The findings showed a sign of progress on learner autonomy. Collaboration and intrinsic motivation were encouraged during their work to achieve the agreed goals and to construct the knowledge as well. Interestingly, self-regulation was exhibited when the students managed to overcome failure.

On the contrary, McCarthy's (2010) study aiming at exploring whether learner autonomy was fostered after the implementation of PBL approach revealed that a plenty of research participants were notably unconcerned about exercising autonomous learning. They did not perform much effort and interest in independent language learning. In addition, they wondered why decision-making was their responsibility. Their learning was oriented towards getting credit, so they were content to follow teacher-centered instructions. Nonetheless, the study came to a conclusion that regardless of the slight variation in the attitudes of the learners, PBL is beneficial to the learners and teachers if the learners are made clear of their capacity to work autonomously and to achieve growth in language learning.

In a narrower sense, Le and Ho (2021) explored university students' perceptions of benefits as well as challenges when PBL is applied in ESP classrooms. Sixty-four fourth-year students majoring in Business English at HUTECH university were involved in answering the questionnaire, taking part in the interview, and writing journals. The findings indicated that the benefits of PBL outweighed challenges they encountered. The participants reported their improvement in language and content knowledge, professional skills, sense of responsibility, and motivation. However, there existed some obstacles such as their absence of skills, their current level of English proficiency, and their negative attitude.

In short, PBL has been considered one of the favorable practices to reinforce learner autonomy despite the fact that it could not benefit a small number of learners. It is assumed that students need to invest in their studies for academic achievement (Murray et al., 2004); therefore, it is useful to promote their ownership in learning. A learner with an ownership mindset will take accountability for their work and success. This sense of ownership can be flourished in the PBL-based environment where learners can often address questions and solve problems (Murray et al., 2004; Helle et al., 2006). Consequently, learners are not products of a society, but producers. The project work gives students plenty of opportunities to develop confidence and independence (Fried-Booth, 2002). Bell (2010) echoed all the views on PBL and generalized that PBL brings students far-reaching outcomes, three of which are learning responsibility, independence and discipline. In this study, the researchers endeavored to examine whether adolescents' autonomous learning skills were developed in a PBL-based Media course at a bilingual school which has not been conducted in previous studies so far.

3. Methodology

Research Design

The study employed the explanatory sequential mixed-method design in which a questionnaire and semi-structured interview were included. In the first phase, the quantitative data were collected from the questionnaire and analyzed. In the second phase, the qualitative data were generated from the interview and the diary to support the quantitative results. It is noted that the quantitative and qualitative results were integrated and connected.

Research Site and Participants

The present study was conducted at a Ho Chi Minh City-based bilingual school offering Vietnamese and English programs to three levels from primary to high school. With reference to the Vietnamese program, students are taught according to the program designed by the MOET. For the English program, the school has provided a learning curriculum based on K-12 education standards of American Education Reaches Out (AERO) and common core state standard. It is noteworthy that Media classes are

just for students at pre-intermediate level and above. A semester GPA of each subject will be the total of class performance (40%), mid-term test (30%), and final test (30%). Test papers are applied for all subjects except Media as it is only evaluated on the basis of class performance which is evaluated by the teacher-in-charge.

The participants of the study were 35 out of 69 students in grade 9 who were conveniently chosen. That is, there were two grade-nine classes, and one of the researchers was in charge of the studied class. Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, most of the research participants were at the age of 15 (94.3%). There were 18 males (51.4%) and 17 females (48.6%). Among these 35 students, most of them have studied English for more than 7 years (65.7%). Nearly 50% of the sample spent less than 2 hours for self-study each day and only a few (8.6%) invested more than 4 hours. Regarding the time of project preparation, almost all students (approximately 97%) were able to fulfill the tasks within one month.

The Application of PBL

The Media course of the school is designed to enrich students' knowledge of various aspects such as cultures, geography, science, people or social issues all over the world. More importantly, it is expected to help students develop their English skills and study skills as well. Accordingly, the course exposes students to plenty of practice in reading, speaking and writing skills. Study skills such as

researching, critical thinking, problem solving and self-directed learning are also placed much focus for the development. By this course, each skill area is beneficial to students in different ways. For instance, students are provided with instructions and chances to practice selecting reliable and valuable information from the Internet, which is helpful to their future research endeavors. In order to promote students' speaking and presentation skills, instructions and learning activities are designed to give students exposure to debates, social conversations or speech delivery. Likewise, the writing instruction focuses on both academic and non-academic paragraph writing to help students produce better writing output. For autonomy enhancement, especially, guidance, learning and teaching strategies and classroom tasks bring students to teamwork and problems or situations they are able to overcome by themselves.

The Media course aims to help learners acquire well-rounded knowledge of diverse cultures, customs as well as traditions of people throughout the world, from which learners are able to increase their perception of social issues. Aside from this, it tentatively intends to enhance the learners' autonomous learning and accountability for lifelong learning. The acceptance of responsibility for their own actions would help the learners to easily drive their own lives as well as to become valuable citizens of the global community. The course in this study is scheduled as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Description of the Media Course

Topic	Content	Week
Culture: Ancient China	Overview of ancient China Learning about Chinese dynasties, early civilizations, and ancient inventions **Diary**	1
	Presentation	2
	Studying about religions in ancient China, Introducing Confucius and Lao-tzu **Diary**	3
	Portfolio	4
Geography: Egypt	Exploring location, geographical features of Egypt	5

	How these features affect the economic developments	
	Presentation	
	Introducing climatic features as well as benefits and difficulties to the pace of life	6
	Diary	
	Discovering the biodiversity in terms of plants and animals	7
	How the biodiversity is beneficial to the scientific research and economy	
	Diary	
	Video clip	8
	Video clip	9
Government: Abraham Lincoln	Biography and political life of Abraham Lincoln	10
	Diary	
	Interview	11
	Role-play	12
People: J. K. Rowling	Childhood, life achievement and timeline	13
	Diary	
	Portfolio	14
	Harry Potter	15
	Role-play	16

To collect information for the projects, students were encouraged to make use of the school's e-library resources, cooperated and developed by Gale Cengage Learning. Any other research tools or materials could be used for task accomplishment. Students were only evaluated for class performance based on the criteria agreed by the school teachers, including class attendance, class discipline, presentation and class participation. However, marking can be different as teachers can adapt some criteria that are supposed to be appropriate for their students. Often, students' participation in class was assessed by their contribution to group presentations, writing and projects. These kinds of group work were evaluated by the teacher-in-charge with the rubric. During each week, additionally, special class activities such as individual work, group discussion or debating were employed as tools to assess students' progress.

The students were required to carry out projects according to the following guidelines. Firstly, the students reported their learning experiences in terms of contents learned, tasks, and suggestions for improvement in their diaries during the course. Secondly, the students searched for information to prepare a presentation. After the presentation, the presenters answered the questions raised by the teachers as well as the peers. Thirdly, the students created digital portfolios comprising a collection of artifacts and contents of the lessons. Next, the students recorded the summary of the lessons and made video clips that would be played in class for feedback and suggestions. Following this, the students designed the interview questions based on the lessons learned. They then interviewed 3 or 4 classmates, took notes and shared what they received from the interviews. As for role-play, finally, the students first read a story of famous people and simulated real-life situations. Each group member decided which role they should take. They performed their situations in class.

Research Instruments

The study employed three instruments,

namely a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and diaries for data collection. Based on the theoretical foundation, the questionnaire was generated to scrutinize the students' self-evaluation of their autonomous learning skills with the intervention of the project-based Media course. It was divided into two parts: part A to collect participants' general information and part B including 10 questions involving students' self-evaluation of their autonomous learning. These 10 questions were designed with a 5-point Likert scale (from Not at all true of myself to True of myself).

The semi-structured interview had 5 core questions involving frequency of group meetings during the project, individuals' tasks, strengths and weaknesses relating to autonomous learning skills, and development of these skills. The one-on-one interview was conducted with each individual to gain in-depth ideas or perspectives in relation to autonomous learning skills and PBL. The informants were labeled from I1 to I6 according to the order of the interviews.

The structured diaries were also employed to support the results obtained from the questionnaire and the interviews. In particular, the students needed to reflect what they learned and suggestions e.g., topics/contents, assigned tasks, allotted time, pre-determined plans, strengths and weaknesses, suggestions. The students' diaries were submitted to the teacher on a weekly basis.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the questionnaire, interview questions and diaries were reviewed and consulted by an expert in the field of English language studies before they were delivered to the research participants. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to measure the internal consistency of items. The results show the reliability of the questionnaire as the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was at .90. In terms of language barriers, the language used for collecting the data through the questionnaire, interviews, and diaries was Vietnamese – their mother tongue as the participants may encounter difficulties in expressing themselves in the target language.

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

Before the official data were collected, 3 students were invited to pilot the questionnaire, then some adjustments were made to the questionnaire. After that, the questionnaires were administered to 35 students with some clarifications in Vietnamese to assure students' full understanding. It took them 10 minutes to complete the questionnaires. Next, 6 out of 35 students were invited for one-on-one interviews on a voluntary basis, each of which lasted around 15 minutes. All interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, recorded with interviewees' consent, and transcribed. Diaries were carried out in Vietnamese by all of the 35 participants every week. All responses garnered from the interviews and diaries were translated into English.

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods research used both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data yielded from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS version 25 in terms of mean (M) and standard deviation (SD). The meaning of the mean scores was interpreted as follows: 1.00-1.80: not at all true of myself; 1.81-2.60: slightly true of myself; 2.61-3.40: about halfway true of myself; 3.41-4.20: mostly true of myself; 4.21-5.00: true of myself. Meanwhile, the qualitative data gathered from the interviews and diaries were analyzed on the basis of content analysis. First, the data were read and put in the Excel files. After that, the researchers coded and recorded the data. Finally, the data were categorized and interpreted according to themes. The interviewees were labeled from I1 to I6, and the students' diaries were labeled from the first student (D1) to the last one (D35).

4. Results and Discussion

Results

As shown in Table 2, the overall mean score of students' self-evaluation of their autonomous learning skills was 3.39 out of 5.00 (SD = 1.03). That is, the participants perceived that they were capable of undertaking part of autonomous learning strategies.

Table 2

Students' Self-Evaluation of Autonomous Learning Skills

Item	During the project-based Media class, I can … .	N = 35	
		M	**SD**
1	determine clear learning objectives to achieve them	3.17	1.04
2	set my learning plan whenever each project is given	3.37	.94
3	seek clarification of the learned contents on the Internet when needed	3.91	.95
4	arrange discussions with my classmates outside class to complete assigned projects	3.26	1.22
5	ask for help from my classmates or teacher when facing difficulties in given tasks	3.54	.95
6	strive to complete given tasks on time and in expectation as well	3.29	1.02
7	use in-class and outside class time constructively to complete projects promptly and excellently	3.20	1.05
8	assess my learning capacity based on my strengths as well as weaknesses during teamwork	3.43	1.04
9	monitor my study through diary writing after each lesson	3.31	1.11
10	consistently engage in Media class as I am given more freedom of ideas expression	3.46	.98
	Average	*3.39*	*1.03*

Note: M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation

The quantitative data revealed that most students would "seek clarification of the learned contents on the Internet" when necessary (item 3: M = 3.91; SD = .95) and "ask for help from classmates or teacher" to overcome the learning problems or challenges found during their work (item 5: M = 3.54; SD = .95). The participants admitted of "consistently engag[ing]" in Media class as a result of having "more freedom of ideas expression" (item 10: M = 3.46; SD = .98). Moreover, the students displayed the considerable potential for "assess[ing] [their] learning capacity based on [their] strengths as well as weaknesses during teamwork" (item 8: M = 3.43; SD = 1.04). Nevertheless, there was a doubt in the students' mind about other strategies, especially those in regard to setting goals, planning, monitoring and implementing. By way of illustration, most of them expressed little agreement on the statements that they were able to "determine clear learning objectives to achieve them" (item 1: M = 3.17; SD = 1.04), "set learning plan whenever each project is given" (item 2: M = 3.37; SD = .94) and "monitor [their] study through diary writing after each lesson" (item 9: M = 3.31; SD = 1.11).

Also, participants had an air of uncertainty about their ability to "arrange discussions with [their] classmates outside class" so as to accomplish the tasks given (item 4: M = 3.26; SD = 1.22), "complete given tasks on time and in expectation" (item 6: M = 3.29; SD = 1.02), and "manage time to complete projects properly" (item 7: M = 3.20; SD = 1.05).

The qualitative results gained from the interview reveal that the students could carry out several autonomous learning skills. They set plans to work towards the finished products with a wide range of tasks such as gathering information, assigning particular work and setting deadlines.

> My group and I make a plan which covers the contents necessary to be presented in the project, task assignment for each member and the allotted time. (I1)
>
> We had one week to prepare the script. We made an outline and followed the leader's assignment. It was very hard to remember the script, but I tried my best and practiced more with my friends. (D22)

Moreover, the students actively sought

help from peers, instructors or the Internet when facing troubles. In case of limited class time, they also managed to arrange meetings outside the school. For example, I6 revealed, "sometimes my group members and I gather at one's house, eat and work on some complicated projects like making video clips or role-playing." Some other students (I2, I3, I6, & D4) said that they communicated with each other through social media apps apart from discussions at school. Zalo, Facebook and Instagram were their favorable social networking sites.

With reference to the self-evaluation, there is a consensus among the students that they could self-assess their capacity for learning during group work. In other words, the students knew what their strengths or weaknesses are, from which they could develop or improve.

I am good at speaking skills but cannot communicate with others effectively. My friends always start a conversation. (I3)

I realize I am good at giving presentations as my friends just read words on slides, not explain the provided information. However, I am not good at technology. (I4)

After weeks of hard work, we had the full video. During this time, I think our group has done a great job although sometimes we had some misunderstandings. Being a leader gives me an opportunity to improve my leadership skills. I feel more confident when working with other people and know how to connect people together. (D1)

Given more freedom of speech, the students voiced their ideas more frequently as I5 declared that "it is so exciting that I can present my ideas and express my understanding without any worries."

On the other hand, several students did not use goal setting and monitoring skills. They simply checked whether or not each individual's task was done whilst the quality of products was not paid much attention.

Since the projects are given, group members will be assigned different tasks and try to finish their tasks within given time. Any unfinished task will be cut

when it is about to the submission deadline. (I4)

We come straight to the point – products or performances – to save time. (I5)

This week we presented the culture of Ancient China to the class. We made an outline and each member was in charge of one part of the presentation. With the information I found last week, I could finish my task quickly because I am familiar with PowerPoint. Until the deadline, we combined all parts and edited the presentation. (D22)

Discussion

The present research displayed some positive results. Specifically, learners tried to successfully deal with the difficulties that probably happened during their work in various ways such as making good use of the searching tools or asking for help from their teachers and friends. Also, they strove to complete their parts on time, which is aligned with Bell's (2010) finding which stated that students may be pushed to take their responsibility due to the expectations of their peers. Each member is expected to make equal contributions to the group projects; therefore, he or she must keep on tasks and finish their work promptly. With regard to students' ability to be in charge of their studies, students often practiced planning, implementing and self-evaluating strategies without the direct control of their teacher. These findings are in accordance with those of some researchers (Bell, 2010; Díaz Ramírez, 2014; Yuliani, 2017). The students themselves designed plans, selected appropriate contents, discussed the deadline, searched for materials using technology or other resources, and made a good choice for their products. During group work, they could reflect how well their work was and were aware of their merits or shortcomings.

From the garnered data, however, it was found that very few students did practice in goal setting and monitoring. This matter might lead students to the unreliable self-assessment of their learning outcomes. The fact that goal setting and self-monitoring skills were not exercised by the students in this research can be a consequence of students' insufficient preparation or inexperience in autonomous learning. These

suggested reasons are consistent with Lengkanawati's (2016) position. Accordingly, the students need prolonged training to have effective practice in setting goals and self-monitoring as learner autonomy is an ability that is not innate but could be only acquired through a long process, as stated by Sinclair (as cited in Yuliani, 2017).

5. Conclusion

The findings of the study shed light on the issue shown in the research questions. The study results revealed that students were more autonomous during the project-based Media class. Apparently, they demonstrated a habit of planning and implementing numerous strategies in order to accomplish the final products. In addition, the majority of learners took responsibility for their group work and managed to self-overcome the learning problem. They could further carry out the evaluation of their learning capacity, their finished products and the ones of their peers. Nevertheless, the students showed no practice in the other strategies, including goal setting and monitoring skills. Seemingly, the learners are inexperienced in these two aspects and thus need adequate training and a long process for the development.

In order to help maximize Vietnamese secondary school students' autonomous learning skills and to effectively implement PBL, some pedagogical implications are suggested. Firstly, it is essential to raise teachers and students' awareness of their roles and the benefits of PBL in the teaching and learning process. To do this efficiently, teachers should be provided with more opportunities to approach conferences, training, and up-to-date teaching resources in order that they can grasp primary concerns of education or have successful implementation in their classroom. Likewise, the students must be well-equipped for learning in the PBL-related environment and for undertaking successful independent learning, both inside and outside the classroom; especially, students should be instructed to define clear learning goals and to be self-disciplined. Both school administrators and teachers are really important to make it possible. Teachers ought to show students the objectives of each lesson, guide them to set goals for their own tasks or projects, and control over their work without preventing them from undertaking their independent learning. Teachers also need to inform students of learning objectives at the beginning of each class and seriously supervise their performance. Secondly, PBL has to be made a principal task in the school curriculum and the products students produce ought to be assessed as oral, fifteen-minute or even forty-five-minute tests. Such practice helps students be more engaged in PBL and the learning is more meaningful as well. Finally, school administrators should be aware of the importance of autonomous learning skills and the benefits of PBL approach to learners' success in learning, so they may organize workshops, seminars or training sessions on these aspects. More importantly, they should have the curriculum reviewed or even revised so that it is aligned with learner autonomy enhancement as well as the effectiveness of PBL approach.

The current study still has some limitations; therefore, the following recommendations are drawn for future research. First of all, this study was conducted with the participation of only 35 ninth-grade students at a secondary school, so its results should not be used to make generalizations to other participants with different learning contexts. It will be better if the sample size of further study is enlarged. Second, in spite of the triangulation of data collection instruments, the study results depended much on the perceptions of individual learners, which may leave a distinction between their perceptions and actual behaviors. It was such a distinction that could affect the validity as well as reliability of the research. It is recommended that future study should employ other research instruments such as observations or tests to avoid this limitation. Last but not least, only perspectives of students were explored in this study while the aspects of teachers or school administrators were not. In fact, they can greatly contribute to the development of autonomous learning skills and the success of PBL implementation. For this reason, the future researchers should consider discovering autonomous learning skills and PBL from the perspectives of different stakeholders.

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TĂNG CƯỜNG TÍNH TỰ CHỦ TRONG HỌC TẬP THÔNG QUA PHƯƠNG PHÁP HỌC TẬP THEO DỰ ÁN TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG SONG NGỮ

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Tóm tắt: Phương pháp học theo dự án được biết đến như là phương pháp giúp người học tự tiếp thu kiến thức bởi vì phương pháp này thúc đẩy tư duy phản biện, học tập chủ động, làm việc độc lập và/hoặc làm việc nhóm của người học. Vì thế, nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu mức độ tự đánh giá của học sinh lớp 9 tại một trường song ngữ ở thành phố Hồ Chí Minh về khả năng tự chủ trong học tập sau khi giáo viên sử dụng phương pháp dựa theo dự án trong lớp Media. Dữ liệu được thu thập dựa vào bảng khảo sát và nhật ký của 35 học sinh lớp 9. Ngoài ra, 6 trong số 35 học sinh sẽ được tham gia phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc. Thống kê mô tả (cụ thể là giá trị trung bình và độ lệch chuẩn) được sử dụng để phân tích dữ liệu định lượng thu thập từ bảng khảo sát. Trong khi đó, dữ liệu định tính thu thập từ nhật ký của học sinh và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc được xử lý thông qua phương pháp phân tích nội dung. Kết quả cho thấy rằng những học sinh này có các kỹ năng tự chủ trong học tập. Cụ thể là học có khả năng lập kế hoạch để hoàn thành dự án, tự vượt qua những khó khăn trong học tập, đưa ra nhiều ý tưởng hơn và tự đánh giá năng lực học tập của mình. Tuy nhiên, họ không nhận thấy sự thay đổi ở các kỹ năng khác như thiết lập mục tiêu và tự giám sát.

Từ khóa: kỹ năng tự chủ trong học tập, tự chủ trong học tập, phương pháp học tập theo dự án

EFL STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES
TOWARDS THE USE OF ICT FOR SELF-REGULATION

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Abstract: This survey research aims to examine EFL students' perceptions of using ICT to self-regulate their language learning. A total of 164 non-English majored sophomores at a public university completed a 25-item questionnaire which consisted of six areas regarding goal setting, resources, affection, cultural outcomes, metacognition monitoring, and social connection. The findings indicate participants utilized ICT to manage those aspects of their language learning. In addition, students were excited about using ICT devices to attain objects, control emotions, and manage resources, but less enthusiastic about using technology to engage in social learning and metacognitive monitoring. Several pedagogical implications have been recommended for pedagogists to stimulate students' self-regulation in their language learning.

Keywords: ICT, self-regulated learning, self-regulation, students' perspectives

1. Introduction

The notion of self-regulated learning (SRL) has gained popularity in educational circles as the concepts of lifelong learning and personalized learning gain popularity (Lewis & Vialleton, 2011). It is defined as "an active, constructive process where learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features of the environment" (Pintrich, 2000, p. 453).

The SRL methods of monitoring, goal setting, and controlling are thought to be critical in helping students build a feeling of personal control (Zimmerman, 2000). Control over the learning process is one of the variables contributing to academic achievement (Lewis & Vialleton, 2011). According to Zimmerman (2009), self-regulated learners are more likely to be proactive in pursuing learning goals, which

motivates learners to take command of their learning process. As Zimmerman (2000) claimed, self-regulated learners must have a high level of self-efficacy in their learning activities and a strong commitment to their educational purposes. Learner autonomy and self-regulation (SR) are crucial for students to achieve their learning goals. Learners need to be able to set learning plans, choose resources and techniques, and monitor and assess their learning throughout the learning process. Both frameworks stress active engagement, goal-directed behavior, metacognitive skills, and their inner innovation for themselves to take responsibility for students' own growth. Students' SR results in their complete acceptance of responsibility for their educational decisions. It is known that SR and other online learning features are linked.

The idea of SRL in language learning has expanded with the advent of technological instruments (Pintrich, 2000; Lai & Gu, 2011; Lai, 2013). The potential of Information and

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Communication Technology (ICT) tools for language learning has been discovered in research conducted in technology-enhanced learning environments (Chapelle, 2010), and these potentials have been shown to enrich both formal and informal instructional contexts (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010; Zhang, 2011; Lai, 2013). However, limits on in-class language education make it difficult to incorporate ICT technologies (Zhang, 2011). With the new trend of technology area 4.0, digital devices are utilized to support either teachers or students in managing their teaching and learning processes (Lai & Gu, 2011; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010). Therefore, the use of ICT in SRL processes must be further investigated to untangle the complicated nature of technology usage for SRL (Lai & Gu, 2011; Çelik et al., 2012; Hsiao et al., 2012). This study is an effort to add to the literature on ICT use for SRL. The research question was addressed "What are students' perceptions towards their utilization of ICT to self-regulate their language learning?"

2. Literature Review

2.1. Self-Regulation and ICT Language Learning

ICT technologies have proliferated in educational settings in recent decades, and as a result, theories of self-regulated learning have evolved to emphasize the importance of technology in education. Because of the mandatory online teaching and learning during the Covid-19 outbreak, educational institutions were allowed to adapt by making the most of their technical infrastructure. Students were better prepared to thrive in higher education surroundings. In contrast to universities in the developed world, those in developing nations have been forced to rely on free software like Zoom or Google Meet to deliver course material through live online classes using information and communication technology (ICT) devices like personal computers, laptops, iPads, cellphones, headphones, and microphones. SRL has been recognized for raising students' interests and

motivation in language learning outside of the class (Winke & Goertler, 2008; Lai & Gu, 2011; Çelik et al., 2012; Pham et al., 2021); promoting their metacognitive monitoring (Hirata, 2011; Hisao et al., 2012; Tran & Nguyen, 2020); enhancing students' language skills (Hisao et al., 2012; Ngo, 2019).

The use of ICTs and SRL in EFL has been the subject of several prior overseas studies. Several pedagogists shed light on the use of ICT in fostering language students' SR. They were reported to spend more time self-studying and self-controlling their learning outside the class. In addition, those studies advocate students' positive stimulation towards using digital techniques in their SRL. More than nine hundred EFL beginners were polled by Winke and Goertler (2008) to explore how they utilized and perceived technology to help them improve their language skills in their own time. Researchers found that participants mainly use ICT for pleasure and information gathering, but only a small percentage of their time was spent using ICT to learn a language. Respondents claimed that they were unaware that a quarter (25%) of the technology they use daily could be used to aid in their language acquisition. In another investigation, more than 279 students at the University of Hong Kong were studied by Lai and Gu (2011). The results indicated that many students used technology frequently to enhance their language learning outside of the classroom. Still, there were significant differences in how individuals regulated critical components of their language learning. Therefore, using ICT for SRL requires additional investigations. In recent research by Çelik et al. (2012), EFL students' usage of ICT tools to self-monitor their language acquisition was examined. Participants were 399 university students who were taking a high-intensity English course. A survey found that students were enthusiastic about using ICT to manage their learning materials but less evangelistic about using ICT tools for metacognitive control. Several studies have looked at the influence of individual ICT tools on SRL outside the c ass. Using English-language websites, self-directed English learning was the focus of Hirata's (2011)

study of Japanese students. As a teacher, the researcher directed students through online language resources as part of an experimental design. Students' views regarding Internet use for SR were assessed after a 12-week intervention. According to the findings, web-based learning boosts students' ability to organize, monitor, and evaluate their language acquisition. Similarly, Hsiao et al. (2012) found an association between students' SR levels and their learning results through WebQuest learning with SRL-supported features. The results of 193 sixth-grade students' pre-and post-tests were collected. It was found that WebQuest-based language training that incorporated SRL features might increase the frequency of SRL activity in language learners.

In the Vietnamese teaching context, empirical studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of SRL and ICTs on students' language skills development and explore their perceptions of the integration of SRL and ICTs. The correlation between EFL students' capacity for SR and their listening skills was examined by Ngo (2019). Gender and listening skills were also examined to see whether they affected the language learners' SR of learning habits. The research was conducted using the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, adapted from Pintrich et al. (1991) and given to 38 English-major students at a university in central Vietnam. An appraised listening exam was also used to evaluate the listening skills of the individuals in their second language. The statistics show participants exhibited a moderate degree of SRL, which was correlated with their English listening skills. EFL learners' listening skill was closely linked to metacognitive SR, effort management, and critical thinking. Nevertheless, no gender or ability differences in the subjects' SR Systems are recognized. Another exploration by Tran and Nguyen (2020) was conducted with 100 English-major students using SRL strategies via a closed-ended questionnaire. The findings show that students employed SR strategies for record-keeping and monitoring and requested social

support more frequently. However, SR strategies were claimed to be poorly understood due to their lack of proficiency in their implementation process. The researcher consequently recommended educators should pay close attention to whether their students are aware of SR practices or not to help them become more self-directed learners. More recently, Pham et al. (2021) investigated the correlation among three constructs, namely internet self-efficacy, online self-regulation, and emergency online learning during Covid-19. Data from over 2,000 undergraduates at a Vietnamese institution was mined using a partial least squares structural equation modeling. Students' Internet self-efficacy was shown to be both a direct and an indirect predictor of their ability to take control of their learning, as evidenced by their interactions with course material, instructors, and other students. Students who had a previous online learning experience and those who had not shown substantial disparities in the correlations between the various variables examined in the research. Gender, on the other hand, had no impact on the interactions.

Research on SRL in Vietnam has focused chiefly on language skills and SR practice. However, one area where the potential of ICT tools could be explored further is SRL, an active, constructive process in which learners take the lead in their learning experiences, primarily due to the lockdown of face-to-face EFL classes. The COVID-19 epidemic has also caused difficulty in covering an in-depth understanding of learners' attitudes towards utilizing ICT for their learning regulation. Students' perspectives on SR and ICT capacity are significant aspects of the current body of knowledge, and empirical evidence is being gathered on these themes.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

Academics have offered several theoretical frameworks to explain how students' self-directed usage of technology for language acquisition is affected by various aspects.

Figure 1

Pintrich's (2004) Cycle Model for SRL
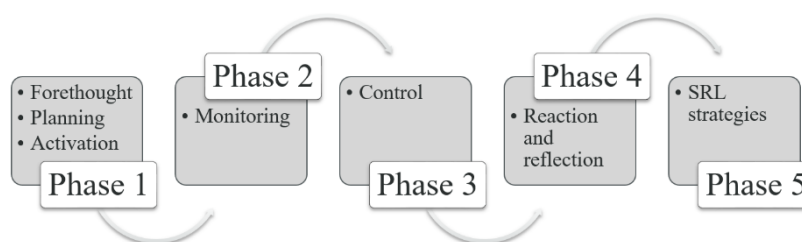
Pintrich (2004) splits the SRL cycle into five parts, as described in Figure 1. A new component is added to his process model, which determines the strategies used by SRL. The critical aspects of SRL are metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, behavioral, and environmental (Pintrich, 2004). Metacognitive control is the ability to plan and monitor progress toward learning objectives. Employing cognitive strategies to search for learning materials and social resources is regarded as Cognitive regulation. Even though those SRL aspects were first grouped, motivational and volitional control approaches were studied independently. The finalized version of the model includes Zimmerman and Pons's (1986) self-regulated learning strategies.
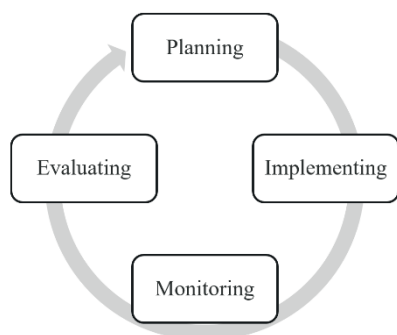
Figure 2

Thronton's (2010) Cycle Model With Recursive Stages for SRL

Thronton (2010) established a model for SRL in light of the idiosyncratic aspects of language learning more recently (Figure 2). Recursive stages are the focus of Thornton's paradigm. The first step is planning, which entails looking at what is needed and what the student already knows, coming up with some objectives, deciding on resources, and then finalizing your strategy. The first two steps

foster the ability to learn. Learners are given the option to study independently or with help from a tutor in phase two. Self-awareness of the language being known and the areas where the learners have deficits is developed during the monitoring phase. Learners may assess and evaluate the possibility that they have met their predetermined objectives in the final stage, the evaluation phase. Self-directed learning of languages is the goal of all of these stages (Thronton, 2010). As these stages of SRL are recursive, they enable learners to reflect on their learning and analyze their progress, and so help learners to maximize their learning experience.

Figure 3

Zimmerman's (2009) Cycle Model for SRL
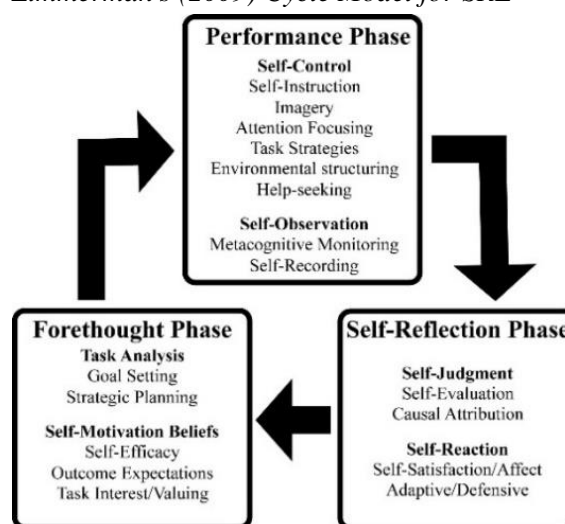
According to Zimmerman's (2009) cycle model, SR is a three-stage self-directed learning process (Figure 3). Forethought, performance, and self-reflection are the stages that occur before, during, and after the learning attempt. Students begin the learning activity analysis process by evaluating their skills and setting goals and strategies for achieving their jobs. In

the second phase, students primarily use self-control and self-observation. Self-management may take several forms, including self-instruction, seeking help, and self-punishment (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2013). As a result, two types of self-observation are implied in terms of self-monitoring (comparison of actions performed or things created using criteria to judge the quality of what is being tried) and self-recording (recording of activities while being conducted to encourage in-depth assessment). Self-reflection is the last phase, which continues the learning process. At this point, students evaluate their progress and generate reasons to support their judgments. One way to do this is to utilize self-assessment tools (Zimmerman, 2009).

Zimmerman (2009) asserts that learners use self-regulation to direct and govern their actions, thoughts, and emotions to accomplish their learning objectives. This researcher recognized the multifaceted characteristics of self-regulation of learning, which encompasses the control and regulation of various components of learning processes, ranging from cognitive to metacognitive to socio-affective to behavioral. Other influential sociocognitive models of SRL suggest the following SRL aspects in terms of meta-cognition regulation (goal commitment, planning, and monitoring), cognition regulation (employing and monitoring cognitive strategies), motivation and affect regulation (monitoring and adjusting affective states, making learning attractive), environment regulation (creating favorable learning environments through seeking various physical and social resources), and behavior regulation (time and effort management). The understanding of self-regulation of its multidimensional nature includes regulating the cognitive, metacognitive, socio-affective, and behavioral processes and conditions that affect learning (Pintrich, 2004; Thronton, 2010). Due to the time restraint, the researchers could not cover all the SRL components. Hence, in this study, the researchers examined how language learners self-regulate several parts of their language learning experience regarding their goal commitment, relationship with the community, out-of-class learning materials, reflection on culture, metacognition control, and tradition control regulation via the use of

technology. Therefore, the model by Zimmerman (2009) with several aspects serves as the theoretical underpinning for the current research.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Instruments

This survey research employed a questionnaire related to the SRL Scale, which was designed based on the theoretical framework of Zimmerman (2009) and adapted from Lai and Gu (2011). In the first part of the survey, students' demographics, learning background, and familiarity with ICTs devices such as computers, laptops, iPad, and the Internet; cell phones or mobile phones; headphones, and microphones were required. For the questions related to their studying with ICT equipment, open space was delivered for students to share their experiences with some digital applications to learn English. The second section of the questionnaire consisted of 25 Likert-scale items split into six components in the SRL Scale on the attitudes of students regarding using ICT resources in their language learning activities, namely Social Connection (item 17, 21), Culture Outcomes (item 7, 25), Metacognition Monitoring (item 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 23), Affection (item 2, 3, 4, 9, 22, 24), Resource (item5, 10, 11) and Goal Setting (item 1, 6, 8, 13, 15). The responses ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" on a five-point scale (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree). The questionnaire was designed and delivered to other English lecturers at the institution for feedback and editing (Lai & Gu, 2011). The questionnaire was given to students at the beginning of semester 1, the school year 2021-2022.

3.2. Participants

The current study was conducted with 164 second-year non-English major students from different backgrounds at a public university in Vietnam. They were reported to complete General English 1 to continue their following English credit. Hence, they were regarded to be at a pre-intermediate level of proficiency. Since English was a compulsory subject at the university, they only attended two English

classes per week, one of which lasted 135 minutes. The textbook they need to achieve is Market Leader, published by Pearson.

3.3. Data Analysis

SPSS Statistics 22 was utilized to examine students' perceptions of using ICT in language learning activities with confirmatory factor analysis. This structural equation model looks at the relationships between measurable and latent variables (Brown & Moore, 2012). From the calculated statistics, the questionnaire may consistently assess ICT for SRL. In addition, internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's Alpha of 0.89, which could ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire (Dörnyei, 2007). This study utilized independent sample t-tests and variance analysis to explore the associations between language acquisition, demographic characteristics, and technology usage for SRL and SR.

4. Findings

After completing the questionnaire, the data will be analyzed and evaluated to answer the research question.

4.1. Students' Background

According to Table 1, 96 males (58.5%) and 68 females (41.5%). Forty-two individuals accounted for 25.6%, who had learned English for three or five years, 89 students (54.3%) for six or seven years, and 33 ones (20.1%) for eight years and onwards. In addition, 62.2% of participants reported dedicating from one to three hours per day to self-study with ICT, followed by 29.9% with 4-5 hours, and 7.9% with less than an hour.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic and Learning Habits

No.	Information	Classification	N = 164	
			Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
1	Gender	Male	96	58.5
		Female	68	41.5
2	Age	19-20 years old	105	64
		21-24 years old	59	36
3	English learning experience	3-5 years	42	25.6
		6-7 years	89	54.3
		More than eight years	33	20.1
4	Time for self-studying with ICT per day	Less than 1 hour	13	7.9
		1-3 hours	102	62.2
		4-5 hours	49	29.9
5	Technology tools	Computers/ laptop/ iPad and Internet	160	97.6
		Cellphones	164	100
		Headphones and microphones	128	78

More than 97% of participants owned or had easy access to ICT with computers/ laptops/ Ipad and the Internet, 100% mobile phones, and 78% headphones and microphones. Owing to some students' reports in the open-ended questions, they added Learning Management Systems (LMS), Zoom, Meets, and even Zalo to exchange learning information with peers and teachers.

4.2. Students' Perceptions Towards the Use of ICT for SR

Data analyzed from the second questionnaire demonstrates students' attitudes towards implementing ICT for their SRL. Six categories related to the SRL framework were employed, and their ranks were displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Students' Types of ICT Use for SRL

No	Categories	Mean	Std.
1	Social Connection	3.02	1.21
2	Culture Outcomes	4.51	0.83
3	Metacognition Monitoring	3.76	0.8
4	Affection	4.42	0.84
5	Resource	4.62	0.86
6	Goal Setting	4.69	0.87

The factor analysis indicates the variation in their use of technology for language acquisition can be explained by six independent factors. Goal setting was the highest-ranked component (M=4.69, SD=0.87), followed by Resource (M=4.62, SD=0.86), Culture outcomes (M = 4.51, SD = 0.83), Affection (M = 4.42, SD = 0.84), Metacognition monitoring (M = 3.76, SD = 0.86), and Social connection (M=3.02, SD=1.21) respectively.

Concerning the areas of goal setting, 80.5% of participants said that they could accomplish their English learning objectives promptly and effectively. Additionally, 79.9% and 78.9% of respondents were aware of the role of ICT not only in helping them to attain their English learning objectives but also in sustaining their interests while pursuing those goals. Following that was their awareness of the need to define sub-goals throughout the English learning process (71.2%) and provide students with an opportunity to succeed with the objectives. Among the characteristics of goal commitment, approximately a third of students assumed and disputed that technology may develop and raise the chances of assisting them in achieving their objectives. In terms of Resource items, an average of 74.3% favored

ICTs when they helped them obtain access to appealing and informative learning materials outside the class; consequently, they acquired more experience with ICT. In terms of cultural results, the majority of participants claimed to use ICT to find cultural values, whereas an average of 13.85% admitted to no cultural activities. The next rank was Affection, with the most considerable frequency of respondents selecting amusement and relaxation motives (78.4%), but slightly more than half claiming to use ICT for English study. Metacognition Monitoring was ranked fifth, allowing the researchers to identify better how students use ICT to govern their SRL metacognitively. Over 77.7% of students were aware of using ICT to accomplish their learning objectives at a particular stage. Furthermore, most students were conscious of their learning environment and could choose and use relevant ICT to address their learning deficits. Students' satisfaction with ICT use, their actions toward adjusting their English goals through ICT use, their intention to use relevant materials outside of class through ICT use, and their intention to use appropriate tasks outside of school through ICT use were calculated to be 65.4%, 57.4%, 55.9%, and 51.8%, respectively. The lowest score was for items related to social connection, indicating students' reluctance to use ICT to interact with English speakers.

The statistics provided the researchers with a picture of students' attitudes towards using ICT for SRL. The following is the discussion on what was found in this study with other relevant findings in implementing ICT for SRL.

5. Discussion

5.1. Students' Background

The participants acknowledged utilizing technology to control language acquisition. Since high school, students have had several specific experiences using ICT to learn English. Furthermore, all students had to attend virtual classes due to the country's lockdown. ICT was employed to serve educational purposes; hence, they spent more time using digital devices during their learning process. The result echoes Ngo (2019), Tran and Nguyen (2020), and Pham et al.

(2021). After online learning amid Covid-19, many students used digital dictionaries and read and commented on their classmates' and friends' walls in the target language. They also watched YouTube videos, read online news, and sent SMS or emails to their classmates and friends in the target language, among other activities. When distance classes have become popular, and students gradually get acquainted with online learning, students are obliged to use ICT for studying purposes. From open space for other ideas in section 2 of the questionnaire, students reported they had to attend much more online conferencing, Learning Management System (LMS), etc. than ever before. They stated that they had had no previous experience with Web 4.0 technologies like that. Participants' understanding of different technologies for language learning was likewise inadequate. Despite their regular use of popular communication technologies, the participants did not know how to perfect their language acquisition. With insufficient expertise about how to utilize technology, particularly communication tools, for language acquisition, the participants in this research mirrored prior studies' technical characteristics in Winke and Goertler (2008), Zhang (2011), and Lai and Gu (2011).

5.2. Students' Perceptions Towards the Use of ICT for SRL

The six aspects of technology-enhanced SRL were used to improve social connections with native speakers and other peer learners worldwide, encourage oneself to persevere and commit to a learning goal, seek out and expand learning resources, and improve cultural competence understanding. The finding is in line with several studies discussed in the literature (Winke & Goertler, 2008; Hirata, 2011; Lai & Gu, 2011; Çelik et al., 2012; Hsiao et al., 2012; Ngo, 2019; Tran & Nguyen, 2020; Nguyen, 2021). It could be explained that using technology was quite well-received and well-integrated into the cycle of all six components. Participants reported using technology to explore actual language usage opportunities, gain cultural knowledge, and expand their social networks. Using technology to create engaging learning environments has also been documented. Besides, students were encouraged to examine their present language ability level actively. It was less optimistic, though, when it came to utilizing technology to communicate with native speakers and peers throughout the globe.

In terms of Goal Setting directly affecting student motivation, the analysis demonstrates that students were driven to attain their goals. The statistics illustrate that most students think ICT may help them learn a language. This conclusion supports, in part, the findings by Hirata (2011), Lai and Gu (2011), Ngo (2019), and Nguyen (2021), which respectively demonstrated the impacts of ICT on students' automated processes. Reasonably, students may learn languages faster and more successfully when using ICT. They discovered in their study that students' positive views of ICT for goal commitment management are linked to the technology's ability to provide diverse information sources and interactional possibilities.

Students had complete contempt for using ICT to link with others and learn about the target culture for academic objectives. Survey respondents were categorized into two groups based on their use of ICTs or not, including connecting with native speakers of the target language and secondly with other language learners globally for support and encouragement. Although one of the primary features of digital settings is the ability for learners to connect with native speakers, this study discovered that the majority of EFL learners do not fully use this potential. The first possible explanation might be that just a tiny number of EFL learners displayed high levels of second language preparation for interpersonal communication. Secondly, it could be explained by students' limited use of ICT for communicating with native speakers and other students that they are unconscious of its critical role in language learning, leading to the conclusion that students' awareness should be raised through explicit instruction and strategy training, which supports the findings in Pintrich (2004); Dabbagh and Kitsantas, (2013) and Ngo (2019).

Concerning the Affection component, it is essential to control one's emotions. It is undeniable that affection like effort and persistence are linked to self-regulated learning.

The students expressed positive attitudes towards using ICT tools for affection and resource management. In addition, almost all the students commented they used ICT resources to make language learning more appealing. It is in line with Pham et al.'s (2021) results that ICT tools may facilitate self-regulated learning by connecting learners to abundant resources. Some students claimed that ICT technologies might be used to create an atmosphere for learning outside of class, proving the validity of this assumption which supports Lai's (2013) finding. However, the relatively low rank of social connection compared with the other aspects disagrees with Lai and Gu (2011), which revealed students' attention to developing their social relationships. It could possibly be explained that the participants were used to seeking lesson content with ICT by themselves, rather than asking for help from others and developing communication skills. As a comparison, this might reveal the differences between English and non-English majors students, which were analyzed by Pham et al. (2021).

The results show students ranked metacognitive processes with ICT quite at low frequency. The statistics indicated that EFL students felt ICT had a less impact on metacognitive control than emotional or resource management. Nearly a third of all the participants were unclear or disapproved of the utility of using ICT to track their own academic progress. It is indicated they had little knowledge of utilizing ICTs to improve language skills. This study's findings on students' attitudes toward using ICT to manage metacognitive components of language learning highlight the importance of strategy training in language acquisition. Students should be encouraged and supported to employ ICT tools with metacognitive practices, which Çelik et al. (2012) and Lai and Gu (2011) recommended in their studies. This aid may include metacognitive strategies, ICT resource information, and guidance on using technology to study a foreign language outside of the classroom.

6. Conclusions and Implications

Using SRL as a theoretical framework, this study discovered that participants' technical profiles matched earlier research, indicating that language learners utilize ICT tools to govern their learning activities. The findings reveal that EFL students use ICT to regulate a variety of aspects of their language learning process, including Social Connection, Culture Outcomes, Metacognition Monitoring, Affection, Resource, and Goal Setting. As a result, previous studies that demonstrated positive perceptions and interaction with ICT for emotional regulation are supported by this study. Using ICT, students may learn at their own pace and their level. In this way, ICT may help students enjoy and relax while learning a language, thereby preserving their interest and enthusiasm. Learners have access to a broad variety of resources they may choose according to their needs and preferences via ICT. As a result, they will be able to help students better manage their resources. This study found that EFL students used ICT for metacognitive and social control less than other aspects of SRL. However, there is still an emphasis on the necessity for EFL students to get strategy training and participate in awareness-raising activities.

However, this investigation still has restrictions. The majority of participants in this research are not English majors, and there is an imbalance between the sexes. Second, owing to the small sample size, the results of this research should not be extrapolated too far. Third, because just the questionnaire was used to assess participants' SRL, it is possible that some students did not read, question, or evaluate answer options prior to submitting their responses. Future research may incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews to understand how students manage their language acquisition. Students enrolled in EFL programs should become familiar with ICT for SRL, particularly metacognitive techniques. Consequently, language learners will be more aware of the need to manage social connections and cultural learning. In this context, the application of ICT to discover and engage with a target culture is referred to as "culture learning regulation." Teachers should additionally educate students on the value of cultural knowledge in language learning to increase their consciousness. Students may benefit from adopting ICT such as online chat or email for

cultural studies by increasing intercultural participation. Students may benefit from an understanding of cultural distinctions. In addition, further research might recruit students from a broader range of academic disciplines and employ a random sample approach to find a better match between study participants and the intended audience for more reliable and believable findings.

More longitudinal and experimental researches are needed to determine the relationship between SRL and genuine language acquisition using self-reported data. Further research on the effect of strategy education on self-directed language learning is additionally warranted.

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Appendix

	Items	SA/A (%)	NS (%)	SD/D (%)
1	ICT plays an integral part in maintaining my passion for achieving the English learning goals	78.9	6.7	14.4
2	ICT makes English learning more attractive	77.1	7.3	15.6
3	ICT makes me spend more time learning English	60.2	15.3	24.5
4	ICT enables me to regain my passion for resisting learning English	73.3	9.5	17.2
5	ICT enables to expand of learning resources	73.2	10.1	17.7
6	ICT enables me to reach English learning goals in learning English	79.9	7.2	12.9
7	ICT enables me to find information on language and culture	75.1	13.5	11.3
8	ICT enables me to achieve English learning goals quickly and efficiently	80.5	6.3	13.2
9	ICT maintains my passion for learning English	76.9	7.6	15.5
10	ICT enables me to increase learning experience outside the class	72.5	9.7	17.8
11	I search for attractive language learning materials and experiences delivered by ICT	77.3	11.0	11.8
12	I know how to use ICT to effectively monitor myself to achieve the learning goals at each stage	77.7	13.5	8.8
13	ICT creates and increases opportunities to help achieve my goals	70.9	10.7	18.4
14	I plan to learn tasks to do outside of school that involve the use of ICT	51.8	18.8	29.4
15	I set sub-goals for the next stage of learning in the light of how much I can understand and produce when using ICT to acquire information or communicate with others	71.2	7.6	21.2

16	I plan relevant materials to do outside of school that involve the use of ICT	55.9	16.6	27.5
17	ICT enables me to connect with English native speakers	58.3	10.5	31.2
18	When I feel bored with learning English, I use ICT to entertain and increase the enjoyment	78.4	7.2	16.5
19	I am satisfied with the way I use ICT to help myself continue to reach my goals	65.4	13.5	31.4
20	I adjust my English learning goals using ICT	57.4	13.2	29.4
21	ICT enables me to search for encouragement and support from other English learners	57.1	14.2	28.7
22	ICT makes me enjoy learning English more	71.7	10.2	18.1
23	For the areas that I am weak in, I know how to select and use appropriate ICT to improve the areas	68.1	13.7	18.2
24	ICT makes my English learning a relaxing process	75.8	11.4	12.8
25	ICT enables me to understand and appreciate the target culture better	73.4	10.2	16.4

QUAN ĐIỂM CỦA SINH VIÊN TIẾNG ANH TRONG VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CÔNG NGHỆ THÔNG TIN ĐỂ TỰ ĐIỀU CHỈNH VIỆC HỌC TIẾNG ANH

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu khảo sát này nhằm mục đích tìm hiểu nhận thức của sinh viên học tiếng Anh đối với việc sử dụng công nghệ thông tin (CNTT) để tự điều chỉnh việc học tiếng của họ. 164 sinh viên không chuyên năm thứ hai tại một trường đại học công lập đã hoàn thành bảng khảo sát gồm 25 mục liên quan đến khả năng tự điều chỉnh mục tiêu, tài liệu học, điều tiết cảm xúc, mục tiêu văn hóa, giám sát siêu nhận thức và kết nối xã hội. Kết quả cho thấy sinh viên sử dụng CNTT trong việc học ngoại ngữ. Ngoài ra, sinh viên hào hứng với việc sử dụng các thiết bị CNTT để tiếp cận đối tượng, kiểm soát cảm xúc và quản lý tài nguyên; nhưng ít hào hứng với việc sử dụng CNTT để học tập xã hội và giám sát siêu nhận thức. Nghiên cứu cũng đưa ra một số đề xuất sư phạm nhằm kích thích khả năng tự điều chỉnh của sinh viên trong việc học ngôn ngữ.

Từ khóa: CNTT, học tập tự điều chỉnh, tự điều chỉnh, quan điểm của sinh viên

VIETNAMESE EFL COLLEGE STUDENTS' SENSITIVITY TO THE ENGLISH MASS-COUNT DISTINCTION

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Abstract: This paper examines how Vietnamese learners of L2 English interpret the English mass-count distinction. In a picture-based judgment experiment, sixty-two college students learning English as their L2 made judgments that reflect their sensitivity to the English mass-count distinction and morphosyntax-semantics mappings. The findings indicate that Vietnamese learners of L2 English correctly based their judgments on number for count nouns (e.g., *cup*) and object-mass nouns (e.g., *furniture*), and on volume for substance-mass nouns (e.g., *milk*). In addition, Vietnamese learners performed at chance level with English flexible nouns, i.e., nouns that are interpreted as count in the presence of the plural marker *-s* and as mass in its absence. Furthermore, no significant correlation was found between learners' L2 proficiency scores and their judgments. Taken together, these findings suggest that Vietnamese college students are insensitive to the morphosyntactic cues of English flexible nouns when interpreting their meaning. Such insensitivity might be due to L1 effects and can be independent of L2 proficiency.

Keywords: mass-count distinction, morphosyntax-semantics mapping, Vietnamese, quantity judgment, L2 acquisition

1. Introduction

Recent research on second language acquisition (SLA) has seen a growing interest in understanding the interfaces between the linguistic system and different grammar modules of the second language (L2) learner, such as syntax-semantics, syntax-morphology or morphology-phonology. In particular, there has been considerable emphasis on exploring L2 learners' ability to correctly map morphosyntactic elements onto their corresponding semantic interpretations, especially when the learner's first language (L1) is devoid of such mapping. To date, the majority of L2 research on the morphosyntax-semantic interface is primarily done in the aspectual domain (i.e., the acquisition of tense-aspect system, cf. Montrul & Slabakova, 2002).

As far as nominal domain is concerned, focus has mostly been directed to the L2 acquisition of article semantics and plural markings on noun phrases in different semantic contexts. For instance, L2 learners of English whose L1 lacks an article system are found to frequently map the English articles (*a/an, the, Ø* or the null article) to incorrect semantic features (Ionin et al., 2004; Nguyen, 2017; Nguyen, 2018). Another topic of great concern in this domain is the relationship between morphosyntactic marking plural *-s* and semantic interpretation involved in the English mass-count distinction and how L2 learners interpret such relationships. In this area, an interesting question could be raised as to whether L2 learners of English whose L1 is devoid of the plural marking *-s* can encode the English mass-count contrast on the basis of morphosyntactic knowledge.

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Nevertheless, studies exploring L2 knowledge of morphosyntax-semantics mapping in the mass-count distinction are, unfortunately, quite rare. One of the earliest attempts to answer the question raised above is Inagaki (2014) whose goal was to test L1 Japanese-L2 English adult learners' sensitivity to the syntax-semantics mapping for the mass-count distinction. Yin and O'Brien (2018) is another recent study that examined the morphosyntax-semantics mapping with Chinese-English bilingual adolescents. Both of the aforementioned studies involve participants whose L1s lack a mass-count distinction and the corresponding obligatory number marking (Cheng & Sybesma, 1999; Muromatsu, 2003) and L2 English proficiency level are quite advanced. None of these studies deal with L2 speakers whose level of English proficiency is intermediate or lower-intermediate.

The present study is motivated by two reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of similar research into how Vietnamese learners of English can encode the target-like mass-count distinction based on plural marking *-s* when Vietnamese is devoid of the parallel mapping. Secondly, little is known about whether L2 proficiency contributes to the variability in L2 learners' sensitivity to morphosyntax-semantics mapping. The present study is thus expected to contribute more empirical data to the existing SLA literature regarding this nominal domain.

2. Literature Review

The mass-count distinction is traditionally assumed to be largely based on their respective ontological features in which homogeneous substance is generally denoted by mass nouns (e.g., *water*) whereas discrete and individuated objects are represented by count nouns (e.g., *dog*). There are a number of ways in which a language can encode this distinction in its morphosyntax. English, for example, allows pluralization via plural marker *-s* for count nouns (e.g., *dogs*) but not for mass nouns (e.g., **waters*). In addition, English mass nouns and bare plural nouns can be used to denote kinds (e.g., *I like water and I like dogs*), in contrast to bare singular count nouns which cannot denote kinds (e.g., **I like dog*). Furthermore, English

count and mass nouns co-occur with different types of determiners (e.g., quantifiers such as *many/few* and numerals are permitted for count nouns while only quantifiers such as *much/little* can be used for mass nouns).

Vietnamese, on the other hand, differs from English in a number of respects. To begin with, Vietnamese does not explicitly mark the mass-count distinction with a plural morpheme as seen in English, and head nouns in Vietnamese are generally treated as mass nouns (Chierchia, 1998). In addition, Vietnamese has a generalized classifier system in which a noun must always be preceded by a classifier before it can be quantified (the syntactic order being numeral + classifier + noun). Classifiers are required to enable counting for all nouns and the lack thereof would automatically result in ill-formedness, as illustrated in (1) below:

(1)   Ba   trái   táo   Vietnamese
       Three CL   apple
       'Three apples'   English
       *Ba   táo   Vietnamese
       Three apple
       'Three apples'   English

Nevertheless, a difference exists in the type of classifiers that can go with mass nouns and count nouns such that count classifiers serve to name partitioning units for nouns, while mass classifiers create such units. Hence, Vietnamese seems to encode the mass-count distinction through its classifier system in contrast with English where it is morphologically reflected. The difference between Vietnamese and English regarding morphosyntax-semantic mapping for the mass-count distinction might present considerable challenges to Vietnamese L2 learners of English.

In addition, we need to mention the fact that while it might be tempting to think the mass-count distinction is a mere syntactic coding of the object/substance difference, there is in fact a lack of a clear reduction of count and mass nouns into representations of objects and substances. Mass nouns like *jewelry* or *furniture* are used to refer to (collections of) individuals, as opposed to substance (Bale & Barner, 2009; Chierchia, 1998). Count nouns such as *line* or *twig* are used to talk about homogenous entities in the sense

that any arbitrary subpart of a twig is a twig, just as an arbitrary subpart of water is water. These instances further blur the semantic distinction between count and mass. Indeed, the entities that can be described with a plural count noun (e.g., *shoes, coins, ropes*) can also be described with a mass noun (e.g., *footwear, change, rope*), again demonstrating that the grammatical mass-count distinction does not align neatly with the ontological object-substance distinction. A question naturally arises, which is whether we can arrive at a unified semantic representation from which we construct the meanings of both count and mass nouns. The answer to this question proves crucial in any attempt to understand how language learners, children and L2 learners alike, acquire the mass-count distinction and its encoding in a language.

2.1. Theories of Mass-Count Distinction

In early semantic work such as Quine (1960), count and mass nouns are distinguished on the basis of individuation and cumulativity. Specifically, Quine noted that while count nouns provide the logical structure required for individuating entities and tracing their identity through space and time, mass nouns fail to provide principles of individuation. Adopting a similar view, Link (1983) argued that only count nouns refer to individuals or 'atoms', and Wisniewski et al. (1996, p. 271) believe language users should 'conceptualize the referents of count nouns as distinct, countable, individuated things and those of mass as non-distinct, uncountable, unindividuated things'. We can summarize the Quinian theory of mass-count distinction in (2) below:

(2)   a. count noun → individual

        b. mass noun → non-individual

In addition, Quine noted that mass nouns have the property of cumulative reference. For example, given a mass noun such as *water*, it is true that 'if a is water and b is water then a and b taken together are water'. Given a count noun such as *dog*, however, it does not follow that 'if a is a dog and b is a dog then a and b taken together are a dog'. It follows from this analysis that a mass noun is cumulative, while a count noun is non-cumulative. In a similar spirit, Cheng (1973) argued that the meaning of words like *water* are crucially distinct from words like

dog in another aspect which is coined divisity. For example, if c is water and a and b are two parts that make up c then a is water and b is water. On the other hand, if c is a dog and a and b are parts that make up c, it does not follow that a is a dog and b is a dog.

Using Boolean algebras, Link (1983) proposed a formal account of the above conceptual properties of the mass-count distinction. In this analysis, nouns like *dog* denote a set of atoms (objects without subparts) while nouns like *water* denote a set that is closed, both upwardly and downwardly, under the 'part-of' relation (i.e., if the elements a and b are members of the denotation, then any element c that is part of a or b is a member of the denotation; and any element c that is the combination of a and b is also a member of the denotation). These general properties are said to hold true whether the count or mass nouns are abstract or concrete. Singular count nouns always denote a set of atoms while mass nouns have denotations that are divisive and cumulative and hence do not contain atoms.

Some challenges have been raised to this Quinian analysis of mass-count distinction based on cumulativity or divisity. First of all, this cumulativity of reference fails to distinguish mass nouns from plural count nouns: 'if the animals in this camp are horses and the animals in that camp are horses then the animals in the two camps are horses' (Gillon, 1996). Secondly, while count nouns uniformly have atomic denotations, mass nouns can vary in which some such as *milk* or *happiness* do not have atoms in their denotation while others such as *equipment* and *furniture* do. Taking a departure from the Quinian analysis, Gillon (1996) proposed that all mass nouns are linguistically unspecified for whether they can be individuated or not. An examination of the world would tell one that *furniture,* despite being linguistically non-specified, denotes individuals while *water* does not. In light of this theory, mass-count flexibility observed with nouns such as *rope* or *string* can also reveal the denotation of mass nouns. A mass noun's "conversion to a count noun requires that its denotation must be such that it has minimal parts, or atoms" (p. 28). Thus, any term that can be used in either mass or count syntax (e.g., *string/strings*) must denote individuals in its mass realization.

2.2. The Quantity Judgment Paradigm

Reluctant to defining the mass-count distinction in terms of both syntactic and semantic criteria, Barner and Snedeker (2005) believed that the task of characterizing the mass-count distinction can be made possible by looking at quantity judgment data. They observe that in some languages that have a syntactic mass-count distinction such as English, some mass nouns can have countable atomic denotations. Mass nouns such as furniture and equipment permit quantity judgments based on number in comparative sentences whereas nouns such as water and mud do not. For instance, speakers of English judge sentences in (3a) and (3b) based on the numbers of items possessed by each person. Even if John only has three small chairs, four small side tables and a small couch whereas Mary has two giant chairs and a huge couch that weighs more than all of John's items taken together, John still has more furniture than Mary.

(3) a. John has more furniture than Mary.

b. John has more chairs than Mary.

c. John has more mud than Mary.

In contrast, nouns with non-atomic denotations such as mud in (3c) never permit comparison by number, even when suitable portions for counting are given and illustrated. If John has five small buckets of mud while Mary has one huge bucket, Mary is judged to have more mud as long as her bucket contains a greater mass or volume of mud, despite the fact that John has a greater number of portions.

Bale and Barner (2009) argued for a methodology which they often deployed in their experiments to test the semantic interpretation of mass and count nouns relying on quantity judgments as shown in Figure 1 below (cf. Barner & Snedeker, 2005; Barner et al., 2008). This method has helped to establish a number of interesting patterns underlying object-mass nouns and the mass-count shifting (i.e., mass nouns that permit individuation depending on contexts, e.g., *string/a string/strings, stone/a stone/stones*).

Figure 1

Images Depicting Stimuli in Quantity Judgment Task (Barner & Snedeker, 2005)

(Who has more stone/s?) (Who has more string/s?) (Who has more paper/s?)
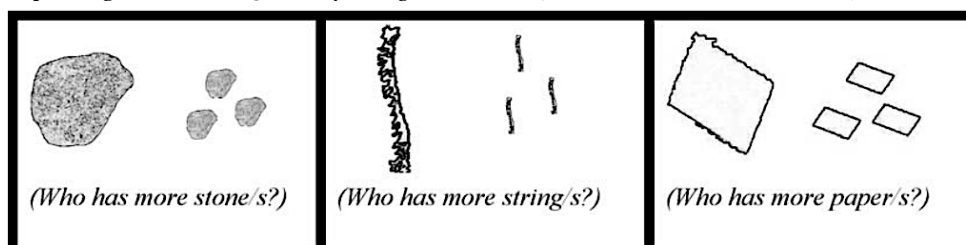
Specifically, the same noun in the same context yields different methods of comparison when used as a mass noun versus a count noun. Consider the examples in (4) and (5) taken from Bale and Barner (2009).

(4) a. Esme has more ropes than Seymour.

b. Esme has more strings than Seymour.

c. Esme has more stones than Seymour.

(5) a. Esme has more rope than Seymour.

b. Esme has more string than Seymour.

c. Esme has more stone than Seymour.

Evaluating the truth or falsity of the sentences in (4) requires counting the number of ropes, strings, and stones, while doing so in (5) requires comparing the length, mass, volume or area associated with the rope, string, or stone. In one and the same context, sentences in (4) could be true while the ones in (5) could be false.

This quantity judgment task has been used in a growing number of studies to address the empirical challenge of defining and interpreting the mass-count distinction. As empirical inquiry expands, a number of studies have extended this task paradigm to exploring the nature of mass-count distinction in a number of languages other than English, and a few among which have attempted this method to examine the L2 acquisition of mass-count distinction in some learner populations. The following section offers a dissemination of such studies.

2.3. Mass-Count Knowledge in Second Language Acquisition

Research into L2 acquisition of mass-count distinction is much less diverse compared to L2 acquisition of other nominal knowledge. There are broadly two lines of research in this area: one is to look at the morphosyntax-semantics mapping in relation to the mass-count distinction, and the other is to examine L2 learners' sensitivity to the morphosyntactic properties of count versus mass nouns such as the plural morpheme -s and quantifiers. Given the scope and objectives of this study, this section focuses on reviewing the first one only.

Inagaki (2014), adopting the quantity judgment paradigm mentioned above, tested L1 Japanese-L2 English adult learners' sensitivity to the syntax-semantics mapping for the mass-count distinction. In their stimuli, the volume and number of objects/portions of substance were manipulated and participants were to judge which side has more objects/substance, assuming the quantity for count nouns depends on number and for mass nouns on volume. Interestingly, one of the test conditions contains nouns that could alternate between count (in plural form) and mass (in singular form) contexts, namely *Which side has more strings/string?* The results indicated that L2 learners' judgment of quantity did not depend on mass-count syntax, namely whether the flexible nouns are used with plural marking -s or without, and they performed worse in count conditions than in mass conditions. It was concluded that the participants had issues with morphosyntax-semantics mapping for the mass-count distinction. What remains unclear in Inagaki (2014) is whether learners' difficulty with morphosyntax-semantics mapping would persist even when they become increasingly proficient at the target language.

Adopting a similar design, Yin and O'Brien (2018) carried out an experiment with 228 Chinese-English bilingual students aged primary and secondary schools in Singapore). Their stimuli contained five noun conditions including object-count (e.g., *shoe*), substance-mass (e.g., *ketchup*), object-mass (e.g., *furniture*) and two conditions involving items

that can occur flexibly in both mass and count contexts (e.g., *string/strings*). Analyses of the subjects' quantity judgments across conditions reveal that Chinese-English bilingual children were able to use morphosyntactic knowledge to cue meanings, providing number-based judgments for count conditions and volume-based judgments for mass conditions just as native English speakers would do. Interestingly, the results revealed a developmental effect where younger participants were less accurate in assigning volume-based judgments to substance-mass conditions compared to older bilinguals. Nevertheless, regarding performance in flexible noun conditions, both Chinese- and English-dominant bilinguals did not reach the level of adult native speakers reported in Barner and Snedeker (2005). In particular, around 65% and 40% of their judgments are number-based for nouns appearing in count and mass syntax respectively, as opposed to 95% and 3% of native speakers' judgments. This finding suggests that child bilinguals have yet to use syntax to guide their judgments, thereby showing their insensitivity to morphosyntax-semantic mappings in the mass-count distinction.

MacDonald and Carroll (2018) took another attempt to deal with the English mass-count distinction, exploring the L2 processing of English mass-count nouns by L1 Koreans. Adopting the same quantity judgment paradigm, they found that Korean learners of L2 English paid attention to morpho-syntactic cues to the mass-count contrast when processing English object-count nouns, substance-mass nouns and object-mass nouns. However, Korean learners deviated from English native speakers on the flexible noun conditions where the plural morphology was the critical cue to the correct interpretation, indicating that Korean learners of English experience difficulty with English flexible nouns. This finding is explained with recourse to the learners' L1 in which there is a strong positive correlation between the English flexible nouns and the corresponding morphologically unmarked nouns in Korean (e.g., those that are not marked with the usual Korean plural marker -tul), suggesting a role for lexical transfer in the delayed acquisition of English mass-count contrast.

To summarize, previous studies seem to show inconclusive results regarding proficiency effects. In addition, there seems to be a lack of consistency as to what sources of difficulty with the mass-count distinction that L2 learners have. While results from Inagaki (2014) indicate that count nouns induce poorer performance, MacDonald and Carroll (2018) and Yin and O'brien (2018) suggest that flexible nouns pose greater difficulty for L2 learners. To address this gap, the present study focuses on examining L1-Vietnamese L2-English learners' knowledge of the morphosyntax-semantics mapping in relation to the English mass-count distinction and investigating the role of proficiency in the acquisition of English mass-count contrast, as well as trying to establish the sources of difficulty with the mass-count distinction. Following previous research, we adopt the quantity judgment paradigm to investigate this knowledge. In light of the findings obtained from prior studies, the following predictions are made. Firstly, L1-Vietnamese L2-English learners would not have problems giving accurate judgments on conditions where morphosyntax and conceptual semantics are congruent (where the ontological object-substance distinction aligns with the

morphosyntax). On the contrary, difficulty might arise in situations where learners can only rely on conceptual semantics to make judgment and that conceptual semantic knowledge proves to be rather idiosyncratic (object-mass nouns such as *furniture*). In addition, L2 learners are predicted to make inaccurate judgments in conditions where attention to morphosyntax is required (flexible nouns such as *stone/stones*). Lastly, concerning the proficiency effect, we predict that participants with higher English proficiency might perform better in these contexts.

3. The Present Study

3.1. Participants

Participants were 62 Vietnamese college students whose age ranged from 18 to 25 years old (mean age = 21), and they were selected randomly from a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. They were enrolled in different academic disciplines (e.g., English linguistics, Economics to Information Technology). The participants were placed into two different English proficiency levels based on their scores in the Quick Placement Test (2001; version 2). The description of the participants is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Information

Group	Number of subjects	Mean scores (out of 60) and SD	Mean age
Low Intermediate Group (LI)	29	35.27 (SD = 2.23)	20.8
High Intermediate (HI)	33	45.48 (SD = 1.60)	21.2
Total	62		

3.2. Materials

The participants in this study completed two tasks: a quantity judgment test and a test of English proficiency – the Oxford Quick Placement test.

Oxford Quick Placement test (QPT)

The QPT test contains 60 multiple-choice questions measuring L2 learners'

reading, vocabulary and grammar competence and to be completed within 40 minutes. The QPT test places its test takers at five proficiency levels that correspond to the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) levels and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels. Table 2 describes the QPT levels and compares them with ALTE levels and CEFR levels.

Table 2

Details of QPT, ALTE, and CEFR Levels

QPT scores	QPT levels	ALTE levels	CEFR levels
55-60	Very advanced	Level 5	C2
48-54	Advanced	Level 4	C1
40-47	Upper intermediate	Level 3	B2
30-39	Lower Intermediate	Level 2	B1
18-29	Elementary	Level 1	A2
0-17	Beginner	Level 0	A1

Given the fact that we conducted this research in time of COVID-19 pandemic and large-scale social distancing, the original paper-based QPT was administered over the Internet. We first digitized the test using Google Forms and then distributed the form to the participants through email. The participants' test scores were then subject the a reliability test, which yielded the value of Cronbach's alpha of 0.92, suggesting the reliability of this proficiency test used for this study.

Quantity Judgment Test

As mentioned earlier, we employed the quantity judgment paradigm pioneered by Barner and Snedeker (2005) to investigate Vietnamese college EFL students' knowledge of mass-count distinction. In this study, we are interested in five noun conditions, namely object-count nouns, substance-mass nouns, object-mass nouns, flexible nouns in count syntax, and flexible nouns in mass syntax. These conditions constitute three mapping relationships, which are congruent mapping where ontological semantics and morphosyntax are aligned, incongruent mapping where morphosyntax and ontological semantics are not aligned and flexible mapping where nouns can occur in two morphosyntactic contexts. With

respect to congruent mapping, there is agreement among conceptual semantics, morphosyntax and semantic judgment. There are two types of nouns in this group, which are substance-mass nouns and object count nouns. Regarding substance-mass nouns, they are always in singular form and semantic judgment is always volume-based. On the contrary, object count nouns can be pluralized, and semantic judgment is always number-based. Regarding incongruent mapping, the agreement only appears between conceptual semantics and semantic judgment. It means that the nouns in this group are grammatically mass but can be denoted individuals and made quantity judgment based on the number of individuals like the typical count nouns in the congruent groups. With regard to flexible mapping, the nouns in this group can appear in both form – singular and plural in which when making quantity judgment, participants needed to pay attention to count syntax and mass syntax as in count form, semantic judgment is based on number and in mass form, semantic judgment is based on volume. The test consists of 40 items, 30 of which are main test items and 10 fillers. The complete list of items is provided in Table 3 below. For the quantity judgment test, we briefly illustrate the sample for each test condition in Figure 2-6 below.

Table 3

Conditions and Items Used in the Study

Mapping relationship	Condition	Number of items
Congruent (morphosyntax and conceptual semantics aligned)	Substance-mass *mustard; butter; toothpaste; sugar; ketchup; milk*	6

	Object-count *cups, pens, balls, bags, plates, shoes*	6
Incongruent (morphosyntax and conceptual semantics not aligned)	Object-mass *furniture; jewelry; equipment; clothing; silverware; mail*	6
Flexible (nouns that can appear in both count and mass syntax)	Flexible in count context *strings; ropes; rocks; stones; cakes; chocolates*	6
	Flexible in mass context *twig; fence; paper; pie; wire; salad*	6
Fillers	*dogs, tigers, flour, sauce, trucks, oranges, popcorn, tables, mugs, vases*	10
	Total	**40**

Figure 2

Sample for Object Count Nouns

Figure 4
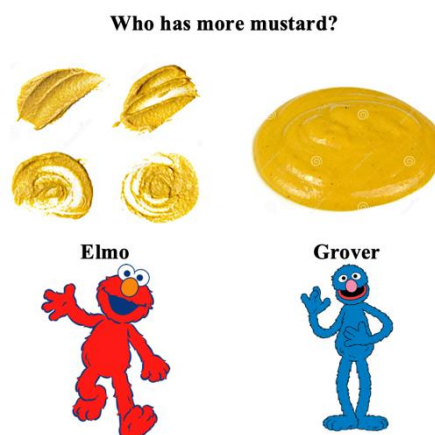
Sample for Substance-Mass Nouns

Figure 3
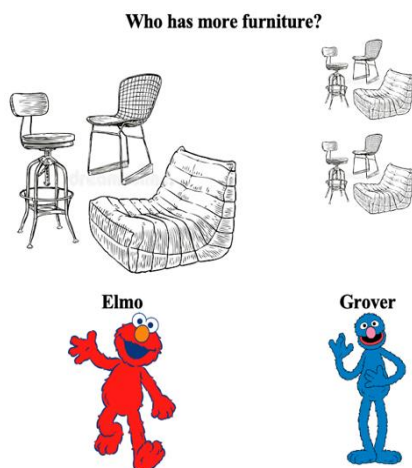
Sample for Object Mass Nouns

Figure 5

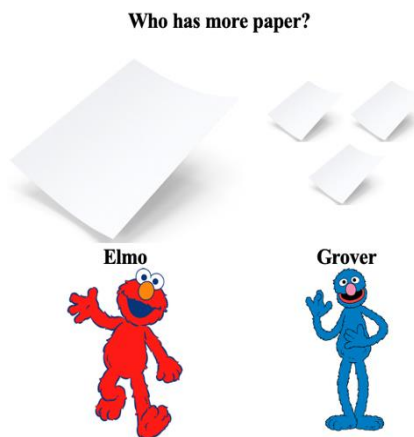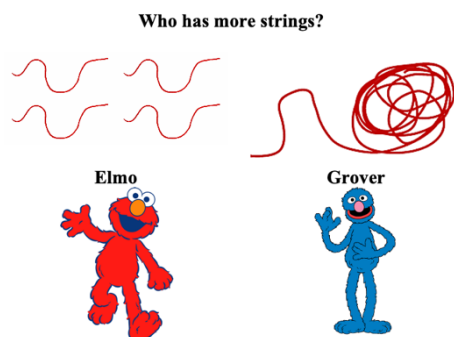*Sample for Flexible Nouns in Mass Contexts*

Figure 6

Sample for Flexible Nouns in Mass Contexts

The quantity judgment test is available in two versions to heighten the random probability and prevent participants from guessing the pattern. Both equivalent versions comprise 40 test items. The items were chosen based on their frequency and no repetition appeared. Additionally, to make this study distinguished we pay attention to the flexible nouns in which if the word is with plural marking (*-s*) in version 1 then it is without *-s* in version 2 and vice versa. The order of questions is manually scrambled and the question order in the final versions is fixed for all participants. Individual responses to individual questions are recorded in the database, enabling later analysis of responses.

3.3. Procedures

The participants completed two tasks - the quantity judgment test and the proficiency test, both of which were built on Google Form and distributed to the L2 learners via emails. At the beginning of the first task, participants were asked to give some background information including names and ages. Subsequently, a brief instruction and 05 practice items of the quantity judgment test were given so as to familiarize the participants with the test. This test had two versions which were delivered randomly to participants. In each version, there were 24 items presented in random order. Participants were shown questions "*Who has more NP(s)?*" first and then pictures of two characters from Sesame Street: Elmo and Grover. One character had 1-2 large object(s) or one large drop or smear of substance and the other character had 3-4 tiny objects/substances. In the 15-minute time limit, they indicated their answers by clicking on the appropriate name of the two characters. In the second task, participants were required to complete an Oxford Quick Placement test consisting of 60 multiple-choice questions in 40 minutes to reliably place them in two separate proficiency groups, namely intermediate group (N=29) and advanced group (N=23). All testing was done individually with screen devices.

4. Results

Following previous research using the quantity judgment paradigm, responses were analyzed by calculating the rate of number-based judgments, e.g., judging four small cups as more than two large cups or four small drops of milk as more than a large drop of milk. The following table summarizes the results for two proficiency groups.

Table 4

Percentage of Number-Based Judgments

	Object-count	Substance-mass	Object-mass	Flexible nouns used with count syntax	Flexible nouns used with mass syntax
Intermediate learners N=29	98.8%	28.6%	93.4%	45.5%	69.6%
Advanced learners N=33	99%	17.2%	92.4%	45.4%	67.1%

In congruent conditions where morphosyntax and conceptual semantics align, lower-proficient and higher-proficient participants' percentage of number-based judgments for object-count nouns account for 98.8% and 99%, respectively, and for substance-mass nouns the rates of number-based judgments are 28.6% for lower-level participants and 17.2% for higher-level participants. In the incongruent condition where morphosyntax and conceptual semantics do not align, judgments from both groups are mostly based on the number of individuals for object-mass nouns, at 93.4% and 92.4% for the lower proficiency group and higher proficiency group respectively. In the flexible conditions where nouns could be used with either count syntax (with the plural marking -s) or mass syntax (without the plural marking -s), both groups perform at chance level, fluctuating between giving number-based judgments and volume-based judgments regardless of whether the nouns are used with count or mass syntax.

At this stage, we believe it is useful to look at the L2 learners' judgments in terms of accuracy. This is usually done by comparing the results from L2 learners with those of a native speaker control group on the same test. Admittedly, we did not employ a native speaker control group for our study, partly due to logistical constraints; however, since our study made use of the similar quantity judgment paradigm first implemented in the seminal work of Barner and Snedeker (2005), we decided to use their results as benchmark for this study. In their study, 100% of adult native speakers' judgments are based on number for object-count nouns, 98% for object-mass nouns, 0% for substance-mass nouns, 95% for flexible nouns used with count syntax and 3% for flexible nouns used with mass syntax. Therefore, number-based judgments for substance-mass nouns and flexible nouns used with mass syntax given by the participants in our study would be coded as incorrect. Table 5 below reports the accuracy rates of both proficiency groups on five conditions.

Table 5

Accuracy Rates Across Noun Conditions and Proficiency

	Object-count	Object-mass	Substance-mass	Flexible nouns used with count syntax	Flexible nouns used with mass syntax
Lower proficiency N=29	98.8%	93.4%	71.4%	45.5%	30.4%
Higher proficiency N=33	99%	92.4%	82.8%	45.4%	32.9%

From the above table, it could be seen that object-count and object-mass nouns are relatively unproblematic for the L2 learners as the vast majority of the judgments are accurate, while flexible nouns pose considerable challenge for the L2 learners as fewer than half of their judgments are non-target-like.

In determining if noun type (i.e., object-count, object-mass, substance-mass, and flexible) and learner proficiency affect learners' judgments, we ran a two-way repeated measures ANOVA with noun type (object-coun, substance-mass, object mass, flexible) as a within-subject variable and proficiency level

(lower proficiency and higher proficiency) as a between-subject variable, while judgment accuracy was the dependent variable. The test results reveal a main effect of noun type ($F(3, 240) = 57.44$, $p < .001$). A large observed effect size was also reported ($\eta2 = 0.42$). Pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustment show significant differences in accuracy rates between all noun types, except for flexible nouns used with count syntax and mass syntax ($p = .45$). Concerning the proficiency effects, no main effects of language proficiency were found ($F(1, 240) = 2.28$, $p = .13$). In addition, no significant interaction effects were found between noun type and language proficiency ($p = .32$).

Taken together, these results suggest that L2 learners seem to have little difficulty interpreting object count and object mass nouns as quantifying over individuals and mass nouns as quantifying over overall mass. However, they face considerable challenges where sensitivity to syntactic cues (i.e., the presence or absence of plural marker -*s*) is required to make native-like judgments, even when they are moving up on the proficiency scale. This finding indicates L2 learners' insensitivity to the role of syntax in quantification judgments and suggests incomplete acquisition of the English mass-count distinction even at high levels of L2 proficiency.

5. Discussion

In this study, we explored Vietnamese adult L2 learners' knowledge of morphosyntax-semantics mappings in English mass-count distinction and examined whether they are sensitive to the English plural morpheme -*s* as a crucial cue to correctly interpreting flexible nouns. We also looked at proficiency as a potential factor governing the acquisition of English mass-count distinction. We employed a quantity judgment task with two groups of different English proficiency levels, who were 62 Vietnamese college students learning English as their L2. In this task, the learners were asked to make semantic judgments (volume-based or number-based) about the quantity of objects or substance for five noun conditions that constitute three types of mapping relationships between morphosyntax and conceptual semantics: congruent mapping (where count syntax corresponds to conceptual semantic notion of individuation/discreteness and mass syntax corresponds to conceptual semantic notion of homogeneity), incongruent mapping (where mass syntax corresponds to conceptual semantic notion of individuation/discreteness) and flexible mapping (where nouns could be used with both mass syntax and count syntax).

The results reported in Section 4 showed that Vietnamese L2 learners of English correctly based their judgments on number for object-count nouns and object-mass nouns, and on volume for substance-mass nouns, but failed to make native-like judgements when it comes to flexible nouns that could be used with both mass and count syntax. These results are in line with our predictions stated earlier and also in consensus with what was found with L1 Japanese-L2 English participants in the experiment of Inagaki (2014). As far as the sources of difficulty are concerned, aligned with our predictions, L1 Vietnamese-L2 English learners have great difficulty with flexible nouns, particularly flexible nouns used in mass syntax as indicated by their low rate of target-like judgments. Surprisingly, we found that while the higher proficiency group performed slightly better than the lower proficiency group, the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant, indicating the insignificant role of proficiency in predicting whether the learners can successfully acquire the English mass-count distinction.

The learners are highly successful with congruent mapping conditions, indicating their reliance on conceptual semantics rather than morphosyntactic knowledge. On the other hand, the learners' performance in substance-mass condition and flexible nouns was at chance level, seemingly suggesting their difficulty with conceptual semantics for mass nouns or mass syntax. This result might be attributed to task effects of this quantity judgment paradigm. Nouns used in mass syntax are homogeneous, and thus artificially dividing the substance into portions as how nouns were presented in this study might create additional processing burden for the learners to judge and compare the amount of the substance and thus might lead to low accuracy in their judgments. For instance, the test item *mustard* invited the learner to make comparisons between two large smears of mustard and four smaller smears of mustard. The learners thus had to mentally merge the portions of mustard together on both sides before comparing the volume of the substance. This additional step could have led to the increase in the processing cost, resulting in low accuracy with mass nouns and flexible nouns used in mass syntax.

6. Conclusion

Using a quantity judgment test (Barner & Snedeker, 2005), this study was conducted in

order to explore how Vietnamese adult learners of L2 English acquire English mass-count distinction. The findings show that despite lacking mass-count syntax in the Vietnamese language, L2 learners accurately give number-based judgments for nouns denoting individuals, namely object count nouns (e.g., *pen*) and object-mass nouns (e.g., *jewelry*) and give volume-based judgments for substance-mass nouns (e.g., *ketchup*) which denote non-individuals. Furthermore, adult L2 learners' judgments are not significantly correlated with their proficiency levels.

This study has several important pedagogical implications. Firstly, in order to sensitize Vietnamese L2 learners of English to morphosyntactic cues and help them to fully acquire mass-count distinction, they should be exposed to syntax-semantic mappings at early stages of studying English. Additionally, should it be helpful if teachers direct learners' attention to plural marker -*s* for more accurate meaning interpretation and teach them a common set of English flexible nouns.

However, this research does have some limitations. Tested items were limited and did not include cross-linguistic variable nouns (e.g., *hair*). The number of our participants, additionally, were quite small, and they were mainly Vietnamese university students. After analyzing the data, we just compared them with statistics in the previous study (i.e., Barner & Snedeker, 2005). Thus, more tested nouns and larger populations comprising both L1 and L2 learners may be needed to make comparisons and produce more concrete results.

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KHẢO SÁT ĐỘ NHẠY CẢM CỦA SINH VIÊN HỌC TIẾNG ANH NHƯ MỘT NGOẠI NGỮ ĐỐI VỚI SỰ KHÁC BIỆT VỀ KHỐI-LƯỢNG TRONG TIẾNG ANH

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Tóm tắt: Bài báo này kiểm tra cách người Việt Nam học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ diễn giải sự khác biệt về khối-lượng (mass-count distinction) của danh từ tiếng Anh. Trong một thí nghiệm phán đoán dựa trên hình ảnh, 62 sinh viên đại học đã đưa ra những phán đoán phản ánh độ nhạy của họ đối với sự khác biệt khối-lượng trong tiếng Anh và ánh xạ hình thái-ngữ nghĩa. Kết quả chỉ ra rằng những người Việt Nam học tiếng Anh đưa ra các phán đoán chính xác dựa trên số lượng (number-based judgment) đối với danh từ đếm được chỉ vật thể (object-count nouns, ví dụ: *cốc*) và danh từ khối lượng chỉ vật thể (object-mass nouns, ví dụ: *đồ đạc*) và dựa trên khối lượng (volume-based judgment) đối với danh từ khối lượng chỉ chất (substance-mass nouns, ví dụ: *sữa*). Ngoài ra, đối với các danh từ tiếng Anh có thể được diễn giải linh hoạt tuỳ vào sự xuất hiện/vắng mặt của hình vị số nhiều -*s*, tức là danh từ được hiểu là có thể đếm được (count nouns) khi có hình vị -*s* đi kèm và không đếm được (mass nouns) khi không có -*s*, thì người học chưa đạt được sự nhạy cảm với sự linh hoạt này dựa trên chỉ dấu hình vị số nhiều -*s*. Hơn nữa, không có mối tương quan đáng kể nào được tìm thấy giữa trình độ tiếng Anh của người học và độ nhạy cảm. Tổng hợp lại, những phát hiện này cho thấy rằng sinh viên đại học Việt Nam chưa có sự nhạy cảm với các dấu hiệu hình thái của danh từ linh hoạt trong tiếng Anh khi cần phải diễn giải ý nghĩa của chúng.

Từ khóa: sự phân biệt khối-lượng, ánh xạ hình thái-ngữ nghĩa, phán đoán số lượng, sự tiếp thu ngôn ngữ thứ hai

USING KAHOOT! IN VOCABULARY LEARNING: EVIDENCE FROM A VIETNAMESE HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

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Abstract: This study aims to find out how undergraduate English students at a Vietnamese institution felt about utilizing Kahoot to learn vocabulary. Using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the study collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data from 53 first-year English major students. The participants in the study regarded the game to be enjoyable, although their involvement was not consistent throughout the trial. Interaction, engagement, focus, competition, and motivation were also essential characteristics that contributed to students' pleasant learning experiences and helped them enhance their vocabulary learning, particularly in terms of retention. Based on these important findings, certain recommendations have been made addressing the necessity to incorporate more digital-game-based activities into classroom education in order to motivate students better and maintain classroom engagement.

Keywords: Kahoot, Vietnam, game-based activity, vocabulary learning

1. Introduction

In the context of technological developments, educators, teachers, and practitioners have sought innovative ways to support learning with the integration of modern technologies and facilities (Anh et al., 2021). The application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has become increasingly popular for educational purposes too. ICT effectively promotes interaction between the teachers and students and among the students synchronously and asynchronously (Viet & Linh, 2021). Concerning English Language Teaching (ELT), the use of ICT has gained its standing because of its various positive impacts. For example, using ICT to teach English has increased learners' autonomy (Hussain, 2018; Tri & Nguyen, 2014). Chau (2021) analyzed prior research and concluded that ICT usage improved all aspects of speaking

abilities. Furthermore, according to Nguyen (2021), technology in the EFL classroom encouraged students to participate more actively in classroom activities and collaborate with their peers more confidently and actively.

Traditionally, games were used to promote better learning, and they have still been used up to the present day. Gamification has been employed in the classroom and has been shown to encourage students' learning (Greijdanus, 2015; Ha & Lam, 2010). Gamification has also been employed in ELT and has been shown to improve good learning experiences. Some prominent game-based platforms that are widely used nowadays are Duolingo, Kahoot, Quizlet, Quizizz, and others. The application of Kahoot is said to boost student motivation and performance, foster autonomy, and encourage classroom

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collaboration (Chotimah & Rafi, 2018). This study aimed to find out how undergraduate English majors feel about using Kahoot as one of the most widely used gamified platforms for English language learning, particularly vocabulary acquisition.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning for this study was Malone's (1981) idea of intrinsic motivation. According to Malone (1981), challenge, fantasy, and curiosity are the three fundamental qualities that make learning enjoyable. Malone (1981) emphasized the need to create a demanding learning environment, as a challenge is an essential factor in intrinsic motivation. According to Malone's (1981) ideas of intrinsic drive, fantasy is also a significant component. The players' drive is frequently sparked by their abilities and speed of response or by constructive feedback provided by the game fantasy. Curiosity is another important factor, as it is thought to signal a learner's desire to learn. Finally, music, colors, and audio effects are examples of gaming systems that can pique a player's interest.

2.2. Vocabulary Learning Through Digital Games

Game-based learning is defined by Kirriemuir and McFarlane (2004) as "activities that have a game at their core, either as the main activity or as a stimulus for other related activities and have learning as a desired or incidental outcome" (p. 7). Serrano (2019) did a thorough review of the effects of digital games on the learning of K12 students. According to the findings, digital game-based learning improves students' engagement and motivation. Furthermore, the review showed that the use of digital games that included both competition and collaboration had a substantial impact on students' achievement.

Rasti-Behbahani (2021) conducted a

literature review to see how successful digital games were at teaching vocabulary. Motivation, repetition, engagement, and feedback were among the primary themes. Because digital games are interesting and inspiring to students, the researcher discovered that digital game-based learning was beneficial for vocabulary learning. Furthermore, these games can give pupils a variety of sources of repetition, which aids in retaining vocabulary. In the study, feedback and engagement were also observed to help with vocabulary development.

Li (2021) conducted a quasi-experimental study to see if digital vocabulary learning applications improved Chinese EFL students' vocabulary acquisition, motivation, and self-confidence. In terms of vocabulary achievement, pupils in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group. In addition, the researcher found that digital game-based vocabulary learning applications increased students' motivation and self-confidence.

2.3. Kahoot!

Kahoot was designed in 2013, and was initially released in 2015. It is a personal response system that makes quizzes, debates, and surveys easier to complete (Le, 2018). Kahoot was mentioned by Charbonneau (2018) as a game-based student response system (GSRS), which is a platform that allows teachers to create highly dynamic quizzes that students respond to using their digital devices in a game-show-like setting (Licorish et al., 2018). Kahoot can be used for teaching, learning, and assessment purposes and can also be used to collect student reflections after use. To put Kahoot into action, teachers can create a free account at https://create.kahoot.it in the classroom. Then teachers can choose from pre-made quizzes or modify them as needed, or they can design their own games. Kahoot is appropriate for a big classroom since it facilitates collaboration and interaction between teachers and students (Le, 2018).

Figure 1

The Interface of the Kahoot Game
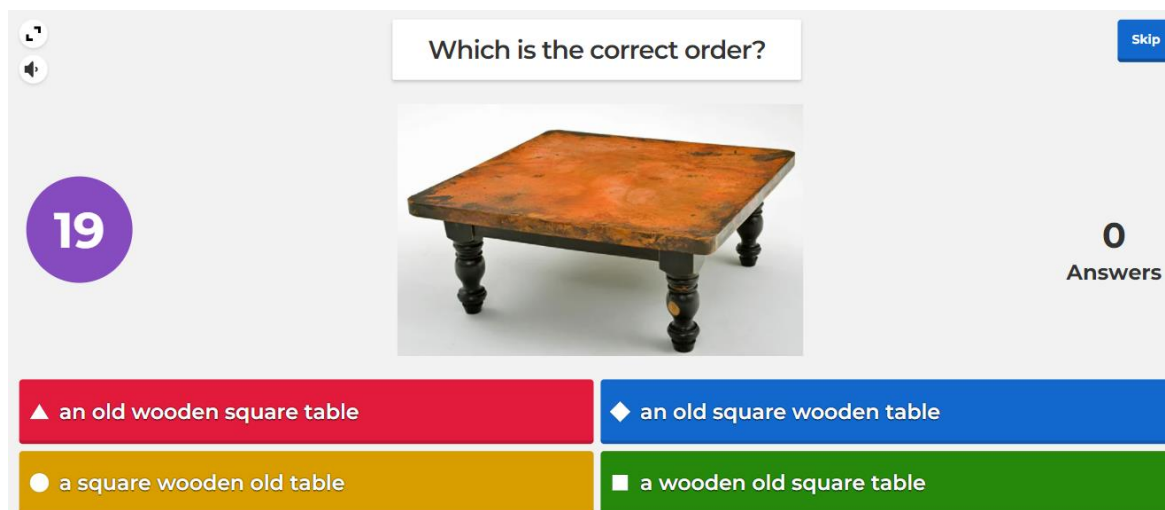
2.4. Usage of Kahoot as a Teaching and Learning Tool

Investigations into the use of Kahoot have been found to have a variety of good effects, including improved knowledge retention, increased engagement and participation, and speedy feedback (Ciaramella, 2017; Chotimah & Rafi, 2018; Hunsu et al., 2016). The surveyed students in Hunsu et al. (2016)'s study reported that Kahoot aided in the improvement of their ability to remember and recall information. Similarly, Chotimah and Rafi (2018) investigated the application of Kahoot as a tool for teaching reading in a quasi-experimental study. According to the findings, Kahoot effectively improved and focused students' attention on questions and texts. Participants in the study also stated that having better concentration aided them in comprehending the topic. Le (2018), who used a mixed-methods design to investigate the use of Kahoot with 154 year-two undergraduates, concluded that students' motivation, engagement, and collaboration were enhanced thanks to the use of Kahoot in classroom activities.

Kahoot has also been used in language classrooms for vocabulary learning. The impacts of Kahoot were investigated by Ciaramella (2017) whose participants were pupils with learning challenges and other health impairments. All study participants agreed that they could learn more new languages and found the game simple to play. Medina and Hurtado (2017) used Kahoot in a quasi-experimental investigation in a study on the use of Kahoot as a tool for vocabulary learning among university undergraduate students from various faculties. With the use of Kahoot, it was discovered that students' motivation, engagement, and interaction all improved.

Several studies have also investigated how students felt about using Kahoot (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018; Le, 2018; Licorish et al., 2018). According to Bicen and Kocakoyun (2018), Competition in Kahoot improved students' performance in answering questions and classroom teamwork. In the same vein, the results of a study by Le (2018) indicated that using Kahoot improved students' involvement, teamwork, and learning experience. A study conducted by Licorish et al. (2018) revealed that Kahoot increased classroom dynamics, engagement, motivation, and learning experience. Similarly, according to Charbonneau (2018), Kahoot delivered feedback "in an engaging and playful fashion" (p. 43).

Despite the numerous advantages of Kahoot, the game, like many other GSRS platforms, may have a number of drawbacks, including technological issues such as a lack of an Internet connection. Furthermore, the anonymity of these online activities may enhance the possibility of pupils guessing incorrectly (Nielsen et al., 2013). As a result, the game's outcomes do not adequately reflect

students' actual comprehension and performance. Wang (2015) discovered that frequent use of Kahoot may reduce classroom dynamics, and students' motivation might wear out over time. Furthermore, according to Plump and LaRosa (2017), some students became demotivated after failing to get the correct answers a couple of times. This is because the leaderboard and ranking system, according to Singer (2016), are not always appealing to pupils. The final flaw of Kahoot lies in its other game mechanics.

In summary, Kahoot has been used widely in different EFL contexts, and the results of studies in the literature indicated that the game enhances students' motivation, engagement and interaction, despite some technological and academic drawbacks. In Vietnam, however, little is known about how the game was used in how it could enhance the learning experience for Vietnamese students. In the current study, an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used to investigate how students interpret the impact of using Kahoot on vocabulary retention. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What were the students' participation patterns in Kahoot in vocabulary learning?

2. What are the students' perceptions of the use of Kahoot in vocabulary learning?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Setting

This study took place in a Vietnamese university's English language department, which provided English language education and training to students. Undergraduates at this college learned the four English language macro skills in the first two years of their curriculum before moving on to other disciplines, including linguistics, translation, and interpreting in their final years. In the first phase of their study, students mainly had lessons in four macro language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The teachers had to use textbooks that were prescribed in the university curriculum. However, they could also integrate other materials at their disposal to help the students achieve learning outcomes.

For this research, Kahoot was incorporated into the lessons of two classes. Before using Kahoot in the lessons, the researchers standardized all course materials to ensure that both classes got equal teaching on the contents. To ensure that everything worked well together, lesson plans, additional resources, teaching styles, and lesson delivery were all coordinated. Each class received a Kahoot session after every two lessons. Throughout the course, sessions were offered in weeks 3, 5, 7, and 9. For every Kahoot session, the students responded to the questions using personal devices, such as cellphones, tablets, or laptops, which were connected to the university's Wi-Fi system or their 3G network. The number of students that participated in the game was collected in an auto-generated report at the end of the session.

3.2. Research Participants

The participants were first-year English. The study's expected number of participants was 65 students from two classes where Kahoot was used. However, participants were only urged to participate in the game if they wanted to. As a result, people who took part in at least one Kahoot session completed the questionnaire survey, and only 53 did. Similarly, the participants in the qualitative phase were chosen using deliberate sampling, a non-probability sampling approach. The following criteria were used to choose interviewees for the focus-group interview: (i) they had participated in at least two Kahoot sessions, (ii) the chosen students must have recently participated in a Kahoot session so that they could accurately recollect their experience. Despite the disadvantage of not representing a significant population, Cohen et al. (2011) pointed out that this technique had certain advantages, such as being easier and less expensive to set up. The use of a purposive sample technique was beneficial because the primary goal of this study was not to extrapolate the findings to a larger population. Furthermore, the researchers decided to recruit an equal number of participants from each class for the interview to guarantee that the data acquired in the second phase was valid and not biased. Accordingly, six students, three from each class, were recruited for the follow-up interviews.

3.3. Research Design

The current study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The quantitative data from the questionnaire survey was first collected and examined by the researchers. Qualitative data from the focus-group interview was collected and analyzed to follow up on the findings from the first phase. The quantitative phase's findings provided a general overview of students' perceptions of Kahoot usage, while the findings from the qualitative phase provided more insight into a number of features from what had previously been known based on students' responses. In addition, a website-created report documenting the number of students in each session was used to depict their patterns of participation in the game.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

After obtaining permission from the leaders of the participating faculty, the implementation of the Kahoot took place. Data from the survey were analyzed to check the reliability of the questionnaire. After the analysis, it was found that the adopted questionnaire had an acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.878. This indicated that the survey items were reliable for the official survey with 65 participants (Hair et al., 2010).

The time gap between each Kahoot session was two weeks. After the implementation, the 53 actual game participants (out of the initially intended 65 students – the total number of students from the two classes) were invited to participate in the questionnaire survey. In addition, it was required that the students who had played the game directly with their device at least once were eligible to take part in the survey. In addition, they were fully informed of the purpose of the study before joining the questionnaire survey that aimed to collect quantitative data regarding students' perceptions of the use of Kahoot in learning vocabulary.

3.5. Research Instruments

A 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data for this investigation. It asked the participants questions about their impressions of Kahoot to brush up on vocabulary. The 5-point scale, in its original version, allowed pupils to express how strongly they disagreed with a proposition, with one equating to strongly disagree and five equating to strongly agree. The questionnaire was derived from Alawadhi and Abu Ayyash's (2021) study, which looked at how students felt about Kahoot in terms of focus and attention, interaction and engagement, etc. The questionnaire had a total of 16 questions in it. One rationale for adapting Alawadhi and Abu-Ayyash's (2021) questionnaire is that it was conducted in a higher-education institution and had comparable goals to the current study, which was to investigate students' perceptions of Kahoot. A pilot survey was conducted prior to the official one, with 20 students picked at random to complete the questionnaire. Any points of misunderstanding or ambiguity were carefully considered, and the researchers made any required changes to the questions. Besides the questionnaire, a web-created report was utilized to collect the number of students participating in each session of the game.

After the quantitative data from the first phase was analyzed, a focus-group discussion was held to delve deeper into topics such as fun and enjoyment (e.g., what do you think the factors are that make Kahoot fun?), interaction and engagement (e.g., how do you think Kahoot enhances classroom interaction?). A group of six students participated in the focus group discussion. Students were contacted by phone prior to the conversations to gauge their participation interest. They were also required to sign a consent form before participating in the focus group session. Before the interview began, the researchers requested that the participants consent to the interview being recorded, transcribed, and examined. Interview protocols in this study followed Creswell's (2009) guideline, which included a heading, instructions for the interviewers to follow, questions for interviewees, and a thank-you statement.

In terms of data analysis, the data from the questionnaire survey were analyzed using descriptive statistical approaches. The researchers calculated the percentage frequency of each item in the questionnaire. The answers to the questionnaire survey were then utilized to create follow-up interview questions. In the case

of qualitative data from the focus-group interview, thematic analysis with the coding technique was applied. The interview was first transcribed into texts because it was audio-recorded. After that, the data was analyzed using the thematic analysis approach, which included constant comparison, contrast, and classification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, the outcomes of the two data analysis processes were merged for additional interpretation and triangulation.

4. Findings

4.1. Quantitative Results

4.1.1. Patterns of Students' Participation

To respond to the first study question about Kahoot usage by participants, the researchers documented the number of participants in each session using a website-created report after each session in vocabulary acquisition. The findings are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Patterns of Students' Participation in Four Kahoot Sessions
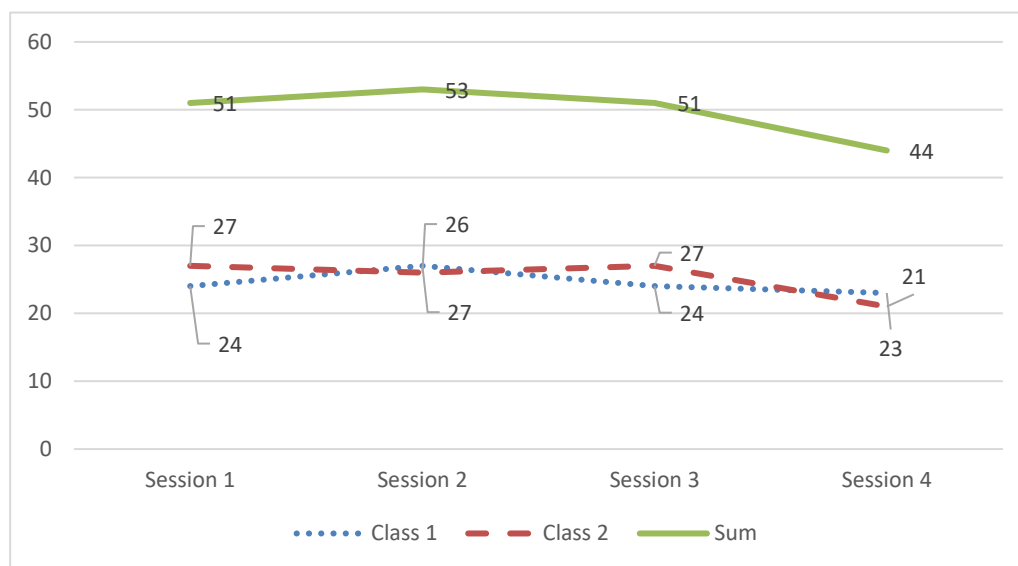
Figure 2 shows that the number of students engaging in the Kahoot decreased slightly. Students' involvement in both classrooms (two bottom dotted and dashed lines) tended to diminish over time after Kahoot was implemented. While the total number of players differed between the first and last Kahoot. While Class 1 sessions were insignificant (21 versus 24), Class 2 sessions saw a higher reduction over the same time period (21 versus 27).

Initially, the researchers wanted to get more data from the students' involvement, such as their earned points and their time on activities. This was not achievable due to technical limitations and the breakdown of Covid-19. As a result, data from their questionnaire responses were evaluated to understand more about how they felt about the five categories of fun and enjoyment, attention and focus, interaction and engagement, learning and information retention, motivation and competition.

4.1.2. Students' Perspectives on Using Kahoot

The participants' perceptions of utilizing Kahoot were the subject of the second study question. The researchers examined the data from the questionnaire and a focus group discussion. The survey confirmed that all of the categories mentioned above were present. The findings of the analysis are presented in Table 1 for each category.

Table 1

Participants' Perceptions of the Use of Kahoot

Category	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Fun and Enjoyment					
Fun	0%	1.90%	1.90%	24.50%	71.70%
Boring	45.30%	45.30%	5.70%	1.90%	1.90%
Proud and happy	1.90%	3.80%	11.30%	22.60%	60.40%
More interactive and lively	0.00%	1.90%	5.70%	32.10%	60.40%
Interaction and Engagement					
Engaging and enthusiastic	0.00%	1.90%	9.40%	47.20%	41.50%
No interaction with materials	24.50%	56.60%	13.20%	5.70%	0.00%
Attention and Focus					
Focusing more for higher ranking	0.00%	1.90%	11.30%	52.80%	34.00%
Helping to focus	0.00%	1.90%	24.50%	43.40%	30.20%
Being distracted	30.20%	34.00%	30.20%	5.70%	0.00%
Learning and Knowledge Retention					
Leading to a better learning experience	1.90%	3.80%	7.50%	50.90%	35.80%
Helping to learn vocabulary	0.00%	0.00%	15.10%	47.20%	37.70%
Explaining correct answers to peers	3.80%	7.50%	56.60%	24.50%	7.50%
Motivation and Competition					
More willing to play with nickname	0.00%	3.80%	13.20%	45.30%	37.70%
Fun to compete against peers	1.90%	3.80%	15.10%	45.30%	34.00%
Trying to win the game	0.00%	11.30%	28.30%	37.70%	22.60%
Important to play well	0.00%	7.50%	34.00%	43.40%	15.10%

The majority of participants indicated a favorable attitude about Kahoot in the fun category, as shown in Table 1. The vast majority of those polled (more than 96 percent) believed that playing Kahoot was enjoyable. The sight of their names progressing up the game scoreboard made a large number of participants (83%) feel pleased. Leaderboards, a gamification feature of Kahoot, appeared to encourage a good learning experience. Students had a great need to express

themselves and compare themselves to their peers.

Table 1 shows that just a small percentage of participants (less than 2%) questioned the tool's effectiveness in terms of interaction and engagement. The data show that the vast majority of those surveyed (about 90%) strongly agreed or agreed with items 1 and 2 that the classroom atmosphere was "more engaged and livelier" and "engaging and enthusiastic" during Kahoot sessions.

The third item in the survey asked about students' perceptions of attention and focus during Kahoot in the classroom to revise vocabulary. One surprising discovery was that during the Kahoot session, the students were extremely attentive and focused. Specifically, approximately 90% of the participants in the survey said they paid greater attention during Kahoot sessions to achieve a high position on the leaderboards. Furthermore, just a small percentage of respondents (5.7%) believed that playing Kahoot in the classroom made them feel preoccupied.

The survey also aimed to explore students' perceptions of the benefits of using Kahoot in facilitating learning and knowledge retention. Remarkably, 86.7% of the respondents thought that Kahoot provided them with a better learning experience. However, regarding collaboration and peer learning, an inconsistent result was found between the data for each category. While over half of the surveyed remained neutral when asked if Kahoot activities helped to facilitate peer learning, and only a third reported interacting with and explaining the answers to their friends. Nearly two-thirds (60.4%) reported that a higher level of interaction was visible in the classroom with the help of Kahoot. This inconsistency in the result suggests that the effectiveness of Kahoot in improving students' collaboration is still an open question that needs further investigation. The data in this category also reveals that, despite some neutral opinions, most of the participants (nearly 85%) believed that their vocabulary retention was enhanced with support from Kahoot.

Finally, as for anonymity, the majority of the participants (80%) agreed that they were in favor of using a random nickname when playing Kahoot. This feature increased the number of students that wanted to participate in Kahoot-based activities. In terms of motivation and competition, it appears that just 58.5 percent of participants took the game seriously as a competition, with only roughly 60 percent attempting to win. Despite this, more than three-quarters of the students polled (79.3%) said they enjoyed competing against peers when playing Kahoot.

4.2. Qualitative Results

This study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, as indicated in the methodology section. Following the collection and analysis of quantitative data, the researchers held a focus group discussion in which the participants were presented with the categories listed above. They took turns expressing their thoughts on the quantitative findings. The results of combining quantitative and qualitative data on the five categories described before are presented in the next section.

4.2.1. Fun and Enjoyment

Subthemes: music, game, interactiveness, variety

According to the results of the focus-group interview, Kahoot was thought to be a nice game for the students. The respondents' remarks revealed that a variety of variables contribute to the success of Kahoot. The interaction between the teacher and the students and among the students made the game an entertaining experience.

> "I believe the characteristic that distinguishes Kahoot. The interaction between teachers and students is enjoyable. "For example, when we use Kahoot, we interact with one other." Students will work in groups and engage with one another as well as with the teacher and respond to questions posed by the teacher. It's a lot of fun" (St. 1)

While interactiveness was a common theme among most interviewees, the range of questions in the Kahoot also played a vital role in ensuring that participants had a great learning experience. Furthermore, one student stated that using Kahoot before the lecture is a terrific warm-up activity. This was partly due to the

game's lively background music, which was said to make students anxious to compete with each other. In addition, the fact that Kahoot was used as a game itself created enjoyment.

> "I believe that the range of questions makes students more enthusiastic to answer all of them. And I think having a warm-up activity before studying is quite intriguing" (St. 2)

> "Because it's simply a game, and we can learn while having fun" (St. 3)

4.2.2. Interaction and Engagement

Subthemes: competition, teamwork

Most of the interviewed participants agreed that Kahoot helped to increase classroom interaction and enhance students' engagement in the classroom. The competition was reported as one of the critical factors that improved students' interaction and increased motivation.

> "I believe that, first and foremost, Kahoot makes us more competitive with one other, which encourages individuals to interact more" (St. 4)

In addition, interviewees stated that Kahoot helped to improve the class's collaborative spirit. Specifically, one St. commented that during the Kahoot activities, some teams or groups were formed to discuss the question and find the correct answer. Another student added that she discussed with other students to understand more about vocabulary usage.

> "They could form a team and work together to figure out what those words are" (St. 4)

> "I just agree, personally, when I play Kahoot, I sometimes have a talk with my friends around me, and after the game, we also ask each other about the answer and the terms we don't understand so that we may help each other increase vocabulary" (St. 5)

4.2.3. Attention and Focus

Subthemes: warm-up, curiosity, game mechanics

Quantitative data suggested that students' attention and focus were improved

during Kahoot sessions. The qualitative phase yielded similar results, indicating that students were able to focus more in the classroom due to this. The background music that triggered students' motivation to play the game could be one of the plausible explanations. Furthermore, several students believed the game's anonymity drew their attention. One student, for example, acknowledged that as the game continued, he desired to know the true identities of the top scorers on the scoreboard. This finding is supported by Malone's (1981) theory, which suggested that music and sounds in games tended to pique players' interest.

> "I've noticed that when my students encounter anonymous or amusing nicknames, they strive to figure out who they are" (St. 2)

> "When most of our students do not use their true names, they feel as if they are in another world, a mystery." They are trying to figure out who is at the top and who is at the bottom" (St. 4)

Because the length of the class had a significant impact on students' focus, especially in the researcher's teaching context, where each lesson lasted over 3 hours, students needed to have the opportunity to take a break between activities. As a result, the Kahoot vocabulary revision gave the students a breather, allowing them to recharge for the following classroom activity. The findings are consistent with those of Alawadhi and Abu-Ayyash's (2021) study, in which participants admitted that their concentration and focus were aided by taking part in Kahoot session. One participant viewed: *"I think having a warm-up activity before studying is extremely intriguing"* (St. 2). Similarly, another one noted that *"Kahoot allows me to study vocabulary in a fun method rather than the traditional way"* (St. 3)

Students' enhanced attentiveness had also been attributed to game mechanics. The interviewees cited the time limit and awards in response to the question asking them to provide more specific remarks on how they used Kahoot. They were able to concentrate better as a result of this.

"We were pressed by the time limit. We have to stay laser-focused in order not to miss the inquiry" (St. 3)

"We were excited since there were occasions when questions received a double score, therefore we tried our hardest to complete such questions" (St. 4)

4.2.4. Learning and Knowledge Retention

Subthemes: self-assessment, better retention, word use enhancement

While it was found from the quantitative phase that Kahoot enhanced vocabulary retention, interviewed participants were divided in stating the usefulness of Kahoot in improving their vocabulary retention. What is remarkable is that Kahoot was also seen as a self-assessment tool for the students in terms of vocabulary learning. Two students even reported that their habit of learning vocabulary was changed thanks to Kahoot.

"In terms of the benefits, when I try to learn the terminology after a while and then test myself, it gives me inspiration and recognition" (St. 2)

"Actually, the vocabulary I learned! did not assist me in any way throughout the exam. However, I developed the practice of revising my vocabulary" (St. 5)

Furthermore, the majority of the participants stated that they could recall the vocabulary more easily and utilize the new phrases in a variety of situations. One student explained this by noting that if the words were arranged in a phrase, she could guess what they meant, while another said the Kahoot aided in broadening her vocabulary and deepening her knowledge of new terms, "*Occasionally, when I play Kahoot, I can demonstrate how to use it and set a good example*" (St. 2). Another participant said, "*Yes, I am aware that this word is used in a certain context*" (St. 3). Another one admitted, "*I believe Kahoot is a fantastic approach for us to expand our vocabulary and gain a thorough knowledge of the new word we learned*" (St. 6)

One student pointed out that this development was partly due to the teacher's support and hints, as well as the game itself. This was something that a few other students agreed

on as well, *"So it does not help me recall all the words because I sometimes remember the answer but guess the meaning other times. It's not really something I recall"* (St. 2). Similarly, one participant pointed out that: *"it's not just what the word is or what it means; it's also the teacher who used the word in a specific statement, so we had to read the entire sentence to figure out the correct response"* (St. 5).

Another theme that was observed to impact students' vocabulary retention substantially was peer learning. Students frequently worked together with their classmates to discuss the questions and develop the correct solutions. One participant said: *"I believe I have a better idea. I believe in Kahoot because it encourages our competitiveness with other students, it improves our learned knowledge. So, we may call it peer-learning because we can learn with other students and work together"* (St. 4).

4.2.5. Motivation and Competition

Subthemes: Anonymity, mystery, self-expression

When it came to motivation and competition, the majority of the interviewees agreed that the game's competition encouraged them to participate in Kahoot classroom activities. Kahoot was a great game for competitive students and was thought to be the ideal technique to communicate with others. For example, one interviewee said: "I want to be recognized, therefore if my true name is on the board, that will help. It serves as motivation for me to work harder in order to correctly answer all of the questions" (St. 2). Another added:

"I'm competitive by nature, so when I compete with my classmates and see where I am in the class, I feel more inspired and determined to develop myself, and I believe that some of my students have felt the same way" (St. 6).

However, regarding the modes of self-expression, viewpoints differ. Shyer students felt compelled to express themselves and obtain acceptance from their peers. However, they preferred to remain anonymous during the game by choosing a playful pseudonym rather than their true names. As a result, anonymity is another prominent feature motivating students to

play the game. The comments below show the participants' views:

> "Because there were instances when I didn't understand the question or the word. So, I believe that utilizing the nickname helps me avoid being embarrassed when I'm wrong" (St. 3).

> "And no one will know or even they will know if they are at the bottom of the board. It's a game, after all, and they can try again, so there's no reason. There's no reason why they shouldn't take part in the game" (St. 4).

The results of the focus-group interview revealed several intriguing data that help explain why the number of participants has decreased. The interviewed students, for example, attributed the decreasing trend to both objective and subjective factors. Some objective reasons may have prevented them from participating in the game, such as the availability of an Internet connection, whether 3G, 4G, or Wi-Fi. Talking about this issue, an interviewee said: *"There are external variables at work here. When students are unable to play the game due to a lack of Internet access, they may create a group to play as a team"* (St. 2).

Another objective element is the wear-out effects of using Kahoot repeatedly. However, Wang (2015) revealed that Kahoot wear-off effects were not as strong as previously thought; this was not a big issue in terms of motivation, engagement, and perceived learning. For example, one interviewee said: *"I believe that the frequent usage of Kahoot, particularly the repetitive use of numerous question kinds in the game, made it more dull, and hence the students refused to participate"* (St. 4). This view was echoed by another participant:

> "I concur. There are now a few of comparable apps, such as Quizizz, which I find more intriguing because of its game mechanics, which allow players to restart the game and re-answer difficult questions" (St. 2).

Subjective variables may include competent players' unwillingness to join in the game because they do not see the necessity to compete against their peers to win. This was described by Malone (1981), who argued that

one of the key drivers of intrinsic motivation among students is competitiveness. However, one of the participants noted that *"Aside from its wear-off effects, I believe another factor is that many high-level students are unmotivated to play the games."* (St. 2)

4.2.6. Interaction, Collaboration, and Competition

The quantitative results revealed that using Kahoot to help with classroom dynamics improved classroom dynamics significantly, particularly the interactions between teachers and students and between students themselves. Many of the participants stated that they felt inspired to compete with their peers during the game. Initially, it was thought that the higher the level of competition, the less interaction there would be in the classroom. However, both findings appeared to be at odds with one another. The results of the focus group interview, on the other hand, were intriguing. One possible explanation for the high levels of both interaction and competition at the same time was that interaction among peers took place at an in-group level rather than at a whole-class level. One participant explained:

> "As desk mates, we didn't actually compete against one another because we were well aware of our colleagues' abilities. As a result, we frequently debated the topic inside our group in order to compete with our classmates. This is partly because we want to learn more about the abilities of our classmates" (St. 2).

It was also interesting to discover in the interview that students had a tendency to wait for the teacher to explain the correct answers to them rather than seeking an explanation from their peers. On the other hand, sometimes, the students knew the correct answer because they turned to the coursebook or dictionary, *"Every now and then, we'd look it up in the coursebook or dictionary"* (St. 4).

5. Discussion

The current study investigated five categories that arose in students' participation in Kahoot using theories of intrinsic motivation and

social interaction. The findings of this study will be compared to those of earlier research in the section that follows.

First and foremost, Kahoot is a lot of fun to use thanks to the accompanying music, interactiveness while playing, and various game activities that were evident in the sessions. This discovery matched the findings of a study by Ryan and Deci (2000), which found a significant positive association between enjoyment and learning engagement. This finding has also been reported in the literature (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018; Wang, 2015). According to the findings of this study, the fun component of the game also led to high motivation and engagement, which are compatible with those of Wang (2015) and Plump and LaRosa (2017), who discovered Kahoot to be an effective tool for increasing student participation in classroom activities and increasing in-class activities. Because of Kahoot, the student's motivation and participation may improve concentration. These findings are also consistent with Wang and Liberoth (2016), who found that using points and music in GSRS helped students concentrate more.

Second, the participants greatly valued the advantages of Kahoot in enhancing knowledge retention and learning. Specifically, through participating in the Kahoot, students' understanding, retention, and recall of vocabulary could be improved, and their use of newly acquired terms. These findings are consistent with the results of other research that suggest GSRS improves pupils' vocabulary (Medina & Hurtado, 2017). The current research, on the other hand, contradicts the earlier findings. Wang et al. (2016) discovered no detectable significant difference in students' academic performance between using GSRS and not using it in a study on the usefulness of GSRS on vocabulary learning. As a result, while Kahoot was a great way to brush up on vocabulary, it did not necessarily help students boost their grades.

Thirdly, it is interesting to learn that competitiveness, or winning the game, was not an essential aspect. For this group of students, it appears that having fun while playing the game was more significant. While playing the game, the players were not consciously competing with one another, but they did wish to outperform the

other groups. In other words, there was collaboration and engagement inside the group, but not at the whole-class level. This conclusion contradicts the findings of Malone (1981), who claimed that intrinsic motivation is raised when students feel their accomplishments are recognized, particularly in the game's leaderboards. One reason is that not all students felt competition to be a powerful motivator (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Finally, the results of the focus-group discussion provided a more detailed explanation for the quantitative data. The fact that it was performed like a game and the game music was revealed to be the factors that made the students enjoy themselves while participating in Kahoot - based activities in the classroom. Nonetheless, students' enjoyment was not the only thing that kept them engaged in the game. Kahoot was useful in providing an opportunity for students to communicate with one another and collaborate as a group. However, competition also took place in the presence of teamwork and collaboration among these participants, as the needs to express oneself may differ from one learner to another. Another important theme was focus and attention. Due to its fun nature and some game mechanisms like bonus points, music, and time limit, the Kahoot helped to increase the level of students' concentration. Additionally, vocabulary retention was improved thanks to the high level of interactivity and opportunities for collaboration offered by this technological application.

6. Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

This research project aimed to explore English major students' perceptions of the use of Kahoot in vocabulary learning, for example, fun and enjoyment, interaction and engagement, focus and attention, motivation and competition, and learning and knowledge retention.

Kahoot was found to have favorable perceptions from the survey participants. Kahoot was perceived by all participants to be a fun and beneficial classroom warm-up activity. Furthermore, the use of Kahoot dramatically improved classroom dynamics, particularly student-to-student interaction. With various characteristics like incentives and leaderboards,

it was revealed that the game inspired students to participate in classroom activities. More importantly, the use of Kahoot triggered students' need to express themselves. However, it was unexpected to find out that anonymity also helped boost students' learning motivation. Concerning vocabulary and knowledge retention, the effects of Kahoot is still open to question, as it was not clear whether the use of Kahoot or teachers' instructions were responsible for students' improvement.

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be taken. To begin, more GSRS platforms for teaching and learning should be promoted to aid in achieving desired learning outcomes. Furthermore, as the study found, implementing Kahoot in the classroom boosted students' attentiveness and interaction. As a result, incorporating digital learning platforms into tertiary education settings can enhance active learning while removing distracting variables like mobile phones, which are increasingly widely available among university students. According to the findings of this study, teachers should employ these tools to promote engagement with and among students. Another conclusion is that employing these interactive GSRSs may provide students with a safe and non-threatening learning environment. The findings of this study demonstrated that leveraging anonymity as a game element attracted more people to play.

Moreover, the findings of this study showed that the popular game-based method should be implemented in the classroom as a type of continuous formative evaluation. Kahoot is being used in Vietnamese higher education as a game-based learning platform; it may aid vocabulary learning, particularly word retention. The findings of this study also show that teachers can use Kahoot to encourage peer learning and perform digital-based scaffolding. As a result, teachers are encouraged to use and customize Kahoot to enable effective learning and discussion in the classroom. Naturally, in order to conduct such a game-based vocabulary, classrooms need to be equipped with modern facilities (Anh et al., 2021)

Despite the study's achievements, there are a number of significant limitations to consider. The first limitation is the number of people who filled out the questionnaire survey. Because the sample size was small (n = 53), the results should be interpreted with caution. The findings are limited to a small sample and cannot be applied to the entire population. As a result, it is strongly suggested that future research be conducted with a bigger sample size. Another limitation lies in the selection of participants in the questionnaire survey. Those who were invited to participate in the survey must have played Kahoot at least once. However, the number of participating times varied, which may have become a threat to the validity of their responses. To circumvent this limitation, further studies may be required to synchronize the number of times students play the game.

One more important limitation is that the effects of Kahoot were investigated based on students' self-reported feedback with no concrete measurements. As perceptions are complex and sometimes considered unreliable, further investigation into the effects of using Kahoot in vocabulary learning may be necessary to validate findings from the present study. A longitudinal study, for example, can be conducted to investigate how these perceptions from students may change over time. Future studies may also focus more on the effectiveness of using Kahoot for vocabulary learning by examining students' scores in exams or students' academic achievements, providing more reliable findings. Lastly, an issue that was not addressed in this study was that teachers' perspectives were not considered when evaluating the effects of Kahoot. Hence, a study on instructors' perceptions of Kahoot as a GSRS may help provide a new understanding of this subject matter.

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SỬ DỤNG TRÒ CHƠI KAHOOT ĐỂ HỌC TỪ VỰNG: NGHIÊN CỨU TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu hoạt động sử dụng trò chơi Kahoot để dạy học từ vựng tiếng Anh cho sinh viên ở một trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Sử dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu kết hợp định lượng và định tính, nghiên cứu thu thập dữ liệu khảo sát và phỏng vấn từ 53 sinh viên năm thứ nhất. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy việc sử dụng Kahoot để học từ vựng mang lại hứng thú cho người học cho dù sự tham gia của họ không ổn định trong quá trình thử nghiệm. Trò chơi Kahoot giúp tăng cường sự tham gia, tương tác, tập trung, ganh đua và động lực học tập nói chung, học từ vựng nói riêng, đặc biệt là khả năng nhớ từ. Nghiên cứu đưa ra một số đề xuất về việc lồng ghép các trò chơi kỹ thuật số vào việc dạy học nhằm thúc đẩy động cơ học tập và duy trì sự tham gia của sinh viên tốt hơn.

Từ khóa: Kahoot, Việt Nam, hoạt động dựa vào trò chơi, học từ vựng

DISCUSSION

ENGLISH TEACHERS' READINESS
FOR EMERGENCY ONLINE TEACHING
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: COVID-19 pandemic has been widely spread to most countries in the world and its sudden appearance has seriously impacted the global education. The paper presents findings of a case study which investigated how English teachers responded to the new teaching context in the centre of Vietnam. How ready they were to deal with the abrupt switch from normal teaching to online teaching was presented in the article. The research employed the mixed method with a survey and in-depth interviews as the main instruments. Teachers of English from primary schools to high schools in the centre of Vietnam were invited for the survey. As revealed from the survey, these teachers of English were not well-prepared for sudden online teaching and the level of readiness varied according to the school levels. It is, therefore, recommended that teachers of English should update themselves with strategies used in online teaching, IT skills through training and self-study.

Keywords: teacher training, teaching context, online teaching, pedagogical knowledge

Introduction

Coronavirus first appeared in Vietnam in February 2020 with 16 cases. Most schools and universities were closed for safety and the new teaching context began. At that time, there was no prediction of how long the closure of schools would last. Yet, in early April, 2020 when the pandemic became serious in many countries in the world, schools throughout Vietnam quickly implemented some actions to maintain teaching and learning. Some schools which are located in major cities like Hochiminh city, Hanoi city and Danang city organised online teaching through MS Team, Zoom or Google Meet. In rural areas where Internet connection is limited, teachers tried to maintain their teaching by using emails or Zalo to send documents or assign tasks to pupils.

The sudden changes in the teaching context have led to many changes in education in general and in English teaching in particular. In order to have an insight into how teachers of English in Vietnam coped with the new teaching context, this study on English teachers' readiness for online teaching was conducted in the centre of Vietnam with the aim to find out how ready the targeted teachers of English were for online teaching and what challenges they encountered in the new teaching context.

Literature Review

English Teaching and Learning in Vietnam

In Vietnam, English is taught as a foreign language in most schools. Pupils start

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learning English at primary schools either in the first grade or the third grade and continue learning English until they finish high school (Nguyen & Hudson, 2012). Finishing high school, pupils are expected to achieve B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). English is a compulsory subject for all important examinations like high school entrance examinations and high school graduation examinations.

Teaching Context in COVID-19 Pandemic in the World and in Vietnam

Possibly, the whole world has been witnessing great changes in life and in education due to COVID-19 pandemic. Quickly, the education systems in most countries in the world where COVID-19 is serious have implemented a swift from normal teaching to distance education. Specifically, in the United States, massive open online courses have been created to maintain students' learning at all levels (Schleicher, 2020). China quickly created the online learning system with simultaneous online learning exercises to maintain students' learning (Gao & Zhang, 2020). According to Rusmiati et al. (2020), the School from Home system has been implemented to cope with the sudden change in the teaching mode in Indonesia.

Early February is the time when the Covid-19 first appeared in Vietnam and quickly all schools were shut down. Most of teaching and learning activities stopped. In this case, English teaching and learning context in Vietnam experienced changes in the teaching mode (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021). Teachers tried to maintain their teaching to a certain extent by many ways from using online meetings to sending documents or assigning tasks to students through email or Zalo to ensure that their students' learning was not interrupted by the pandemic.

Online Teaching

Online teaching or distance education has been increasingly popular since the appearance of COVID-19 (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021). Online teaching is defined as the kind of teaching implemented by the Internet synchronously and asynchronously. With synchronous teaching, teachers apply various tools like Zoom, MS team or Google Meet to provide students with online meetings. In other words, students have a fixed learning schedule. Differently, asynchronous teaching provides students with a flexible timetable. The two kinds of teaching can be combined for effective learning outcomes (Richardson et al., 2020).

English Teachers' Professional Development in Vietnam

Teachers' professional development has been of great interest and has been continuously invested in Vietnam. With the thought that on-going training is the essential part of teachers' professional development, the government launched The National Language Project 2020 as a key solution to develop the quality of language teaching in Vietnam. The major aim of the project is to train teachers of foreign languages in general and teachers of English in particular in terms of language proficiency and methodological knowledge. A wide array of training programmes such as "Technology in Education", "Testing and Assessment", "English for Teaching", and "Action Research" has been designed to serve that aim (Phan, 2015; Vo et al., 2018).

The course "Technology in Education" has three main objectives "obtaining fundamental and general ICT knowledge and skills appropriate for career development; combining pedagogical and ICT and knowledge skills to improve language teaching and learning quality; employing ICT to enhance communicative and collaborative effectiveness in teaching" (Huynh & Nguyen, 2021, p. 35). Therefore, participating teachers are expected to be equipped with certain knowledge and skills for their adoption of ICT in language learning. In addition, workshops and training for teachers' professional development are organized by Department of Education and Training (DOET) every summer. In Vietnam, DOET is responsible for updating teachers' information and knowledge to catch up with changes in the educational system and the teaching context. In the urgent online teaching situation, teachers' professional development including the "Technology in education" training has, to some extent, contributed to the level of readiness for urgent online teaching among teachers of

English in Vietnam. Without preparation, teachers of English are only able to rely on the knowledge gained during their professional development for their online teaching. It is found that only 31.1% of teachers really benefit from such training workshops while 89.2% learn how to apply ICT in language teaching themselves (Dang, Nicholas & Lewis, 2012). In addition, teachers of English in Vietnam have a very low level of ICT integration in language teaching, resulting from their lack of knowledge (Pham, Tan & Lee, 2019; Vo, Pang & Lee, 2020). In other words, despite continuous training, teachers of English in Vietnam still face difficulties in using ICT in their English language teaching.

Previous Studies

Teachers' readiness for online teaching is defined as their available ability to implement online teaching (Hung, 2015). The readiness for online teaching relates to teacher's knowledge to use ICT in teaching, their confidence, facility, and their pedagogical knowledge and skills in online teaching (Hung, 2015; Vo, 2021).

Numerous studies on teachers' readiness for online teaching have been published worldwide. According to Copriady (2014), teachers' readiness for online teaching is decided by their self-motivation. Whether teachers get ready for their online teaching or not depends on their motivation to use technology in education. In a study conducted in Palestine, teachers' readiness for online teaching and learning is perceived as the ability and preparedness to implement online teaching. The level of teachers' readiness is measured by "their e-learning knowledge, computer skills, and positive belief about the benefits of e-learning" (Trayek et al., 2016, p. 2). Trayek et al. (2016) also concluded that technical, content and infrastructure readiness is the key element of teachers' readiness for online teaching.

Research in Indonesia has similar findings of what factors influence the level of teachers' readiness for online learning. Teachers' readiness for online teaching also depends on such elements as infrastructure, teachers' IT skills and ability to deliver online lessons (Ergene & Türk Kurtça, 2020; Mirķe et al., 2019; Rassmitadila et al., 2020). In Vietnam, it is found that English school teachers'

methodological knowledge, facility, school policies contribute to the level of English school teachers' adoption of technology in language teaching (Huong & Marie, 2016; Le & Vo, 2014; Pham et al., 2018; Pham et al. 2019; Vo et al., 2020). Teachers of English have gradually applied technology in their English language teaching. Such activities like synchronous online discussion have been used to improve productive skills effectively in Vietnamese classrooms (Nguyen & Pham, 2021). Yet, the level of technology integration among teachers of English in Vietnam is still not high, resulting in challenges for them to conduct online teaching (Vo, 2021).

Recently, a study conducted in a university in Vietnam has shown the quick reaction of moving to online teaching with suitable policies and practical support of the university (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021). Yet, the qualitative research which was conducted in a university in Vietnam with the in-depth interview and document review did not investigate the readiness level of lecturers for online teaching and at the tertiary level, the ability of integrating technology in language teaching may be different from that of school teachers. In another study, Vo (2021) in a mixed method research found that secondary school teachers of English in Vietnam used a mass variety of ways to maintain their teaching from sending exercises through Zalo and emails to online meetings for maintaining their students' learning. Yet, their lack of ICT knowledge and pedagogical knowledge results in the low level of effectiveness.

All things considered, there is a need to have a better understanding of how ready English teachers are to cope with the sudden change to online teaching without time for preparation in Vietnam. Therefore, this study was conducted to provide researchers, administrators and teachers with a picture on how ready English teachers are and what needs to be carried out for effective online teaching.

In this study, the concept of teachers' readiness for online teaching is understood as their ICT skills and knowledge, their confidence in online teaching and their pedagogical knowledge and skills, and facility as proposed by Hung (2015) and Vo (2021).

Methodology

Research Question

The study aims at answering the two research questions: *How ready are teachers of English to implement online teaching during COVID-19 pandemic? What factors decide teachers' level of readiness for online teaching?*

Research Approach

"A mixed method case study design is a type of mixed methods study in which the quantitative and qualitative data collection, results, and integration are used to provide in-depth evidence for a case" (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In order to have effective research, the study adopted the mixed method to investigate how ready teachers of English were to deal with the sudden change from the normal teaching to online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. The sequential explanatory strategy in which the quantitative phase was conducted first, followed by the qualitative phase was selected for the mixed method.

Research Instrument

The first instrument, the survey, has four main parts. The first part is about demographic features like genders, qualifications and teaching levels. The second part seeks for information on how ready English teachers are to implement online teaching.

The second part of the survey has 9 items to identify how ready teachers were to conduct online learning regarding their confidence for online teaching, their IT skills, pedagogical knowledge and teaching condition. The 5-point scale which was used for all items of the questionnaire is from "Totally disagree" to "Totally agree".

The second research instrument is the in-depth interview which was designed to support and explain the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire. The aim of the interview is to explain information obtained from the protocol; therefore, the interview questions were developed from findings of the survey, and besides prepared questions, the researcher would spontaneously add questions to the interview for further information. The main questions are " How confident are you in teaching online?", "What ICT trainings have you taken? Are these trainings beneficial for your online teaching?", "How ready are you for your online teaching? Why?" "What factors affect your readiness for online teaching?". Yet, based on the specific situations of the interview, the questions can be edited to suit the context, and spontaneous questions were added for deeper information.

Research Sample

300 teachers of English from primary schools to high schools in the centre of Vietnam were invited to take part in the survey via emails, Zalo messages, or Facebook. However, among them only 225 teachers actually responded to the survey. Therefore, the total population was 225 teachers with 56 primary school teachers, 76 secondary school teachers, and 93 high school teachers. Three teachers were invited for an in-depth interview. These interviewed teachers have the typical responses found from the questionnaire and they volunteered for the interview. One is a primary teacher while the other two ones are secondary and high school teachers.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were processed using Excel. Meanwhile, the qualitative data was analysed using codes and themes.

Research Validity and Reliability

In order to have more evidence for the validity and reliability of the research, a pilot study was conducted with 15 teachers. After the pilot, the items of the survey were refined for better comprehensibility and also serving the study more effectively. In addition, member checking was utilized for the validation of the qualitative data analysis. All the interviews were recorded, and the transcripts and themes were sent to interviewees for checking.

Findings

English teachers' readiness for online teaching is recognised through their confidence to conduct online lessons, their IT skills, their pedagogical knowledge and the teaching condition for delivering online teaching as proposed as by Hung (2015) and Vo (2021).

Teachers' confidence for online teaching

In order to figure out the level of confidence teachers had for their online teaching, three items were designed. Regarding the first item on how confident teachers are to
Table 1

Level of Confidence

Levels of schools	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally agree
All 3 levels (225 teachers)	2.2%	10%	40%	46%	0%
High school teachers (93 teachers)	0%	5.3%	43%	51%	0%
Secondary teachers (76 teachers)	2.6%	13.1%	39.4%	44%	0%
Primary school teachers (56)	5.3%	17.8%	35.7%	41%	0%

As shown from the table, the higher the level of schools, the more confident the teachers are. While 51% of high school teachers agreed that they felt confident for online teaching, 44% of secondary school teachers and 41% of primary school teachers felt the same. By contrast, 17.8% of primary school teachers did not think that they were confident for online teaching whereas only 5.3% of high school teachers shared the idea.

The explanations for the level of confidence were found during the interviews. Teachers taking part in the interview replied that they were confident with their online teaching because they had been trained how to apply technology in language teaching. Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has been implementing the National Language Project 2020 to enhance English teachers' language proficiency and pedagogical knowledge through training programs (National Foreign Language 2020 project, 2008; Nguyen & Baldauf, 2010; Vo, 2017). The training includes not only how to use technology for language teaching in class but also how to design and implement online courses.

In addition, the reason why the level of confidence increases with the higher level of schools (i.e. high school and secondary teachers were found to be more confident than primary school counterparts) is that after the training, primary school teachers did not actually apply what they learnt in their teaching, so they found it less confident for their online teaching.

conduct online teaching, the level of confidence among students was a little below the average. Specifically, 46% of teachers agreed that they had confidence for online teaching while no teachers totally agreed.

"Q: How confident are you to conduct the online teaching?
A: I think I am confident that I can use technology for my online teaching because I took part in a training course organised by MOET and I have enough IT skills for organising meetings with Zalo. My school also organised peer support so that we can help each other to teach online."

(Interview with a high school teacher)

"Q: How confident are you to conduct the online teaching?
A: Actually, I am unconfident with my online teaching.
Q: Why? Did you have any training on how to use technology in teaching?
A: I did get some trainings when I took part in series of training by MOET, but in my school, I did not have condition to apply what I learn and my pupils are very small (6-10 years old), so I forgot almost all what I learnt."

(Interview with a primary school teacher)

The level of teachers' confidence was also realised through teachers' belief of how satisfied their students were with their online lessons. 19.1% of all teachers found their students were not satisfied with their online lessons while 33.3% agreed that their students felt satisfied with lessons. Similar to the level of confidence, more high school teachers and secondary teachers believed their students were satisfied with their online lessons, with 56.9%, 21% and 10.7% respectively.

Table 2

Teachers' Belief of How Satisfied Their Students Were With Online Lessons

Levels of schools	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally agree
All 3 levels (225 teachers)	0%	19.1%	47.5%	33.3%	0%
High school teachers (93 teachers)	0%	3.2%	39.7%	56.9%	0%
Secondary teachers (76 teachers)	0%	26.3%	52.6%	21%	0%
Primary school teachers (56)	0%	35.7%	53.5%	10.7%	0%

The reasons for the differences in the belief of how satisfied students with online lessons come from two factors. Firstly, it is harder to teach primary students online because at the age from 6 to 11 years old, students are naughty and need more attention from teachers. Teaching young learners requires much interaction which brings them more interests in learning. Sitting in front of the computer for online learning is not an easy task for young children at all. Secondly, primary school teachers are less confident to conduct online teaching.

"...Q: Why do you think that your students are not very satisfied with their teaching?

A: Primary students are young and naughty. They soon find it boring when having to sit in front of the computers for 2 periods. Teaching young children requires various activities to motivate them. I cannot organise games or fun activities with Zoom meetings. "

(Interview with a primary school teacher)

All in all, various levels of confidence for online teaching were found among English teachers. The level of confidence increases with the level of schools. In addition, more high school and secondary school teachers had belief that their students were satisfied with online lessons than primary teachers.

English teachers' IT skills for online teaching

Table 3

Teachers' IT Skills

Items	Levels of schools	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally agree
I have sufficient IT skills to conduct online teaching.	All 3 levels (225 teachers)	0%	28,8%	20%	51%	0%
	High school teachers (93 teachers)	0%	30%	10.7%	59%	0%
	Secondary teachers (76 teachers)	0%	27%	32%	39%	0%
	Primary school teachers (56)	0%	28%	17.8%	53%	0%
I know how to use tools (MS Team, Zoom, Google Meet, etc.) for my online meetings.	All 3 levels (225 teachers)	0%	22%	11%	66%	0%
	High school teachers (93 teachers)	0%	21%	5.3%	73%	0%
	Secondary teachers	0%	32.8%	15.7%	51.3%	0%

(76 teachers)					
Primary school teachers (56)	0%	8.9%	14.2%	76.7%	0%

As shown in table 3, English teachers in Vietnam generally have certain IT skills to deliver online lessons with 51% of all respondents agreeing and 28,8% of them disagreeing that they have sufficient IT skills for online teaching. Among three levels of school teachers, the percentage of high school teachers who have sufficient skills for online lessons is the highest with 59% agreeing and 30% totally agreeing. It is not surprising when 0% of teachers selected "totally disagree" for these two items of the questionnaire because they were given more or less chances to take part in training for online teaching organized by their schools. The reason why they did not choose "Totally agree" may come from the fact that they were not very confident with their ability.

English teachers' pedagogical knowledge for online teaching

The most important element for successful online teaching is teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills. As revealed from the survey, approximately a third of the Vietnamese school teachers generally have adequate knowledge and skills for their online teaching. 33.3% of teachers agreed that they had sufficient knowledge for online teaching; 45.3% were of agreement that they had sufficient pedagogical skills for online lessons; 33.7% believed they knew how to use tools for online teaching. Differences were identified among the three levels of school teachers. High school teachers and secondary school teachers were a little bit better at pedagogical knowledge and skills for online teaching as seen in table 4.

Table 4

Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge for Online Teaching

Items	Levels of schools	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally agree
I have sufficient pedagogical knowledge for online teaching.	All 3 levels (225 teachers)	2.2%	20%	44.4%	33.3%	0%
	High school teachers (93 teachers)	1%	16.1%	53.7%	29.7%	0%
	Secondary teachers (76 teachers)	2.6%	19.7%	39.4%	38.1%	0%
	Primary school teachers (56)	3,5%	26.7%	35.7%	33.9%	0%
I have sufficient pedagogical skills for online teaching	All 3 levels (225 teachers)	0%	19.1%	35.5%	45.3%	0%
	High school teachers (93 teachers)	0%	19.1%	26.8%	59.1%	0%
	Secondary teachers (76 teachers)	0%	22.3%	32.8%	44.7%	0%
	Primary school teachers (56)	0%	17.8%	53.5%	28.5%	0%
I know how to design an online teaching lesson.	All 3 levels (225 teachers)	2.6%	22.2%	41.3%	33.7%	0%
	High school teachers (93 teachers)	2.1%	21.5%	35.4%	40.8%	0%
	Secondary teachers (76 teachers)	2.6%	19.7%	46%	31%	0%

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally agree
Primary school teachers (56)	3.5%	26.7%	44.6%	25%	0%

Thanks to the "Technology in Education" training program organised by the National Language 2020 project, teachers of English in Vietnam have been equipped with knowledge and skills to integrate technology in their language teaching. All interviewed teachers replied that they took part in the training course, so they had certain knowledge and skills for their online teaching. Yet, they admitted that such knowledge and skills were not sufficient and teaching online was different from using some tools for their face-to-face classes.

"Q: Have you ever taken part in any courses/ training programmes for

technology knowledge and skills for online teaching?

A: Last year, I participated in a training course for technology in language teaching, so I know how to create online courses and use some tools in my lessons. But the course is to train us how to integrate technology in our teaching, not for complete online teaching. We also did not learn how to use Zoom for online meetings."

(Interview with a primary school teacher)

All in all, approximately under 50% of English teachers have sufficient knowledge and skills to deliver online teaching.

Teachers' condition for online teaching

Table 5

Teachers' Condition for Online Teaching

Items	Levels of schools	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally agree
I have good internet connection for my online teaching.	All 3 levels (225 teachers)	0%	8.8%	2.2%	88.8%	0%
	High school teachers (93 teachers)	0%	12.9%	0.1%	86%	0%
	Secondary teachers (76 teachers)	0%	6.6%	1.3%	92.1%	0%
	Primary school teachers (56)	0%	5.4%	5.3%	89.2%	0%
I have a laptop/ a desktop for my online teaching.	All 3 levels (225 teachers)	0%	0.8%	13.3%	84.4%	0%
	High school teachers (93 teachers)	0%	2.1%	5,3%	92.4%	0%
	Secondary teachers (76 teachers)	0%	2.6%	19.7%	77.6%	0%
	Primary school teachers (56)	0%	1.7%	17.8%	80.3%	0%

As found from the survey, English teachers in Vietnam have basically good conditions for their online teaching when a very high percentage (88.8%) of all participants have good internet connection and surprisingly, 84.4% of school teachers have laptops or desktops for online lesson delivery. The three interviewed teachers explained that not all

teachers have their own laptop/ desktops and internet connection, but they are supported by schools. Those who do not have enough facilities to teach online from home can be at school and use the school facility. In Vietnam, almost all schools have computer rooms with internet connection and schools make use of such facilities to support their teachers.

"Q: It is surprising that the survey shows that all teachers have laptops/ desktops for their online teaching. What do you think about it?

A: Ah, because we can use our school desktops. My school has two computer rooms with high-speed internet connection supported by Viettel (i.e. a famous company in Vietnam). If we do not have our own ones, we can use school facility. My school encouraged us to deliver online lessons at school with the help of technicians rather than at home. The school set up the classroom with a desktop and a camera. We just come to school and use..."

(Interview with a primary school teacher)

"Q: It is surprising that the survey shows that all teachers have laptops/ desktops for their online teaching. What do you think about it?

A: I use my own laptop, but if anyone does not have enough condition for online teaching, they can come to school and use computer room there. We just need to inform our school in advance for preparation. Some of my colleagues prefer to teach online at school because they can get support from others."

(Interview with a high school teacher)

"Q: It is surprising that the survey shows that all teachers have laptops/ desktops for their online teaching. What do you think about it?

A: I do not know. I have a laptop so I did online lessons at home. My school encouraged us to maintain students' learning and supported us with technology help and we also helped each other by sharing our experiences and facilities.

Q: How did you share the facility?

A: By many ways, we lent each other our laptops or we came to colleagues' houses for internet connection. In addition, we could use school computers if we wanted."

(Interview with a secondary teacher)

In other words, for those who conducted online teaching, teaching conditions like laptops/desktops and internet connection are not constraints. However, the participants of this study have just finished a series of training courses in which they had to study both online and offline. Therefore, they may have a better preparation for online learning and teaching than other teachers of English in Vietnam in general.

Discussion

Teachers' readiness for online teaching is affected by many factors such as teachers' confidence for online teaching, teachers' methodological knowledge and skills for online teaching, IT skills, and teaching facility (Gao & Zhang, 2020; Koo, 2008; Mohama et al., 2020; Popova & Pikulenko, 2020). Nevertheless, the research participants just conducted online meetings and assigned tasks like homework to students by email or Zalo. They did not really design an online course on such platforms like Blackboard or Learning Management System (LMS). In fact, what they used for their online teaching does not require much knowledge and skills.

According to Pham et al. (2019), generally, English teachers' ability to integrate technology in education is quite low, just at the beginning level of SAMR model. Teachers simply use some of the very basic tools like audio players, computers or emails for their teaching (Le & Vo, 2014); therefore, they find it challenging when they have to deal with online teaching. The situation is similar in some Asian countries. In Malaysia, teachers hardly use internet for their teaching, so they have difficulties in organising online lessons (Koo, 2008). A study conducted in Palestine shows that capabilities of IT skills decides the readiness of teachers for their e-learning lessons (Trayek et al., 2016). In Palestine, teachers' own belief that they can conduct e-learning in their classroom is one factor deciding the level of teachers' readiness of their e-learning activities. According to Trayek et al. (2016), in Palestine, teachers do not have strong belief for their ability to implement online teaching.

Facility readiness decides teachers' readiness for online teaching. In Vietnam, facility is one constraint of technology integration in language learning (Le & Vo, 2014;

Pham et al., 2018; Pham et al., 2019; Vo et al., 2020). Though this study shows that English teachers basically have enough conditions to conduct online teaching, facility is still a matter because to join online courses, students need to have their laptops or smartphones connected to the internet. In such a developing country like Vietnam, the requirement that every student in a class can access the internet for online learning cannot be achieved, especially in rural areas. In other words, teachers' facility readiness cannot assure the quality and the implementation of online teaching. In fact, facility is always an element preventing teachers from adopting technology in their lessons to certain extent (Ergene & Türk Kurtça, 2020; Mirķe, Cakula & Tzivian, 2019; Koo, 2008; Rusmiati et al., 2020; Trayek et al., 2016).

Implication

The level of English teachers' readiness for online teaching can be increased through active and spontaneous support form MOET, schools' administrators as well as teachers' proactive solutions to challenges that may arise (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021). First, training programmes should be provided to enhance English teachers' ability to implement online lessons. Those programmes should not only focus on IT skills but also methodological knowledge and skills for online teaching (Vo et al., 2020). Lesson design, online activity selection and teaching approach should be introduced in the course. In addition, teachers need to be continuously trained to update knowledge and skills for online teaching.

Online teaching is not simply conducting online meetings, but it should be a combination of both asynchronous and synchronous activities for effective learning outcomes (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021). Actually, in Vietnam, before COVID-19 pandemic, schools were not familiar with online courses, so when the outbreak happened, they just encouraged teachers to implement any kind of activities to maintain students' learning. The nation should reserve a certain portion of educational budget for schools' facilities and platforms for online courses.

Spontaneous support is also a solution to help teachers to deal with problems that may arise during their teaching. From training to actual teaching practice is a distance that can be shortened by several ways. First, besides training programmes provided by MOET, schools need to have their own workshops or activities to train teachers on time. Secondly, peer mentoring can be applied to enhance teachers' ability to cope with difficulties in online teaching and enhance their ability to deliver online teaching (Vo et al., 2018). In peer mentoring, teachers will be organised in small groups in which skilled and experienced ones will be responsible for helping others to design online courses and organise activities for online teaching. With peer mentoring, teachers can get instant help from colleagues, resulting in quick responses to challenges that may arise during their online teaching.

Finally, teachers of English need to be self-aware that they themselves must try to self-study to update with the new teaching context. In fact, if teachers wish to make changes to their teaching, they definitely get their own ways to overcome current challenges and head for improvements in teaching.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers' confidence, methodological knowledge and skills, and teaching facility decide their level of readiness to deal with the abrupt change of the teaching mode from face-to-face to online teaching. The study shows that under 50% of English teachers in the centre of Vietnam were methodologically available to conduct certain kinds of online teaching. Yet, they did not face difficulties in teaching conditions much. Measures like support from the government and schools, peer mentoring and self-study should be conducted for better online teaching in the future.

Yet, the study focused on exploiting teachers' readiness for online teaching based on their own perceptions; therefore, the results cannot truly reflect their actual readiness. Further studies can be conducted to cover such gap.

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MỨC ĐỘ SẴN SÀNG CỦA GIÁO VIÊN TIẾNG ANH VỚI VIỆC GIẢNG DẠY TRỰC TUYẾN KHẨN CẤP TRONG ĐẠI DỊCH COVID-19 Ở VIỆT NAM

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Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Đà Nẵng
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Tóm tắt: Đại dịch COVID-19 đã lây lan rộng rãi đến hầu hết các quốc gia trên thế giới và sự xuất hiện đột ngột của đại dịch đã ảnh hưởng nghiêm trọng đến nền giáo dục toàn cầu. Bài báo trình bày kết quả của một nghiên cứu điển hình thông qua khảo sát cách giáo viên tiếng Anh phản ứng với bối cảnh giảng dạy mới ở miền Trung Việt Nam. Bài báo phân tích mức độ sẵn sàng của giáo viên tiếng Anh để đối phó với việc chuyển đổi đột ngột từ dạy học bình thường sang dạy học trực tuyến. Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp hỗn hợp sử dụng bảng khảo sát và phỏng vấn sâu như là công cụ nghiên cứu chính. Các giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh từ các trường tiểu học đến trung học phổ thông ở miền Trung Việt Nam đã được mời tham gia làm bảng khảo sát. Kết quả của nghiên cứu cho thấy giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh không được chuẩn bị tốt cho việc giảng dạy trực tuyến đột ngột và mức độ sẵn sàng thay đổi tùy theo cấp học. Do đó, các giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh nên tự cập nhật các chiến lược được sử dụng trong giảng dạy trực tuyến, các kỹ năng công nghệ thông tin thông qua các khóa đào tạo và tự học.

Từ khóa: đào tạo giáo viên, bối cảnh giảng dạy, giảng dạy trực tuyến, kiến thức sư phạm

THE USE OF SMARTPHONE APPLICATIONS
IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS
AT VNU INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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Abstract: This research focuses on the use of smartphone applications in learning English vocabulary of over 400 first-year students of elementary level at International School - Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU-IS). It helps to clarify what aspects students should know when learning a new word and aims to find out what criteria these students take into consideration when choosing smartphone applications to learn English vocabulary, which smartphone applications are most frequently used by them and how they evaluate the effectiveness of these smartphone applications in learning English vocabulary. From the data collected and the findings, some conclusions are made relating to the use of smartphone applications in English vocabulary learning of first-year elementary students at VNU-IS.

Keywords: English language, vocabulary learning, mobile applications, apps

1. Introduction

It is undeniable that vocabulary plays an important role in language learning in general (Altman, 1990; Gass & Selinker, 2001) and foreign language learning in particular (Coady & Huckin, 1997). Vocabulary is a key element in language learning because a widely productive vocabulary is essential in enhancing a learner's language skills. This role can be clearly seen in the saying: *"without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed"* (Wilkins, 1972, pp. 111-112).

Troike (1976, p. 87) emphasizes that *"vocabulary is the most important for understanding and knowing names for things, actions and concepts"*. This does not mean that other aspects of language such as phonology or grammar can be neglected, but one thing which can be clearly seen is that the first thing language learners need in order to be able to communicate is vocabulary.

Due to these reasons, learning vocabulary is an essential aspect in foreign language methodology. If a learner has a wide range of vocabulary, he can make others understand himself easily and also can understand others easily. On the contrary, if his vocabulary is limited, he will surely have difficulties in doing so and in learning a foreign language. It can be concluded that vocabulary is a "must" for all language learners by all means.

At International School - Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU-IS), students need to acquire a large amount of vocabulary in a short period of time. Regardless of their English proficiency when admitted, they need to achieve B2 level within one year. According to the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR), English learners' proficiency can be classified into the following levels: A0, A1, A2, B1, B2, C, C1, C2 and B2 level is relevant to score 5.5 IELTS (International English Language Testing System), a well-established and the most popular international English

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proficiency test. In order to get B2 certificates, students are free to choose their test format beside IELTS such as TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), APTIS (All Purpose Ticket Issuing System), VSTEP (Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency)... This pushes them to try hard to learn vocabulary and using smartphone applications is one of their favourite ways. This is due to the fact that smartphones are popular and handy, applications on smartphones are available. This article focuses on the use of smartphone applications in learning English vocabulary of first-year students of elementary English level at VNU-IS. On that basis, some recommendations are made to help students improve the effectiveness of smartphone applications in learning English vocabulary.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Vocabulary Learning

In his opinion, Laufer (2004) describes a word as a set of properties or features. Knowing a word, therefore, necessarily includes knowing the following things: forms (spoken and written, i.e. pronunciation and spelling), word structure (the basic free morpheme and the common derivations of the word), syntactic pattern of the word in a phrase and sentence, meaning (referential, affective and pragmatic), lexical relations of the word with others (such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy), common collocations of the word.

Nation (2001) describes the most comprehensive construct of word knowledge. He lists three main aspects of knowing a word: form, meaning, and use. In general, when learning a new English word, a learner should, by all means, know its form, meaning and use simultaneously. Among these three aspects, the use is the most important, but without thorough understanding of the form and meaning of the word, the learners are unable to use it correctly.

2.1.1. Form

In terms of word forms, what learners need to know are spelling, pronunciation, affixes, part of speech, and irregularities of that word. It is necessary for learners to make sure that these aspects are fully understood. Besides, the grammar of a new word should also be learnt. The learners need to know grammatical functions, the change of form in different grammatical contexts, the regularity and irregularity, the singular and plural forms of the new word. For example, when learning the noun *child*, the learner should at the same time know the plural form *children* or when learning the verb *have*, the learner should be aware of its irregularity in past form *had*. Once having known the grammar of a word, the learners can use the word in such a way that is grammatically true.

2.1.2. Meaning

When we talk about the meaning of a word, it is necessary to refer to its denotative and connotative meaning as well as its meaning relationship. The meaning of a word is primarily what it refers to in the real world, i.e. its denotation. This meaning can be found in a dictionary. For example, if you look up the word *snake* in a dictionary, you will discover that one of its denotative meanings is "any of numerous scaly, legless, sometimes venomous reptiles; having a long, tapering, cylindrical body and found in most tropical and temperate regions."

Another component of the word meaning which is less obvious is its connotation in different contexts or its connotative meaning. This is the associations of positive or negative feeling it evokes. This meaning may or may not be indicated in a dictionary. For example, the connotations for the word *snake* could include evil or danger.

Knowing denotative and connotative meanings of a word is not adequate. The learners also need to know its meaning relationship, which is how the meaning of that word relates to the meaning of others. A variety of meaning relationships can be listed such as synonyms, antonyms, translation, etc. One thing to be noted is that the learner has to make a careful choice and decision on how many words to learn in a given period of time or else it will be impossible for them to absorb too many meanings and words. Then confusion or forgetting will be unavoidable.

2.1.3. Use

Learning the use of a word, the learners necessarily need to know how to use it correctly in different oral and written contexts, otherwise it may become useless. To use a new word well, learners need to know the way to collocate it with other words correctly. Due to this reason, the learners should put words into collocations when learning vocabulary and learn by heart if possible. For example, we say *"drive a car"* but *"ride a bicycle"*.
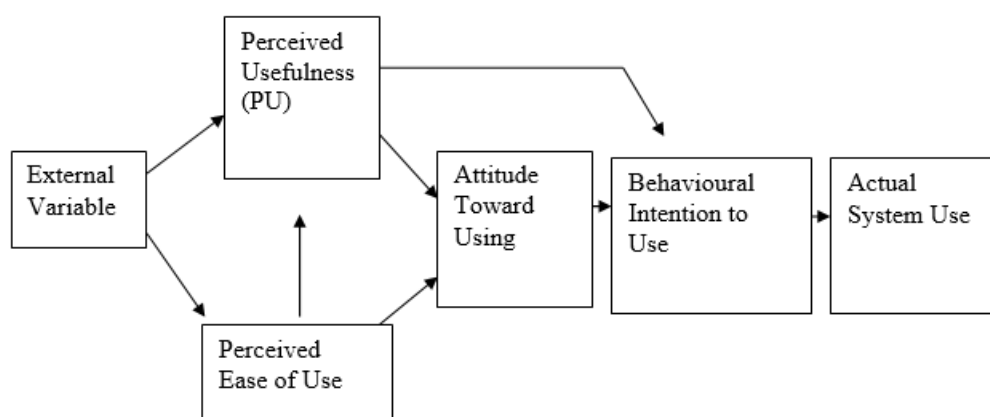
To sum up, learners should understand the form, the meaning, and the use of words in a vocabulary lesson. It should be ensured that vocabulary is regularly recycled/revised because if learners do not get the chance to put it into use, they will easily forget it. In this case, vocabulary learning is not effective.

2.2. *Mobile Learning and the Technology Acceptance Model*

Mobile technology appears to be an appropriate approach to education since smartphones and other portable Wi-Fi gadgets are related to both traditional and innovative ways of learning and are well aligned with strategic educational goals (Kukulska-Hulme,

2009). Klímová (2017) argued that characteristics such as portability, individuality, unobtrusiveness, availability, adaptability, persistence, usefulness, and usability make mobile devices an ideal language-learning tool. Moreover, the ownership of smartphones among students has grown fast which led to a great popularity of the mobile technology in education, including English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Mobile devices have been adapted in the traditional classroom environment and are increasingly used by English language learners (Nasab & Taki, 2016).

Since vocabulary acquisition is considered to be an essential part of language learning, vocabulary mobile learning applications (apps) have become a popular form of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) (Klímová, 2019).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Fred D. Davis in 1989 and evaluated the influence of four internal variables upon the use of technology in learning. The variables used in the original model are perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitudes towards using and intention to use as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Technology Acceptance Model (Davis et al., 1989)

According to this model, the students' intention to use mobile apps is influenced by the acceptance in using the apps. Besides, one more variable which is also used in this study is app design. Therefore, it is proposed that the acceptance of students in using mobile apps to learn vocabulary is influenced by the students' perceived usefulness (the degree to which a

person believes that their work performance can be increased by using the system), perceived ease of use (the extent to which a person has to make a mental or physical effort to use the technology) and app features. It is also proposed that the students' intention to use mobile apps in vocabulary learning is influenced by their acceptance in the use of mobile apps in

vocabulary learning. Hence, they are assumed to use the apps in the future if their acceptance towards the use of the apps in vocabulary learning is positive.

3. Methodology

This study aims to:

- Identify students' acceptance towards the use of mobile applications in learning English vocabulary
- Find out the most frequently-used smartphone applications by students at VNU-IS to learn English vocabulary
- Find out the students' overall evaluation on the effectiveness of the smartphone applications that they used

The participants in this research include over 400 first-year students at International School - Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU-IS) whose English ability is at elementary level. These students are learning general English at an English preparatory program in order to be able to achieve B2 certificates or equivalents (for example, IELTS 5.5) after finishing the program. They are required to reach B2 level before studying their major in English because all training programs at VNU-IS are conducted in foreign languages. The maximum length of time for them to acquire B2 certificates

is one year, which is challenging for them and puts them under pressure. Therefore, learning vocabulary is extremely important for them to improve their English skills and overall proficiency.

In this research, quantitative approach was applied and a set of questionnaires consisting of closed-ended items was used. The data from the questionnaires were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The data were then displayed and described with the use of tables and figures.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. The Acceptance of Students in Using Mobile Apps to Learn English Vocabulary

As mentioned above, the acceptance of students in using mobile apps to learn vocabulary is influenced by the students' perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and app features. In order to find out what students take into account when choosing smartphone applications used for learning English vocabulary, the participants are asked to list the criteria then rank their importance on a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 means "least important" and 5 means "most important". The data collected is summarized in the following table.

Table 1

The Acceptance of Students in Using Mobile Apps to Learn English Vocabulary

(1= Extremely unimportant, 2 = Unimportant, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Important, 5 = Extremely important)

No	Criterion	1	2	3	4	5	(4) + (5)
	Ease of use						
1	Ease of use			18%	50%	32%	**82%**
2	Saving time		7%	14%	35%	44%	**79%**
3	Convenience			6%	60%	34%	**94%**
	Usefulness						
4	Enhancing students' self-learning		7%	23%	38%	32%	**70%**
5	Improving students' learning effectiveness			25%	50%	25%`	**75%**
6	Changing students' learning habits		2%	28%	40%	30%	**70%**
7	Improving students' technological skills		2%	29%	44%	25%	**69%**
	App features						

8	Appealing animation and graphic design	2%	15%	38%	45%	**83%**
9	Good sound quality	3%	10%	35%	52%	**87%**
10	Providing definition and thesaurus of vocabulary	4%	18%	40%	38%	**78%**
11	Interesting activities	2%	8%	45%	45%	**90%**
12	Increasing level of difficulty		30%	35%	35%	**70%**

As can be seen from the table above, there are many criteria that VNU-IS students take into consideration when choosing the smartphone application to learn English vocabulary. The top three most important criteria include: convenience (94%), interesting activities (90%), sound quality (87%). The next highly important criteria that VNU-IS students care about are: appealing animation and graphic design (84%), ease of use (82%), saving time (79%) and providing the definition and thesaurus of vocabulary (78%). The other criteria which are also considered to be really important include: improving students' learning effectiveness (75%); enhancing students' self-learning, changing students' learning habits, increasing level of difficulty (70%) and improving students' technological skills (69%).

It can clearly be seen that when choosing an application to be installed in their smartphones, students take convenience as the crucial factor and they seem to care a little more about the design (activities provided by application developers, quality of sound embedded in that application as well as the graphic design) than the function of that application (ease of use, saving time or providing definition/ thesaurus of vocabulary). Participants in this research have a rather comprehensive choice of applications to be used for learning English vocabulary via their smartphones.

Convenience is the most important thing they care about because with smartphones students can learn whenever and wherever they want. If the application is not convenient enough, its operation may make users waste a lot of time and cause demotivation. Besides, if students find the application uninteresting, they may not continue using it. That is the reason why interesting activities are considered to be really important and students prefer using smartphone applications instead of using traditional ways of learning vocabulary. They enjoy the excitement brought about by the activities in the application and feel like they are playing their favourite games. It is understandable why over 90% of participants choose these two criteria.

4.2. The Most Frequently-Used Smartphone Applications by Students at VNU-IS to Learn English Vocabulary

As mentioned previously, over 400 students participated in this survey. They are first-year students at elementary English level and are on the way to improve their skills to achieve B2 certificates before studying their majors in English. The data collected reveals that the following smartphone applications are most frequently used: Quizlet, Duolingo, LinGo Play, Memrise and 11+ Vocabulary Builder. The table below illustrates the names and logos of these five mostly chosen smartphone applications of VNU-IS students in the survey.

The five smartphone applications are briefly described as follows.

4.2.1. Quizlet

For smartphone version, Quizlet provides the following functions:

- *Flashcard:* digital flashcards demonstrate terms in which the students can flip them by using mouse clicks or touching the screen to show definitions or pictures that explain the term.
- *Learn:* words and their meanings can be learned through multiple choice and writing questions. Questions are sorted from easy to difficult.
- *Write:* students are asked to write the definition for the term or the picture exposed. They can retake this module if they make an error.
- *Test:* a test consists of four types of

questions: written, multiple choices, matching, and True or False. The questions are based on the study set. The scores gained and the correct answer for the mistaken ones can be checked.

- *Match:* a game in which players are asked to match terms to their definition (or the corresponding pictures) as quickly as possible. After finishing it, the app learners.

4.2.2. Duolingo

Duolingo enables users to practice vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation using spaced repetition. Exercises can include written translation, reading and speaking comprehension, and short stories. Duolingo courses are built upon the concept of a "tree". A number of units must be successfully completed before a user can move to the next row of activities. Units tend to be semantically or grammatically themed. Completion of all 68 units is equated with a high-intermediate, or B2 on the CEFR.

Each unit contains a linear sequence of lessons, each made up of a set of chronologically ordered activities containing a chunk of related skills. Skills can be vocabulary and grammatically based. Skills are composed of six levels. Learners progress through levels of skills by practicing the lessons a certain number of times. When users complete a lesson or test out, they are rewarded experience points. Users are also tested on prior knowledge in future lessons as lessons will call back to previously learned words and expect the user to be able to apply them in new sentences. Lessons can include matching, translating, speaking, and multiple choice.

4.2.3. LinGo Play

When opening the app, you will discover your homepage with a summary of your profile. The different categories of the app include: Play online (for learners to invite friends and have fun while learning foreign languages together), Tournaments (for learners to participate in tournaments with other players around the world), Rating + prizes (for learners to participate in rating competitions and win prizes), Learn lessons (for learners to discover

thousands of new words and phrases in foreign languages), Updates (for learners to keep their vocabulary updated),

Learn lessons (for learners to complete the course and get a certificate in any of the foreign languages available in the app). Each lesson has three options: flashcards, words and phrases.

4.2.4. Memrise

Memrise lessons alternate between eight different types:

- *Learn new words:* this lesson type starts off with a video of a native speaker saying a word. Learners have to listen and match. Next, the English translation is shown. This is where learners can create a meme or add it to the "difficult word" category. This is repeated for the new words that make up the lesson.
- *Classic review:* it consists of a few practice activities and does not introduce any new material. Learners get plenty of chances to practice reading, writing, and listening to the language.
- *Speed review:* this a fast-paced multiple choice quiz that uses the words and phrases learners have learned so far. In the speed review, learners are supposed to answer the question as quickly as possible. The faster they do it, the more points they get.
- *Difficult words:* it is a collection of words that the app has identified as especially difficult for learners and words that learners have identified as difficult themselves. Selecting the difficult words exercise brings learners to a basic review session of the difficult words.
- *Listening skills:* the listening skills portion is made up of a few different audio review activities. Learners get points based on how many they get correct, but it is relaxed practice without time limits.
- *Learn with locals:* it is a bunch of simple exercises with videos of native speakers speaking the words and phrases. Learners get points based on how many

they get correct, but it's relaxed practice without time limits.

- *Chatbots and grammarbots:* this is an interesting way to interact with the language. The Grammarbots are very similar to the Chatbots, but they focus on grammar.

4.2.5. 11+ Vocabulary Builder

11+ Vocab Builder app helps students boost their vocabulary by applying various study techniques. This interactive app is designed in a quiz format and covers the following topics: 1. Alphabetical Order, 2. Anagram Pairs, 3. Antonym Pairs, 4. Antonyms, 5. Combi-Words, 6. Spelling Errors, 7. Synonym Sets.

The application has over 350 questions that cover over 5000 words. On the completion of each test the user is given a summary of questions answered correctly, incorrectly and skipped along with the time taken on each question. Every question can be reviewed and all questions have an explanation of the answer. An interactive pie chart displays current progress for

each topic. Pie charts simply display what areas need to be worked on and the mock test at the end of the section ties all of the skills together to prepare for the verbal reasoning paper.

Learners can choose to answer only incorrectly answered questions, unattempted or correctly answered questions. After learners have practiced all types of questions, they can take a Mock Test with 50 questions selected randomly from each topic. Scores for the mock tests taken in the past are displayed in a bar chart. There is no limit on how many mock tests you can take. All of these applications can be found and downloaded/installed easily on smartphones. Before deciding to use these applications, students must have made a thorough research and review in order to choose the most suitable ones. However, VNU-IS students in the survey have different choices for these applications. The detailed percentage of users choosing each of these smartphone applications to learn English vocabulary is displayed in the following figure.

Figure 2

Percentage of Smartphone Application Users to Learn English Vocabulary
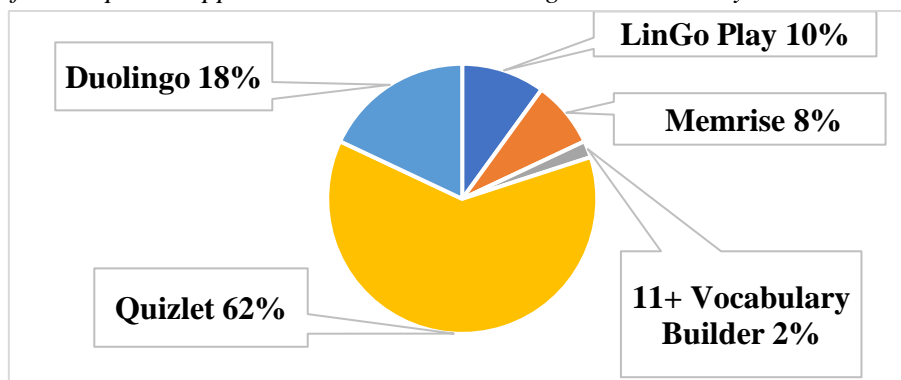
It can clearly be seen that Quizlet outweighs others and becomes the most-favored smartphone application that students in the survey choose to use for learning English vocabulary. Quizlet accounts for 62% while the second ranking application – Duolingo – only takes up 18%. Other applications are chosen by quite a small number of users: LingGo Play 10%, Memrise 8%, 11+ Vocabulary Builder 2%. The dominance of Quizlet over other applications leads the researcher to find out features that enable it to attract the majority of students in the survey.

Further interview with Quizlet users reveals the reasons why it is chosen. They find Quizlet useful because it helps them save time and effort spent on learning new words, helps to increase their learning motivation, helps to encourage their autonomy and self-study. Most importantly, Quizlet makes them feel interested to learn vocabulary. It can be concluded that interest is really important for students and this is the factor that makes them continue using that application.

4.3. Students' Overall Evaluation on the Effectiveness of the Smartphone Applications

Being asked to make a general evaluation on the effectiveness of these smartphone applications in helping them broaden their vocabulary on a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 means least effective and 5 means most effective, the students have various ideas. The data collected is summarized in the following table.

Table 3

Students' Overall Evaluation on the Effectiveness of English Vocabulary Using Smartphone Applications

(1= Extremely ineffective, 2 = Ineffective, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Effective, 5 = Extremely effective)

No	Application	1	2	3	4	5	(4) + (5)
1	Quizlet	8%	12%	20%	25%	35%	60%
2	Duolingo	22%	28%	35%	6%	9%	15%
3	LinGo Play	32%	42%	20%	4%	2%	6%
4	Memrise	38%	22%	35%	3%	2%	5%
5	11+ Vocabulary Builder	44%	35%	20%	0.5%	0.5%	1%

As mentioned previously, the number of students using these five smartphone applications vary greatly and therefore the percentage of answers relating to the effectiveness vary accordingly. 62% of participants in this research choose to use Quizlet to learn English vocabulary and 60% of them consider it to be effective. The data for Duolingo, LinGo Play, Memrise and 11+ Vocabulary Builder are: 18% - 15%, 10% - 6%, 8% - 5%, 2% - 1% accordingly. This reveals the fact that a few learners choose an application but after a certain period of time using it, they may find it unsuitable and it can not help them improve their vocabulary size as expected. Luckily, the number of these students is small in comparison with the total number of users choosing that application. The application designers must have done a thorough research of vocabulary learning methods as well as learning habits of various users before developing such applications.

5. Conclusion

This research involves a limited number of VNU-IS students to find out how they use smartphone applications to learn English vocabulary. The results show that students decide to choose the application based on a wide range of criteria such as convenience, interesting activities, sound quality, appealing animation and graphic design, ease of use, saving time and providing the definition and thesaurus of vocabulary, improving students' learning effectiveness, enhancing students' self-learning, changing students' learning habits, increasing level of difficulty, and improving students' technological skills. These criteria are not equally important.

The survey results show that the following smartphone applications are most frequently used by VNU-IS students: Quizlet, Duolingo, LinGo Play, Memrise and 11+ Vocabulary Builder. Among these, Quizlet is the most widely used and favoured by the students.

The experience of using these smartphone applications helps students evaluate their effectiveness in improving vocabulary size. The good news is that the majority of users think that these applications are effective.

However, it can be seen that students are not fully aware of the word aspect they need to focus on as well as the types of vocabulary exercise or activities they need to use in order to learn English vocabulary effectively. For VNU-IS students, they are required to improve their

vocabulary size in particular in their English level in general in a limited period of time. Therefore, it is crucial that students be given necessary information about word aspects, vocabulary learning methods in order to be able to choose the most suitable learning methods as well as the most suitable smartphone application which can help them learn vocabulary effectively. Students should be equipped with knowledge about study skills so that they can know how to gain the best in the shortest time.

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VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CÁC ỨNG DỤNG TRÊN ĐIỆN THOẠI THÔNG MINH ĐỂ HỌC TỪ VỰNG TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ NHẤT TRƯỜNG QUỐC TẾ - ĐẠI HỌC QUỐC GIA HÀ NỘI

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này đề cập tới việc sử dụng các ứng dụng trên điện thoại thông minh để học từ vựng tiếng Anh của hơn 400 sinh viên năm nhất trình độ sơ cấp tại Trường Quốc tế - Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội (VNU-IS). Nghiên cứu giúp làm rõ khi học từ mới sinh viên cần học những gì và tìm hiểu các tiêu chí sinh viên quan tâm khi lựa chọn ứng dụng trên điện thoại thông minh để học từ vựng tiếng Anh, những ứng dụng nào trên điện thoại thông minh thường được sử dụng nhiều nhất và đánh giá của các sinh viên này về hiệu quả của các ứng dụng trên điện thoại thông minh trong việc học từ vựng tiếng Anh. Từ dữ liệu thu thập được và kết quả nghiên cứu, tác giả đưa ra một số kết luận về việc sử dụng các ứng dụng trên điện thoại thông minh để học từ vựng tiếng Anh của các sinh viên năm nhất trình độ sơ cấp tại Trường Quốc tế, ĐHQGHN.

Từ khóa: tiếng Anh, học từ vựng, ứng dụng trên điện thoại, ứng dụng

READING STRATEGY TAXONOMIES: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract: The crucial importance of reading in any language has stimulated a noticeable growth in the number of studies on reading strategies used in second and foreign language reading to improve readers' comprehension. This paper examined the classifications of reading strategies by providing a variety of reading strategy taxonomies by different authors. The comparisons of the most well-known reading strategy taxonomies by Oxford (1990) and three other best-known ones by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), and Oxford (2013) were also demonstrated clearly. Two questionnaires, one of which was modified by Nguyen (2016) from the one by Sheorey and Mokhtari (2002) were also presented as useful recommendations for researchers in the field. The results of the research offer a quite comprehensive insight into reading strategy taxonomies, which might be useful for researchers in the field of reading strategies in choosing an appropriate theoretical framework for their studies in the future.

Key words: reading strategies, taxonomies, comparisons, theoretical framework

1. Introduction

According to the Paris et al. (1991), reading strategies are defined as actions that readers select deliberately and control to achieve goals or objectives (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991). They actually refer to the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text. Reading strategies, in this way, show how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand (Barnett, 1988; Block, 1986; Brantmeier, 2002). In other words, reading strategies are conceptualized as conscious and deliberate activities that readers take to help their reading in acquiring, storing, retrieving information and constructing meaning from the text (Yang, 2004).

Although different authors have defined reading strategies in different ways, they share the same viewpoint on the characteristics of reading strategies. Those are (1) deliberate,

conscious plans, techniques and skills; (2) aiming to enhance reading comprehension and overcome comprehension failures; and (3) behavioral mental. They are of interest for what they reveal about the way readers manage their interaction with the written text and how these strategies are related to text comprehension (Carrell, Pharis & Liberto, 1989).

This paper provides an overview of reading strategy classifications focusing on the comparisons of the most well-known reading strategy taxonomies by Oxford (1990)'s and three other best-known taxonomies by O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s, Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002)'s, and Oxford (2013)'s.

2. Classifications of Reading Strategies

Reading strategies have been classified variously by different authors. Based on three broad category classifications Chamot (1987) (as cited in Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 77) introduced twenty-two strategies which can be

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used in reading, categorized in Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Social and Affective strategies. Metacognitive category which allows readers think about the reading process, plan for reading, monitor the reading task, and evaluate how well one has read (Schramm, 2008; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001), consists of seven strategies: Planning, Directed attention, Selected attention, Self-management, Self-monitoring, Problem identification, and Self-evaluation. Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, encourage readers manipulate the reading material mentally or physically by using their prior knowledge, or applying a specific technique and various strategies in their efforts to construct meaning in the comprehension process (Chamot, 1987, as cited in Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 77; Pang, 2008). This strategy category consists of eleven specific strategies: Repeating, Resourcing, Grouping, Note taking, Deduction/ Induction, Substitution, Elaboration, Summarization, Translation, Transferring, and Inferencing. Four last strategies belonging to Social and Affective strategies allow readers to interact with others to assist reading or using affective control to assist a reading task. Those are Questioning for clarification, Cooperation, Self-task, and Self-reinforcement.

Oxford (1990) classifying language learning strategies into six groups of Direct and Indirect strategies proposed fifty strategies which can be applied in reading. The first group of Direct strategies is Memory, which consists of ten specific strategies categorized in four strategy sets: Creating mental linkages, Applying images and sounds, Reviewing well, and Employing action. The second group is Cognitive including thirteen strategies divided into four sets: Practicing, Receiving and sending messages, Analyzing and reasoning, and Creating structure for input and output. The last group of Direct strategies is Compensation with only one set named Guessing intelligently with two specific strategies Using linguistic clues and Using other clues. The last Indirect group consists of five strategies divided into three sets: Asking questions, Cooperating with others, and Empathizing with others. The names and definitions of all fifty strategies in this classification are presented in details in the Appendix 1.

In a very recent study Oxford (2013) introduced a quite different taxonomy of reading strategies (Appendix 2). The Self-Strategic Regulation (S2R) model includes strategies of three majors, mutually influential dimensions: cognitive, affective, sociocultural-interactive, and metastrategies. While Cognitive strategies help the reader construct, transform, and apply L2 knowledge, Affective strategies help the reader create positive emotions and attitudes and stay motivated. Sociocultural Interactive (SI) strategies, on the other hand, help the learner with communication, sociocultural contexts, and identity. All of these three strategy dimensions are powerfully influenced by three types of Metastrategies. Metacognitive strategies simply mean "beyond the cognitive" and include strategies that provide general control of cognitive strategies and help the reader control cognitive strategy use. Similarly, meta-affective strategies facilitate readers control of affective strategy use, and meta-SI strategies enable the readers to control SI strategy use. Metastrategies, by virtue of their executive-control and management function, help the readers know whether and how to deploy a given strategy and aid in determining whether the strategy is working or has worked as intended. Strategies and metastrategies in the model are highly dynamic, because they respond to changing needs of the learner for varying purposes in different sociocultural contexts.

A different classification of reading strategies was proposed by Shih (1992) and Baker-Gonzalize and Blau (1995) when they suggested three stages of reading strategy use: before reading, while reading, and after reading. Before, or pre-reading strategies are believed to activate prior knowledge, or schemata, essential for understanding texts; during, or while-reading strategies help to locate the main idea; and after, or post-reading strategies are used to review, detect and cogitate upon the information (Paris et al., 1991; Young & Oxford, 1997).

Other scholars classified reading strategies using different terms. Anderson (1991) groups reading strategies to five categories: 1) supervising strategies, 2) support strategies, 3) paraphrasing strategies, 4) strategies for establishing coherence in the

text, and 5) test-taking strategies. Meanwhile, Jimenez, Garcia, and Pearson (1996) divided reading strategies into text-initiated, interactive, and reader-initiated strategies.

Studies in both L1 and L2 reading generally indicate a binary categorization of "bottom-up" and "top down" strategies. These strategies have quite the same functions as local strategies and global strategies by Block (1986) and Carrell (1989). Bottom-up or local strategies include focusing on identifying the meaning and grammatical category of individual words, sentence structure, and details of the text (Salataci & Akyel, 2002). As the readers process information that each sentence gives they check to see how this information fits by using top-down or global strategies, such as activating background knowledge, predicting, getting the gist of the text, and skimming (Barnett, 1988; Block, 1986; Carrell et al., 1989).

Brown (1990) listed five specific strategies that can help students read more quickly and effectively: Previewing, predicting, skimming and scanning, guessing from context, and paraphrasing. Sharing a quite similar view Brantmeier (2002) agreed that reading strategies "may involve skimming, scanning, guessing, recognizing cognates and word families, reading for meaning, predicting, activating general knowledge, making inferences, following references, and separating main ideas from support ideas" (p. 1).

Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) and Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) introduced the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) and Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) to "measure the type and frequency of reading strategies that adolescent and adult ESL students perceive they use while reading academic or school-related materials in English" (p. 4). The authors proposed thirty items using three broad categories as Global, Problem-solving, and Support strategies. These three classes of strategies interact with and support each other when used in the process of constructing meaning from the text.

3. Comparisons of Most Well-Known Reading Strategy Classifications

3.1. Comparing the O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s and the Oxford (1990)'s Reading Strategy Systems

O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s reading strategy system derived from cognitive psychological theory of information processing (Brown & Palincsar, 1984) distinguishes three broad types of reading strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective (or sometimes called socio-affective or social-affective). Oxford (1990) classifies learning strategies into two major areas: direct and indirect strategies which are subdivided into a total of six classes (memory, cognitive, and compensation under the direct class; metacognitive, affective, and social under the indirect class). Direct and indirect strategies support each other and each strategy group is capable of connecting with and assisting every other strategy group (Oxford, 1990, p. 14). However, in research practice, particularly in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and Strategy Applications Listed According to Reading Skill, Oxford did not use the direct/indirect dichotomy. In fact, she introduces fifty reading strategies divided into memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

There is a considerable degree of overlap between the two strategy systems, although there are also many differences (Appendix 3). O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) metacognitive strategies generally match those of Oxford (1990). The general function of this category is planning, organizing, and evaluating one's own reading process. The number of metacognitive strategies introduced by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990) are not the same (seven compared with ten). However, according to Oxford (1990) paying attention strategy involves two modes: directed attention and selective attention, which are separated in O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s system. Obviously, the two systems share six metacognitive strategies. Besides O'Malley and Chamot (1990) add problem identification strategy and Oxford (1990) adds six more (Overviewing and linking with already known

material, Identifying the purpose of a language task, Setting goals and objectives, Seeking practice opportunities, Finding out about language learning, and Organizing). It can also be said from this difference that setting goals and purpose of reading is considered important in Oxford (1990) system while O'Malley and Chamot (1990) ignore this. In general, metacognitive strategies are quite consistent in both classifications.

The cognitive strategies of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) roughly correspond to a combination of Oxford's cognitive and memory strategies although the number of strategies of these two systems are quite different (eleven strategies compared with twenty-four). The classification by Oxford (1990) has six cognitive strategies and eight memory strategies more than those in O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s. However, inferencing strategy of O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s system is listed as a compensation strategy in Oxford (1990)'s (using linguistic and other clues to guess - of guessing intelligently strategy set). The reason for this, according to Oxford (1990) is that this strategy is essential to make up for inadequate knowledge while reading.

Oxford (1990) intentionally separates memory strategies from the cognitive category because memory strategies appear to have a very clear, specific function which distinguishes them from many cognitive strategies. Naturally, memory strategies serve cognition. However, the actions included as memory strategies are particular mnemonic devices that aid learners in moving information to long-term memory for storage purposes and in retrieving it from long-term memory when needed for use. Most of the memory devices do not tend to contribute to deep processing of language information, although cognitive strategies do contribute to deep processing (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002).

Both systems mention strategies dealing with affect and social interaction. Affective strategies are techniques whereby the reader manages his/her emotions, feelings, and motivational states. One of the most basic social interactions is asking questions, an action from which learners gain great benefit. In addition, social strategies are techniques involving learning with other people.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) group affective strategies and social strategies together to form a category known as social-affective or socio-affective strategies. In contrast, Oxford (1990) classifies affective and social strategies as separate categories and there are six more individual strategies of these categories in Oxford (1990)'s than in O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s.

Both O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s and Oxford (1990)'s reading systems have made an important contribution to and have advanced our understanding of how reading strategies can be systematically categorized. Nevertheless, in their research Hsiao and Oxford (2002) suggest that "it may be preferable to subdivide O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s cognitive strategies into memory, cognitive, and compensation dimensions than to consider cognitive strategies as a unitary dimension" (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). In addition, O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s socio-affective strategies should be separated into affective and social dimensions (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002, p. 378). Concluding that the six-factor model without the two higher-order strategy constructs is more consistent with learners' strategy use than other models (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002), Oxford (1990) emphasizes the classification is more comprehensive and detailed; it is more systematic in linking individual strategies, as well as strategy group; and it uses less technical terminology (Oxford, 1990, p. 14). Furthermore, this comprehensive classification system has provided the foundation for the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), which has been employed in numerous studies across the world to validate the effectiveness of reading strategies to reading comprehension. It is estimated that the SILL has been used in major studies on reading strategies around the world and involved 10,000 language learners (Kaylani, 1996). Moreover, it has been translated into more than twenty languages (Oxford, 2001). However, it appears that there could be other approaches that might help to advance theories of reading strategy classification and explain variability in learners' strategy use as well as or better than the six-factor strategy model.

3.2. Comparing Oxford (1990)'s and Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002)'s Reading Strategy Systems

In 2002, Mokhtari and Sheorey introduced the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), which was initially inspired by the review and use of another instrument Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) as a measure of students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. The SORS is intended to measure the type and frequency of reading strategies that adolescent and adult EFL students perceive they use while reading academic materials in English. Here is a comparison of the reading strategy classifications by Oxford (1990) and that by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) (Appendix 4).

The two systems show that Oxford (1990) and Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) share twenty-one strategies, such as using previous knowledge, repeating, guessing, taking notes, translating, using clues, etc. though the strategies are categorized differently by the authors. As mentioned earlier Oxford (1990) proposes fifty strategies categorized in four groups while there are only thirty strategies divided into three groups in Mokhtari and Sheorey's (2002) classification. Although Oxford's (1990, p. 14) classification is comprehensive and detailed, with so many strategies, it is very difficult to decide which are the most important to learning. In addition, there is a tendency to find overlapping strategies, which cannot be attributed to any particular theory of learning. For example, three strategies of Cooperating with peers (Social), Cooperating with proficient users of the language (Social), and Discussing your feelings with someone else (Affective) can be combined as one strategy: Interacting to Learn and Communicate (in S2R model); or four strategies of Organizing (Metacognitive), Setting goals and objectives (Metacognitive), Identifying the purpose of a language task (Metacognitive), and Planning for a language task (Metacognitive) can be grouped as Planning (in S2R model).

It can be noticed that the classification by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) is simply organized and the number of reading strategies

are moderate for readers to assess themselves. Mentioning SORS, Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) indicate "SORS is presented as a simple and effective tool for enabling students to develop a better awareness of their reading strategies, for teachers assess such awareness, and for assisting students in becoming constructively responsive readers" (p. 2). Furthermore, the title of each strategy group (Global, Problem-solving, and Support) can also be considered as a useful guide for readers when they deal with reading texts. Global strategies can be applied in all kinds of texts, at any time, while problem-solving strategies help readers cope with problems emerging during their reading. Besides, they can make the best of support strategies when facing difficulties in reading. In addition, many researchers have applied SORS in their studies to investigate readers' strategies used while reading English academic materials as a foreign/second language (Alsheikh, 2011, 2014; Al-Sohbani, 2013; Jafari & Shokrpour, 2012; Monos, 2005; Sheorey & Baboezky, 2008; etc.).

3.3. Comparing Oxford (1990)'s and Oxford (2013)'s Reading Strategy Systems

Oxford's (2013) new model of reading strategies has addressed the gaps in her initial 1990 taxonomy. In the new model the divisions of direct and indirect strategies, which were considered as the main limitation of Oxford (1990)'s taxonomy (Uztosun, 2015), have not been used any longer.

With the new concept of self-regulation, the S2R model shifted the focus of language learning strategies to the assumption that "learners actively and constructively use strategies to manage their own learning" (Oxford, 2013, p. 7). There are obviously important differences between Oxford's (2013) S2R model and her 1990 strategy classification.

The most important difference is that S2R model includes metastrategies for each strategy dimension: metacognitive strategies, meta-sociocultural-interactive strategies, and meta-affective strategies. Oxford's explanation for this is that metaknowledge is not only relevant to cognitive strategies but also affective and sociocultural-interactive ones. To explain for this innovation Oxford (2013) claims that

deploying any type of strategy requires using a meta-strategy which "help[s] the learner know whether and how to deploy a given strategy and aid[s] in determining whether the strategy is working or has worked as intended" (Oxford, 2013, p. 18).

In the S2R model, the role of memory (ME) and compensation (COM) strategy categories is not mentioned. Some individual strategies of these categories have been put into the category of cognitive strategies, such as Using linguistic clues (COM), Using other clues (COM), Using keywords (ME), and Using imagery (ME). The others, for example, Using physical response or sensation (ME), Using mechanical techniques (ME) have not been used any more.

The new model also highly emphasizes the role of culture in reading process by including strategies which are used to deal with sociocultural contexts and identities namely 'sociocultural-interactive'.

According to Hsiao and Oxford (2002), Oxford's S2R Model (2013) is different from other strategy taxonomies, which shows the advantages of this new model. The most significant differences can be demonstrated as follows.

Firstly, three major traditions of learning theory and research: psychological, socialcognitive, and sociocultural are systematically integrated. The psychological tradition of strategies is very diverse, including strategies related to schema (mental structure) development, comprehension, cognitive information-processing, metacognition, motivation, emotion, and beliefs. The social-cognitive strand deals with strategies as associated with task phases, self-efficacy, and social comparisons. The sociocultural tradition involves strategies (often called "higher mental functions" or "operations") as linked with mediated learning, instrumental enrichment, the ZPD, communities of practice, and cognitive apprenticeship. Secondly, by proposing affecting and sociocultural interaction subscales of strategies, especially by recognizing the significant importance of metastrategies, Oxford (2013) indicates that second language reading is not just a cognitive/metacognitive process but is also influenced by a complex web of beliefs, emotional associations, attitudes, motivations, sociocultural relationships, personal interactions, and power dynamics. Thirdly, the S2R Model states that metastrategies, such as Planning, Organizing, Monitoring, and Evaluating, are naturally usable at either the task level or the whole-process level. Meanwhile, several social-cognitive models of self-regulated learning view these as only related to a particular task-phase (e.g., strategies used before, during, and after the task). Finally, the S2R Model includes the fewest strategies and metastrategies (a total of nineteen) needed for self-regulated L2 learning; therefore, the model can be viewed as scientifically elegant.

4. The Applications of the Strategy Taxonomies

Many studies on reading strategy use have been taken applying the reading strategy classifications by the authors mentioned above. The author herself has conducted some studies on students' reading strategy use.

Nguyen (2018) used the framework by Oxford (2013) to design a questionnaire to explore the use of strategies in English reading comprehension by university students in Vietnam. The results of Cronbach's Alpha revealed that both external and internal reliability and validity of the questionnaire was assured. The internal reliability of the questionnaire was high with Cronbach's Alpha = 0.935 for 19 items of reading strategies categorized into Metastrategies, Cognitive strategies, Affective, and Socio-cultural strategies. In addition, the correlation between coefficient variables and total of each item was high with the score ranging from 0.454 to 0.758. The overall mean score of 2.90 indicates that the participants used reading strategies at moderate scale of frequency when they read English for general academic purposes. Considering the use of each reading strategy category, the most frequently used category was Cognitive strategies (M = 3.24; S.D = 0.85), followed by Affective strategies (M = 2.89; S.D = 0.85), Socio-cultural Interactive strategies (M = 2.80; SD = 0.85), and Metastrategies were reported being used at the lowest level of frequency with M = 2.69, SD = 0.83.

In addition, a modified SORS was also proposed by Nguyen (2016) to investigate the use of reading strategies. Based on the meaning and correlation of strategies of each component by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), the researcher re-categorized the strategies into five subscales with titles and meanings presented in the table below.

No.	Subscale	Usage
1	OVERVIEWING	Used at the first stage of the reading process when the readers plan to monitor or manage their reading.
2	PROBLEM DEALING	Used when the readers meet difficulties while working directly with the text
3	SUPPORTING	Used when the readers need aids to understand the text. The aids may be from reference materials or the readers' own ways, or from other readers, for better comprehension.
4	GUESSING	Used during reading process, when the readers want to guess the meaning of the text without any aids
5	INFORMATION DEALING	Used when the readers want to check their understanding of the read information

A full modified SORS with 31 items categorized in five subscales mentioned above can be seen in Appendix 5.

The reliability of the modified SORS has been confirmed by the results of different necessary tests. The most significant thing of this modified SORS is that beside it covers all appropriate strategies proposed by other authors it helps readers decide what strategies to use at each stage of reading process. In this way readers can use the strategies in a more appropriate way to gain more effectiveness for their reading. Any readers who want to assess their own use of reading strategies themselves, and researchers who need to investigate readers' strategy awareness can use this modified SORS with a Likert scale.

The modified SORS has twofold usefulness. First, it can help teachers get information to measure students' reading strategy use and to instruct them to comprehend a text strategically. Data obtained from the SORS can be used as a means to monitor students to become effectively responsive readers. Second, students can use the model as an instrument to increase their own awareness of reading strategies. They can evaluate themselves and adjust their way to achieve the most effectiveness. Application of good strategies will help students become better readers which motivate them to read more and be more interested in reading in particular and language learning in general.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has provided an overview of classifications of reading strategies. Two reading strategy frameworks, one of which was modified by Nguyen (2016) from the one by Sheorey and Mokhtari (2002), were also presented as useful recommendations for researchers in the field. As demonstrated above, each existing classification system in and on itself involves an implicit theory about the nature of reading strategies. However, how best the use of the strategies presented by the authors can be depends on types of readers and their reading purposes. Using appropriate strategies for reading helps learners think and process the reading in specific contexts (Chamot, 2005; Cohen, 2007; Oxford, 2013). Nevertheless, how many strategies are available to learners to assist them in reading and how these strategies should be classified are open to debate (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). It may also cause a problem that many researchers are very easy to be puzzled with which classification to follow when they conduct studies on reading strategy. The comparisons among best known taxonomies as presented might help researchers decide an appropriate reading strategy classification for their study in the field.

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APPENDIX 1

Strategies Applied in Reading Proposed by Oxford (1990)

No.	Strategy group	Strategy set	Strategy	Definition
	DIRECT STRATEGIES			
1.	Memory	Creating mental linkages	Grouping	Classifying or reclassifying what is read into meaningful groups, thus reducing the number of unrelated elements. It sometimes involves labeling the groups.
2.	Memory	Creating mental linkages	Associating/ elaborating	Associating new language information with familiar concepts already in memory, making the material easier to remember
3.	Memory	Creating mental linkages	Placing new words into a context	Placing new words or expressions that have been read into a meaningful context, such as a written sentence, as a way to remember it
4.	Memory	Applying images and sounds	Using imagery	Creating a mental image of what has been read; remembering a written item by picturing the place where it is located
5.	Memory	Applying images and sounds	Semantic mapping	Arranging concepts and relationships on paper to create a semantic map, a diagram in which the key concepts are highlighted and are linked with related concepts via arrows or lines
6.	Memory	Applying images and sounds	Using keywords	Combining images to remember more easily what has been read in the new language. Two steps: identifying a familiar word in one's own language or another language that sounds like the new word; then generating a visual image of the new word and the familiar

				one interacting in some way
7.	Memory	Applying images and sounds	Representing sounds in memory	Linking the new word with familiar words or sounds from any language
8.	Memory	Reviewing well	Structured reviewing	Reviewing new material in the target language at different intervals
9.	Memory	Employing action	Using physical response or sensation	Physically acting out what has been read or associating physical sensations with specific words found in reading passages
10.	Memory	Employing action	Using mechanical techniques	Writing the new expressions in a full sentence on a flashcard
11.	Cognitive	Practicing	Repeating	Reading a passage more than once for a better understanding
12.	Cognitive	Practicing	Recognizing and using formulas and patterns	Recognizing and using unanalyzed expressions in the target language
13.	Cognitive	Practicing	Practicing naturalistically	Using the language in an authentic way for reading comprehension
14.	Cognitive	Receiving and sending messages	Getting the idea quickly	Skimming- searching for the main ideas Scanning- searching for specific details
15.	Cognitive	Receiving and sending messages	Using resources for receiving and sending messages	Using resources such as dictionaries, word lists, grammar books, and phrase books to find out the meaning of what is read
16.	Cognitive	Analyzing and reasoning	Reasoning deductively	Deriving hypotheses about the meaning of what is read by means of general rules the learner already knows
17.	Cognitive	Analyzing and reasoning	Analyzing expressions	Breaking down a new word, a phrase, a sentence, or even a paragraph into its component parts for better understanding
18.	Cognitive	Analyzing and reasoning	Analyzing contrastively	Analyzing elements of the new language to determine likeness and differences in comparison with one's own native language
19.	Cognitive	Analyzing and reasoning	Translating	Using the reader's own language as the basis for understanding
20.	Cognitive	Analyzing and reasoning	Transferring	Directly applying previous knowledge to facilitate new knowledge in the target language
21.	Cognitive	Creating	Summarizing	Making a condensed, shorter version of

		structure for input and output		the original passage
22.	Cognitive	Creating structure for input and output	Taking notes	Writing key points in the reader's own language or in the target language
23.	Cognitive	Creating structure for input and output	Highlighting	Emphasizing the major points in a dramatic way, through colour, underlying, boxes, circles…
24.	Compensation	Guessing intelligently	Using linguistic clues	Using previously gained knowledge of the target language, the reader's own language such as suffixes, prefixes and word order for guessing meaning
25.	Compensation	Guessing intelligently	Using other clues	Using other resources which are not related to language such as titles or nicknames, summaries, conclusions, transitions, etc. for guessing the meaning of what is read
	INDIRECT STRATEGIES			
26.	Metacognitive	Centering your learning	Overviewing and linking with already known material	Previewing the basic principles and/or material for an upcoming language activity and linking these with what the reader already knows
27.	Metacognitive	Centering your learning	Paying attention	Directing attention and selecting attention. Deciding generally or globally to pay attention to the task and avoid irrelevant distractors and deciding in advance to notice particular details
28.	Metacognitive	Arranging and planning your learning	Finding out about language learning	Uncovering what is involved in language learning
29.	Metacognitive	Arranging and planning your learning	Organizing	Creating the best possible physical environment, scheduling well, and keeping a language learning notebook
30.	Metacognitive	Arranging and planning your learning	Setting goals and objectives	Writing aims for language learning in the language learning notebook, along with deadlines for accomplishing them and an indication as to whether those deadlines were met
31.	Metacognitive	Arranging and planning your learning	Identifying the purpose of a language task	Determining the task purpose

32.	Metacognitive	Arranging and planning your learning	Planning for a language task	Identifying the general nature of the task, the specific requirements of the task, the resources available within the reader, and the need for further aids
33.	Metacognitive	Arranging and planning your learning	Seeking practice opportunities	Finding additional chances to practice the language
34.	Metacognitive	Evaluating your learning	Self- monitoring	Noticing and correcting the reader's own errors in reading by writing down the most difficulties in his/ her language learning notebook and trying to eliminate them
36.	Metacognitive	Evaluating your learning	Self- evaluating	Gauging progress in reading by using checklists, diaries, journals
36.	Affective	Lowering your anxiety	Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or mediation	Alternately tensing and relaxing all the major muscle groups, one at a time
37.	Affective	Lowering your anxiety	Using music	Listening to soothing music for some minutes before or during reading to get calmness
38.	Affective	Lowering your anxiety	Using laughter	Laughing to reduce anxiety during reading
39.	Affective	Encouraging yourself	Making positive statements	Using positive statements to encourage themselves
40.	Affective	Encouraging yourself	Taking risks wisely	Consciously deciding to take reasonable risks regardless of the possibility of making mistakes or encountering difficulties
41.	Affective	Encouraging yourself	Rewarding yourself	Discovering how to reward learners themselves for good work in reading
42.	Affective	Taking your emotional temperature	Listening to your body	Paying attention to what the body says
43.	Affective	Taking your emotional temperature	Writing a language learning diary	Using language learning diaries or journals to describe the reader's feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about the reading process
44.	Affective	Taking your emotional temperature	Using a checklist	Using an everyday checklist to assess students' own feelings and attitudes about reading
45.	Affective	Taking your emotional temperature	Discussing your feelings with someone else	Discussing the reading process with other people

46.	Social	Asking questions	Asking for clarification and verification	Asking the more proficient reader for clarification and verification
47.	Social	Cooperating with others	Cooperating with peers	Working together with other readers with a common goal or reward
48.	Social	Cooperating with others	Cooperating with proficient users of the language	Cooperating with proficient readers during the reading process
49.	Social	Empathizing with others	Developing cultural understanding	Improving background knowledge of the new culture for better understanding what is read
50.	Social	Empathizing with others	Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings	Purposefully being aware of fluctuations in the thoughts and feelings of particular readers

APPENDIX 2

Oxford's Strategic Self-Regulation (S2R) Model of L2 Learning (2013)

Metastrategies and strategies in the Strategic Self-Regulation (S2R) Model of L2 learning	
Metastrategies and strategies	**Purpose**
8 Metastrategies (metacognitive, meta-affective, and metasociocultural-interactive)	
Paying Attention	Managing and controlling L2 learning in a general sense, with a focus on understanding one's own needs and using and adjusting the other strategies to meet those needs
Planning	
Obtaining and Using Resources	
Organizing	
Implementing Plans	
Orchestrating Strategy Use	
Monitoring	
Evaluating	
6 strategies in the Cognitive dimension	
Using the Senses to Understand and Remember	Remembering and processing the L2 (constructing, transforming, and applying L2 knowledge)
Activating Knowledge	
Reasoning	
Conceptualizing with Details	
Conceptualizing Broadly	

Going Beyond the Immediate Data	
2 strategies in the Affective dimension	
Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes	Handling emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation in L2 learning
Generating and Maintaining Motivation	
3 strategies in the Sociocultural-interactive dimension	
Interacting to Learn and Communicate	Dealing with issues of contexts, communication, and culture in L2 learning
Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communicating	
Dealing with Sociocultural Contexts and Identities	

APPENDIX 3

Comparing the Strategy Systems by O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990)

O'Malley & Chamot (1990)	Oxford (1990)
METACOGNITVE	
Planning (M)	*Planning for a language task (M)*
Directed attention (M)	*Paying attention (M)*
Selected attention (M) (Oxford, 154)	
Self-management (M)	
Self-evaluation (M)	*Self- evaluating(M)*
Self-monitoring (M)	*Self- monitoring (M) (Oxford, 160)*
Problem identification (M)	Overviewing and linking with already known material (M)
	Identifying the purpose of a language task (M)
	Setting goals and objectives (M)
	Seeking practice opportunities (M)
	Finding out about language learning (M)
	Organizing
COGNITIVE	
Repeating (C)	*Repeating (C)*
Resourcing (C)	*Using resources for receiving and sending messages (C)*
Note taking (C)	*Taking notes (C)*
Summarization (C)	*Summarizing(C)*
Translation(C)	*Translating (C)*
Transfer (C)	*Transferring (C)*

Deduction/ Induction(C)	*Reasoning deductively (C)*
Grouping (C)	*Grouping (ME)*
Elaboration (C)	*Associating/Elaborating (ME)*
Inferencing(C)	*Using linguistic clues (Com), Using other clues (Com)*
Substitution (C)	Analyzing contrastively (C)
	Practicing naturalistically (C)
	Getting the idea quickly (C)
	Analyzing expressions (C)
	Recognizing and using formulas and patterns (C)
	Highlighting (C)
	Using imagery (ME)
	Placing new words into a context (ME)
	Semantic mapping (ME)
	Using keywords (ME)
	Representing sounds in memory (ME)
	Structured reviewing (ME)
	Using physical response or sensation (ME)
	Using mechanical techniques (ME)
SOCIO-AFFECTIVE	
Cooperation (SA)	*Cooperating with peers (S)*
Questioning for clarification (SA)	*Asking questions for clarification and verification (S)*
Self-reinforcement (SA)	*Making positive statements (A)* *Rewarding yourself (A)*
Self-task (SA)	Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or mediation (A
	Using a checklist (A)
	Using music (A)
	Using laughter (A)
	Taking risks wisely (A)
	Listening to your body (A)
	Discussing your feelings with someone else (A)
Notes: C: Cognitive strategy; M: Metacognitive; SA: Socio-affective.	Notes: ME: Memory strategy; C: Cognitive strategy; Com: Compensation; M: Metacognitive; A: Affective; S: Social.

APPENDIX 4

Comparing the Strategy Systems by Oxford (1990) and Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002)

Oxford (1990)	Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002)
Planning for a language task (M)	
Paying attention (M)	*Paying closer attention (P)*
Self- evaluating (M)	Critically analyzing and evaluating the information (G)
Repeating ©	*Rereading (P)*
Using resources for receiving and sending messages ©	*Using reference materials (S)*
Grouping (ME)	*Finding relationships among ideas (S)*
Taking notes ©	*Taking notes (S)*
Summarizing©	*Summarizing (S)*
Translating ©	*Translating (S)*
Cooperating with peers (S) *Discussing your feelings with someone else (A)*	*Discussing with others (S)*
Transferring ©	*Thinking about what known (G)*
Reasoning deductively ©	*Guessing (G)*
Asking questions for clarification and verification (S)	*Asking oneself questions (S)*
Using linguistic clues, Using other clues (Co)	*Using context clues (G)* *Using typographical aids (G)*
Self- monitoring (M)	Checking the guesses (G) Checking understanding (G)
	Deciding what to read closely and what to ignore (G) Thinking about whether the content of the text fits reading purpose (G)
Overviewing and linking with already known material (M)	*Previewing the text (G)*
Identifying the purpose of a language task (M) *Setting goals and objectives (M)*	*Having a purpose in mind (G)*
Seeking practice opportunities (M)	
Analyzing contrastively (C)	*Stopping from time to time and thinking about what is being read (P)*
Practicing naturalistically *(C)*	
Getting the idea quickly (C)	*Skimming the text (G)*

Oxford (1990)	Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002)
Analyzing expressions (C) *Recognizing and using formulas and patterns (C)*	*Guessing the meaning of unknown words or phrases (P)*
Highlighting (C)	*Underlining or circling information (S)*
Using imagery (ME)	*Using tables, figures, and pictures in text (G)*
Placing new words into a context (ME)	
Semantic mapping (ME)	*Picturing or visualizing information (P)*
Using keywords (ME)	
Representing sounds in memory (ME)	
Structured reviewing (ME)	
Using physical response or sensation (ME)	
Using mechanical techniques (ME)	
	Paraphrasing (S)
	Reading aloud (S)
Associating/Elaborating (ME)	
	Reading slowly but carefully (P)
	Getting back on track (P)
	Adjusting reading speed (P)
Making positive statements (A) Rewarding yourself (A)	Thinking about information in both English and mother tongue (S)
Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or mediation (A	
Using a checklist (A)	
Using music (A)	
Using laughter (A)	
Taking risks wisely (A)	
Listening to your body (A)	
Discussing your feelings with someone else (A)	
Notes: ME: Memory strategy; C: Cognitive strategy; Com: Compensation; M: Metacognitive; A: Affective; S: Social.	Notes: G: Global strategy; P: Problem solving; S: Support.

APPENDIX 5

A MODIFIED SORS by Nguyen (2016)

No.	Strategies	1	2	3	4	5
OVERVIEWING STRATEGIES						
1	I have a purpose in mind when I read.					
2	I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.					
3	I take an overall view of the text to see what it is about before reading it.					
4	I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization.					
5	When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.					
6	I use typographical features like boldface and italics to identify key information.					
PROBLEM DEALING STRATEGIES						
7	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.					
8	I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading.					
9	When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading.					
10	I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading.					
11	I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I am reading.					
12	When text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.					
13	When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.					
SUPPORTING STRATEGIES						
14	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.					
15	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it					
16	I use reference materials (e.g., dictionary) to help me understand what I read.					
17	When reading, I translate from English into my native language.					
18	I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read.					
19	I go back and forth in the text to find relationship among ideas in it.					
20	I summarize what I read to reflect on important information in the text					
21	I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding					
GUESSING STRATEGIES						
22	I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.					
23	I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.					

24	When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.					
25	I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading.					
INFORMATION DEALING STRATEGIES						
26	I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.					
27	I check my understanding when I come across new information.					
28	I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text					
29	I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding.					
30	I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.					
31	When reading, I think about information in both English and my mother tongue.					

PHÂN LOẠI CHIẾN LƯỢC ĐỌC:
MỘT NGHIÊN CỨU TỔNG QUAN

Nguyễn Thị Bích Thủy

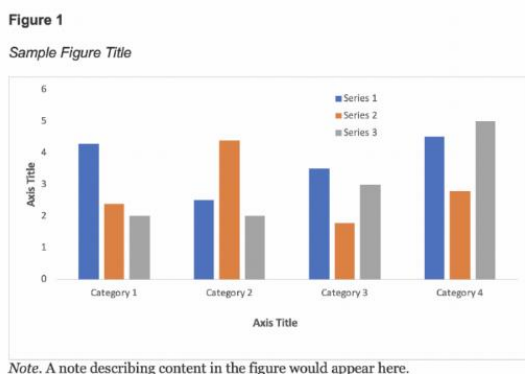*Khoa Tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học PHENIKAA, Yên Nghĩa, Hà Đông, Hà Nội 12116, Việt Nam*

Tóm tắt: Tầm quan trọng cốt yếu của việc đọc bằng bất kỳ ngôn ngữ nào đã tạo nên sự gia tăng đáng kể về số lượng các nghiên cứu về việc sử dụng chiến lược đọc nhằm cải thiện năng lực đọc hiểu của người học ngoại ngữ. Bài viết này nghiên cứu về sự phân loại các chiến lược đọc thông qua việc cung cấp các mô hình phân loại chiến lược đọc đa dạng của các tác giả khác nhau. Việc so sánh các phân loại chiến lược đọc của Oxford (1990) và ba phân loại chiến lược đọc thông dụng khác của O'Malley và Chamot (1990), Mokhtari và Sheorey (2002), và Oxford (2013) cũng được trình bày rõ ràng. Hai mô hình phân loại chiến lược đọc, trong đó có 1 mô hình được Nguyen (2016) điều chỉnh trên cơ sở khung phân loại của Sheorey and Mokhtari (2002) cũng được giới thiệu nhằm đưa ra những gợi ý cho các nhà nghiên cứu trong lĩnh vực này. Kết quả của nghiên cứu đã đưa ra cái nhìn khá toàn diện về việc phân loại các chiến lược đọc nhằm hỗ trợ các nhà nghiên cứu chiến lược đọc lựa chọn một khung lý thuyết phù hợp khi thực hiện các nghiên cứu trong tương lai.

Từ khoá: chiến lược đọc, phân loại, so sánh, khung lý thuyết

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)