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RESEARCH

THE PLACE OF GRAMMAR IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION ENGLISH CURRICULUM AND THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING GRAMMAR CONTENTS FROM CURRICULUM TO TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract: This paper is concerned with two important issues but seem to have been neglected in foreign language curriculum development and textbook writing research: the place of grammar in a modern foreign language curriculum and the problems of translating grammar contents designed in the curriculum to textbooks for effective learning and teaching. Two specific questions raised for exploration in this study are: (1) What is the place of grammar in the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)'s 2018 General Education English Curriculum (GEEC)?", and (2) What are the main problems textbook writers often experience in translating grammar contents from the GEEC to textbooks? These questions constitute the foci of the paper and will be addressed in detail throughout.

Keywords: grammar, role, MoET's 2018 GEEC, problems, curriculum, textbooks

1. Introduction

In any curriculum, syllabus or content of teaching plays an essential, if not an indispensable, part. In the General Education English Curriculum of Vietnam (GEEC), the syllabus part takes up the largest textual space: 37/54 A4-size pages (see Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2018b). The GEEC syllabus is an integrated, multi-component one consisting of experiential contents which comprise (general) themes and (specific) topics, communicative competences/functions realizing through the four communicative skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and linguistic knowledge elements consisting of phonology/pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. This paper focuses on the place of grammar as an element of MoET's (2018) GEEC syllabus and the problems of translating the items of this element specified in the GEEC syllabus to textbooks for effective learning and teaching in the classroom. The paper is organized around four main parts. Part one deals with the place of grammar in the GEEC syllabus. Part two looks at the selection, distribution, and grading of grammar contents in the GEEC syllabus. Part three discusses some specific problems the writers of an English textbook series have experienced in translating the grammar contents specified in

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the GEEC syllabus to their textbooks. And Part four gives a résumé of the paper and makes some suggestions for further research.

2. The Place of Grammar in the GEEC Syllabus

Throughout the history of foreign language teaching, the teaching of grammar, although viewed differently in different methods and approaches, has generally been given a proper status (cf. Tonkyn, 2002; Ellis, 2002). In the grammar-translation method, the main aim is to inculcate an understanding of the grammar of a foreign language and to enable the student to write the foreign language accurately by regular practice in translating from his or her native language. Grammar thus occupies a predominant status in the syllabus and sizeable space in the textbook. A textbook written in the grammar-translation tradition often provides detailed and systematic descriptions of the grammar of the foreign language based on traditional categories with written exercises, especially translation exercises accompanied by bilingual lists of vocabulary. The work of the teacher who follows this teaching method is to enable students to memorise grammatical rules, translate texts from their mother tongue into the foreign language, complete all the written exercises in each lesson, and cover all the lessons in the textbook in a given period of time. Grammar of the foreign language is taught explicitly and deductively with elaborate explanations in the native language (see Rivers, 1970; see also Brown and Lee, 2015).

In the direct method, students learn to understand a foreign language by listening to it and to make themselves understood in the foreign language by speaking it as much as possible. The ultimate aim is to develop students' ability to think in the foreign language, whether conversing, reading or writing. In this method, more attention is paid to pronunciation of the foreign language. Grammar thus is relegated to a secondary status in the syllabus, and the space reserved for it in the textbook is naturally modest. It is taught implicitly and inductively: students learn grammar largely through practice; they are encouraged to draw their own structural generalisations from what they have been learning by an inductive process (Rivers, 1970, p. 19; cf. Diane-Freeman, 2003, p. 28). When grammar is taught more systematically, at post-intermediate or advanced level, it is taught in the foreign language with the use of the foreign language terminology.

In the audio-lingual method, the main aim of teaching is to enable students to communicate in a foreign language in listening and speaking first as the foundation on which to build the skills of reading and writing. There is no translation between first and second languages, and there is little or no analysis of grammatical rules (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 20). One of the most important tenets characterizing the audio-lingual method is "teach the language not about the language" (Rivers, 1970, p. 39; see also Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This is, to a large extent, like the direct method where the learning of a foreign language is thought to be like the acquiring of a first language: children do not need to memorize rules in order to use their native language, and the rules necessary to use the foreign language will be figured out or induced from examples. Also like the direct method, grammar is not given a predominant status in the audio-lingual syllabus, and the space reserved for it in the textbook is accordingly limited. Grammar is taught in patterns with lots of repetitive practices and exercises in simple conversations; it is taught by inductive analogy rather than deductive explanation: students have to discover the rules of grammar for themselves after they have become acquainted with enough examples.

In Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the general goal is to develop communicative competences which, it is now widely accepted, consist of "linguistic

competence", "socio-linguistic competence", "discourse competence", and "strategic competence" (Canale & Swales, 1980, Canale, 1983/2013). In the CLT approach, fluency and accuracy are generally seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques (Brown, 2000, p. 267; Brown & Lee, 2015). Grammar thus is just one of the many components in the syllabus and in the textbook contributing to the total development of communicative competences. Students can learn grammar from functions, situational contexts and from the roles of the interlocutors (Diane-Freeman, 2003, p. 128). Since the development of the early model of CLT by scholars of Council of Europe in the early 1970s such as van Ek and Alexander (1975), Wilkins (1976) and many others, a number of CLT variants have been developed, some give pride to grammar, while others relegate it to a secondary status or even an almost "zero" position evident in English textbooks written in the 1980s and early 1990s such as *Streamline English* [Departures, Connections, Destinations, Directions] by Hartley and Viney (1982), *Functions of English* by Jones (1987), *Meanings into Words* [Intermediate and Upper-intermediate] by Doff, Jones, and Mitchell (1984), and *Person to Person* [Book 1 and Book 2] by Richards and Bycina (1985).

The GEEC is a communicative curriculum. Its syllabus is an integrated and multi-graded one designed in both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Horizontally, it is organized around four aspects: (1) experiential contents consisting of "chủ điểm (themes)" and (2) "chủ đề (topics)", (3) "năng lực giao tiếp (communicative competences/functions)" stated in terms of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and (4) "kiến thức ngôn ngữ (linguistic knowledge)" consisting of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Vertically, these four aspects of content are delivered throughout the ten grades (from Grade 3 to Grade 12) in a way that new learning is introduced, consolidated and extended to affirm the spiral nature of the Curriculum. "The purpose of the horizontal and vertical design is to enable textbook writers and teachers to see more clearly the body of linguistic knowledge and the levels of language skills needed for each grade and each level of education" (Hoang, 2022, p. 13). Thus, it can be seen from the GEEC syllabus that grammar is a legitimate, but not a predominant, element in the total English language learning and teaching in Vietnamese general education.

3. Grammar Contents in the GEEC Syllabus

3.1. The Term "Pedagogical Grammar" and the Choice of Grammar in the GEEC Syllabus

What is "pedagogical grammar"? The question is simple, but the answer appears to be fairly complex. The reason is that like many scientific concepts, the term "pedagogical grammar" is an overloaded one: it is understood differently by different scholars. Within the literature available on the topic in English, pedagogical grammar can refer to a grammar of any language that is written for teaching and learning purposes: for teachers and students as a first, a second or foreign language, at any level of proficiency: primary, intermediate, or advanced. In terms of types, pedagogical grammar can be a traditional grammar, a structural grammar, a transformational-generative grammar, a functional grammar, a communicative grammar, a pragmatic grammar, a theoretical grammar, a practical grammar, a prescriptive grammar, a descriptive grammar, and so on (for detail, see Corder, 1973; Rogova, 1975; Crystal, 1987; Greenbaum, 1987; Chalker, 2000; Tonkyn, 2000; Candlin, 2001; Derewianka, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Celce-Murcia, 2002).

The fact that pedagogical grammar is so multivalent a concept suggests that choosing a sort of grammar suitable for the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in

Vietnamese schools is never an easy task for any syllabus designer. Pick traditional or structural grammar, for example, and the syllabus designer is criticized for being backward and anachronistic, not keeping up with the current communicative movement in foreign language teaching and learning; pick functional, pragmatic or communicative grammar and the syllabus designer is criticised for being dreamy and unrealistic. Either way, it seems, the syllabus designer cannot win even though we well recognise that the ultimate goal of learning a foreign language is communication. In their design, the GEEC syllabus designers seem to have chosen a sort of what we would like to refer to as "traditional-structural" English grammar. There are several reasons for this choice, but two seem to stand out. Firstly, traditional-structural grammar is the kind of grammar Vietnamese teachers and students are most familiar with: in their mother tongue Vietnamese they both are acquainted with concepts and categories such as noun, verb, adjective, sentence, simple present, simple past, etc. And secondly, the real-life needs of most of Vietnamese school students of English as a foreign language (at least at the present time) are not so much the development of communicative skills as the development of language accuracy for passing tests and examinations which are largely traditional grammar-based.

3.2. Grammar Contents in the GEEC Syllabus

It should be noted that the GEEC (*Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông: Chương trình môn tiếng Anh*) is only one of the 27 subject curricula recognised in the Total General Education Curriculum (*Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông: Chương trình tổng thể*) (see Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2018a; see also Hoang, 2022, p. 3). And as can be seen in 2, grammar is just one of the several elements in the design of the GEEC syllabus. The specification of its contents, therefore, must meet at least two conditions: (1) it must be realistic; i.e. it must be designed in a way that both teachers and students can teach and learn it effectively; and (2) it must match the stages of the educational development; i.e. in terms of grammatical competence, it must be designed in a way that upon finishing the primary level, students will have achieved Level 1, upon finishing the lower secondary level, students will have achieved Level 2, and upon finishing the upper secondary level, students will have achieved Level 3 as specified in *Khung năng lực ngoại ngữ 6 bậc dùng cho Việt Nam* (6-level Foreign Language Proficiency Framework of Vietnam) (VNFLPF) (see Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2014). To meet these requirements, grammar contents of the GEEC syllabus are organised into two categories: "general contents" and "specific contents".

3.2.1. General Contents

Grammar contents designed for each level of the general education are stated generally in the GEEC as follows:

Primary level. The grammar content introduced at the primary level includes items and structures which serve to develop students' grammatical competence at the VNFLPF Level 1.

Lower secondary level. The grammar content introduced at the lower secondary level consolidates and extends the grammar items and structures already introduced at the primary level. They include items and structures which serve to develop students' grammatical competences at the VNFLPF Level 2.

Upper secondary level. The grammar content introduced at the upper secondary level consolidates and extends the grammar items and structures already introduced at the primary and lower secondary levels. They include items and structures which serve to develop students' grammatical competences at the VNFLPF Level 3.

3.2.2. Specific Contents

Specific grammar contents are the specifications or realizations of the general contents. They are designed vertically. This means that grammar items have been selected to be used in teaching to three pre-determined levels of achievement from Grade 3 to Grade 12. The purpose of this vertical design is based on the idea that new learning is introduced, consolidated and extended in a cyclical manner to affirm the spiral nature of the curriculum (see Hoang, 2022, p. 13). Table 1 represents the list or inventory of the grammar items selected for ten years' learning of the GEEC.

Table 1

Grammar Contents in the GEEC Syllabus

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Grade 3

    - Present simple tense

    - Present continuous tense

    - Simple sentences

    - Demonstrative pronouns: *this/that/these/those*

    - Sentences with *There is/There are*

    - Wh-questions*: what, where, who, how, how old,…*

    - Interrogative questions *(Yes/No* question*)*

    - Imperative sentences: *Stand up, please. Don't talk, please, …*

    - Modal verbs: *may, can*

    - Personal/impersonal pronouns: *I, you, he, she, it, we*, *they*

    - Possessive adjectives: *my, your, his, her, its, our, their*

    - Nouns (singular and plural): *pen(s), book(s), chair(s), ...*

    - Descriptive adjectives: *big, small, new, old, …*

    - Quantifiers: *a lot, many, some, …*

    - Conjunctions: *and*

    - Articles: *a/an, the*

    - Prepositions (of place): *in, at, on, …*

      …

Grade 4

    - Present simple tense (consolidation and extension)

    - Present continuous tense (consolidation and extension)

    - Past simple tense

    - Simple sentences

    - Wh-questions

    - Interrogative questions (*Yes/No* questions)

    - Modal verbs: *can, would*

    - Personal/Impersonal pronouns (consolidation and extension)

- Conjunctions: *and, but, or, because*
- Prepositions: *with, near, behind, next to, opposite, by, ...*
  …

Grade 5

- Past simple tense (consolidation and extension)
- Future simple tense
- Wh-questions
- Interrogative questions: (*Yes/No* questions) (consolidation and extension)
- Modal verbs: *should, could, would*
- Simple descriptive adjectives
- Adverbs (of manner): *fast, hard, well, ...*
- Adverbs (of frequency): *always, usually, often, never, ...*
- Prepositions: *by, on, ...*
  …

Grade 6

- Present simple tense (consolidation and extension)
- Present continuous tense (consolidation and extension)
- Future simple tense (consolidation and extension
- Past simple tense (consolidation and extension)
- Simple sentences
- Compound sentences
- Modal verbs: *should/shouldn't, might*
- Wh-questions
- Interrogative questions (*Yes/No* question)
- Imperative sentences: positive/negative
- Nouns: countable/uncountable
- Adjectives
- Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives
- Possessive cases
- Possessive pronouns: *mine, yours ...*
- Indefinite quantifiers: *some, any, ...*
- Prepositions of place, time, …
- Adverbs of frequency
- Conjunctions: *because, ...*
- Articles: *a/an, the*
- Conditional sentence (Type 1)
  …

Grade 7

- Present simple tense (consolidation and extension)
- Present continuous tense (consolidation and extension)
- Past simple tense (consolidation and extension)
- Future simple tense (consolidation and extension)
- Simple sentences
- Modal verbs: *should/ should not, ...*
- Interrogative questions (*Yes/No* questions)
- Comparisons of *like, (not) as ... as, different from, ...*
- Possessive pronouns: *mine, yours, his, ...*
- Indefinite quantifiers: *some, lots of, a lot of, ...*
- Prepositions of place, time*: in, on, at...*
- Conjunctions: *although, however, ...*
- Articles: *a/an, the, zero article* (consolidation and extension)

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Grade 8

- Present simple tense (consolidation and extension)
- Past continuous tense
- Present simple tense with future meaning
- Verbs (of liking) + gerund (V-*ing*)
- Verbs (of liking) + to infinitive
- Wh-questions
- Interrogative questions (*Yes/No* questions)
- Types of sentences: simple/compound/complex sentences
- Conditional sentence Type 1 (consolidation and extension)
- Reported speech: reported statements and reported questions
- Adverbs of frequency
- Comparative adverbs
- Prepositions of place, time
- Countable and uncountable nouns
- Possessive pronouns
- Articles: *a/an*, *the*, *zero article* (consolidation and extension)

  …

Grade 9

- Past continuous tense (consolidation and extension)
- Past simple tense with *wish*
- Modal verbs with *if*

- Modal verbs
- Phrasal verbs
- *Suggest* + V-*ing* structure
- Gerund following *like*, *dislike*, *love*, *enjoy*, *hate*, ...
- Infinitives (verb + *to*-infinitive)
- Question words before *to*-infinitive
- Reported speech
- Adverb clauses of causes, results, concession
- Relative pronouns
- Relative clauses (defining and non-defining)
- Comparative adjectives

   …

Grade 10
- Present perfect tense
- Present simple and present continuous tenses (consolidation and extension)
- Future simple tense and future with *be going to* (consolidation and extension)
- Past simple and past continuous tenses with *when* and *while*
- Infinitive with *to* and infinitive without *to*
- Gerund and infinitive (for description)
- Passive sentences, passive sentences with modal verbs
- Compound sentences
- Relative clauses: defining and non-defining (extension)
- Conditional sentence Type 1 (consolidation and extension)
- Conditional sentence Type 2
- Reported speech
- Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives
- Adjectives (indicating attitudes)
- Articles

   …

Grade 11
- Past simple tense and present perfect tense
- Modal verbs: *must* vs. *have to, ...*
- Linking verbs: *be*, *seem*, …
- Stative verbs in progressive tense
- Gerund (used as subject, object, etc.)
- Participles and clauses with to-infinitives
- Perfect gerund and perfect participle

- Connectors
- Word formation: compound nouns
- Cleft sentences: *It is/was ... that* + clause
  …

Grade 12
- Present perfect tense (consolidation and extension)
- Past simple and past continuous tenses
- Types of sentences: simple, compound, complex sentences (consolidation and extension)
- Articles (consolidation and extension)
- Reported speech: command, request, offer, advice, instruction
- Relative clauses with *which* referring to a whole clause
- Prepositions after some verbs
- Phrasal verbs (verb + adverbs and verb + preposition)
- Double comparison indicating changing things
- Sentences of cause: active and passive
- Adverbial clauses of condition, comparison
- Adverbial clauses of manner, result
  …

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Table 1 shows that the grammar contents specified in the GEEC syllabus are relatively exhaustive in coverage. They consist of a listing of morphology (parts of speech) and syntax such as nouns (singular, plural, and collective), pronouns (personal, demonstrative, interrogative), verbs (modal, auxiliary, lexical, stative), basic verb tenses (present simple, past simple, present continuous, past continuous, present perfect, etc.), verb forms (participle 1, participle 2, gerund, infinitives), adjectives (descriptive, possessive), adverbs, articles, prepositions; sentence moods (declarative, imperative, interrogative), sentence types (simple, complex, compound), direct (quoted) and indirect (reported) speech, conditional sentences (type 1, type 2), subordinate clauses (adverbial clauses of condition, comparison, result, manner), comparative and superlatives of adjectives and adverbs, and others. These contents reveal the concepts of traditional-structural grammar which Vietnamese teachers of English are supposed to possess. The list of grammar items is assumed to be sufficient for students to achieve, in terms of grammatical competence, VNFLPF Level 1 after they have finished the primary school level, VNFLPF Level 2 after they have finished the lower secondary school level, and VNFLPF Level 3 after they have finished the upper secondary school level. In addition, there are three notable features of the list. Firstly, it is graded in the sense that it provides the grammar items that should be taught in each grade of the ten-year curriculum. Secondly, it indicates clearly which item is taught as an item of new knowledge, and which is taught as an item of consolidation and extension. And thirdly, it reflects the openness and flexibility of the syllabus: it puts the three dots (**…**) at the end of each grade list to allow textbook writers and teachers to add some more items to or omit some from the list to meet the needs of their students and to suit the diverse teaching and learning conditions of their localities.

4. Problems of Translating Grammar Contents From Syllabus to Textbooks

4.1. Preliminary Observations

Over half a century ago when foreign language textbooks were a rarity, an ideal set of materials a Vietnamese student madly needed to acquire a foreign language were a small dictionary to learn the vocabulary of the foreign language, a basic grammar book to learn the grammar structures of the foreign language, and a reader to read some simple texts in the foreign language. This essential trio is said to be associated with the grammar-translation method whose main activities in the classroom were oral and written translation from the mother tongue (Vietnamese) into the foreign language (English, French, Russian, or Chinese) followed by some vocabulary and grammar structure drill exercises to consolidate and affirm the correctness of the translation. This trio of materials was produced in English-speaking countries, mainly Great Britain and the USA. Curriculum or syllabus was nowhere to be seen and no other materials were available.

With the rapid changes in foreign language teaching over the past few decades, the way that information about a foreign language is organized has changed radically, moving the ideal trio of a dictionary, a grammar book and a reader to the background: now the information about a foreign language is designed systematically and distributed appropriately in curriculum or syllabus and is then translated to textbooks, accompanied by numerous supplementary materials (both printed and electronic) forming what is now commonly referred to as 'foreign language textbook ecology' such as teacher's books, workbooks, audio CDs, pictures, flashcards, puppets, electronic teaching plans, video phonics, teaching demo-videos, e-textbooks, and many others. If one attempts a small research into modern national foreign language syllabi and their corresponding sets of textbooks, one can see that many of them have a multi-component design, consisting of themes/topics or communicative events students need to engage in, communicative competences/functions students need to take part in the topics expressed through communicative language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and key linguistic knowledge elements of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar students need to achieve communicative functions (cf. Nunan, 2001). One can also see that all these components are rolled into the textbooks, so that instead of concentrating, for example, all the grammar information in one place, all the lexical information in another, and all the phonological information in another, they are spread over the whole course in several course books, interspersed with practice exercises or activities of various sorts. This has enriched the contents of modern foreign language teaching, but at the same time has caused textbook writers lots of problems, one of which concerns how to translate grammar contents from the curriculum syllabus to textbooks. The problems experienced by the writers of the English textbook series "Global Success" can serve the point well. But before we could proceed, it would be useful to take a brief look at this prestigious textbook series.

4.2. The Textbook Series "Global Success"

"Global Success" is a multi-graded English textbook series for Vietnamese school students from Grade 3 to Grade 12. The textbook series is developed by authors of Vietnam Education Publishing House in collaboration with those of Macmillan Education (for the primary level) and Pearson Education (for the lower and upper secondary levels). The textbook series is developed in compliance with MoET's (2018b) GEEC. Based on the structure of the Vietnamese general education system, the amount of time allocated for each level of the general education specified in the GEEC, and the language proficiency for each level specified in the

VNFLPF – Level 1 for the primary level, Level 2 for the lower secondary, and Level 3 for the upper secondary, the collaborative authors have designed the series into ten textbooks, one for each grade. The total amount of time that the textbook series must cover is 1155 periods: 420 periods for the primary level, 420 for the lower secondary level, and 315 for the upper secondary level.

The textbook series "Global Success" has a multi-component design: all three textbooks at the primary level are organised around Topics, Competences/Functions, Structures, Vocabulary, and Phonics; all four textbooks at the lower secondary level are designed around Topics, Language Focus (Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Grammar), Communication & Culture, Skills 1 (Reading & Speaking), Skills 2 (Listening & Writing), and Looking Back & Project; and all three textbooks at the upper secondary level consist of Topics, Language Focus (Pronunciation, Vocabulary, and Grammar), Reading, Speaking, Listening, Writing, Communication & Culture/CLIL, and Looking Back & Project.

Each unit of the textbooks of each level differ slightly in their structure which can be presented Table 2 below.

Table 2

Structures of Global Success's Primary, Lower Secondary, and Upper Secondary Textbooks

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Primary level textbooks

Each textbook of the primary level is structured around 20 learning units and four review units, each learning unit consists of three lessons, and each lesson consists of two 35-minute periods. Specifically, a learning unit is designed as follows:

Unit topic (for example, **Unit one – Hello**)

Lesson 1

Period 1

1. Look, listen and repeat: introduces new vocabulary and structures in a stimulating way to provide pupils with visual support for listening, reading and speaking practice.

2. Listen, point and say: provides controlled practice and drill of the target vocabulary and structures.

3. Let's talk: provides different situations with visual and textual prompts for pupils to use English to practice orally with their peers and their teacher.

Period 2

4. Listen and circle/tick/number: focuses on improving pupils' initial listening skills.

5. Look, complete, and read: provides pupils with opportunities to use the learned vocabulary and structures.

6. Let's sing: provides opportunities for pupils to practice using English in authentic context (through singing a song).

Lesson 2

Period 1

1. Look, listen and repeat: introduces more new vocabulary and structures in a stimulating way (e.g. cartoon form) to provide pupils with visual support for listening, reading

and speaking practice.

2. Listen, point and say: provides controlled practice and drill of the target vocabulary and structures.

3. Let's talk: provides different situations with visual and textual prompts for pupils to practice orally English with their peers and their teacher.

Period 2

4. Listen and number/complete/tick: further develops pupils' listening skills.

5. Read and match/complete/tick/write: provides a simple reading text for pupils to initially develop reading skills.

6. Let's play: provides opportunities for pupils to practice using English in real situation (through playing a language game)

Lesson 3

Period 1

1. Listen and repeat: introduces the target sounds for pupils to practice pronouncing them. Through practice, familiarizes pupils with the common association of English letter(s) and sound which pupils might find problematic.

2. Listen and circle/write/complete/tick: develops pupils' ability to recognize and understand the association of the learned letter(s) and the sound which pupils might find problematic.

3. Let's chant: provides opportunities for pupils to practice using English in real situation (through singing a chant).

Period 2

4. Read and circle/complete/write: provides a simple interactive text for pupils to develop reading skills.

5. Let's write: provides pupils with less controlled production writing practice.

6. Project: provides guidance for pupils to do a real-life project effectively and creatively.

Lower secondary level textbooks

Each textbook of the lower secondary level is structured around 12 learning units and 4 review units; each learning unit consists of 7 periods. Specifically, a learning unit is designed as follows:

Topic unit (for example, **Unit one – My New School**)

Period 1 – Getting Started: introduces the topic of the learning unit, usually by an interactive text which highlights the phonological and grammar item(s), and some vocabularies related to the topic which should be taught and extended in the next periods of the unit.

Period 2 – A Closer Look 1: introduces for students to practise the selected phonological items and the new vocabularies related to the topic of the unit.

Period 3 – A Closer Look 2: introduces for students to practise the selected grammar item(s).

Period 4 – Communication & Culture: introduces for students to practice some

everyday language function(s) such as introducing someone, greeting and responding to greeting, complementing and responding to complement, etc., and some culture-related communication activities.

Period 5 – Skills 1: develops students' reading and speaking skills. The topic of the reading text and the topic for speaking are revolved around the topic of the unit.

Period 6 – Skills 2: develops students' listening and writing skills. The topic of the listening text and the topic for writing are revolved around the topic of the unit.

Period 7 – Looking Back & Project: reviews the vocabulary and grammar items learned in the previous periods, and asks students to present the given real-life project related to the topic of the unit.

Upper secondary level textbooks

Each textbook of the upper secondary level is structured around 10 learning units; each learning unit consists of 8 periods. Specifically, a learning unit is designed as follows:

Unit topic (for example, **Unit one – Family Life**)

Period 1 – Getting Started: introduces the topic of the unit of learning, usually by an interactive text which highlights the phonological and grammar item(s) to be taught and some vocabularies related to the topic which should be taught and extended in the next periods of the unit.

Period 2 – Language: introduces for students to practise the selected phonological and grammar items and the new vocabularies related to the topic of the unit.

Period 3 – Reading: develops students' reading skills. The topic of the reading text is related to the topic of the unit.

Period 4 – Speaking: develops students' speaking skills. The topic for developing speaking skills is related to the topic of the unit.

Period 5 – Listening: develops students' listening skills. The topic of the listening text is related to the topic of the unit.

Period 6 – Writing: develops students' writing skills. The topic for writing is related to the topic of the unit.

Period 7 – Communication & Culture/CLIL: introduces for students to practise some everyday language function(s), and some culture-related communication activities.

Period 8 – Looking Back & Project: reviews the vocabulary and grammar items learned in the previous periods, and asks students to present the given real-life project related to the topic of the unit.

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It can be seen from Table 2 that a learning unit in the textbook series "Global Success" is an amalgam of various components: communicative events or topics, communicative competences/functions, linguistic knowledge (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar), communication and culture, and communicative skills. These components run throughout the whole textbook series. But when they interact, they can conflict, causing a lot of problems for the textbook writers. Space does not permit us to discuss them all in detail. In what follows we shall deal exclusively with some of the most common problems experienced by the writers of

the "Global Success" textbook series in translating grammar contents from the GEEC syllabus to their textbooks.

4.3. The Problems of Translating Grammar Contents From the GEEC Syllabus to the Textbook Series "Global Success"

There was, and is considerable confusion about syllabus and textbook. Many school teachers often equate a syllabus or even a curriculum with a textbook. This is not true. It would be more appropriate to say that the textbook is a reflection or a realization of the syllabus. In some similar manner, some scholars of syllabus design often mistakenly think that teachers can use the contents specified in the syllabus as instructional materials. This is not true either. The contents specified in the syllabus are just the identifications of what is to be taught in a course (cf. Wilkins, 2008, p. 75). They are too general for the teacher to use as teaching materials in the classroom. From the contents specified in the syllabus to those that can actually be taught in the classroom, the teacher must use an intermediate product – the textbook. Here we can see some sort of division of labour between the syllabus designer and the textbook writer: the syllabus designer's task is to identify and make a list of "what is to be taught" in the syllabus, while the textbook writer's task is to present and detail the list of "what is to be taught" in his or her textbook to make it ready for teaching and learning in the classroom. It should be noted that even when the textbook writer is well aware of his or her own task, he or she still faces with so many daunting problems in translating the contents specified in the syllabus to his or her textbooks. Regarding the translation of grammar items from the syllabus to the textbooks, the problems confronting the textbook writers are numerous, but four seem to be salient: (1) how to select the grammar item(s) listed in the syllabus for each topic unit in the textbook; (2) how to allocate appropriate amount of time for grammar in relation to other elements in a topic unit of the textbook; (3) how to select the most appropriate aspect(s) of the grammar item listed in the syllabus to present in the textbook; and (4) how to present a grammar item in a way that it can serve practical purposes of teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

4.3.1. The Problem of Selecting the Grammar Item(s) Listed in the Syllabus for Each Topic Unit in the Textbook

As can be seen in 3.2.2, the grammar items specified in the GEEC syllabus are graded in the sense that they are selected and listed for each grade in the ten academic years' learning; but the items listed for each grade seem to be randomly ordered. They are not suggestive in the sense that the item which is put first in the syllabus list does not necessarily mean that it should be selected for the first topic unit in the textbook. Choosing which grammar item in the syllabus for which topic unit in the textbook is the task of the textbook writers. This is not an easy task for them because on the one hand they have to choose from the random list a grammar item that students need in order to achieve some communicative functions so that they can use them to take part in the communicative event (topic) they engage in; and on the other hand they have to ensure that all the grammar items selected for a grade in the syllabus are chosen to fit all the topic units selected in the textbook of that grade. Below is an example showing how the textbook writers of *Tiếng Anh 10* (English 10) of the textbook series "Global Success" have struggled to solve this daunting problem. (Note that two items which are listed as separate in the syllabus are selected for one topic unit, and that two items (14 and 15) which are specified in the syllabus list are not selected in the textbook).

Table 3

Grammar Items in the Syllabus and the Selection of Grammar Items in Tiếng Anh 10

	Grammar items listed in the GEEC syllabus for Grade 10	Grammar items selected for each unit in *Tiếng Anh 10*
1	Present perfect tense	Unit 5
2	Present simple and present continuous tenses (consolidation and extension)	Unit 1
3	Future simple tense and future with *be going to* (consolidation and extension)	Unit 2
4	Past simple and past continuous tenses with *when* and *while*	Unit 4
5	Infinitive with *to* and infinitive without *to*	Unit 3
6	Gerund and infinitive (for description)	Unit 5
7	Passive sentences, passive sentences with modal verbs	Unit 2
8	Compound sentences	Unit 3
9	Relative clauses: defining and non-defining (extension)	Unit 8
10	Conditional sentence Type 1 (consolidation and extension)	Unit 10
11	Conditional sentence Type 2	Unit 10
12	Reported speech	Unit 9
13	Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives	Unit 7
14	Adjectives (indicating attitudes)	
15	Articles	

4.3.2. The Problem of Allocating Appropriate Amount of Time for Grammar in Relation to Other Elements in a Topic Unit of the Textbook

It cannot be denied that grammar is present in all corners of a language, and that one cannot learn a foreign language effectively without learning its grammar". "…grammar is the core of language. Without grammar, we are left with a few words as labels for features of the physical environments" (Rivers, 1970, p. 71). As can be seen in Table 2, grammar is recognised as a legitimate element in the structures of all the ten textbooks of the "Global Success" series, but how to allocate appropriate amount of time for teaching grammar at each level is a big problem for the textbook writers. It requires very detailed and careful consideration of grammar in relation to other elements in a topic unit such as competences/communicative functions (realized in the communicative skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing), vocabulary, and phonics at the primary level; pronunciation, vocabulary, communication, reading, speaking, listening, writing, looking back and project at the lower secondary level; and pronunciation, vocabulary, reading, speaking, listening, writing, communication & culture/CLIL, looking back and project at the upper secondary level. Below is a solution the authors of the textbook series "Global Success" have offered to solve this problem.

At the primary level, the amount of time allocated for the teaching of grammar is not explicitly indicated in the design of the textbooks of all three grades *Tiếng Anh 3* (English 3),

Tiếng Anh 4 (English 4), and *Tiếng Anh 5* (English 5). The grammar element comes under the general heading "Structures" in the book map, but the presentation of grammar contents is dispersed throughout the three lessons of the topic unit, interspersed with other components and activities: phonics, vocabulary, listening, speaking, listening, writing, games, singing and chanting.

At the lower secondary level, the amount of time allocated for the teaching of grammar is explicit in the design of the textbooks of all four grades *Tiếng Anh 6* (English 6), *Tiếng Anh 7* (English 7), *Tiếng Anh 8* (English 8), and *Tiếng Anh 9* (English 9): one period for learning new grammar item(s) which comes under the heading "Grammar" and about one third period for consolidation and extension which also comes under the heading "Grammar" in the "Looking Back & Project" lesson.

At the upper secondary level, the amount of time allocated for the teaching of grammar is also explicit in the design of the textbooks of all three grades *Tiếng Anh 10* (English 10), *Tiếng Anh 11* (English 11), and *Tiếng Anh 12* (English 12): about one third period for learning new grammar item(s) which comes under the heading "Grammar", and about one third period for extension and consolidation which also comes under the heading "Grammar" in the "Looking Back & Project" lesson.

4.3.3. The Problem of Selecting the Most Appropriate Aspect(s) of the Grammar Item(s) Specified in the Syllabus to Present in the Textbook

In the GEEC syllabus (Table 1), there are grammar items which are specific such as "Prepositions (of place)*: in, on, at* [Grade 3], "Possessive pronouns: *mine, yours…*" [Grade 6], "Gerund following *like*, *dislike*, *love*, *enjoy*, *hate*" [Grade 9]. But there are quite a number of other grammar items which are overloaded, containing many aspects such as "Wh-questions" [Grade 6], "Types of sentences: simple/compound/complex sentences" [Grade 8], "Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives" [Grade 10]. Those grammar items that are specific do not seem to cause any problem for the textbook writers because they do not need any breaking down into smaller items. But it is the overloaded grammar items that cause the textbook writers a lot of problems. Take the item "Reported speech" listed in the Grade 9 syllabus as an example. This is a very complex grammatical category of the English language. The category itself contains quite a number of subcategories, each of which, to be effectively used, involves a number of complex grammatical processes. To solve the problem of the complexity of reported speech, the textbook writers have to decide whether "direct speech" or "indirect speech" should be selected first for presentation in their textbook. If direct speech is selected first, it will involve a general introduction to the category (what it is, what we use it for, and when we use it, etc.) and, when it is put into practice, the change in personal pronouns in terms of "who reported the speech": from *I* to *you* as in *"I'm going to be a doctor", I said → You said: "I'm going to be a doctor."* If indirect speech is selected first, it will involve not only a general introduction to the category (what it is, what we use it for, and when and how we use it, etc.) but also quite a number of changes such as the following:

(1) Changes in personal pronouns both in the reporting clause and the reported clause: from *I* to *you* as in *"I'm going to be a doctor", you said → You said that you were going to be a doctor*; from *I* to *he* as in *"I'm going to be a doctor", he said → He said that he was going to be a doctor*; and from *I* to *she* as in *"I'm going to be a doctor", she said → She said that she was going to be a doctor*.

(2) Changes in verb forms to realize tenses: from the present simple to the past simple

as in *"I **go** to school every day", he said → He said that he **went** to school every day*; from the present continuous to the past continuous as in *"He **is watching** the TV", she said → She said that he **was watching** the TV*; from the present perfect to the past perfect as in *"We **have completed** our English programme successfully", they said → They said that they **had completed** their English programme successfully*.

(3) Changes in time expression references: from *now* to *then* as in *"I can see her **now**", he said → He said that he could see her **then**"*; from *today* to *that day* as in *"We will finish our work **today**", they said → They said that they would finish their work **that day**"*; from *yesterday* to *the day before* as in *"We completed our work **yesterday**", they said → They said that they had completed their work **the day before***, and so on and so forth.

The fact that some grammar items are complex and contain a number of aspects indicates that how to select the most appropriate aspect(s) of the selected grammar item listed in the syllabus to present in the textbook for teaching and learning may cause problems for the textbook writers. Our experience has shown that when encountering a complex, multi-aspect grammar item, selecting which aspect(s) to present in the textbook requires very careful consideration and thorough discussion among the authors before arriving at a final decision.

4.3.4. The Problem of Presenting a Grammar Item in a Way That it can Serve Practical Purposes of Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language

Since the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the discussion of pedagogical grammar has revolved around whether the teaching of grammar should be form-focused or meaning-focused. Those who support the meaning-focused approach to teaching grammar suggest that grammar in textbooks should include purely communicative activities to meet what is referred to as "real-life" needs of the students. This may be true to the context of second language teaching where the use of communicative activities is predicated on abundant out-of-class exposure to the target language. But in the context of what I would refer to as "genuinely foreign language teaching and learning" as Vietnam, this does not seem to be a realistic contention. As mentioned in 3.1, the real-life needs of most Vietnamese students who learn English as a foreign language and, in particular, as a school subject are not so much the development of communicative skills as the development of language accuracy for passing grammar-based tests and examinations (see Pham, 2016; Hoang, 2017; see also Fotos, 2002). This explains in part why the writers of the "Global Success" textbook series have chosen a more form-focused approach to presenting grammar contents in their textbooks. They have presented a grammar point generally in a three-step procedure, starting off with naming the grammar point that is going to be taught (e.g. The present simple), followed by giving rules and its usage (e.g. We use the present simple to talk about actions or events that often happen, or are fixed [at the present time]). This is followed by a practice activity that requires correct use of the target grammar point at sentence level (e.g. Choose the correct answer A, B, or C [where students can learn to use the present simple tense through making the correct choice of the present tense verbs in different sentences]), followed by some guidance on how to use the grammar point correctly in special cases (e.g. Remember! The present simple verbs with *he/she/it* needs an ending *s/es*). The procedure ends with a further practice activity where the target grammar point is practised at discourse level (e.g. Write the correct form of the verbs given in bracket [where students learn to use the present simple tense by practicing using the correct forms of six verbs put in brackets]) (for more detail about this three-step procedure, see Hoang et al., 2022, p. 9).

5. Concluding Remarks

Much has been written generally about the importance of grammar in foreign language teaching, but very little has been written specifically about the place of grammar in a modern national foreign language curriculum and the problems textbook writers experience in translating grammar contents from the curriculum to textbooks. This study is an attempt to fill the gap: exploring the place of grammar in the 2018 General Education English Curriculum of Vietnam and the problems the writers of the textbook series "Global Success" have experienced in translating the grammar contents specified in the GEEC syllabus to their textbooks. To lay ground for the study, we raised two questions for exploration: (1) What is the place of grammar in the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)'s 2018 General Education English Curriculum (GEEC)?", and (2) What are the main problems textbook writers often experience in translating grammar contents from the GEEC to textbooks?"

To answer the first question, we devoted the first part of the paper to examining the place of grammar in the design of the GEEC. Our examination brought to light a number of findings of which three seem to be prominent: (1) grammar is a legitimate element in the total make-up of the GEEC; (2) grammar contents are carefully selected and graded for each grade of the ten-year programme (from Grade 3 to Grade 12); and (3) although not explicitly stated, the selection of the grammar contents is based generally on the principle of "from easy to difficult, from simple to complex". Our study also shows that in the current conception of foreign language teaching, knowledge of grammar is by no means the only, or perhaps the most important, kind of knowledge a student of foreign language needs: it is just one of the three dimensions of linguistic knowledge (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar) needed to develop the student's linguistic competence contributing to his or her total communicative competence as conceptualized by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983/2013) and other scholars.

To address the second question, we discussed four specific problems we as textbook writers have experienced in translating the grammar contents specified in the GEEC syllabus to the series of English textbooks "Global Success": (1) the problem of selecting the grammar item(s) listed in the syllabus for each topic unit in the textbook; (2) the problem of allocating appropriate amount of time for grammar in relation to other elements in a topic unit of the textbook; (3) the problem of selecting the most appropriate aspect(s) of the grammar item selected in the syllabus to present in the textbook; and (4) the problem of presenting a grammar item in a way that it can serve practical purposes of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in present Vietnamese schools. It seems from our discussion that most of the problems experienced by the textbook writers in translating grammar contents to textbooks are derived from the nature of the multi-component and multi-graded curriculum. A multi-component curriculum can look good and attractive, can convince the evaluator, and can be praised for its comprehensiveness; but when it comes to the actual design of the curriculum syllabus and, in particular, the writing of the corresponding textbooks, many problems emerge. The problems we have discussed in our experience are just some. There may be others that need to be expounded. The solutions we have offered in this paper do not mean that the problems of translating grammar contents from the curriculum syllabus to the textbooks have been solved. There may be other solutions that are more viable.

This paper has been concerned with the place of only grammar in the make-up of the GEEC syllabus. The place of other elements in the curriculum syllabus such as pronunciation, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, writing, intercultural information, and the problems

experienced by textbook writers in translating them to textbooks, therefore, should be the topics for further research.

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VỊ TRÍ CỦA NGỮ PHÁP TRONG CHƯƠNG TRÌNH GIÁO DỤC PHỔ THÔNG MÔN TIẾNG ANH VÀ NHỮNG KHÓ KHĂN TRONG VIỆC CHUYỂN DỊCH CÁC NỘI DUNG NGỮ PHÁP TỪ CHƯƠNG TRÌNH SANG SÁCH GIÁO KHOA

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Tóm tắt: Bài viết này đề cập đến hai vấn đề quan trọng nhưng dường như bị lãng quên trong nghiên cứu phát triển chương trình và biên soạn sách giáo khoa ngoại ngữ: vị trí của ngữ pháp trong một chương trình ngoại ngữ hiện đại và những khó khăn trong việc chuyển dịch các nội dung ngữ pháp được thiết kế trong chương trình sang sách giáo khoa để phục vụ cho việc học tập và giảng dạy đạt hiệu quả. Hai câu hỏi cụ thể được đặt ra để khám phá trong nghiên cứu này là: (1) "Vị trí của ngữ pháp trong Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh năm 2018 của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo Việt Nam là gì?"; (2) "Những khó khăn chính mà những người biên soạn sách giáo khoa thường gặp phải khi chuyển dịch nội dung ngữ pháp từ Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh năm 2018 của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo Việt Nam sang sách giáo khoa là gì?". Hai câu hỏi này hình thành nên trọng tâm của nghiên cứu và sẽ được giải quyết chi tiết và xuyên suốt trong bài viết.

Từ khóa: ngữ pháp, vai trò, Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh, các khó khăn, chương trình, sách giáo khoa

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES OF ONLINE LEARNING AT DANANG UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY AND PHARMACY

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Abstract: Like many other countries, educational institutions in Vietnam were forced to shift their courses from a face-to-face approach to online classes during the Covid-19 pandemic to try to stop the spread of the coronavirus. The objectives of this study were to investigate students' perceptions of online learning as well as to identify challenges of online learning they confronted. The study took a quantitative approach, using an online questionnaire on Google Forms to collect data from 631 undergraduate students at Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy in Danang, Vietnam. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results revealed that the participants perceived online learning as being useful and time-saving. However, the study revealed some challenges the students encountered, such as unreliable internet connections, poor e-learning platforms and services, a lack of information and communication technology skills, and distractions. Based on the findings, some implications on online learning have been put forward.

Keywords: online learning, students' perspectives, challenges, Covid-19

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic affected almost the entire world, many countries closed their borders and restricted or completely stopped immigration (McCorkle, 2020). The pandemic had an adverse effect on economies, social life as well as educational facilities and services around the world (Farooq et al., 2020; Niemi & Kousa, 2020; Paudel, 2021). Millions of students were affected by the nationwide lockdown that took place in most countries around the world (UNESCO, 2020). Educational institutions quickly switched from face-to-face to online learning in an attempt to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Due to this sudden change, many administrators and teachers began to deploy surveys, supportive devices as well as resources to convert from face-to-face to online learning.

Many technology tools and products were used in online classrooms to activate the teaching and learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic, including synchronous and asynchronous communication tools such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Moodle, Blackboard, and Google Classrooms. This rapid but necessary change forced schools to use available technology devices to create an online learning environment and resources for different subjects (Kaur, 2020). As a result, the online learning process faced many challenges during the pandemic (Crawford et al., 2020).

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Like many other universities in Vietnam, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy quickly switched to online teaching and learning mode to maintain the training process by using Moodle learning management system and other online teaching and learning softwares selected by teachers according to their preferences, convenience and/or availability of tools. Previously, online classes had not been part of the regular programs in Vietnamese public schools and universities, but several universities and schools offered e-learning tools, such as the Moodle learning management system, Microsoft Teams which were utilized to help teachers and their students to navigate through the learning material effectively and to enable online collaborations (Khoa & Nguyen, 2021; Tu & Luong, 2021). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the fact that Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy forced to convert all courses to a completely online mode changed its students' thinking, perception and learning and teaching methods. Studying and examining students' perspectives and the challenges regarding online learning across different educational institutions in Vietnam would help stakeholders and decision makers evaluate and enhance the quality of online learning under the new circumstances. This issue stresses the importance of this research in terms of obtaining a profound understanding of students' views and the challenges of online learning in the context of online education in the Danang University of Medical Technology – Pharmacy.

2. Research Objectives

Based on the underlying problem, this study aims to reveal the perspectives of students and the challenges they faced regarding online learning at the Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy by finding the answers to the two following research questions:

1. What are students' perspectives of online learning at Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy?

2. What are challenges the students of Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy faced when studying online?

3. Literature Review

Online teaching and learning is a virtual interaction between teachers and students, which can take place anywhere but they are separated by physical space. Technology is used to bridge this spatial gap, mediate the teaching process, and create interactive opportunities for teachers and learners (Kim, 2020). This new teaching method gives students a more flexible learning environment, and can be done at any time, at any location without the need to go to university campuses. In addition, online learning is more convenient than face-to-face learning because online learning allows students to learn actively at their own pace and choose a time that suits them (Singh & Thurman, 2019; Yilmaz, 2019).

In recent years, many researchers have made efforts to study online teaching and learning methods related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some have studied students' attitudes and/or perceptions of online learning (Ananga, 2020; ElSaheli-Elhage, 2021). For example, Zhu et al. (2020) conducted research on university students and found that students' attitudes towards online learning were generally positive and that they intended to continue their online learning, as predicted by self-regulating factors and attitudes, through perceived online social interactions. Agarwal and Kaushik (2020) conducted a study on 77 paediatric students participating in online courses on Zoom during the Covid-19 pandemic, they revealed that the

majority of students participating in the study found online learning appropriate, tailored to their clinical practice and learning needs because they found online learning enjoyable and motivating. All students agreed that online classes should be designed in the undergraduate program for medical students. Nguyen and Pham (2021) also concluded that all medical students participating in their study had a positive perception of and interest in computer-mediated synchronous online learning. This study also showed that students who participated in online learning had better academic results than those who attended traditional face-to-face classes.

However, Owusu-Fordjour et al. (2020) reported the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on Ghanaian students' learning. Nambiar (2020) also revealed that the majority of Indian university students preferred face-to-face learning to online learning; in their perspectives, online teaching methods were inadequate. Similarly, Adnan and Anwar (2020) also surveyed the attitudes of Pakistani students about online learning models at university level. The study highlighted that the online learning model did not produce favorable outcomes in developing countries such as Pakistan. The study also reported many barriers in online learning. In line with these studies, Xhelili et al. (2021) investigated Albanian students' perception of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic and found that students had more positive attitudes towards the traditional classroom learning environment.

Moreover, a number of studies have shown various influences and challenges of online learning (Farooq et al., 2020; Koi-Akrofi et al., 2020). To improve the quality of online learning, researchers investigated the obstacles and challenges the students faced during online learning. For example, Farooq et al. (2020) conducted a study in Pakistan and found the challenges that medical students faced during the pandemic, relating to the dynamics of online learning, internet connection, learner participation, assessment tools and methods, as well as the lack of training for teachers and support from the school board. Rababah (2020) conducted a study on English language students at Jadara University in Jordan which included only twelve students and pointed out the difficulties they faced, three out of twelve students indicated that they were worried about teaching effectiveness, insufficient and inconsistent teaching methods. In addition, research by Almaiah et al. (2020) indicated that these constraints varied from country to country due to differences in culture, context, and willingness to adapt.

In Vietnam, a variety of Vietnamese researchers have also investigated different attitudes and barriers when learning online (Dang et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022; Pham & Dao, 2022). Dang et al. (2020) implemented a survey on 250 students of Faculty of Tourism, Hue University and presented four main groups of barriers in online learning, including barriers on economy, interaction, psychology and environment. Through the analysis of the four factors, the researchers found that interaction and environment barriers were the two biggest barriers. Most of the respondents commented that they wanted to return to the lecture hall as soon as the Covid-19 pandemic ended. They added that the teachers should provide more interesting and engaging lectures in case they continue to study online in future. In the cross-sectional study by Pham and Dao (2022), the participants had positive attitudes toward online learning although they pointed out that online learning did have some limitations, such as attention, motivation, and interaction. Preference of online learning was found lower than face-to-face learning in traditional classroom (m = 2.9 to 3.2). They recommended the university should provide a trial of blended online theoretical lectures and face-to-face practical lectures for medical students to further evaluate for a feasible solution in future.

In addition, the study by Nguyen et al. (2022) aimed to explore how undergraduates

interact during online English language learning via two theoretical models, four types of interaction (student-lecturer, student-student, student-content, and student-interface), and three phases of learning (preparation, lecture and evaluation phase). The researchers pointed out the two most prominent problems that students faced when participating in online classes, which were: insufficient cooperation with interactive activities, especially with group work and lack of motivation. Apart from that, students also reported plentiful difficulties in learning due to lack of knowledge, unstable internet connection, health problems and unclear instructions from teachers. Students reflected that the interaction time between students - teachers and students - students was shortened due to internet connection issue, making students depressed, reducing motivation and interest in online learning.

To sum up, previous studies have shown mixed results on the attitudes, perceptions and challenges the students faced regarding the effectiveness of online learning. Researchers need to conduct more research to investigate obstacles and challenges the Vietnamese students face in the process of teaching and learning online. The aim of this study is to discover and complement the existing literature by investigating the students' perspectives at Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy towards online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges they face. This study might provide further insight into the challenges faced in online classes by developing countries. This research would also help managers and stakeholders evaluate and improve the quality of online teaching and learning in the new situation.

4. Research Methods

We implemented survey-based research with a quantitative approach to collecting data to examine the perspectives of students from Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy and the challenges they faced in terms of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. This design used an electronic survey, which was appropriate for the purpose of the study, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic when students were off the campus. The questionnaire consists of 3 sections: the first one asking about the demographic characteristics of the participants (3 items), the second investigating the students' perspectives of online learning (8 items) and the final section examining the challenges that students face during online learning (17 items).

To collect data for this study, the researchers designed a questionnaire based on available literature about the perceptions, attitudes and challenges that students faced while learning online (Aboagye et al., 2020; Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Owusu-Fordjour et al., 2020) to investigate the perspectives of students from Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy. The questionnaire was adopted with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree). After being approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy and obtaining the online consent from the research participants, the researchers collected data using an online survey questionnaire via Google Forms. All students who took part in online courses at Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy were invited to fill out the questionnaire, in which 631 responded on the voluntary basis. The number of responses collected was sufficient to ensure the objectivity of the study, because the number of samples exceeded the number of samples required by Raosoft (2013)'s sample size calculation, with 95% confidence and 5% error.

Table 1 below is the general information of the study subjects:

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 631)

Information		Percentage (%)	Frequency
1. Gender	Male	16	101
	Female	84	530
2. Duration of learning online	2 semesters	84	530
	3 semesters	11.4	72
	More than 3 semesters	4.6	29
3. Online learning platforms (more than 1 option)	Zoom Meeting	80	505
	Microsoft Teams	11.3	71
	Google Meet	83.2	525
	Skype	2.7	17
	Google Handout	2.4	15
	Other	1.8	9

A total of 631 students completed the questionnaire, in which 84% were female and 16% were male. This response rate reflects the actual gender distribution in the student population at Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy. Out of a total of 631 students, 505 students participated in online learning for 2 semesters, 72 students studied for 3 semesters and 29 students studied for more than 3 semesters. Online learning platforms were also different, most of the students learned through Zoom Meeting (80%) and Google Meet (83.2%), the rest learned through Microsoft Teams, Skype, Google Handout, and some other platforms.

Before conducting data collection, to ensure validity and reliability, we conducted a pilot to fill out the questionnaire for 50 participants (41 female and 9 male). After the pilot test, we removed two questions that did not make sense and replaced 2 new questions. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also calculated to determine the consistency and reliability of the questionnaire. The results of calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient were: 0.89 for items about students' perspectives and 0.94 for items about challenges faced by students. These results showed that the research instrument was valid and reliable.

The responses were divided into three clusters for analysis, including demographic characteristics (items 1-3) as presented in Table 1 above and two other separate clusters to analyze two research questions. The researchers used SPSS software version 23 to analyze the obtained data and provide descriptive statistics such as mean score, frequency, and percentage.

The results are summarized and discussed for each specific question in the Results and Discussion section below.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Students' Perceptives of Online Learning at Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy

To answer the first research question on the students' perspectives of online learning at

Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy, consisting of 8 items, the researchers calculated the frequency, percentage, and mean score for each statement. To facilitate the explanation for the results, the researchers merged the results of strongly disagree and disagree responses to disagree, those of agree and strongly agree to agree (see Table 2).

Most students did not have a positive perception of online learning. As shown in Table 2 below, the results showed that 75.7% of students answered that online learning was not as effective as face-to-face learning with the lowest mean score of 2.27. This finding is in line with many researchers in Vietnam and in the world (Amir et al., 2020; Nambiar, 2020; Pham & Dao, 2022; Xhelili et al., 2021). Pham and Dao (2022) found preference of online learning lower than face-to-face learning for medical students in their study (m = 2.9 to 3.2). In addition, 71.7% of students did not like online learning (m = 2.34). This result is similar to the findings of Amir et al. (2020), which showed that students were less interested in learning online than in traditional classrooms. Similarly, in the study of Xhelili et al. (2021), the research team found that students had a negative attitude towards the online learning environment.

Table 2

Students' Perceptives of Online Learning at Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy (N = 631)

Statements	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Mean
	P* (%)	F*	P* (%)	F*	P* (%)	F*	
(6) Online learning saves time for students.	21.8	138	14.5	91	63.7	402	3.41
(4) Online learning enables comfortable electronic communication.	31.4	198	12.4	78	56.2	355	3.24
(3) Online learning helps to explore educational materials effectively.	45.3	286	16.6	105	38.1	240	2.90
(5) Online learning makes it easier to complete group assignments.	50.0	316	15.4	97	34.6	218	2.82
(8) Online learning is an effective model.	43.6	275	31.9	201	24.5	155	2.76
(7) Online learning enhances the acquisition of knowledge.	61.5	388	22.2	140	16.3	103	2.49
(2) I prefer online learning to face-to-face learning.	71.7	452	14.4	91	13.9	88	2.34
(1) Online learning is more effective than face-to-face learning.	75.7	478	12.4	78	11.9	75	2.27
Mean of cluster							**2.78**

Note: (*) P = percentage, F = frequency

In terms of the statement "Online learning helps to explore educational materials effectively", 45.3% responded disagreeing with this statement while 38.1% answered agreeing (m = 2.90). This might be because the effectiveness of online learning depends partly on the autonomy and self-discipline of learners. More than half of the students (56.2%) answered that online learning helped their electronic communication comfortable (m = 3.24). This statement

corroborates the study by Nguyen and Pham (2021), which showed that learners preferred comfort and less anxiety in a synchronous online discussion. Some other researchers commented that the benefit of online discussion was that learners did not worry about pronunciation, and thus would spend cognitive energy on other aspects of communication (Kost, 2004; Koi-Akrofi et al., 2020). These results are consistent with the findings of Adnan and Anwar (2020) study, which found that 77% of students felt comfortable in online communication.

However, only 34.6% answered that online learning helped students complete group assignments easily (m = 2.82). This might be because there was no face-to-face presence when learning online, whereas in the face-to-face classroom there were more opportunities for learners to interact with each other and helped form social connections. In addition, some students had difficulty communicating with each other to discuss group assignments due to different timetables and locations. Furthermore, online communication did not include body language or facial expressions, so it was difficult for students to understand each other in some situations. This result is similar to the finding of Adnan and Anwar (2020), whose findings showed that 45% of students did not complete group assignments easily.

As shown in Table 2, 63.7% of students agreed with the statement "Online learning saves time" with the highest mean score of 3.16. The reason might be that learners preferred to study from home to avoid being infected with Covid-19 during the pandemic. Online learning also helped them save time by not having to travel to school, use transportation or waste time on social interactions. This result is consistent with the previous study by Amir et al. (2020), which showed that 87.9% of students answered "online learning helps them have more time to study".

Among the participants, 61.5% disagreed with the statement "Online learning improves the acquisition of knowledge" with the mean of 2.49, only 0.9% completely agreed with this statement. Regarding the final statement, 24.5% of students thought that online learning at Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy was a useful learning mode, 43.6% disagreed with this statement and 31.9% answered neutral with mean score of 2.76. In general, the students were optimistic about online learning (m = 2.78). Their positive experiences might be related to the flexibility of learning from any place at any time. This flexibility allows students to learn from the comfort of their homes and they can access learning materials several times for better comprehension. They also save time and money because there is no need for transportation.

5.2. Challenges That Students of Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy Face When Studying Online

To answer the second research question about the challenges students faced when learning online (17 items), the researchers calculated the frequency, percentage, and mean score for each statement and for the entire cluster. Similar to section 5.1, to facilitate the explanation for the results, the researchers combined the results of strongly disagree and disagree responses to disagree, those of agree and strongly agree to agree (see Table 3).

Table 3

Challenges Faced by Students of Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy When Studying Online

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Mean
	P (%)	F	P (%)	F	P (%)	F	
(2) The Internet connection is unreliable.	11.3	71	8.6	54	80.1	506	3.77
(13) Online learning restricts teacher-student and student-student interactions.	23.5	148	18.4	116	58.1	367	3.67
(7) I can not concentrate on an online learning environment and can not avoid distractions.	24.2	153	19.3	122	56.7	346	3.36
(14) The teacher's interaction and feedback are inadequate.	37.9	239	21.4	135	40.7	257	3.01
(8) I have poor time management skills, which affect my online learning capabilities.	36.3	229	28.7	181	35	221	2.98
(9) I have poor ICT skills which affect online learning.	36.9	233	26.6	168	36.5	214	2.98
(3) Online learning platforms and services are of low quality.	36.4	230	29.8	188	33.8	213	2.96
(12) The isolation of classmates affects my online learning.	39.9	252	27.9	176	32.2	203	2.90
(10) The technical assistance is not adequate.	38.4	242	31.4	198	30.2	191	2.89
(6) I am not motivated to learn online.	40.4	255	34.9	220	24.7	156	2.81
(17) The evaluation methods are not suitable.	46.9	295	30.4	192	22.9	144	2.72
(1) Online learning is more expensive than face-to-face learning.	47.2	298	30.4	192	22.4	141	2.71
(15) The teaching strategies are not adequate.	47.5	300	33.7	212	18.8	119	2.67
(5) I have mental health issues (e.g., stress, anxiety) that affect my online learning.	54.9	346	27.4	173	17.7	112	2.54
(16) Learning materials are of poor quality.	58.2	367	24.6	155	17.2	109	2.54
(11) I have technophobia which affects my online learning.	60.7	383	25.5	161	13.8	87	2.45
(4) I have no adequate hardware and software for online learning at home.	64.9	409	23.3	160	9.8	62	2.35
Mean of cluster							**2.88**

Note: (*) P = percentage, F = frequency

As shown in Table 3, in terms of the financial issue, only 22.4% of the respondents agreed (m = 2.71) that online learning was more expensive than face-to-face learning. This expense might be for internet access and some softwares necessary for online learning.

The biggest challenge that students faced was unstable internet connection, in which

80.1% of students responded they had unreliable internet connection with the highest mean of 3.77. This showed us that many students had difficult experiences when taking part in synchronous online classes, as well as downloading learning materials, and so on which affected online learning. A number of students reported that the internet in their home had poor capacity and low bandwidth. Papers by Nguyen et al. (2022), Farooq et al. (2020) and Xhelili et al. (2021) are in line with this current finding, they concluded that internet connectivity was one of the biggest challenges their students faced. This suggests the Ministry of Education and Training as well as the Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy should take practical actions to increase internet coverage and bandwidth to facilitate online learning activities. The research by Owusu-Fordjour et al. (2020) and Xhelili et al. (2021) also found the same results, which pointed out lack of internet access and lack of technology devices as main challenges when learning online.

The results presented in Table 3 above show that 33.8 % of students agreed with the statement "Online learning platforms and services are of low quality" with mean score of 2.96. Of all the participants in the study, only 9.8% reported they did not have online learning software at home. Regarding mental health, 17.7% of students reported having problems, with mean score of 2.54. In terms of statement 6, only 24.7% answered that they lacked motivation to study (m = 2.81). This result is inconsistent with Nguyen et al. (2022)'s study in which they declared that the two most prominent problems that students faced when participating in online classes were: interaction and motivation. However, in Hartnett (2016) study, the researcher recognized motivation as a key factor in learning, developing, maintaining a sense of community, and achieving desired outcomes in an online learning environment. The finding showed that students did not find it too difficult to involve in online learning process. This indicated that they had the ability to self-regulate their learning so as to adapt to the pandemic situation.

56.5% of students answered that they had difficulty focusing on online learning with mean score of 3.36. This finding is similar to that of Dang et al. (2020), Pham and Dao (2022) Amir et al. (2020) and Ramachandran and Rodriguez (2020). Dang et al. analyzed the four different barriers affecting online learning and they confirmed environment was one of the biggest obstacles faced by the students. The other researchers studied both motivation and concentration, the results showed majority of of students had motivation and concentration problems.

In terms of time management skills, 35% of students reported they had difficulty managing their time with mean score of 2.98. According to Roper (2007), time management was the most important skill to help learners meet the requirements of an online course. This finding is consistent with the results of Rajab et al. (2020), in which the author stated that time management was one of the biggest challenges that students faced when studying online.

In addition, 36.5% of students reported having poor technology skills (m = 2.98), and 30.2% reported no technical support provided during online learning process (m = 2.89). The findings of Owusu-Fordjour et al. (2020) and Rababah (2020) are also in line with the current study. They concluded that lack of technology skills was a challenge in the online learning process. Of all participants, 20.1% had technophobia, which is a condition that causes learners anxiety and insecurity about their ability to work with computers, while 60.7% did not see technophobia as a challenge, and 25.5% of students answered neutral (m = 2.45). The response to the statement 12 was that 32.2% felt isolated from their classmates.

The second biggest challenge reported by participants when learning online was limiting

interactions with teachers and classmates, with mean score of 3.67. This finding is much consistent with other studies in Vietnam (Dang et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022; Pham & Dao, 2022). The important finding suggests educators must consider creating opportunities for meaningful and sustained interactions in online courses, especially when many students are taking multiple online courses while balancing their studies with home and work responsibilities because interactions are critical to student success as in online learning they can lead to increase student engagement, motivation, and can help improve student performance.

In addition, 40.7% of students reported teacher's interaction and feedback inadequate (m = 3.01), 18.8% of students felt that the teaching approaches were not suitable (m = 2.67), 17.2% responded lacking quality learning materials (m = 2.54), and 22.9% thought that the assessment methods in the online learning process were inappropriate (m = 2.72).

The overall mean for all challenges in the scale was 2.88 (Table 3), which reflects a moderate challenge level experienced among students at Danang University of Medical Technology. The most prevalent challenge was the unreliable internet connection, the next difficulty was the interaction between teachers and students as well as interactions between students and students. The findings of this study highlighted the external objective factors affecting students' online learning such as technology infrastructure, internet connection and learning environment. The results also showed that the internal barriers that students faced when learning online were teacher-student interaction as well as student-to-student interaction.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, almost all educational institutions in all countries around the world had to switch from face-to-face to online teaching. This study investigates the perspectives of students from Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy about online learning and the challenges the students of Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy faced when studying online. The findings of this study have provided valuable information on students' perspectives and the challenges they faced during online learning at Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy. To achieve the research objectives, a survey questionnaire on Google Form was designed and 631 responses were collected for analysis and synthesis using SPSS software version 23. In general, the students were optimistic about online learning with mean score of 2.78. The advantages of online learning such as time saving, comfortable communication, and others were reported. The challenges that students faced when learning online, both internal and external, are moderate with mean score of 2.88 on the 5-point Likert scale. Reported challenges relate to financial issue, internet connectivity, online software delivery services, software availability, mental health, motivation, concentration, time management skills, technology skills, technology instruction, technophobia, isolation, teacher-student interaction, teacher feedback, teaching methods, learning materials, assessment methods. Despite the barriers, the evidence presented in this study shows that students of Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy can adapt to online learning.

The results of this study provide more information about the need for upgrading technology infrastructure, internet connection, e-learning software, as well as the need for adequate technical support for students when implementing online teaching and learning. Simultaneously, the research results also suggest that teachers need to use specific strategies to motivate and create interaction among students as well as improve the quality of learning materials.

The limitation of the study is that the survey is only carried out at one university - the Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy, and the results are only collected based on the student's point of view. Future researchers can use this study design to collect data from a larger sample size at more schools for more comprehensive and reliable results as well as from teachers' viewpoints. Future researchers should also collect qualitative data to emerge the mentioned issues.

Acknowledgments

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NHẬN THỨC VÀ KHÓ KHĂN CỦA SINH VIÊN TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC KỸ THUẬT Y - DƯỢC ĐÀ NẴNG KHI HỌC TRỰC TUYẾN

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Tóm tắt: Cũng như nhiều nước khác, các cơ sở giáo dục tại Việt Nam đã buộc phải chuyển từ hình thức học trực tiếp sang hình thức trực tuyến khi đại dịch Covid-19 diễn ra để cố gắng ngăn ngừa sự lây lan của vi rút corona. Mục tiêu của nghiên cứu này là điều tra nhận thức, thái độ của sinh viên khi học trực tuyến cũng như tìm hiểu những thách thức sinh viên phải đối mặt khi học trực tuyến. Nghiên cứu sử dụng thiết kế định lượng, dựa trên bảng câu hỏi điều tra trực tuyến qua Google Form để thu thập số liệu từ 631 sinh viên Trường Đại học Kỹ thuật y - dược Đà Nẵng, Việt Nam. Phương pháp thống kê mô tả được sử dụng để phân tích số liệu thu được. Kết quả cho thấy sinh viên nhận thấy hình thức học trực tuyến hữu ích và tiết kiệm được thời gian. Tuy nhiên, kết quả cũng tiết lộ những thách thức mà sinh viên phải đối mặt, như mạng internet không ổn định, phần mềm học trực tuyến chậm, thiếu kỹ năng công nghệ thông tin và truyền thông, sinh viên bị xao nhãng do môi trường học. Dựa trên những phát hiện này, nghiên cứu đưa ra những khuyến nghị về việc học trực tuyến.

Từ khóa: học trực tuyến, nhận thức của sinh viên, thách thức, Covid-19

CHANGES IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN *THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION* COURSE

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Abstract: During the Fall semester of the school year 2021-2022, three concurrent *Emotional Intelligence and Social Communications (EISC)* courses were conducted to assist students' personal development. Using a mixed-method approach, this descriptive study explores changes in the EI levels of students attending these courses. After conducting the survey, which revealed a significant mean difference of 0.12 (95% CI [0.003, 0.237]) between during-course and post-course scores, the researchers employed purposive sampling to select interview participants with the most increased, most decreased, and nearly unchanged levels of EI. The interview data indicated that most interviewees experienced an increase in the ability to consider other perspectives and some in the ability to regulate emotions. On the other hand, emotion management ability seemed to have experienced the slightest improvement. Additionally, the analysis of 20 learner's reflections showed that learners indicating the most recurrent ideas are learners' realisations about self (personal shortcomings, past unfortunate events, existing helpful habits/accomplishment, or intentions of future change/improvement) and statements about benefits of mindfulness (increased perception or relief from unpleasant emotions).

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence and Social Communication, mindfulness, TEIQUE-SF (Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form), changes in emotional intelligence

1. Introduction

Despite being a relatively recent concept, first defined in 1990 and introduced to the public five years later, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has quickly gained popularity for being associated with positive outcomes in different aspects of life from occupational, academic, romantic success to leadership ability, improved mental health, and better relationships with friends, family members, and co-workers (Goleman, 1995). Despite the impressive rate at which studies on EI appear, only a reasonably limited amount has focused on the context of academic settings in Vietnam. Therefore, more attention to this area from an EI perspective would likely be welcomed.

For higher education students who are about to enter the workforce, EI is an indispensable asset, as described by Cambridge (2022). EI allows a person to be more self-aware, more resilient, and have better empathy and relationship skills, all of which are necessary for a fast changing, uncertain environment where setbacks are plenty excellent teamwork ability

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is required. To better prepare the students for their future career, the University of Languages and International Studies offers an EI course named Emotional Intelligence and Social Communication (EISC). The course was developed as a joint effort by lecturers and staff from various faculties. Three classes were conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2021-2022 for one special group of students - the ULIS Ambassadors. Given the novelty and the experimental nature of the course, an analysis of emotional intelligence, the ability/characteristic of the students that the course intends to influence is no doubt of great value to the course developers and interested parties.

Thus, the present paper aims to explore changes in students' Trait Emotional Intelligence levels after finishing one of the three EISC classes, using the following research questions for guidance:

1. What are the changes to Trait EI of those ULIS students who have finished the course, as measured by the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Short Form?

2. What specific evidence of changes are experienced by this group of ULIS students?

The focus of the study rests solely on exploring the experience of learners, not assessing the content or quality of the course (any later discussion on the characteristics of the course are either descriptions to help readers visualise the nature of the course or inferences based on what was found out about learners' experience).

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of EI and Different Categorizations

The concept of EI as known by the public nowadays was first defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (emphasis on "ability") and extensively discussed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). In this study, the two researchers presented a review of a number of studies, all examining "a set of conceptually related mental processes involving emotional information" (p. 190). Said review described these processes, the various attempts at measuring them by other researchers, their contribution to a person's living experience, as well as their correlation to various factors and outcomes, followed by a short summary explaining why these mental processes were included in the concept of Emotional Intelligence. Originally, the processes were divided into three categories: a) appraising and expressing emotions in the self and others, b) regulating emotion in the self and others, and c) using emotions in adaptive ways, together composing an EI model, which describe what abilities or traits EI should include. Over time, other researchers also proposed different EI models. Some, like Mayer and Salovey's model, include only mental abilities (Ability Models), while some include personality traits on top of abilities (Mixed Models) (Goleman, 1995; Bar-On, 2006).

Another distinction, between Ability EI and Trait EI, concerns neither the definition nor the model of EI but rather the method through which EI is operationalised (in other words, how this abstract concept is turned into measurable observations). This differentiation was first proposed by Petrides and Furnham (2000), along with the implication that the measure associated with each EI model should be considered the factor that determines the nature of the model instead of the described skills and competencies. This was later further elaborated upon by the researchers in a 2001 publication as follows: when a researcher opts to measure Ability EI, emotional intelligence is being assessed through participants' "actual abilities" to process emotion-related cognitive tasks, using tests of maximal performance in which there are correct

and incorrect answers, similar to IQ tests. In contrast, when another researcher measures Trait EI using self-report items, emotional intelligence is being assessed through participants' "behavioural tendencies and self-perceived abilities" (Petrides & Furnham, 2001, p. 426).

While Ability EI may seem to be, at first glance, a more direct approach to measuring a concept typically referred to as "Intelligence", researchers often question the validity of Ability EI tests (namely the Mayer Salovey Caruso EI Test) because of its scoring method. Petrides and Furnham (2000, 2001, 2003) and Petrides (2009, 2011) have persistently contended that the operationalisation of EI as an ability is fruitless because the subjective nature of emotion causes the task of designing test items with objective scoring criteria nearly impossible. While Mayer, Salovey and Caruso attempted to circumvent this issue using consensus-based scoring and expert scoring concurrently (Mayer & Salovey, 2007), Maul (2012) expressed concern about using these scoring methods. The validity of and criticisms towards Trait EI are discussed below in the present study.

2.2. Relevant Framework

Although the existence of multiple definitions and models of EI may cause confusion and the impression that the field of EI is conflicting and disorganised, Cherniss (2010) highlighted that most prominent researchers base their model of EI on one early definition initially proposed by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso "the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotional thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others'' (Mayer et al., 2000, p. 396, as cited in Cherniss, 2010). Regarding the models themselves, Ciarrochi et al. (2000) commented that the different models tend to complement each other and generally cover four areas: perception, regulation, understanding, and utilisation of emotion. This was noted by Petrides and Furnham (2001), who employed content analysis to synthesize the different models of EI by Salovey and Mayer (1990), Goleman (1995), and Bar-On (1997), creating their own. The researchers also used this model as the sampling domain for the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, and subsequently, for the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form (TEIQue-SF), which is the instrument used in the present study. Thus, to maintain consistency, this paper utilizes the following model of EI as the reference according to which the EI of the target group of ULIS students were examined.

Table 1

The Sampling Domain of Trait EI in Adults and Adolescents (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2020, p. 25)

The Sampling Domain of Trait EI in Adults and Adolescents

Facets	High scorers view themselves as...
Adaptability	...flexible and willing to adapt to new conditions.
Assertiveness	...forthright, frank, and willing to stand up for their rights.
Emotion expression	...capable of communicating their feelings to others.
Emotion management (others)	...capable of influencing other people's feelings.
Emotion perception (self and others)	...clear about their own and other people's feelings.
Emotion regulation	...capable of controlling their emotions.
Impulse control	...reflective and less likely to give in to their urges.
Relationships	...capable of maintaining fulfilling personal relationships.
Self-esteem	...successful and self-confident.
Self-motivation	...driven and unlikely to give up in the face of adversity.
Social awareness	...accomplished networkers with superior social skills.
Stress management	...capable of withstanding pressure and regulating stress.
Trait empathy	...capable of taking someone else's perspective.
Trait happiness	...cheerful and satisfied with their lives.
Trait optimism	...confident and likely to "look on the bright side" of life.

This table describes Emotional Intelligence to contain 15 different facets, all of which (excluding Adaptability and Self-motivation) are divided into one of four factors: Emotionality, Sociability, Well-being, and Self-control.

Criticisms toward TEIQue often focus on two key points. First, the results of the TEIQue correlate so strongly with other personality scales such as the ones by Eysenck or Goldberg that the questionnaire is of little use. Second, the self-report nature of the test causes faking results to increase desirability to be a problem. Regarding the first point, studies exist that prove the TEIQue has incremental validity over other personality scales (Siegling et al., 2015; Andrei et al., 2016). As for the second criticism, a study by Choi and colleagues (2011) suggested that the effect of faking on the criterion validity of Trait EI tests ranges from moderate to low.

2.3. Related Studies

Many studies have been conducted on the topic of EI in the international context. Researchers have been examining the correlations between EI and factors such as wellbeing, success, relationship quality, as well as assessing the impact of EI interventions. Meanwhile, in Vietnam, fewer studies have been conducted, with most focusing on populations of business employee, as opposed to students in an academic setting. Among them, most merely assessed and compared EI scores of different student batches (Phan, 2010), or concentrated on the correlation between EI and different factors (Đỗ, 2014; Trương & Nguyễn, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2020). The current study aims to rectify this by targeting a population of students that has rarely been targeted EI-related study, as well as examining changes in EI before and after an intervention.

3. Methodology

3.1. Overall Research Design

The current descriptive study uses a mixed-method approach to explore changes to the EI levels of students both quantitatively using questionnaires and qualitatively using interviews and document analysis. The quantitative phase allows the researchers to gain an overview of the amount of change since questionnaires as a data collection tool are known to be an efficient and economical way of studying a large sample. Moreover, the use of the TEIQue-SF, a carefully researched and validated instrument allows the current study to benefit from the extensive research efforts that have been invested in the development of quantitative measures of EI.

During the qualitative phase, interviews were conducted to acquire a specific and detailed description of said changes, as experienced by a few individual students. The present study collects data using semi-structured individual interviews. This form of interview, compared to unstructured and (fully) structured interview, allows researchers to better direct the focus of the conversation, thus being able to elicit more information that is potentially relevant (Brinkmann, 2013).

Finally, the researchers also examined reflections produced by learners to gain an additional view on students' experience, one balancing between the level of detail and the amount of data that can be collected. During the EISC course, learners are required to write a short reflection after each lesson, usually following different prompts provided by the course lecturers. At the end of the course, learners would compile all reflection pieces to create one long reflection entry to be submitted as an assignment.

3.2. Research Context

During the first semester of academic year 2021-2021, the University of Languages and International Studies organized three concurrent and near-identical Emotional Intelligence - Social Communication (EISC) courses for ULIS ambassadors. The course designers stated the following goal: "to develop a community of students and lecturers who are self-aware, can regulate emotions, can empathize and connect with each other, create happy lives, successful careers and positively inspire the broader community, toward personal development".

Further examination of the course content revealed a list of topics discussed throughout the course: Emotional Intelligence, mindfulness, emotions, emotion regulation, empathy/how to look deeply and listen attentively, giving emotional care for others, as well as Buddhist principles including compassion, interbeing, and impermanence. During each lesson, learners are also provided with sessions of guided meditation lasting from 2 to 15 minutes, usually followed by short periods of self-reflection and then circle sharing. At home, students are sometimes required to reflect on certain aspects of life and write down said reflection (or the previously mentioned in-class reflection). There are various other miscellaneous activities during the course, most aiming to encourage self-reflection or to illustrate a knowledge point.

Based on the stated core theory of the EISC course, Petrides' (2009) model of Trait EI was found to be sufficiently suitable since most of the facets included in the model were likely to be either directly or indirectly taught to learners during the course. For example, lessons 3 and 4 where learners are taught about emotions, and emotion regulation are directly related to the emotion expression, emotion perception, and emotion regulation facets of the TEIQue.

3.3. Research Participants and Sampling

The population of this study are around 109 students enrolled in 3 EISC courses. These students are known as ULIS ambassadors, selected by the University through interviews and are expected to promote ULIS at their past high schools. Participants come from a variety of towns and cities in Vietnam, but all currently reside in Hanoi to pursue the second or third year of their degree in either English Teacher Education, Languages and Culture of different countries, or Language Education and Professional Development at ULIS. Although no information on participants' sex or gender was collected, the sample is assumed to follow the same female-dominant trend visible in the population of ULIS student.

For the quantitative phase, 54 students were convenience sampled through voluntary participation (initially, 70 students responded to the during-course survey; however, the 16 that did not respond to the post-course survey were disqualified). For the next phase involving document analysis and interview, the method of multi-phase sampling was used. From the previous 54-participant sample, learners were once again conveniently sampled through voluntary participation in the form of responding "yes" or "no" to a question requesting access to reflections, then purposively sampled when the researchers selected reflection entries. To select interviewees, the researchers used purposive sampling based on the degree of change to EI as recorded by the questionnaire.

3.4. Data Collection

To collect data for Research Question 1, the TEIQue-SF was administered twice, during and after participants attended the three courses (both times via Google Form). The during-course questionnaires were distributed and collected during the fifth and sixth weeks of the course; the after-course ones were distributed and collected about two months later, a few weeks after the courses finished.

For Research Question 2 the researchers first collected explicit consent to review written reflections from learners of each class, once again, through Google Form. Afterwards, access to the reflection pool was granted by the lecturers in charge of each class. The researchers stopped analysing after the twelfth entry, once saturation of content was perceived to have been achieved.

In the final phase of data collection, based on the levels of EI change gathered from the questionnaires, the researchers formed a list of possible candidates, who were then contacted and solicited optional semi-structured interview sessions lasting around one hour. Six learners were interviewed, two for each level of EI changes. All interviewees were female students in their second year of study. The questions utilized by the interviewer to gain information, according to Creswell and Poth (2018) are created by breaking down research questions into sub questions, then rephrased into ones that interviewee can understand. Interviews were conducted via the online video conference platform Zoom.

3.5. Data Analysis

The TEIQue-SF of the quantitative phase contains 30 questions, all of which are answered by choosing a point on a Likert scale of 1 to 7. The London Psychometric Laboratory (publisher of the TEIQue-SF) provides researchers with a scoring engine that converts a raw data sheet containing the scores of 30 questions as answered by participants into a set of 5 scores (4 factors of Trait EI and a global EI score) for each participant. Each of these five scores is accompanied by a Cronbach's alpha value assessing the internal consistency of the questionnaire items that resulted in this score. While more detailed results would be more desirable, the TEIQue-SF scoring engine does not support for calculating each of the 15 individual facets.

Following the recommendation of the questionnaire's author, only total Trait EI scores were taken into consideration as internal consistency (as indicated by Cronbach's alpha) of the four factors were almost all below 0.7 for both during- and post-course responses. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was then conducted using Microsoft Excel built-in formulae and data analysis package. Specifically, the researchers performed a Wilcoxon Signed Rank test to assess differences between mean EI scores during and after the EISC course.

In the qualitative phase, interview recordings were automatically provided by Zoom after each session. Combining notes and audio recordings (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006), the researchers performed manual thematic analysis and summarized the main ideas and stories told by the participants, then grouped them according to research questions: reasons for choosing EISC, general impressions, specific knowledge or skills learned and applied (in other words, changes). Reflection entries, on the other hand, underwent content analysis and were summarized into main ideas, which were then grouped and counted using a table in Microsoft Excel. While the fact that the whole data collection and analysis process was conducted by the same researcher might result in bias, this was necessary due to manpower shortage.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Throughout the study, research ethics were ensured thanks to the fact that, throughout each data collection step, participants are informed of the nature of the study, assured that participation was entirely voluntary, and made aware of the ability to opt-out at any point during the study. Moreover, no identifiable personal information was collected, and all data was kept confidential.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Research Question 1

What are the changes to Trait EI of those ULIS students who have finished the course, as measured by the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Short Form?

In this study, the TEIQue-SF was used to measure how much change occurred throughout the course. Overall, the study observed a difference of 0.12 points between mean during-course scores (M = 4.43, SD = 0.67) and after-course scores (M = 4.56, SD = 0.7). A left-tailed Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated that this difference was statistically significant (Z = -1.9459, p = .0256).

Table 2

During- and After-Course Means, SDs and Subsequent T-Test Results

Course	N	Means and *SD*		Results of Wilcoxon signed-rank test
		During-course	After-course	
Total	54	M = 4.43, SD = 0.67	M = 4.56, SD = 0.7	Statistically insignificant difference (*Z* = -1.9459, *p* = .0256).

These means are found to roughly belong to the same range of scores for 503 Hue university students as measured by the TEIQue-SF in a study by Nguyen (2021). While the during-course mean of ULIS students fell within this range, the after-course score was 0.08 points higher than the highest score in Nguyen's study. However, given the small sample of the current study and the resulting vast confidence interval, this comparison can only be used as a reference, not a definitive conclusion that the EISC course was able to increase ULIS students' EI level above the average for Hue students.

After comparing the during- and post-course means, the current paper calculated the increase to be 0.12 points. This change is somewhat similar to the change found in a study by Abe et al. (2013), in which participants were required to answer the TEIQue-SF before, immediately after, and one year after a three-hour workshop. Although the difference between before the intervention and after the intervention was insignificant, there was an increase of 0.23 when EI levels are re-measured one year after.

Moreover, the TEIQue-SF score and evidence collected from interviews seem to support each other. The questionnaire score was mostly able to accurately reflect the direction and even the extent of change recorded in individual interviews. A participant's +0.97 is matched with a mostly desirable improvement, coupled with some concerning tendency. Meanwhile, another's +1.13 is reflected in complete changes that significantly improved quality of life. This similarity was also found in the cases of three other interviewees. There was, however, a case where a participant experienced the most serious decrease in score, but in fact reported more significant change than two others, who have both found almost no change. A possible explanation was provided by Tschannen-Moran and Carter (2016), who proposed that

> it seems unlikely that the participants actually declined in their EI skills as a result of the training. What seems more likely is that participants were sensitized to issues of EI they had previously ignored, and thus responded to the questions on the assessment differently on the posttest as a result of a deeper understanding of those survey items. (p. 15)

This is supported by the fact that the participant was sincerely surprised by the fact that there are approaches other than mocking group members and had since tried to be more considerate.

4.2. Research Question 2

What specific evidence of changes are experienced by this group of ULIS students?

Through interviews with individual participants, the researchers hoped to gain an in-depth understanding of and collect evidence on specific changes experienced by learners. In this section, the researchers present findings grouped by themes. Interviewees are referred to using pseudonyms and associated changes to EI to ensure confidentiality. Direct quotations are provided in English translation.

Table 3

Pseudonyms and Corresponding Level of EI Change

Name	Level of EI change
Bucha	- 0.63
Irpin	+ 0.10
Izyum	- 0.80
Mariupol	+ 0.97
Odesa	- 0.03
Mykolayiv	+1.33

4.2.1. Displeased With the Course (Little to No Change)

Two learners, Irpin and Izyum, reported having negative experiences attending the course. Irpin (+ 0.10) reported being discouraged by the course activities such as meditating, circle sharing, ("like meditation for example, I didn't find it beneficial at all, so … pass"). The boredom and disinterest towards course activities (which mostly included meditation, self-reflection, and circle sharing) experienced by Iprin was not surprising, as Osin and Turilina (2022) also highlighted in a study how the inability to pay attention and boredom were the two most common obstacle against mindfulness activities. The study also found that meditation caused participants to become reacquainted with and suffer from "the anxiety and frustration they would normally be distracted from by their daily activities". Given the highlighted coping strategies employed by Irpin (distraction, self-invalidation, unsuccessful self-reassurance), sudden introduction to mindfulness activity was likely to cause overwhelming emotional discomfort to the participant. Similarly, Izyum (- 0.80) reported not paying any attention during lessons, due to her dislike for the manner in which lecturers and classmates interacted ("everyone kept giving each other compliments") for the information and activities being presented to learners ("they kept making us meditate and taught us some weird things"). As someone who grew up in a household where strong emotions were considered negative, were discouraged, and neglected, the sudden shift towards paying attention to emotions was likely so alienating that caused her to immediately experience contempt.

4.2.2. Helpful Experience

The remaining four learners reported a more pleasant experience with the EISC course. Most of the comments were similar to the main ideas presented in the course reflection entries.

The most often recorded types of main ideas in the reflection entries of 20 learners were, from most recurrent to least recurrent: (a) Information learned from the course, (b) Self-reflection on certain aspects, (c) Experience with meditation, and (d) Various comments on individual lessons, teachers and/or classmates, and the course in general. This convergence helps support the reliability of course reflection as a source of data for the course designers.

> Other subjects [...] feel dry, but when I was in this course [EISC] I felt more like I was relaxing, destressing, renewing myself after stressful and tiring lessons in other subjects.

> The two first subjects [of that day, before EISC] are always very stressful for me, I don't know what to do, but in this subject, I feel like… I get to go to another world [...] very chill and everybody is nice.

4.2.3. Improved Empathy and Emotion Regulation

Another convergence occurred between the most common reported benefit gained by interviewees, and the most mentioned core theory topics in reflection entries. In both cases, learners reported the most improvement in the ability to listen, to consider another person's perspective; as well as the ability to pay attention to and regulate emotions. This covers three of the four main focuses in the first two modules of the course: self-understanding, self-care, understanding others, and caring for others. The improved ability in these aspects (along with other factors in participants' lives) directly caused learners to experience better interpersonal relationships (less intense fights with parents, better friendships, and better group work), less emotional discomfort, and less academic difficulties (thanks to better group work, better emotional regulation and focus that resulted in more effective work, as well as the ability to overcome fear and seize previously unavailable opportunity).

> after the EISC course [...] feelings that I would call "hatred" would pass away very quickly [...] I don't think there's any reason to keep negative emotions inside. They can come and go as they please.

This not only once again proves the well-established link between improved EI and better life outcomes including overall well-being (Goleman, 1995; Tan, 2012) but also vividly illustrates how changes in one area leads to improvement in another. For example, Mariupol recounted how anxiety and shame had often prevented the participant from practicing speaking in English classes. However, after receiving support from close friends, in combination with practicing emotional management strategies obtained from the course, she was able to self-reassure and ignore the remaining worries to perform said activities in class. The story of another participant, Mykolayiv, demonstrated how improved EI lead to improvements in relationships. Before the course, this interviewee reported not having any friendship with classmates, actively isolating herself from the other students out of insecurity about her perceived academic abilities and having different interests. After the EISC course, among other benefits, she reported having improved her sense of self-worth and learned several strategies to respond to strong unpleasant emotions. The former change, in addition becoming more comfortable with classmates as a natural result of studying for a year together, allowed Mykolayiv to not only be more receptive to her friend's attempt at interaction, but also more active in initiating those interaction, and as a result, gain friendships that she previously thought impossible. In addition, by no longer believing that "there is something wrong with me", the participant experienced fewer unpleasant emotions when there were problems. This, coupled with the newly acquired interest in and having strategies to regulate emotions, meant that Mykolayiv was able to more easily navigate academic pressures and her existing relational

conflicts with her mother.

4.2.4. Insufficient Ability to Care for Others

However, caring for others (or the TEIQue facet named emotional management) seems to have seen the least improvement. Bucha and Mariupol both reported employing fairly ineffective strategies because of and despite the course, respectively. Bucha learned that distraction was a valid strategy and started to switch topic, ignore her friend entirely when they start talking about unpleasant emotions, while Mariupol continued to apply own experience of coping to respond to others' distress, despite the course repeatedly warning against this.

Coincidentally, Irpin, who paid attention to the lesson about listening to others and providing emotional support, commented that the core theory, while useful, was highly theoretical and did not help her resolve discomfort that arises when others came to her for support. The difficult emotions described by Irpin are similar to what Teahan (2021) explained to be trigger responses for those suffering from childhood trauma when having to give validation to another person. Due to a lack of personal experience with receiving emotional support during childhood, some are prone to experiencing shame, helplessness, and guilt, believing that no response they give to soothe the other person would be good enough. Others, on the opposite end of the spectrum, feel great discomfort when exposed to others' emotional distress and would attempt to eliminate the other person's emotions by distancing, attempting to problems, or by forcing them to stop having emotions.

Irpin seems to experience emotional responses on both sides of the spectrum. Bucha and Mariupol, on the other hand, both attempted to escape emotions by forcing the other person to talk about another topic or by distancing, respectively.

4.2.5. Emotion Disregard

Another more change is the appearance of a tendency to disregard or to tolerate uncomfortable emotions that some learners exhibited. In Bucha's case, this was likely caused by a prior wish to become less of a burden to other people, and an aversion to uncomfortable emotions, both reported by the participant as possible reasons for her change. For Odesa, a learner who had already practiced meditation and emotion-appraisal, the practice of letting go of emotions stopped being a way of finding inner peace and started becoming an obligation to fulfil. Meanwhile, for Mariupol, the wish to tolerate emotions stemmed directly from the ability to better regulate emotions with meditation and to consider opposite perspectives in a conflict. On one hand, this may allow the learner to react differently whenever she experiences conflict with a family member, often choosing to spend time alone and observe emotions instead of escalating the fight like before. While being able to disregard certain emotions may allow a person to reduce conflict in relationships, there is also a risk that these problems are then ignored instead of being addressed. Whatever the cause though, failure to resolve conflicts in relationships, attempting to make space for others at the expense of the self, or in other words, not setting boundaries is likely to cause "long-term suffering" that erodes the quality of relationships, causing them to be dysfunctional, unreasonable, and hard to manage (Tawwab, 2021).

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of Key Findings

This study attempted to explore the changes in emotional intelligence of learns enrolled

in the three EISC courses using a mixed methods approach. The researchers observed a diverse range of changes, in different directions and to different extents.

Quantitative instruments revealed a statistically significant small increase in whole-course global EI scores, while qualitative ones gave a glimpse into the experience of a few learners, in which the changes ranged from highly beneficial, life changing (improved interpersonal relationships and emotion regulation ability); somewhat concerning (increased tendency to tolerate instead of resolving uncomfortable situations); to insignificant (little or no change either because of disinterest in the course or because the learner had already mastered a large portion of the skills and knowledge being taught).

The area of EI that experienced the most impact seemed to be the ability to consider another person's perspective and the ability to regulate emotions, both of which resulted in improved interpersonal relationships, less emotional discomfort, fewer academic obstacles. The ability to provide emotional support (manage others' emotions), however, did not see improvements.

5.2. Implications and Significance

This section outlines a few suggestions for EISC course designers to modify Module 1 and Module 2 of the course.

The first problem that needs addressing is the tendency to suppress emotion, to cope with emotions solely through distraction strategies. While the course did repeatedly emphasize the need to focus more on emotions and to view emotions in a better light and with a changed mind-set, this effort was not able to overcome the participants' existing negative view of emotions. It is suggested that this negative view should be further explored, either during lessons or through personal reflection prompts, by asking learners to identify the cause of this attitude and by helping learners overcoming these causes. Additionally, learners may be referred to resources outside of the course, such as online information from credible sources, or the university's counselling services.

The second problem that existed was the inability by some learners to respond to others' emotions. During the course, there was already an emphasis on being present for the other person, and providing support by exploring the problems experienced by the person experiencing distress. However, based on Irpin's account, additional focus should be given to the difficult emotions experienced by the participant when faced with another person's emotional distress. In addition, the course may also provide cases to demonstrate typical effective ways to respond to specific common situations. Based on these, students would have more to draw from when having to respond to emotional distress, given how Bucha's reason for resorting to changing topics was her perceived sense of futility when attempting to discuss the friend's problem.

This study was able to highlight changes to learners' EI levels and, based on that data, suggest a few courses of actions to the EISC course designers. The helpful and meaningful change recorded confirms the case that interventions can help improve learners' EI level to a certain extent, which is also supported by a number of other studies (Kotsou et al., 2019). This paper has contributed to the growing number of studies that explore the use of interviews in emotional intelligence research. It has found qualitative interview to be a suitable method to effectively explore and assess emotional intelligence of individuals. The interview data had also confirmed the accuracy of the TEIQue-SF in measuring changes of EI for the participants who were interviewed. By exploring participants' experience with emotions in-depth, the interviews

in this study were able to not only confirm the correlation between EI in improved outcomes, but also highlight how EI was able to interact with aspects of life such as relationships and academic performance to produce these positive life outcomes. Finally, the study seems to also be one of the first attempts at studying the emotional intelligence of ULIS students, specifically.

5.3. Limitations

Despite best efforts, the current study is limited due to the following factors. First, there were factors that limited the choice of data collection instruments; the questionnaire response rate; the number of interview participants, as well as reflection pieces that could be studied for the research. Second, the two questionnaires were administered during-course and post-course, despite the fact that measuring pre-course EI level would have likely resulted in more accurate reflection of the changes of students' EI throughout the whole course (as opposed to the changes that happened between a portion of the course). Finally, the qualitative side of the research, despite benefitting from a rich sum of data provided by participant, may have suffered from fairly rudimentary analysis methodologies.

5.4. Recommendations for Further Research

Future researchers may consider replicating the study with a larger sample to improve generalizability, or with a different quantitative instrument of measuring EI, to examine whether different measuring tool might lead to different results. Should the TEIQue continue to be used, there should be a switch towards the TEIQue long form instead of the short form, so that individual facets and factors may be considered, thus allowing more in-depth analysis of the quantitative data. Moreover, a different approach to assessing the effectiveness of the EISC course would be to shift the focus of the study from being solely on learners to also assessing the EISC course contents and material, based on the existing literature about EI training.

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NHỮNG THAY ĐỔI VỀ TRÍ TUỆ CẢM XÚC CỦA SINH VIÊN THAM GIA KHÓA HỌC *TRÍ TUỆ CẢM XÚC VÀ GIAO TIẾP XÃ HỘI*

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Tóm tắt: Trong Học kỳ I của năm học 2021-2022, 3 lớp của học phần mới *Trí tuệ cảm xúc và Giao tiếp xã hội* (TTCX-GTXH) được tổ chức để hỗ trợ quá trình phát triển cá nhân của sinh viên. Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp hỗn hợp nhằm tìm hiểu những thay đổi về TTCX của sinh viên sau khi hoàn thành học phần này. Sau khi điều tra và tìm ra một sự khác biệt đáng kể ở mức 0.12 (95% CI [0.003, 0.237]) giữa điểm TTCX trung bình của tất cả sinh viên trong và sau khoá học, nhóm nghiên cứu đã chọn có chủ đích một số ứng viên để phỏng vấn, dựa trên tiêu chí những sinh viên có mức TTCX tăng nhiều nhất, tăng ít nhất, và gần như giữ nguyên. Dữ liệu phỏng vấn cho thấy đa số các sinh viên này cải thiện khả năng nhìn nhận quan điểm của người khác, và một số sinh viên trong nhóm này đã nâng cao khả năng điều chỉnh cảm xúc của mình. Mặt khác, năng lực quản trị cảm xúc dường như được cải thiện ít nhất. Thêm vào đó, phần phân tích các chiêm nghiệm của 20 sinh viên cho thấy các ý tưởng xuất hiện phổ biến nhất là các chiêm nghiệm về bản thân (những điểm yếu, các sự kiện không may trong quá khứ, các thói quen có ích/các thành tựu đã có, hoặc các dự định cải thiện bản thân trong tương lai), và các chia sẻ về lợi ích của việc thực hành mindfulness (thấu hiểu hơn hay giải thoát khỏi những cảm xúc tiêu cực).

Từ khóa: Trí tuệ cảm xúc và Giao tiếp xã hội, chánh niệm, TEIQUE-SF (Bảng hỏi điều tra trí tuệ cảm xúc với tư cách là một đặc điểm-Mẫu ngắn), thay đổi về trí tuệ cảm xúc

AN ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENTIAL MEANING OF THE STORY "QUÀ…TỨC LÀ NGƯỜI" BY THACH LAM

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Abstract: This paper is concerned with exploring experiential meaning realized through transitivity resources in the story *"Quà…tức là người"* by Thạch Lam. The theoretical framework adopted in the study is systemic functional grammar (SFG). The findings show that in composing the story, the writer has employed a high frequency of relational, material, mental processes and a low number of existential, behavioural and verbal processes. Remarkably, relational clauses were deployed to describe the taste and flavor of street foods and the way Hanoians enjoy such foods. The author implies that the choice as well as the way of enjoying food, to some extent, can tell people's personality. This explains why the story was named *"Quà…tức là người"*. In addition, a high number of circumstances are found in the story with the high frequency of circumstances of manner, among which the circumstance of manner is mostly used in relational clauses to specify the taste and flavor of street foods.

Keywords: systemic functional grammar, experiential meaning, transitivity, Thạch Lam

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has proved to be "an appliable theory" (Bartlett & O'Grady, 2017) in a lot of fields including linguistics, education, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and language teaching. Numerous publications in the field of SFL have focused on discourse analysis. These include works by Benson and Greaves (1985a), Benson et al. (1988), Steiner and Veltman (1988), Ventola (1991), Davies and Ravelli (1992), Ghadessy (1993a), Fries and Gregory (1995), Ghadessy (1995), Hasan and Fries (1995), Sanchez-Macarro and Carter (1998), Ghadessy (1999), Ventola (2000), Stainton and de Villiers (2001), and Hasan et al. (2005, 2007) (as cited in Halliday & Webster, 2009), and many others.

SFL offers a valuable framework for analyzing discourse in various contexts in many different languages, and Vietnamese is no exception. Upon reviewing the existing literature, it becomes apparent that there is a lack of similar research focused on examining experiential meaning in the work by Thạch Lam; hence, this serves as the primary motivation for undertaking the present study.

The examined story is *"Quà…tức là người"* which is extracted from the collection *"Hà Nội băm sáu phố phường"* by Thach Lam. This anthology explores the cuisine and the close connection of culinary art with the sophisticated cultural and social life of the elegant people of

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Hanoi. Thạch Lam, with his skillful writing, takes us through the ancient streets to rediscover the essence of Thăng Long - the old Hanoi. The anthology has been highly appreciated by a number of literature critics such as Dang (2021):

> Không kể đến toàn bộ văn nghiệp của Thạch Lam, chỉ với bút kí "Hà Nội băm sáu phố phường", Thạch Lam đã "làm cho lòng người thêm trong sạch và phong phú hơn", yêu quý quê hương, đất nước, yêu quý, Thăng Long – Hà Nội ngàn năm văn hiến của mình hơn.

(Excluding the entire literary career of Thạch Lam, with just the anthology *"The 36 streets of Hanoi,"* Thạch Lam has "made people's hearts cleaner and richer," cherishing his homeland, the country, and cherishing his thousand-year-old cultural capital, Thăng Long – Hanoi even more.)

As an initial step in understanding the story, this paper attempts to delves specifically into exploring the experiential meaning realized through transitivity patterns in the story. Two questions are put forward to fulfil the objectives of the study.

1. What transitivity resources does the writer employ to construct the story *"Quà…tức là người"*?

2. How are those transitivity resources employed?

2. The Theoretical Framework

2.1. An Overview of SFG

The theoretical framework adopted in the research is systemic functional grammar (SFG) which is a part of systemic functional linguistics (SFL). SFL was developed by Michael Halliday, a prominent linguist. Halliday's exploration of language in relation to social context began in the 1950s and was further developed in the 1960s, drawing inspiration from linguists like J.R. Firth. His influential book, *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978), established the foundation of SFL by presenting language as a social semiotic system with a focus on its functional aspects in meaning-making within social contexts. This theory acknowledges that language is a complex semiotic system consisting of four main strata: phonology, lexicogrammar, semantics and context. In SFL, lexicogrammar is concerned with the analysis of how language structures (grammar) are organized to convey meaning and fulfill various communicative functions in different situations.

In SFG, language has three main functions: ideational function (consisting of experiential and logical components), interpersonal and textual function. This study explores experiential meaning in clause simplexes in the story by Thach Lam; hence, the details of this strand of meaning will be presented in the next part. In Vietnam, drawing on Halliday's theory, Hoang Van Van (2012) described the experiential meaning of Vietnamese clause and displayed some specificities of the language.

2.2. An Experiential Grammar of the Vietnamese Clause

Hoang Van Van's special monograph in 2012 offers an examination of Vietnamese grammar from the perspective of SFL. The book, based on his doctoral dissertation, is divided into three parts. The initial part *"Foundation"* begins with a general introduction and then focuses on an exploration of systemic functional linguistics and the concept of the clause in Vietnamese. The second part *"The system of transitivity in Vietnamese"* provides the readers

with basic concepts and delves into doing processes, projecting processes and being processes in Vietnam according to Hoang's classification. Also in this part, types of circumstances are explored with illustrative examples. The final part titled *"Coda"* consists of a summary of the findings and proposes future research directions. Additionally, readers will find useful concluding remarks from chapters two to nine, as well as the index of proper names, index of subjects, and three appendices.

According to Hoang (2012), the experiential meaning is realized through transitivity system, a system of processes, participants and circumstances. The process refers to the action or event that is being represented, while the participants refer to the entities involved in the process, including the actor, the goal, and the recipient. The circumstances refer to the various aspects of the context in which the process is taking place, such as time, location, and manner.

Hoang (2012) formalized process types of Vietnamese clauses in the following figure.

Figure 1

The System of Process Types in Vietnamese (Hoang, 2012, p. 214)
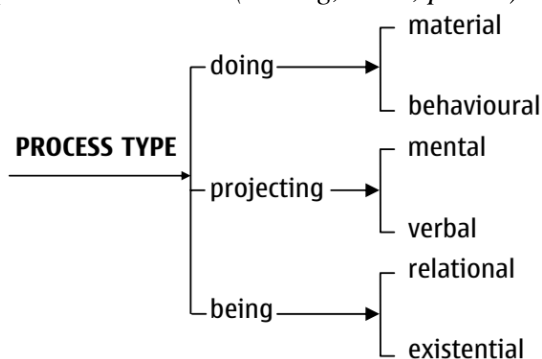
Material process, the process of "doing and happening", is represented with the structure **Actor^Process: material^other Participants**. The participants in this process can include one, two or even three (actor, goal and receiver). Let us look at the following examples extracted from the story, using Hoang's (2012) model of analysis.

Chúng ta đã lần lượt điểm qua các thức quà rong ở Hà Nội (p. 95)

Chúng ta	đã	lần lượt	điểm	qua	các thức quà rong	ở Hà Nội
we	past time	one by one	reviewed	in passing	foods	in Hanoi
Actor		**Circumstance 1**	**Process: material**	**Circumstance 2**	**Goal**	**Circumstance 3**

(We have reviewed the street food in Hanoi in turn.)

One note pointed out by Hoang (2012) is that in the process of material in Vietnamese clauses, some material verbs often come with verb of direction, which is called co-verbs of directions such as *"lên", "ra", "xuống".* In addition, in English, the passive and active voice is distinguished by the different structures; however, in Vietnamese, two words *"bị"* or *"được"* are used to differentiate such two voices. Nevertheless, two words above are not only used for passive voice. They also carry different meanings in different cases which will be shown in the later analysis of the story.

Mental process, the process of sensing, is manifested with the general structure: **Senser^Process: mental^Phenomenon.** Like English, Hoang (2012) probed four primary choices including perceptive, cognitive, desiderative and emotive in Vietnamese clauses. Like in the following example, the mental verb falls into emotive subtype.

Ớt thì thích ớt rất cay. (p. 95)

Ớt	*thì thích*	*ớt rất cay*
Chilly	like	spicy chilly
Phenomenon	**Process: mental**	**Phenomenon**

(Speaking of chilly, Hanoian people like spicy chilly.)

Relational process is the process of being (intensive), having (possessive) and being at (circumstantial). Hoang (2012) divides relational process into three subtypes, which can be grouped into two modes: ascriptive and identifying. As can be inferred from its name, in the ascriptive mode, the entity (carrier) is assigned some attribute that is realized in an adjective or nominal group. On the other hand, in the identifying mode, the entity (identified) is defined or displays its identity through another entity (identifier). Figure 2 illustrates the system of relational process in Vietnamese.

Figure 2

Relational Process in Vietnamese (Hoang, 2012, p. 238)
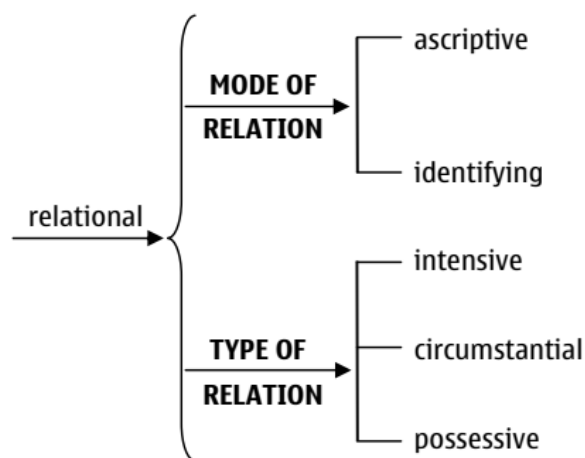
Two following examples are two different modes of relational process extracted from the story.

In the first example, the carrier described is *"cà cuống"* with the attribute realized in the epithet *"rất hăng"*.

Cà cuống thì rất hăng. (p. 95)

cà cuống	*thì rất*	*hăng*
lethocerus indicus	very	pungent
Carrier	**Circumstance**	**Process: relational**

(Lethocerus indicus is very pungent.)

In the second example, the entity *"gói quà phong giấy"* is compared with *"phong thuốc lào."*

Gói quà phong giấy tựa như phong thuốc lào. (p. 96)

Gói quà phong giấy	*tựa như*	*phong thuốc lào*
The gift wrapped in paper	like	the package of tobacco
Identified (Token)	**Process: relational**	**Identifier (Value)**

(The gift wrapped in paper is like the package of tobacco.)

It should be noted that when an attribute is expressed using an adjective in English, the use of "to be" or a linking verb is usually required. However, in Vietnamese, the presence of this element (là) normally is not obligatory (for detail see Hoang 2012).

Three other processes which are the borderlines between main processes (material, mental and relational process).

Behavioural process is the process of physiological and psychological behaviour with one participant. The general structure is: **Behaver^Process: behavioural^Range/Phenomenon**.

Còn cả nhà thì nổi lên cười. (p. 96)

còn cả nhà	*thì nổi lên cười*
All family members	burst into laughter
Behaver	**Process: behavioural**

(All family members burst into laughter.)

Verbal process is the process of saying or includes any kind of symbolic change (Hoang, 2005) with the structure: **Sayer^Process: Verbal(^Receiver') (^Verbiage').**

Khoe với mẹ. (p. 96)

khoe	với mẹ
Show off	to mother
Process: verbal	**Target**

(Showing off to my mother.)

The last one is the process of existing named existential process with one participant: **Process: existential^Existent.** Hoang (2012) also proposed some common existential verbs on Vietnamese with equivalent verbs in English *(treo – hang, ngồi – sit, mọc – grow,).*

Nhưng cái tục lệ đẹp ấy nay mất dần đi. (p. 96)

Nhưng cái tục lệ đẹp đẽ ấy	nay	mất	dần đi
But the beautiful custom	today	lose	gradually
Existent	**Circumstance 1**	**Process: existential**	**Circumstance 2**

(But the beautiful custom is slowly fading away.)

In addition to the essential functions such as Agent and Action, additional elements that explain the material process in relation to place, time, method, etc., are not obligatory in process category. Hoang (2012) suggested eight types of such explanatory elements, which include scope, position, method, reason, co-occurrence, material, function and attitude.

Figure 3

Circumstantial Transitivity in Vietnamese (Hoang, 2012, p.320)
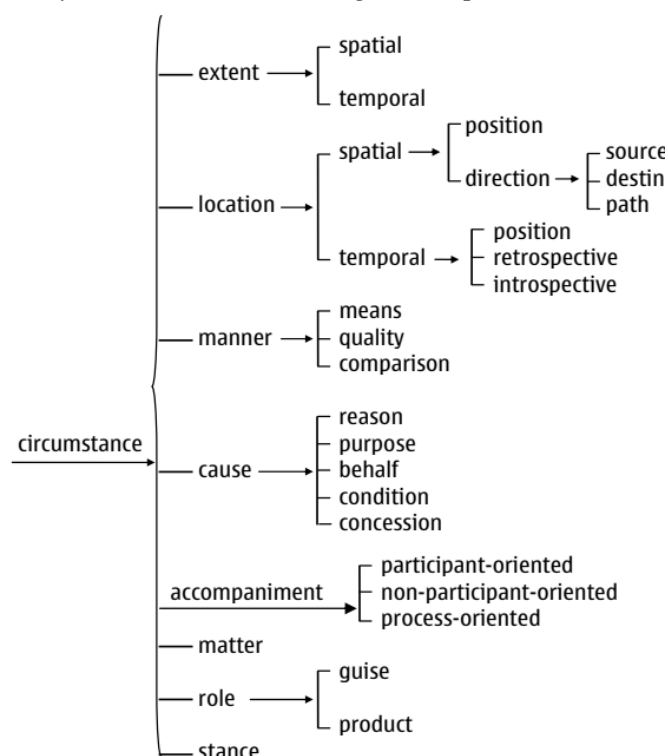
The following example presents the usage of circumstance of manner (comparison) to clarify the attribute which describes the taste of food.

Cả quà ngọt như đường mía (p. 95)

cả quà	ngọt	như đường mía
Food	sweet	like sugar cane
Carrier	**Process: relational**	**Circumstance of manner (comparison)**

(All the food is as sweet as sugarcane.)

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Thạch Lam and the Story "Quà…tức là người"

Thạch Lam was a key member of a literary association called Tự Lực Văn Đoàn, also known as the Self-Reliant Literary Group. This group was established during the time of French colonial rule with the aim of enhancing the literary heritage of our nation.

The anthology titled *"Hà Nội Băm Sáu Phố Phường" (The 36 Streets of Hanoi)* compiles a collection of Thạch Lam's newspaper articles which were published posthumously. The book consists of 22 chapters, with 16 of them dedicated to exploring the culinary delights of Hanoi. However, Thạch Lam's writings went beyond mere descriptions of food. Through the dishes, he depicted the inner beauty of those who prepared the food, the vendors, and even the people who enjoyed the meal.

The story *"Quà…tức là người"* extracted from the anthology *"The 36 streets of Hanoi"* describes the street foods of Hanoi and the changes over time. The author meticulously portrays the taste, colors, and the way people enjoy them. In addition to *"bún ốc"* (snail noodle soup) and red jellyfish meat, the author also shares a childhood memory associated with *"bánh bật cười"* (laughing cake). However, gradually, the way the Hanoian enjoy these snacks has also changed with the emergence of colorful candies and pastries, which lacks exquisiteness. The writer Dang Tuong Nhu (2021) praised the collection as a treasure in the following words:

> Và bút kí "Hà Nội băm sáu phố phường" là một phần châu báu rất sẵn trong kho tàng tâm hồn Thạch Lam, một đóng góp vô giá cho văn sản Hà Nội-Việt Nam.

(And the anthology *"The 36 streets of Hanoi"* is a precious gem readily available in Thạch Lam's treasure trove of the soul, an invaluable contribution to the literary heritage of Hanoi-Vietnam.)

3.2. Unit of Analysis

As aforementioned in the previous pages, the study focuses on exploring the component of experiential meaning in the story; hence, clause simplexes are chosen as the unit of analysis for the study. The clause simplex is composed of a subject, a finite verb, and sometimes, additional elements that constitute the predicate. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) suggest that the clause simplex is seen as the highest unit in grammatical rank for it carries all three metafunctions of language. Similarly, in Vietnamese, the clause on the lexicogrammatical level is the highest unit of grammar analysis (Hoang, 2012). In addition, the clause simplex provides the distinct line of structures associated with different metafunctions. In relation to the logical component, it is concerned with the way information is structured and linked within clauses and between clauses to convey the intended meaning clearly and coherently (clause complexes), which is not the scope of the study. To prevent confusion when dividing clauses within a clause complex, it is essential to remember that the clause complex represents a logical combination of clauses. There are two primary types of relationships between clauses in a clause complex: paratactic or hypotactic. In the paratactic relationship, a core clause combines with coordinate clauses, while in the hypotactic relationship, it combines with subordinate clauses.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

In the first step, the story was taken from the hard cover book *"Hà Nội băm sáu phố phường" (The 36 Streets of Hanoi)* by Thach Lam, which was published by Nha Nam Publishers in 2014. After that, the writer read the story carefully to comprehend the main content before identifying clause simplexes in the story. The writer used two vertical strokes (//) to separate clause simplexes and then classify them into six types of processes in transitivity system: material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential. Simultaneously, the types and number of circumstances were also taken for analysis. To facilitate the readers' reading, each illustrative example is given a number put in square brackets: [1], [2], [3], and so on. In the next step, the process types were counted and illustrated in the chart. The collected findings enabled the writer to analyze and draw conclusions about experiential meaning realized through the transitivity patterns in the story. The analytical framework is shown in the following figure.

Figure 4

Analytical Framework
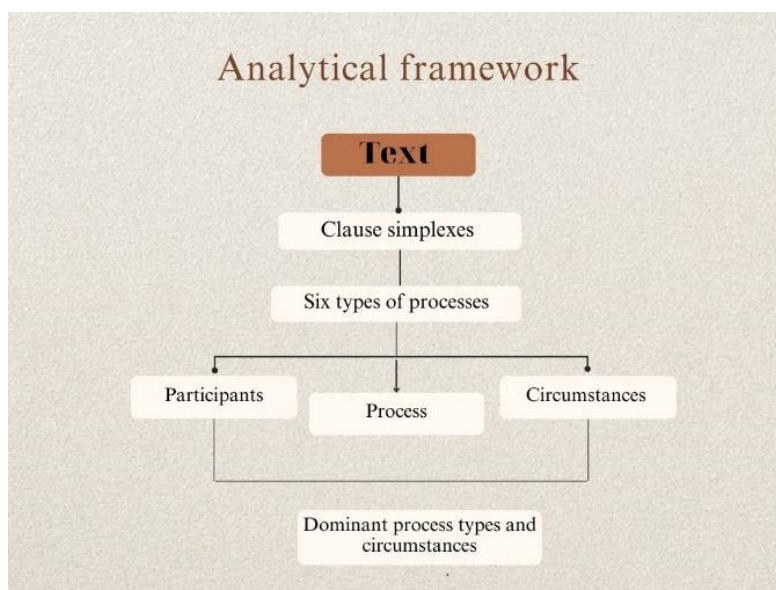
The analysis for gathering initial data is concerned with tallying the number of words and the number of clause simplexes in the story. The total number of words in the story is 560 while the number of clause simplexes collected is 51.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1. Process Types

The following chart presents the percentage of process types collected from the text in the story by Thach Lam.

Figure 5

Percentage of Process Types in the Story "Quà…tức là người"
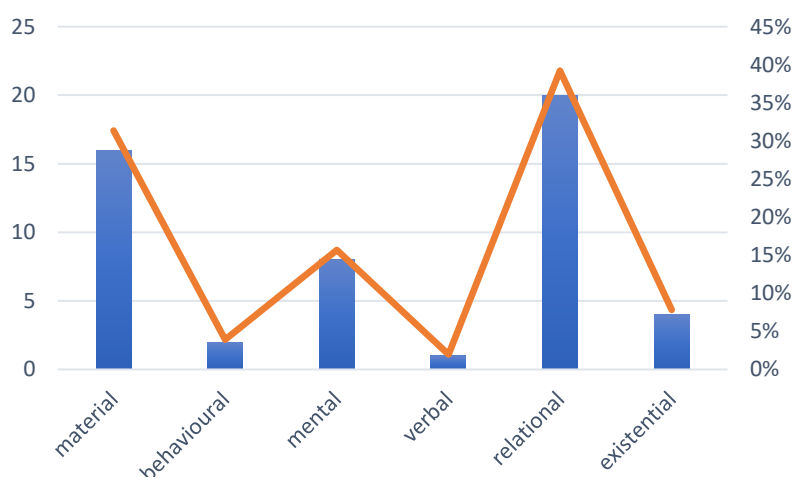
The results from the figure above indicate that the **relational process** type is predominantly used in short stories with 20 instances, accounting for 38%. Three subtypes are found including: (i) intensive ascriptive (17/20); (ii) intensive identifying (2/20); and (iii)

circumstantial ascriptive (1/20).

In 17 intensive ascriptive clauses found in the story, 16 of the attributes are realized through epithets such as *ngọt* (sweet), *mặn* (salty), *tế nhị* (delicate), *hăng* (intense), *thẳng thắn* (straightforward), *phức tạp* (complex), *đáng yêu* (lovely), *mộc mạc và giản dị* (simple and humble), *lương thiện* (benevolent), *nhỏ* (small), etc. Because the attributes are adjectives, the inclusion of verbs is optional (Hoang, 2012). It is the reason why in these 16 clauses, there is no presence of relational verbs. it can be observed that these 16 intensive ascriptive clauses with attributes as adjectives fall into four groups: (i) describing the taste and flavor of street food; (ii) depicting the images of the sellers and diners; (iii) giving comments on the prices of street food; and (iv) the way people enjoy food. The following examples clearly illustrate the aforementioned points.

[1] cả quà ngọt như đường mía.

Cả quà	*ngọt*	*như*	*mía đường*
Food	sweet	like	sugar cane
Carrier	**Proc: relational**	**Circumstance**	

(All the food is as sweet as sugar cane)

The relational process in the example above describes the taste of food (*ngọt* -sweet) along with the circumstance of manner (*như đường mía* – like sugar cane) to help readers vividly imagine that taste. In another example, the author does not characterize the taste of food but describe it in general with the adjective *"lương thiện"*.

[2] Những món quà lương thiện.

những món quà	*lương thiện*
Dishes	kind
Carrier	**Process: relational (attribute)**

(Dishes are kind.)

The image of the seller is also depicted through two intensive ascriptive clauses with two epithets *"sắc", "tươi"*.

[3] mắt sắc

[4] và miệng tươi.

Mắt	*sắc*
eyes	sharp
Carrier	**Process: relational (attribute)**
và miệng	*tươi*
and mouth	bright
Carrier	**Process: relational (attribute)**

(Her eyes are sharp and her smile is bright.)

In addition to the 16 intensive ascriptive clauses with attributes of adjectives, there is one intensive ascriptive clause that is realized through verb *"chứng tỏ"* (prove) *with* the attribute as a nominal group *"cái thay đổi lắm màu của sự thưởng thức của người Hà Nội, cái*

phong phú và cái tế nhị vô cùng" (the diverse and modest changes in the taste of Hanoi's people).

[5] Tất cả những thứ quà đó chứng tỏ cái thay đổi lắm màu của sự thưởng thức của người Hà Nội, cái phong phú và cái tế nhị vô cùng.

Tất cả những thứ quà đó	*chứng tỏ*	*cái thay đổi ...tế nhị vô cùng*
All the dishes	prove	the diverse changes in the taste of the Hanoian, the richness and the sophistication.
Carrier	**Process: relational (attribute)**	**Attribute**

(All the dishes demonstrate the diverse and refined changes in the taste of Hanoi people, both in richness and sophistication.)

Besides the high frequency of relational intensive ascriptive process, another subtype of relational process found in the story is intensive identifying with two instances. As for the intensive identifying, this process established the "defining" or "identifying" relationship (Hoang, 2012), which is different from the intensive ascriptive with "an inclusion" or "classifying" relationship (Hoang, 2012). In this text, the structure of this subtype is: **Identified^Process: relational^Identifier** with two verbs *"là"* (be) and *"tựa như"* (be like).

[6] Gói quà phong giấy tựa như phong thuốc lào.

Gói quà phong giấy	*tựa như*	*phong thuốc lào*
The gift wrapped in paper	like	the package of tobacco
Identified	**Process: relational (identifying)**	**Identifier**

(The gift wrapped in paper is like the package of tobacco.)

[7] Kẻ bán hàng là một người có tuổi.

Kẻ bán hàng	*là*	*một người có tuổi*
The seller	is	an old person
Identified	**Process: relational (identifying)**	**Identifier**

(The seller is an old person.)

Two instances of intensive identifying continue to contributing to the account of the seller and the shape of a food package.

The only circumstantial ascriptive clause in the story expresses "be + measure of price".

[8] có một xu hai phong.

có	*một xu*	*hai phong*
there	one penny	two packages
Circumstantial	**Carrier**	**Attribute**

(Two packages cost one penny)

However, as can be seen that the encoded verb is omitted in this clause, which should be *"có giá một xu hai phong."*

The high proportion of relational process in the story is predictable as the main content of the story involves different kinds of street food in the past and now. Therefore, such elements as the taste and flavor of food, the price, the images of seller, or the way of enjoying food are indispensable.

The process type of **material process** comes in second place with 17 instances, representing 33%. This type represents the action of inviting of the street vendors, the diners enjoying, the process of selling – buying and other activities revolving the street food, which are realized through verbs such as *ăn* (eat), *đánh lừa* (cheat), *thưởng thức* (enjoy), *mời chào* (invite), *xin* (beg), *ra mua* (buy), *đem về* (bring), *mở ra* (open), …

Two noticeable points in material clauses represented in the story are the combination of material verbs with verbs of direction and the presence of two particles *"bị"* and *"được"*. In Vietnamese, a number of material verbs often coordinate with verbs of direction (*lên, xuống, ra* – up, down, out) (Hoang, 2012). This is clearly illustrated in some of material processes in the story.

[9] đem về.

Đem	*về*
Bring	back
Process: material	**Verb of direction**

(Bring back.)

Additionally, the words "bị" and "được" are normally used to indicate the passive voice. However, "bị" or "được" are not always used in passive sentences as they can sometimes convey a sense of *"desirable"* or *"undesirable"* in Vietnamese (see Nguyen, 185; Hoang, 2012). Examples of this can be seen in the following clauses.

[10]. đã được thưởng thức một thứ quà rong đặc biệt gọi là bánh bật cười.

đã	*được*	*thưởng thức*	*một thứ quà rong đặc biệt*	*gọi là bánh bật cười*
		enjoy	a special street food	called laughing cake
Aspectual particle	**particle**	**Process: material**	**Goal**	**embedded clause**

(Enjoyed a special street food called laughing cake.)

[11]. Xin mãi mới được đồng xu mới.

Xin	*mãi*	*mới được*	*đồng xu mới*
Ask	persistently		new coin
Process: material	**Cir**	**particle**	**Goal**

(Ask persistently for a new coin.)

Thus, it can be seen that the word *"được"* in the above clauses does not represent the passive voice but rather reflects the subject achieving something positive, such as a desired outcome.

In reference to **mental process** which accounts for 15% with three subtypes: emotive, cognitive and perceptive, three subtypes found in the text include emotive, cognitive and

perceptive. The verbs that realize this process include: emotive (*thích, ưa, nhớ* - like, adore - remember*)*, cognitive *(biết, hình dung, tưởng* – know, imagine, think*)*, perceptive *(trông thấy, thấy* - see*)*. This type of process is employed to describe the Hanoian's preference of street food and the author's memory of the seller when he was small. Like in Q7 and Q9, the author portrays the Hanoian's preference for *ớt* (chilly) and *chanh* (lemon).

[12] Ốt thì thích ớt rất cay.

Ớt	*thì thích*	*ớt rất cay*
Chilly	like	very spicy chilly
Phenomenon	**Process: mental**	**Phenomenon**

(Speaking of chilly, Hanoian people like spicy chilly.)

[13] Chanh thì ưa thứ chanh non cốm.

chanh	*thì ưa*	*thứ chanh non cốm*
lemon	prefer	young lemon
Phenomenon	**Process: mental**	**Phenomenon**

(Speaking of lemon, they prefer young lemon.)

One noteworthy point in this process is the projection following the process. Among 8 instances of mental process, there are two cases of projection. In the first case, the mental perceptive process takes Macrophenomenon.

[14] thì chỉ thấy bay ra hai con ruồi.

thì chỉ	*thấy*	*bay ra*	*hai con ruồi*
only	see	fly outward	two flies
Circumstance of manner	**Process: mental**	**Macrophenomenon: Act**	

(Only see two flies fly away.)

And in the second case, the mental cognitive process projects an idea.

[15] Những tưởng mất một xu.

Những	*tưởng*	*mất một xu*
	imagine	losing one coin
	Process: mental	**Metaphenomenal**

(Thought of losing one coin.)

For the mental cognitive process, it can be added with the conjunctive "rằng" (that) between verb and metaphenomenon.

[16] Những tưởng rằng mất một xu.

Những	*tưởng*	*rằng*	*mất một xu*
	imagine	*that*	losing one coin
	Process: mental		**Metaphenomenal**

In terms of **existential clauses** which are realized with existential verbs like *"có"*, *"mất"* in Q5, Q6, Q46 and Q49. Normally, if the verb *"có"* is used in a clause, the existent will appear after the process. However, with the verb *"mất"*, the existent can appear before the process, as in the following example. The existential process contributes to the description of the existence of a street food and the practice of the Hanoian's enjoying street food.

[17] Nhưng cái tục lệ đẹp đẽ ấy nay mất dần đi.

Nhưng cái tục lệ đẹp đẽ ấy	*nay*	*mất*	*dần đi*
But the beautiful custom	today	lose	gradually
Existent	**Circumstance of temporal**	**Process: existential**	**Circumstance of manner**

(But the beautiful custom is slowly fading away.)

Behavioural processes only constitute 4%, which are represented with two verbs *"khóc"* (cry) and *"cười"* (laugh). The process of verbal occurs only once, comprising 2% through verb *"khoe"* (flaunt). The two process types add to the description of the author's childhood memoir of buying street food.

4.2. Circumstances

Another aspect of transitivity system that is taken into consideration is circumstance. Five types of the circumstances are employed in the text: circumstance of location, extent, manner, cause, and accompaniment. They are provided in Figure 6 below:

Figure 6

Percentage of circumstantial types in the story "Quà…tức là người"
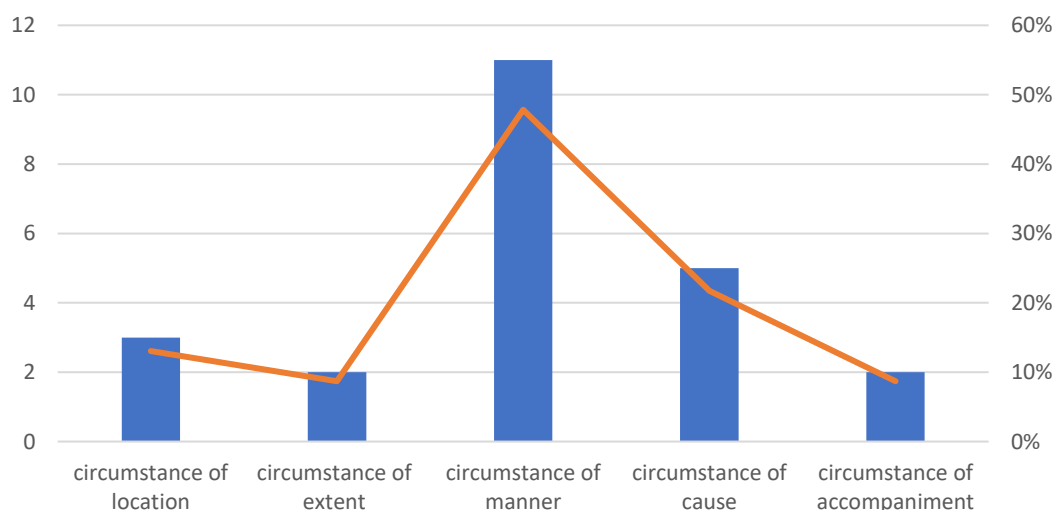
As can be seen from Figure 6, the circumstance of manner is the most frequently used type which accounts for 48%. This type of circumstance falls into three subtypes including: means, quality and comparison, of which the subtype of comparison is realized through nominal phrases: *như đường mía* (like sugarcane), *như muối Trương Lẫm* (like Trương Lam salt), *như quà mộc mạc và giản dị* (like simple and humble gifts). The appearance of this subtype in the

text aims at clarifying the flavor characteristics of the street foods described through the relational process.

[18] Cả quà ngọt như đường mía.

cả quà	*ngọt*	*như đường mía*
Food	sweet	like sugar cane
Carrier	**Process: relational (attribute)**	**Circumstance of manner (comparison)**

(All the food is sweet as sugarcane.)

In addition, the second subtype of circumstance of manner named "quality" is used to depict the way the seller invites her guest as well as the buyer (the author as the child) buying his favorite street food. This subtype is presented in phrases: *đon đả* (affable), *vội vàng và hí hửng* (hurriedly and cheerfully), *dần đi* (gradually)…The subtype is employed in material clauses to answer the question "how the process takes place" (Hoang, 2012). In the example below, the circumstance of manner shows how the seller invites people to buy their food.

[19] đon đả mời chào các cậu bé ở trường về hay thơ thẩn chơi ở vệ hè.

đon đả	*mời chào*	*các cậu bé ở trường về*	*hay thơ thẩn chơi ở vệ hè*
affable	invite	boys coming back from school	or wandering on the pavement
Circumstance of manner	**Process: material**	**Goal**	

(The seller affably invited the boys coming back from school or wandering on the pavement.)

There is no instance of circumstance of manner named means is found in the text.

Ranking the second is circumstance of cause which makes up 22% (five instances). This subtype not only displays reason but "purpose", "behalf", "condition" and "concession" (Hoang, 2012). Three subtypes of circumstance of cause are found in the story including: reason, concession and condition. In the story, the circumstances of reason, concession and condition are realized through prepositional phrases with prepositions *vì* (because), *tuy* (though) and *trong* (in case), relatively. For example, in Q17, the circumstance of reason explains why the entity is assigned the attribute *"đáng yêu"* (lovely).

[20] đáng yêu hơn cũng vì chỗ ấy.

đáng yêu hơn	*cùng vì chỗ ấy*
more lovely	because of that
Process: relational (attribute)	**Circumstance of reason: cause**

(more lovely because of that.)

The circumstance in the example below specifies the condition in which the process takes place.

[21] Trong cái chua dấm dứt của nước bún ốc, trong cái béo ngậy ngọt của thịt lươn, trong cái vị khai nồng của sứa đỏ, biết đón hưởng cái thú mình làm ghê mình

Trong cái chua dấm dứt của nước bún ốc, trong cái béo ngậy ngọt của thịt lươn, trong cái vị khai nồng của sứa đỏ,	*biết*	*đón hưởng cái thú mình làm ghê mình*
In the sourness of the snail vermicelli broth, in the rich sweetness of the eel meat, in the intense flavor of the red jellyfish	know	how to enjoy the pleasure of amazing oneself.
Circumstance of cause: condition	**Process: mental**	**Phenomenon**

(In the sourness of the snail vermicelli broth, in the rich sweetness of the eel meat, in the intense flavor of the red jellyfish, Hanoian people know how to enjoy the pleasure of amazing themselves.)

The circumstances of location, extent and accompaniment are employed with a humble number. Three instances of circumstance of location belong to the subtype of temporal which refers to the time the process happens. The phrases realize this type of circumstance are: *ngày xưa* (in the past), *ngày trước* (before), *nay* (now). The circumstance of extent emphasizes the times the process occurs (*hai lần* – two times, *lần lượt* – one by one). Noticeably, the accompaniment circumstance helps readers vividly imagine what the food is served with.

[22] như ăn chua với gừng, khế dấm với nước mắm.

như	*ăn chua*	*với gừng,*	*khế…nước mắm*
like	eat sour food	with ginger	starfruit with fish sauce
Process: material		**Circumstance of accompaniment**	**Circumstance of accompaniment**

(like eating sour food with ginger, starfruit with fish sauce.)

5. Concluding Remarks

This paper is concerned with exploring experiential meaning in the story *"Quà…tức là người"* taken from the anthology "*Hà Nội băm sáu phố phường*" (The 36 Streets of Hanoi) by Thạch Lam. The analytical framework employed for analysis is SFG as developed by Hoang (2012). It is found that Thach Lam has employed all six types of process to describe different types of street food in Hanoi in the past and now. Specifically, he employed

- a high frequency of relational clauses with three subtypes (intensive ascriptive, intensive identifying, circumstantial ascriptive) was used to: (i) describe the taste and flavor of street foods; (ii) depict the images of sellers and guests); (iii) give comments on the prices of food; and (iv) portray the way Hanoian people enjoy food
- a high frequency of material clauses was also employed, which focused on describing the activities of the street vendors and buyers and some other activities. In this type of process, readers witness the combination of material verbs with co-direction verbs and the usage of two particles "bị" and "được" with the meaning of desirable and undesirable.
- a relatively high number of mental clauses was used to convey the Hanoian's love for street food as well as reminding the author's memory about the street food in Hanoi as a child.

Apart from the process types, Thach Lam employed five types of circumstances mostly found in relational processes to specify the taste and flavor of the food in Hanoi in the past and now: location, extent, manner, cause, accompaniment.

6. Limitation and Suggestion for Further Study

The paper is limited to exploring the use of experiential meaning of the story "*Hà Nội băm sáu phố phường*" written by a famous Vietnamese writer – Thach Lam. The unit of analysis is clause simplex; the categories explored are different types of process and different types of circumstances. This study has delved into only types of process and types of circumstance in the clauses. To have a full picture of how experiential meaning is employed in the text, types of participants should be included. Further, as this study is concerned only with experiential meaning within the clause simplex, a discussion of the use of clause complexes might also form another research.

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PHÂN TÍCH NGHĨA KINH NGHIỆM TRONG TRUYỆN NGẮN "QUÀ…TỨC LÀ NGƯỜI" CỦA THẠCH LAM

Tạ Thị Thu Hằng

Khoa Đào tạo và Bồi dưỡng ngoại ngữ,
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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này tập trung khám phá nghĩa kinh nghiệm được thể hiện thông qua hệ thống chuyển tác trong truyện ngắn *"Quà...tức là người"* của Thạch Lam. Khung lí thuyết được áp dụng trong nghiên cứu là ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống (SFG). Các kết quả cho thấy trong quá trình sáng tác truyện, tác giả đã sử dụng quá trình quan hệ, vật chất, tinh thần với tần suất cao và quá trình tồn tại, hành vi và tạo lời với tần suất thấp. Đáng chú ý, các mệnh đề quan hệ được sử dụng để mô tả hương vị và vị của đồ ăn đường phố và cách người Hà Nội thưởng thức những món ăn đó. Tác giả ngụ ý rằng sự lựa chọn cũng như cách thưởng thức đồ ăn, một phần nào đó có thể tiết lộ tính cách của con người. Điều này giải thích vì sao truyện được đặt tên là *"Quà...tức là người"*. Ngoài ra, truyện cũng có số lượng lớn chu cảnh, đặc biệt là chu cảnh cách thức. Chu cảnh cách thức thường được sử dụng trong các mệnh đề quan hệ để mô tả rõ hơn hương vị và vị của đồ ăn đường phố.

Từ khóa: ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống, nghĩa kinh nghiệm, chuyển tác, Thạch Lam

EFFECTS OF FIRST LANGUAGE AND SECOND LANGUAGE GLOSSES ON LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY RETENTION

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Abstract: While previous studies suggest that textual glosses presented along with reading text facilitate deeper textual understanding and vocabulary uptakes, the extent to which such effects vary in different conditions remain obscure. Employing a quantitative research design, the authors specifically focused on the interplay between glossing languages (L1 and L2) and learners' language proficiency (intermediate and advanced), and the effects of glosses on learners' textual comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning. In this study, 180 learners were divided into two groups according to their proficiency level (intermediate or advanced). Within each group, the treatment conditions (control, glossing in native language, and glossing in second language) provided the foundation for further division into three sub-group of 60 students. ANOVA and t-test analysis show that the use of glosses led to deeper comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning. Two-way ANOVAs indicate that L1 glosses generated deeper comprehension and recall ability in intermediate learners than L2 glosses, and inversely, advanced learners performed better in reading and vocabulary tests when given L2 glosses. Finally, the authors proposed some implications for vocabulary learning and teaching in accordance with the relative differences in L1 and L2, and intermediate and advanced levels.

Keywords: glosses, reading comprehension, incidental vocabulary learning, EFL learners

1. Introduction

Numerous studies have elucidated the link between reading comprehension, competent linguistic knowledge, and decoding skills (Nation, 2001). Specifically, a proficient command of language structures, encompassing grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, is vital for readers to assimilate the text's meaning by comprehending the connections between words. Alternatively, proficient decoding skills are critical in facilitating the quick and accurate identification and processing of words, thereby enhancing fluency and comprehension. As such, readers who lack adequate decoding skills may struggle with word recognition, impeding their understanding of the text's meaning, while those equipped with this faculty can focus their cognitive resources on comprehension, improving their overall reading ability. Consequently, regarding improvement in reading comprehension skills, adequate attention should be paid to vocabulary instruction to refine word recognition skills (National Reading Panel, 2000; Tindall & Nisbet, 2010; Ma & Lin, 2015) as a way to promote textual understanding. Vocabulary instruction

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assists in improving the comprehension of or – at the very least – guesswork related to the lexical resources of a given text, and in turn, leading to reading fluency, thereby enabling readers to devote cognitive resources to maximize comprehension. Moreover, the acquisition of new vocabulary helps expand preexisting knowledge, an essential component of deciphering complex texts.

Effective vocabulary instruction is often linked to contextualizing vocabulary meaning as a measure to protract lexical retention. Due to the general belief that reading is context-driven (Weaver et al., 1996), generating great contextual cues for vocabulary units is expected to cement the reading-vocabulary relationship by ensuring concrete vocabulary gains. Martin-Chang et al.'s (2007) study support this idea with the conclusion that children's ability to identify word meanings is more contingent on context training than isolated training. Furthermore, contextualized vocabulary instruction is believed to prompt natural and incidental vocabulary acquisition if interaction with the textual source leads to comprehension (Hulstijn, 2011; Hunt & Beglar, 2002; Schmitt, 2008). Thus, it can be concluded that verbal comprehension positively correlates with a breadth of vocabulary, and contextualized vocabulary teaching yields incidental lexical acquisition and, simultaneously, a more extended recollection of word meaning. In this sense, glossing words can be considered a practical approach to context training as it allows for a meaning deduction from both original meanings and immediate contextual meanings (Boers, 2022; Gallai, 2022; Ramenzanali et al., 2021).

Bearing these ideas in mind, the present study was conducted to investigate whether deeper reading comprehension would result from an increased supply of word meanings in the form of glosses. This study hypothesises that when given an advantage in lexical understanding, learners would better understand the textual sources. After the intervention period, learners could recall more words from the text. To widen the scope of previous studies, the current research also examined the effect of glosses across intermediate and advanced learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The three research questions are as follows:

1) *Does lexical glossing (in first language and second language) result in deeper understanding of the reading materials among advanced and intermediate learners?*
2) *Does glossing language cause difference in short-term vocabulary retention among advanced and intermediate learners?*
3) *Is there interaction between glossing language and proficiency level on reading comprehension and short-term vocabulary retention amongst readers of glossed texts?*

2. Literature Review

2.1. L1 and L2 in Vocabulary Learning

The acquisition of target vocabulary necessitates a strong link between form and meaning, deemed as "the first and most essential lexical aspect" (Schmitt, 2008, p. 333). This belief leads to the question of whether first language (L1) or second/foreign language (L2) is the superior medium through which words are defined (Wagner & Toth, 2013).

On one end of the spectrum, Krashen's (1982) theories of language learning (i.e., monitor theory and comprehensible input hypothesis) lay solid arguments for the exclusive L2 use in language teaching, as this might ensure higher learning outcomes and be effective against the possible pitfalls of L1 (Swain & Lapkin, 2013; Tognini & Oliver, 2012). This notion resonates well among EFL teachers, who believe that when unknown words are defined in L2, they offer learners the chance for extended L2 exposure. In his study comparing the use of L1

translations and L2 definitions on vocabulary learning, Joyce (2018) concluded that if the aim is towards general language development, learning through L2 definitions has the edge over L1. This idea is also supported by Perez et al. (2013), who found that exclusive use of L2 showed more significant potential than other forms of translation, such as L1 subtitles. The practice of teaching words in L1 was censured by Temperley (as cited in Shin et al., 2020), who likened L1 to a "crutch" that discouraged long-term memorization of new vocabulary.

On the other end, a revisiting of L1, and its use in L2 language development, in recent years has overturned some adamant beliefs of L2 pre-eminence. Studies into the role of L1 in language learning reveal a strong tie between L1 and the success of language learning and a positive connection between L1 and L2 learning (Chen et al., 2020; Wang & Abe, 2008; Yamashita, 2007), and that L2 proficiency level plays a specific part in this relationship (DiCamilla & Anton, 2012; Lee & Schallert, 1997). Specifically, L1 is primarily chosen by L2 learners for ease in completing lexical tasks, such as elaborating on word meanings, recalling linguistic forms, and making out the L2 text's meaning (Proctor et al., 2010; Storch & Aldosari, 2010; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). In vocabulary learning, L1 is regarded as an effective middleman (Lantolf et al., 2015; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003), bridging the conceptual gap between L1 and L2 (Swan, 1997) and thereby facilitating the mapping of L2 vocabulary items onto their native language at the form-meaning stage (Ringbom, 1987). Another way of explaining this connection is that L1 is active during L2 processing (Jiang, 2002; Sunderman & Kroll, 2006), so it can offer a shortcut to acquisition (Scott & Fuente, 2008). Several studies have lent support to this claim, concluding that the translation of words into learners' mother tongue helps sustain a higher number of vocabulary intakes (Latsanyphone & Bouangeune, 2009; Laufer & Girsai, 2008; Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004). Nonetheless, the samples in these studies lacked variety in language proficiency, which, according to Ko (2012), might account for the inconclusive conception of gloss effectiveness. Moreover, earlier researchers (Carter, 1987; Cohen & Aphek, 1980; Schmitt, 2000) believe that, while explicit vocabulary instructions match lower-proficiency learners' needs, intermediate- and above learners would benefit from a more complex, context-based vocabulary learning than mere form-meaning approach. The mismatch between the language used for teaching and testing is also mentioned as a factor which might explain the mixed findings on gloss effects. Therefore, in the present research, the authors focused on how the difference in proficiency level might relate to the differential effects of glossing types.

2.2. Gloss and the Benefits of Gloss in Language Learning

The promotion of incidental vocabulary learning is often associated with extensive reading activities where learners naturally derive vocabulary from leisure reading (Choi et al., 2014; Huckin & Coady, 1999). Although it generally concurs that this activity provides grounds for extensive lexical development (Chun et al., 2012; Nation & Wang, 1999; Waring & Takaki, 2003), reservations persist as the practicality of this practice is often crippled by several factors, including limited attentional resources (Schmidt, 1994), print conditions (Jiang, 2000), word density (Hu & Nation, 2000), the strength of contextual clues (Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1987), and language proficiency (Hazenberg & Hulstijn, 1996). Facilitation of incidental vocabulary learning in reading activities, thus, necessitates an answer to these problems, to which end glosses are devised.

Glosses are nowadays predominantly found in textbooks or academically-inclined readings. One long-running series of books endorsing glosses is the Webster Korean (Chinese/ Japanese) Thesaurus Editions of books such as Jane Austen, Sherlock, A Midsummer Night's

Dream, etc. In this series, glosses of several languages were appended to each page at the margins for learning and easier reading. However, attempts to define glosses began decades ago. Pak (1986) thinks of glosses as explanations, in the form of definitions, of the meaning of a word, and later, Nation (2001) adds that either L1 and L2 synonyms of the words can also be considered gloss. Perhaps Richgels and Mateja's (1984) definition is the most comprehensive, conceptualising glosses as short definitions, explanations or translations of words or phrases unfamiliar to the readers. Gloss is also referred to as 'marginal gloss' because its placement is at the margin of the page, either at the bottom or on either side.

A review of the literature provides evidence to substantiate the claim that glosses tend to exert positive effects on vocabulary learning and reading comprehension as they shift the learner's focus on forms (Nagata, 1999; Bowles, 2004; Yanguas, 2009), offer an effortless understanding of the text (Koren, 1999), help readers avoid incorrect meaning inference or guesses (Nation, 2001), trigger top-down processing, thereby "form-meaning connection conducive to vocabulary learning" (Pulido, 2009, p. 33) and engender active lexical processing that causes word retention (Jacobs et al., 1994). Particularly, these brief explanations or translations of unfamiliar words can facilitate a focus on word form by highlighting the structure and meaning of words, including their prefixes, roots, and suffixes. When encountering unfamiliar words, recognizing their structure or form can enable readers to understand their meaning. For instance, readers can recognize the prefix "un-" and root word "believe" in the word "unbelievable," inferring that it means "not able to be believed." When this practice of contextual inference is developed into a sustainable reading habit, learners can autonomously decode and understand unfamiliar words, achieving reading fluency. Further research inspecting differing glossing types offers empirical evidence of gloss efficiency in vocabulary learning in different forms, namely paper-based glosses (Cheng & Good, 2009; Lin & Huang, 2008) and electronic glosses (Bowles, 2004; Huang & Liou, 2007; Nagata, 1999; Shahrokni, 2009; Yanguas, 2009; Yoshii, 2006). Although it is beyond the purport of this study to investigate the values of other forms of gloss, it is appropriate to mention some successful diversifications of gloss types that help build readers' lexis, such as pictorial gloss (Segler, Pain, & Sorace, 2001; Yoshii & Flaitz, 2002), aural gloss (Al-Seghayer, 2001), and pictorial-textual gloss (Yeh & Wang, 2003; Yanguas, 2009).

With glosses gaining popularity for their effectiveness in prompting vocabulary uptakes and reading comprehension, researchers shifted their attention to the conditions in which such optimized effects would manifest. Specifically, several researchers (Gettys et al., 2001; Nagata, 1999; Watanabe, 1997) compared the relative efficiency of L1 and L2 glosses, revealing mixed findings about the usage of each type. In determining the interplay between gloss languages and reading comprehension, it was concluded in Chen's (2002) study on 85 Taiwanese college students reading three versions of the text (L1, L2, and no gloss) that although participants reading glossed text performed better at the comprehension test, there was no discernible difference between L1 and L2 gloss groups. Similarly, research by Bowles (2004), Cheng and Good (2009), Lee and Lee (2015), Plass et al. (2003) and Yanguas (2009) also added to the obscurity, as they could only affirm the effectiveness of glosses over no gloss, but were unable to show how changes in glossing languages might manifest themselves. The same results were mirrored in investigating glossing types and their effects on incidental vocabulary learning. A study by Jacobs et al. (1994) revealed that participants under gloss conditions could recall more target items regardless of type. However, the difference between the choice of glossing types was unclear.

2.3. Previous Studies on the Effects of Gloss

Earlier research by Jacobs et al. (1994) created a model of methods that is still pertinent to research into gloss. In this study, 85 English-speaking learners of Spanish as L2 were assigned one of the three groups to read the L1 (English) glossed, L2 (Spanish) glossed, and baseline (no gloss) version of the exact 613-word text with 32 target items glossed. The participants then took an immediate and four-week delayed test on their recall ability of the glossed words. Jacobs et al. (1994) mentioned the accretion of lexical items following the treatment while pointing out that the recollection of form meaning was inevitably weakened over four weeks. In the same vein, Chen (2002) inspected how 85 Taiwanese college students responded to L1 and L2 glosses treatment regarding their understanding and ability to pick up words incidentally. While adopting the same group assignment as Jacobs (with L1 being Chinese and L2 being English), he shortened the passage to 193 words, glossing 20 of them. This study reached the same conclusion favouring the use of glosses in incidental vocabulary learning while facing difficulty distinguishing the efficacies of L1 and L2 glosses. Investigating how 240 Chinese EFL learners retained vocabulary from the glossed text, Teng (2020) concluded that the introduction of L1 glosses enabled more vocabulary retention irrespective of the vocabulary knowledge dimension. Specifically, over five weeks with 15 target lexical items for each of the five texts, participants who received L1 gloss treatment consistently outperformed the control group in the active recall, passive recall, active recognition, and passive recognition tests. Ko's (2012) research took into consideration the perspectives of L2 learners. After the treatment, participants were asked to give their opinion on how they perceived the glosses and, as the results showed, most preferred L2 glosses.

While previous researchers focused on intermediate learners, one recent study by Vela (2015) focused on a more inclusive sample with both intermediate and advanced Persian English learners. The effects of L1 (Persian) and L2 (English) glosses on the reading and listening comprehension of 120 students were examined, postulating a more vital link between L1 gloss, reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning, at the same time illustrating that L2 is more suitable among advanced L2 learners. It is also noteworthy that she used TOEFL Reading and Listening passages to measure the degree of task completion in her research. Compared to the studies, Choi (2016) made several changes to the research methods. While striving for the same aims, Choi adopted pseudo-words to preclude the off-chance that learners might be exposed to the target items before, during, or after their contact with the glossed text, thus tainting the reliability of the data (Webb, 2007). Along with that, a total of 180 Korean learners of English were tested for their recall ability for spaced phrases of testing (immediately, one week after, three weeks after, and five weeks after), the results of which showed that participants reading the glossed versions exhibited overall better, however modestly, comprehension of the text. At the same time, the difference between L1 and L2 failed to reach statistical significance.

Kim et al. (2020) conducted a meta-analysis on the effect of glosses on reading comprehension and vocabulary learning across 26 studies with 30 independent samples (N=2,189). Analysis of immediate post-tests and reading comprehension tests supported the conclusion that L1 glosses were more effective than L2, although the target outcome measure might influence the effect size. Additionally, the study found that the participants' language proficiency also contributed to the relative effectiveness; beginner learners, in particular, were more likely to benefit from the lexical support than their intermediate counterparts.

The current research aimed to investigate further the gap in the literature. First, as

mentioned in the review of previous research on incidental vocabulary learning, a widened scope into advanced and intermediate is called to account for the difference in proficiency placement in the success of incidental vocabulary learning. Additionally, since previous studies focused on a reasonably small population, the present study would cover a larger sample for straightforward generalization. Second, previous researchers employed a multiple-choice approach to testing, which may offer test-taking clues, thereby interfering with actual recall ability. To rectify this, the researchers approached the testing of language recall in a freer light, giving open-ended questions inquiring about the definition of words. Finally, the researchers adopted a few modifications by Choi (2016), including the use of pseudo-words and consistent vocabulary recall tests. Previous researchers attempted to measure the degree of vocabulary retention through various meaning recall tests. The present research tested the learners' vocabulary recall ability through several forms of the same tests, each with a different mnemonic trigger. The specifics will be discussed in the methodology section.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

Taking on an experimental research design, the present study aims at comparing the relative effects of L1 and L2 glosses on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning in intermediate and advanced learners. Data were collected through reading comprehension tests from the Cambridge Reading Exam Database, and two spaced vocabulary recall tests.

3.2. Participants and Setting

The study took place in the academic year 2020-2021 in Vietnam. The study employed purposive sampling, a non-random sampling technique wherein the researchers established proficiency levels as the basis for administration and categorization, to facilitate the understanding of particular subgroups and allow the participants to be representative of their respective population. Specifically, 180 Vietnamese EFL eleven-graders were chosen to take part in the project. Regarding reading proficiency, 180 participants were divided into two subgroups of intermediate and advanced according to their reading performance in an IELTS reading test. The IELTS test was chosen due to its ability to test the full-range of proficiency. The researchers qualified participants with an IELTS score range of 4.0-5.0 and 6.5-7.5 to as intermediate and advanced L2 learners respectively, and accordingly as suitable participants for the research. According to their performance on IELTS, there were no significant differences among the three subgroups in the intermediate L2 learners ($F(2, 87) = .095, p = .910$), as well as among the three subgroups in the advanced L2 learners ($F(2, 87) = .084, p = .920$). Levene's tests of Homogeneity of variance were not violated in the intermediate and advanced groups ($p = .728, p = .543$). 90 participants identified as intermediate L2 learners were distributed into three groups to read either the L1 glossed (Vietnamese), L2 glossed (English), or baseline version of the text, and this assignment was applied for the other 90 advanced L2 learners.

Table 1

Learners' Performance in Pre-Test (IELTS)

Learner group	N	Min	Max	M	SD
B1+L1	30	4.0	5.5	4.60	0.42

B1+L2	30	4.0	5.5	4.77	0.37
B1+∅	30	4.0	5.5	4.63	0.41
B2+L1	30	6.5	7.5	6.69	0.36
B2+L2	30	6.5	7.0	6.72	0.37
B2+∅	30	6.5	7.5	6.75	0.39

Table 2

ANOVA of Learners' Performance in Pre-test (IELTS)

Learner group	$F(2,87)$	p
Intermediate	.095	.910
Advanced	.084	.920

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

3.3.1. Experimental Text and Target Words

Two different texts were selected from the Cambridge Reading Exams Database in accordance with the learners' proficiency. For each text separately, three versions of the experimental text were provided: (a) baseline version (no gloss), (b) L1 version (baseline + L1 marginal glosses), and (c) L2 version (baseline + L2 marginal glosses). The B1 text, titled "The world's weirdest food", was 445 words in length, 94.92% of which were diagnosed at A1-B1 level by Text Inspector (Williams, 2018), and had a Flesch Reading Ease score of 63.3, Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score of 9.04. The C1 text, "Are we losing the art of conversation" was 522 words long with 99.13% of the words being within the A1-C1 proficiency range, and had scores of 60.01 and 9.48 for the Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, respectively. After the introduction of the glosses (20 words for each text), the percentage of comprehensible input for each text (defined by learners' approximate proficiency levels and the lexical level of the text) was 94.92% and 95.4% respectively, practically meeting the requirement for comparability with proficiency and comprehensible input (96-98%) (Krashen, 1985). The glossed vocabularies were pseudowords generated from the ARC pseudowords database and constrained by orthographically existing onsets and bodies and legal bigrams (Rastle et al., 2002), word lengths (four to six) and number of syllables (one to two). In a B1 glossed text, for example, the pseudoword "stryne" substitutes for the real word "stream", and thus is glossed with the definitions of "stream". Pseudowords were chosen primarily for their effectiveness in reducing chance-learning pre- and during intervention, thereby undermining the validity of the research (Webb, 2007)

Table 3

Target Words and L1 and L2 Glosses

Target words	Glosses for advanced learners			Glosses for intermediate learners		
	PoS[a]	L2 gloss	L1 gloss	PoS	L2 gloss	L1 gloss
fusk	adj	communicate	giao tiếp	v	famous	nổi tiếng
spresh	v	affect	thay đổi	v	mix	trộn
plail	adj	juggle	tung hứng	n	common	phổ biến

flane	v	parent	phụ huynh	v	eat	ăn
stryne	adj	concern	mối nghi ngại	n	important	quan trọng
tarb	n	fascinate	làm kinh ngạc	v	street	đường
slont	n	homework	bài tập về nhà	n	leg	chân
dyme	v	red	đỏ	n	describe	miêu tả
clett	v	real-life	ngoài đời thực	adj	smell	phát ra mùi
boathe	adj	silence	sự im lặng	n	available	sẵn có
wrag	adj	danger	mối nguy	n	raw	sống
merth	v	generation	thế hệ	n	consist	bao gồm
noor	adj	alone	một mình	adj	careful	cẩn thận
scoar	n	experience	trải nghiệm	v	poison	độc
gere	v	art	nghệ thuật	n	train	đào tạo
drey	n	agree	đồng ý	v	excitement	sự thích thú
feer	n	emoticon	biểu tượng cảm xúc	n	food	đồ ăn
slirp	n	superficial	không sâu sắc	adj	level	mức độ
fawl	v	deprive	tước đi	adj	traditional	truyền thống
rync	v	technology	công nghệ	n	disturb	quấy rầy

ᵃ Part of Speech

3.3.2. Vocabulary Recall Tests

Two vocabulary recall (VR) tests were administered during the research to test vocabulary retention. Immediately after reading, students were administered a passive recall vocabulary test. This test served to measure participants' ability to provide an L1 translation (Vietnamese) or L2 meaning (English) of the L2 target word. An example of the item on the test was as follows.

1. Fusk _____

The raters might count synonyms such as 'tiếp xúc, trao đổi' or 'converse, talk' as correct should the synonym is of semantic relevance. However, synonyms with different connotations, such as 'connect' or 'giao thiệp' were not accepted. In the following week, the participants were administered the "active recall" test, which tested the retrieval of form for a given meaning; specifically, the learners' ability to provide L2 target words that fitted the meaning prompt. In this test, clues in the form of English hyponym (i.e., intended word for recall: spoon; given hyponym: cutlery) were given. Below is one item presented in this test.

1. Communication _____

All the tests had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .944, ensuring its internal reliability. We decided not to apply the repeated measure for the vocabulary recall; that is, repeating the same test, as this would increase the risk of increased exposure to the target words.

3.3.3. Reading Comprehension Test

A reading comprehension (RC) task was conducted to test subjects' grasp of the

materials. The comprehension test was not given until the 15-minute reading-only session was over and the texts were all collected back. This was to ensure that participants would not be distracted by the task of "completing the exercise", which takes the focus from understanding the textual source. The maximum score for the RC task was eight - one for each correct answer. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the RC test was .75, making it acceptable.

3.4. Procedure

The study was conducted over two weeks. In the first week, participants were instructed on the procedure of the study and later read the texts and completed the 15-minute RC test and the passive recall VR test. In the second week, the active recall VR test was administered. When given the reading, learners were encouraged to read the materials for total comprehension, as the spontaneous acquisition of new words takes place upon the learner's reflection on the story's general context (Huckin & Coady, 1999). They were also told that the reading would be retracted during the RC test. Participants were not informed of the subsequent vocabulary recall tests, as this might significantly reduce opportunities for genuine "incidental vocabulary learning". In the vocabulary recall tests, learners were given 25 minutes to finish the tasks.

4. Results & Discussions

In this section, the findings of the study are presented and analyzed. Specifically, the researchers presented a comprehensive and detailed account of the research results, gathered through rigorous experimentation and statistical analysis, entailing the test performance in various data collection instruments and insight into possible interpretations of such results.

4.1. Test Performance

Table 4 presents the frequency analysis of test performance among different groups. In general, participants from the experimental groups (B1+L1, B1+L2, C1+L1, C1+L2) outperformed those in the control group (CG1, CG2) in respective reading comprehension tests by approximately two correct questions. Regarding vocabulary retention, there was a noticeable drop in the number of words learners could recall between the immediate passive recall test and the one-week delayed active recall test. However, among intermediate learners, participants who read the L1-glossed text consistently had higher performance in both passive and active recall tests than those given L2 glosses. At the same time, the inverse trend was observed for the advanced learners.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics on Test Performances

Variable	Condition	Intermediate learners (B1)				Advanced learners (C1)			
		Min	Max	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD
RC test	CG	4.0	7.0	5.25	0.78	4.0	8.0	5.18	0.98
	L1	5.0	8.0	7.50	0.66	5.0	8.0	6.80	0.85
	L2	5.0	8.0	7.08	0.71	6.0	8.0	7.25	0.72
Passive recall	CG	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	L1	15.0	20.0	17.47	1.08	15.0	19.0	17.11	0.93
	L2	13.0	19.0	16.03	1.60	16.0	20.0	18.23	0.97

Active recall	CG	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	L1	12.0	17.0	13.63	1.31	11.0	15.0	13.32	1.16
	L2	9.0	15.0	12.63	1.67	12.0	18.0	15.23	1.22

4.1.1. Effects of Glossing Language and Proficiency Level on Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Recall

Several two-way ANOVAs were conducted to examine any possible interaction between language proficiency and glossing language on reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. There was a statistically significant interaction between the effects of glossing language and proficiency level on textual comprehension ($F(1, 174) = 3.585$, $p = .030$), passive recall ability ($F(1, 116) = 35.107$, $p < .0001$), and active recall ability ($F(1, 116) = 34.578$, $p < .0001$). Specifically, this interaction explained for around 23% of the variance in two recall tests and 4% of that in the reading comprehension test.

Table 5

Two-Way ANOVA Results on Interaction Between Proficiency Levels and Treatment on Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Recall Tests

Dependent variable	Effects	df	Mean square	F	p	η_p^2
Reading comprehension	Proficiency	1	2.939	4.706	.031	.026
	Glossing language	2	78.822	126.212	.000	.592
	Proficiency * Glossing language	2	2.239	3.585	.030	.040
Passive recall	Proficiency	1	25.669	18.478	.000	.137
	Glossing language	1	.752	.541	.463	.005
	Proficiency * Glossing language	1	48.769	35.107	.000	.232
Active recall	Proficiency	1	39.102	21.191	.000	.154
	Glossing language	1	6.302	3.415	.067	.029
	Proficiency * Glossing language	1	63.802	34.578	.000	.230

Table 6

Simple Main Effects Analysis

Variable	Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Reading comprehension	Treatment at					
	L1 Glosses	91.250	2	45.625	73.056	.000
	L2 Glosses	70.872	2	35.436	56.741	.000
	Error	108.667	174	.625		
Passive recall	Treatment at					
	L1 Glosses	30.817	1	30.817	22.184	.000
	L2 Glosses	18.704	1	18.704	13.464	.000
	Error	161.142	116	1.389		

	Treatment at					
	L1 Glosses	1.504	1	1.504	.815	.368
Active recall	L2 Glosses	101.400	1	101.400	54.954	.000
	Error	214.042	116	1.845		

For reading comprehension, simple main effects analysis showed that intermediate learners did significantly better in reading comprehension test ($F(2, 174) = 73.056$, $p < .001$) and passive recall test ($F(1, 116) = 22.184$, $p < .001$) when given L1 glosses, while the opposite was true for advanced learners ($F(2, 174) = 56.741$, $p < .001$; $F(1, 116) = 13.464$, $p < .001$). However, in the active vocabulary tests, although L2 glosses led to higher scores among advanced learners ($F(1, 116) = 54.954$, $p < .001$), glossing language had no effect ($F(1, 116) = .815$, $p = .368$)

4.1.2. Effects of Glossing Language on Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Retention

In order to test if the difference in test performance was attributable to the introduction of glosses, a series of ANOVAs were conducted. Results from the Tests of homogeneity of variances (Table 7) indicated that the data did not violate the assumption of equal variances. ANOVA analysis revealed a statistically significant effect of glossing language on RC among intermediate learners ($F(2, 87) = 83.261$, $p < .0005$) and advanced learners ($F(2, 87) = 48.614$, $p < .0005$). Regarding vocabulary retention, it was also revealed through a series of one-way ANOVAs that there was a statistically significant difference in Passive recall for the B1 ($F(1, 58) = 16.408$, $p < .0005$) and C1 ($F(1, 58) = 20.779$, $p < .0005$) which can be attributed to glossing language. Similarly, this difference in glossing condition also affected Active recall among both B1 ($F(1, 58) = 6.619$, $p = .013$) and C1 groups ($F(1, 58) = 38.689$, $p < .0005$).

Table 7

One-Way ANOVA Between Glossing Language and Reading Comprehension Tests

Measures		f	**Mean square**	F	p	η_p^2
	Between groups	2	42.986	83.261	.000	.657
(B1) RC	Within groups	87	.516			
	Total	89				
	Between groups	1	.30.817	16.408	.000	. 220
(B1) Passive recall	Within groups	58	1.878			
	Total	59				
	Between groups	1	15.000	6.619	.013	.102
(B1) Active recall	Within groups	58	2.266			
	Total	59				
	Between groups	2	35.436	48.614	.000	.528
(C1) RC	Within groups	87	.729			
	Total	89				

	Between groups	1	18.704	20.779	.000	.264
(C1) Passive recall	Within groups	8	.900			
	Total	59				
	Between groups	1	55.104	38.689	.000	.400
(C1) Active recall	Within groups	58	1.424			
	Total	9				

According to Tukey's post hoc test, the experimental groups outdid the control group by a wide margin (both $p < 0.001$) while there was no statistically significant difference recorded in the degree of effectiveness of L1 and L2 glosses ($p = 0.057$, $d = 0.59$). Treatments of L1 and L2 glosses recorded large effect sizes ($d = 2.85$ and $d = 2.32$ respectively) but the relative effectiveness across the two experimental group failed to reach statistical significance ($p = 0.057$) although effect size of L1 against L2 gloss could be considered medium ($d = 0.59$). Tukey's post hoc test suggested that advanced learners shared the tendency to perform better at reading test had they been given glosses (both $p < 0.001$), regardless of whichever type, and similarly, no significant difference in the relative efficacies of L1 and L2 glosses was detected ($p = 0.108$). Additionally, L1 and L2 treatments were associated with large effect sizes ($d = 1.65$; $d = 2.11$)

Table 8

Tukey HSD Results for Reading Comprehension

Group comparison	Mean difference (I – J)	Std. Error	p	Cohen's d
B1+L1 – CG	2.317	0.179	<0.001	2.85
B1+L2 – CG	1.900	0.179	<0.001	2.32
(B1+L1) – (B1+L2)	0.416	0.179	0.057	-
C1+L1 – CG	1.617	0.220	<0.001	1.65
C1+L2 – CG	2.067	0.220	<0.001	2.11
(C1+L1) – (C1+L2)	-0.450	0.220	0.108	-

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the VR ability of the learners when under different glossing conditions. As can be seen from Table 9, intermediate learners from the L1 group recalled significantly more words than those from the L2 group ($t = 4.051$, $p < .001$), although the difference was not statistically significant during the second test. In contrast, there was a significant difference among the intermediate learners in both the passive recall ($t = -4.558$, $p < .001$) and active recall ($t = -6.220$, $p < .001$) tests.

Table 9

Independent Sample T-Test Results for Vocabulary Retention Rate

Testing time	Group comparison	t	p	Mean difference	Cohen's d
Passive recall	B1+L1 – B1+L2	4.051	<0.001	1.433	0.89
Active recall	B1+L1 – B1+L2	2.573	0.13	1.000	-
Passive recall	C1+L1 – C1+L2	-4.558	<0.001	-1.117	1.19
Active recall	C1+L1 – C1+L2	-6.220	<0.001	-1.917	1.65

4.2. Discussion

The present research examined the relative effects of L1 and L2 glosses on textual comprehension and vocabulary retention among intermediate and advanced learners. Accordingly, it was found that marginal glosses generally deepened comprehension. Moreover, there was an interaction between the effects of L2 proficiency and glossing language, leading to a difference in test performance between intermediate and advanced learners.

Firstly, the results suggest that marginal glossing promotes deeper reading comprehension among L2 learners regardless of glossing languages. Glosses led to a statistically significant difference in the reading comprehension test among both intermediate ($F(2, 87) = 83.261$, $p < .0005$) and advanced learners ($F(2, 87) = 48.614$, $p < .0005$). This finding is consistent with previous researchers (Vela, 2015; Kim et al., 2020; Kang et al., 2020), thereby substantiating the claim that gloss is efficacious in promoting comprehension among learners of different language proficiency, from intermediate to highly proficient. Specifically, when learners are unfamiliar with the words in the reading, they tend to create a time-consuming fixation on working out the meaning, thus risking a decrease in concentration on the passage (Hulstijn, 1992; Ko, 2012). By removing lexical barricades to understanding, marginal glosses allow readers to deduce contextual meaning quickly and maintain the flow of the reading activity. From the cognitive load theory perspective, there is a limit to the amount of cognitive processing that can take place at any one time (Sweller, 2011; Plass et al., 2010). Consequently, more mental power would be allocated to essential and generative processing activities, namely building text base or integrating reading content with relevant prior knowledge (Bahrani & Sim, 2011; Kintsch, 2005), which might lead to optimal comprehension. Accordingly, the provision of glosses minimizes the amount of extraneous processing, the process by which learners infer word meaning from context, and frees up space for necessary and generative processing (Bahrani & Sim, 2011).

Secondly, the difference in glossing language led to significant variance in the active ($t = -4.558$, $p < 0.005$) and passive recall tests ($t = -6.220$, $p < 0.005$) among advanced learners and in the active recall test among intermediate learners ($t = 4.051$, $p < 0.005$). The present study examined the use of glosses in facilitating vocabulary retention rather than acquisition since acquisition is a complicated process that involves more than remembering the words. Several factors affecting vocabulary retention, such as length of the word, chance learning, and frequency of exposure, were controlled in the current study to ensure that learners only interacted with the target lexical items when reading the passage and in subsequent meaning-recall vocabulary tests. As such, the findings supported previous researchers' (Choi, 2016; Vela, 2015) belief that glosses led to incidental vocabulary learning at least within one week after the first exposure to the target words. In contrast, the study refuted the conclusion drawn by Jacobs et al. (1994), who did not consider glossing to impact recall ability. However, compared to studies with similar output measures (Choi, 2016; Kang et al., 2020), the average percentage of recallable vocabulary seems much higher among intermediate and advanced learners. Kang et al. (2020), for instance, concluded in their research that L2 glosses helped reinforce form-meaning association but not in acquiring word forms. One likely explanation for this finding lies in the difference in the orthographic system between Vietnamese (alphabetical) and Korean (alphabetic syllabary). Previous studies in the first language (Cunningham et al., 1990; Olson et al., 1989) had theorized the differential contribution of orthographic knowledge to the reading process, suggesting that L2 readers relied on their L1 orthographic processing strategies when they were reading in English as an L2. In essence,

since participants in the current study might not have had to overcome orthographic disparities, most likely compounded by the introduction of pseudowords, they performed relatively better in reading comprehension and word recall.

Thirdly, two-way ANOVA results show an interaction between English proficiency level and glossing language on three dependent variables: reading comprehension, active, and passive recall. Specifically, L2 glosses led to higher performance in test results among advanced learners, while L1 glosses promoted deeper comprehension and immediate vocabulary retention. However, this interaction was much more pronounced in the vocabulary tests ($\eta p2 = .230$, $\eta p2$ .232) than in the reading comprehension ($\eta p2 = .040$). This result, in effect, supports Ko's conclusion (2012) that for intermediate-level backwards, the glossing languages do not offer distinct comparative differences; however, when higher proficiency is reached, L2 glosses are far more effective. In the present study, data analysis demonstrates that, on average, intermediate learners had higher test scores when provided with L1 glosses (as compared to L2 glosses), and L2 glosses helped advanced learners perform better (as compared to L1 glosses). This apparent proclivity could be explained by the difference in vocabulary sizes among the learner groups, which intuitively leads to the disparity in the word association network. In other words, since high-proficiency learners are more well-versed in the language, L2 glosses can help the process of meaning register better by assigning the new words to the already established groups of words with similar denotation or conceptual meanings.

In contrast, L1 learners – more familiar with the native language – would benefit more from L1 translations. Notably, the mismatch between proficiency and glossing language might even render glosses counterproductive as the L2 readers might spend extra time decoding and reprocessing, stagnating reading speed and disrupting reading fluency (Kang et al., 2020). Similarly, as proposed by Emirmustafaoğlu and Gökmen (2015), while the role of L1 in language learning proves vital in the earlier stages of acquisition, it naturally subsides as higher competence in the language allows more efficient, direct links to L2.

With the differences in reading scores and vocabulary test scores among the control and experimental group amounting to statistical significance, the present study corroborated previous studies by Ko (2012), Jacobs et al. (1994), and Vela (2016). Moreover, the results help to reconcile previous arguments about whether the learning of lexis requires the conceptual links to L1 counterparts (Barcroft, 2002; Swan, 1997) or whether longer vocabulary retention would be better facilitated when words are learned through definitions and synonyms in the native language (Joyce, 2018). With renewed importance placed on L1, researchers generally maintain that the tie between L1 and L2 learning is perennial as L1 is crucial in the processing of the L2 language and the eventual intake of L2 forms and usages (Chen et al., 2020; Jiang, 2002; Scott & Fuente, 2008; Sunderman & Kroll, 2006). They espouse that lexical glosses cement understanding of the text sources and facilitate incidental vocabulary learning. This idea is evidenced in the current study, as even advanced learners might still profit from having access to the translation of unfamiliar words into their mother tongue. However, the results also suggest that as learners reach higher proficiency, this association might be overpowered by a more substantial reliance on a second language as a medium for vocabulary retention.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of Findings

The current study attempted to include a more inclusive sample and extend the testing

time frame to explore the efficacy as a tool for deepening reading comprehension and increasing vocabulary gains. Comprehension and meaning-recall vocabulary test scores were analyzed using one-way ANOVAs, two-way ANOVAs and t-tests. The results suggest that marginal glosses generally promoted a deeper understanding of the text regardless of glossing languages. However, this proclivity for comprehension might differ for each experimental group. While intermediate L2 learners generally score higher in reading comprehension tests and meaning-recall vocabulary tests when given L1 glosses, their highly proficient counterparts tend to outperform when L2 glosses are provided. Results of two-way ANOVAs revealed that these differences were of statistical significance. Secondly, glossing language does cause differential effects among learner groups in their performance at the meaning-recall vocabulary tests. While intermediate L2 learners could consistently recount the meanings of more words when words are glossed in L1, the more proficient learners with L2 glosses could recall more word meanings.

5.2. Implications

The research dealt with L2 reading and the learning of vocabulary. It tested whether students could learn incidental vocabulary when provided with the meanings of unknown lexical items. The results bear implications for L2 learners, L2 instructional material designers and L2 teachers. Firstly, there was a pattern for intermediate L2 learners to benefit more from the L1 gloss and advanced learners to benefit more from the L2 gloss. Considering this, designers of textbooks may consider integrating the appropriate gloss for academic reading materials. This implies that, as learners begin to transition from the intermediate to upper-intermediate level of linguistic proficiency, it is vital that they should be exposed to more L2 gloss while the employment of L1 is subsumed. In a broader sense, the explicit teaching of vocabulary should take an appropriate medium for introducing new words. Accordingly, to accommodate deeper memorization of lexical items, while intermediate learners should be exposed to L1 definition, advanced learners are to be given meanings of words in L2.

Secondly, the results suggest that material designers should consider developing L2 reading materials in a new light, for example, incorporating glosses in novels and books, especially those for extensive reading purposes. Glossing, while repurposed as an indirect method of teaching vocabulary, should help accommodate understanding and promote reading powers, as exposure to authentic materials and input would promote authentic language acquisition. Another implication is that with lexical analysis and deeper processing of the target words, the inclusion of glosses will achieve its full potential (Hulstijn et al., 1996). Additionally, the recall test scores revealed that the vocabulary gained during frequent contact with the provided textual gloss could be easily forgotten without practical usage. Therefore, after introducing glossed words or new words through authentic materials, teachers must generally incorporate intentional learning activities to strengthen form-meaning connection and lexical recollection.

Additionally, L2 learners are encouraged to attempt personalizing the lexical items by producing practical use of the words to foster vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, while learners showed signs of vocabulary retention with the help of gloss, it is noteworthy that L2 learners should be able to develop and exercise the ability to infer the meaning from the contextual clues. This is to say that certain appropriate lexical items within a passage should be left un-glossed if they can be guessed from the context of the reading.

5.3. Limitations

The current study suffers from certain limitations, which can be addressed in future research. Firstly, the current study discounted the need for vocabulary test performance from the control group, assuming that since they could not have possibly been exposed to pseudowords, any difference in vocabulary recall would be a self-explanatory consequence. However, data analysis hinted at the possibility of differences in the orthographic system being another cause of variation in vocabulary recall test scores between this and previous studies. Hence, a closer look at the orthographic projection in the context of gloss usage might be warranted. Secondly, the findings of this research might be restricted in terms of generalization. Most learners in the current study were enrolled in specialized high schools or esteemed institutions and had records of intellectual capacity. Therefore, the vocabulary recall tests might be construed from a conservative perspective as memory tests where these learners especially had an advantage. A future study might eliminate the confounding variable of memory capacity through more rigorous testing measures. Thirdly, although the current study has controlled for word length, frequency, and prior learning, other factors, such as cognateness, might have affected incidental vocabulary learning (Tonzar et al., 2009; Willis & Ohashi, 2012) and polysemy (Laufer, 1990). Future studies, thus, should address this issue to increase the experiment's authenticity.

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TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA VIỆC GIẢI NGHĨA BẰNG NGÔN NGỮ ĐẦU TIÊN VÀ NGÔN NGỮ THỨ HAI TỚI KHẢ NĂNG ĐỌC HIỂU VÀ GHI NHỚ TỪ VỰNG CỦA NGƯỜI HỌC

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Tóm tắt: Các nghiên cứu trước đây cho thấy việc cung cấp giải nghĩa trong văn bản giúp cải thiện việc đọc hiểu văn bản và học từ vựng tự nhiên, tuy nhiên, mức độ tác động của phương pháp này trong các điều kiện khác nhau vẫn còn mơ hồ. Với thiết kế nghiên cứu định lượng, nghiên cứu này tập trung đặc biệt vào tương tác giữa ngôn ngữ giải nghĩa (L1 và L2) và trình độ tiếng của người học (trung cấp và nâng cao), cũng như tác động của việc cung cấp giải nghĩa đến đọc hiểu văn bản và học từ vựng ngẫu nhiên của người học. Trong nghiên cứu này, 180 người học được chia thành hai nhóm dựa trên trình độ tiếng (trung cấp hoặc nâng cao). Trong mỗi nhóm trình độ, người học được chia nhỏ thành ba nhóm phụ (60 người/ nhóm) với ba điều kiện khác nhau (đối chứng, giải nghĩa bằng ngôn ngữ mẹ đẻ và giải nghĩa bằng ngôn ngữ thứ hai). Phân tích ANOVA một chiều và t-test cho thấy việc sử dụng giải nghĩa dẫn đến sự hiểu biết sâu hơn và học từ vựng ngẫu nhiên. Phân tích ANOVA hai chiều cho thấy giải nghĩa bằng ngôn ngữ thứ nhất (L1) tạo ra sự hiểu biết sâu hơn và khả năng ghi nhớ tốt hơn ở người học trung cấp so với giải nghĩa bằng ngôn ngữ thứ hai (L2), và ngược lại, người học nâng cao có kết quả tốt hơn trong bài kiểm tra đọc và từ vựng khi được cung cấp giải nghĩa bằng L2. Cuối cùng, các tác giả đưa ra một số kiến nghị cho việc học và dạy từ vựng phù hợp với sự khác biệt tương đối giữa L1 và L2, và trình độ trung cấp và nâng cao.

Từ khóa: bảng chú giải, khả năng đọc hiểu, học từ vựng ngẫu nhiên, người học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ (EFL)

STUDENTS' VIEWS ON QUIZLET AS A LEARNING MEDIUM TO ENHANCE LEGAL ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

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Abstract: Legal English vocabulary acquisition is considered one of the most intriguing topics in English for specific purposes learning due to its distinctive features related to the legal field. Yet, this area has not received adequate attention from learners in determining the effective techniques to boost the legal English vocabulary learning process. Therefore, this study concentrated on clarifying English majors' attitudes towards Quizlet utilization in their legal English vocabulary acquisition in the context of legal English courses at Hanoi Law University, Vietnam. In order to achieve the ultimate purpose, the study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approach with the main data collection instruments of survey questionnaires and semi-structured interview to get insight into the situation. The study provided several remarkable findings, which were consistent with the empirical ones in the literature. Specifically, it is apparently indicated that while a large number of students found Quizlet stimulating and effective, others were still not familiar with this application in learning legal English vocabulary. In the light of these findings, it is highly recommended that both English majors and lecturers in law institutions apply and incorporate Quizlet into the learning and teaching process to enhance legal English vocabulary acquisition.

Keywords: legal English vocabulary, Quizlet, students' views, acquisition, Hanoi Law University

1. Introduction

The acquisition of a language naturally begins with memorizing its words or word combinations, from which all language skills are formed. In other words, before developing any language skills, vocabulary should be built as the top priority. As Abduramanova (2020) points out that vocabulary of a language is like the bricks of a high building. Sharing similar ideas, Behol and Dad (2010) claim that without vocabulary, speakers cannot convey meaning and communicate with each other in a certain language. Accordingly, acquiring a huge range of vocabulary is an essential aspect in foreign language methodology in order to set the grounds for enhancing language competence (Nguyen, 2022). In fact, a high number of researches have been carried out, followed by a wide range of learning methods as well as applications introduced to learners. One of such efficient ways of learning vocabulary is through the incorporation of Information of Communication Technologies (ICT), for example, in the form of gamification thanks to various positive effects (Pham & Duong, 2022). It is believed that with the assistance of ICT, vocabulary learning is beneficial as learners are equipped with metacognitive activities using imaginary and semantic techniques (Kose et al., 2016). Quizlet,

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a recently prevailing application, appears to be a popular tool among learners of English vocabulary at different educational institutions (Çinar & Asım, 2019; Ismailova et al., 2017; Rejeki et al., 2020). Quizlet is deemed to promote collaborative learning, drilling, repetition, and an enjoyable ways of learning (Anjaniputra & Salsabila, 2018).

In the case of English for specific purposes (ESP) teaching and learning, discipline-specific vocabulary is considered to be one of the most challenging aspects to students' success in language competence (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). Nation (2001) stated that technical vocabulary ranges from 1000-1500 words, which makes it difficult for ESP learners to fully understand its disciplines. Furthermore, acquiring ESP vocabulary is such a hard task owing to the irregular input and lack of exposure to the target language (Amiryousefi, 2015). Concerning legal English, a type of ESP specially aiming to equip legal practitioners with English skills in different areas of law, building up a large store of legal English words and phrases is not an exception. Nevertheless, due to its distinctive features, learners have met obstacles in memorizing and understanding legal terminology. Synekop (2020) denotes that an effective way to enhance positive changes in learning ESP vocabulary is to take into consideration the students' differentiation in English language proficiency and learning styles as well as to utilize digital tools in the learning process. In such situation, it is assumed that utilizing Quizlet application in particular is considered to be one of the most appropriate measures to effectively support learners in acquiring legal English vocabulary. A number of research has been carried out to either identify the significance of Quizlet in vocabulary learning (Andarab, 2017; Ashcroft & Imrie, 2014; Barr, 2016; Luu & Doan, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2020; Vargas, 2011) or learners' views on the use of Quizlet (Lander, 2016; Kose et al., 2016). Despite this, in the literature, there exists little research on applying Quizlet in learning legal English vocabulary. Also, the question of learners' attitudes towards Quizlet as well as how to use Quizlet properly or to incorporate Quizlet effectively in legal English vocabulary learning has not been fully answered. All things considered, this paper is conducted to clarify students' perspectives of using Quizlet for legal English vocabulary acquisition and enhancing their learning motivation in the context of Hanoi Law University.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Legal English Vocabulary

2.1.1. Features of Legal English Vocabulary

Legal English, also known as "Language of the law" (Mellinkoff, 2004), is the style of English used by legal professionals in their work in either native English-speaking countries or international contexts, which can be referred to as "legalese" (Veretina-Chiriac, 2012).

Legal English vocabulary, an aspect of legal English, can be divided into spoken or written form. The spoken form may be in the form of the cross examination of a witness by a lawyer, procedural instructions by judges, or lawyers' communication, etc. Written form, on the other hand, includes case law, law reports, and legal documents in the form of international treaties, constitutions or codes, etc. Put it shortly, legal English vocabulary "is recognizably specific to a particular topic, field or discipline" (Nation, 2001, p. 198). It is believed that legal English vocabulary, either in the oral or written form, has "a reputation for being particularly difficult" (Coxhead, 2018, p. 110), especially among lay persons (Bancroft-Billings, 2020). Mellinkoff (2004) highlights the complex features of legal English, which include uncommon meanings of common words, the use of Latin, French words or phrases, archaic and formal

English words, "deliberate use of words and expressions with flexible meanings," and simultaneously, "attempts at extreme precision" (p. 11). Additionally, legal English vocabulary is highly polysemous (Mattilla, 2006), meaning that words can have "one core meaning with various related senses" (Crossley & Salsbury, 2010, p. 575). The various related senses, within a legal English context, are often controlled by sub-context, i.e., "even within a single legal culture, the same term may express several [overlapping] concepts depending on the context in which it is used" (Mattilla, 2006, p. 30).

2.1.2. The Importance of Legal English Vocabulary

It is assumed that legal English vocabulary constitutes the major part of legal English learning as indicated, knowledge of the vocabulary of a specific subject area helps learners understand better their study content (Chirobocea, 2018). Acquiring legal English vocabulary, alike academic English, therefore is crucial for learners to improve four language skills of language courses (Nation, 2001). A huge stack of legal English vocabulary help students manage in English in their own legal field, rather than in some general social situations. Specifically, learners are likely to communicate within their legal environment, as well as to read or write academic English law journals for their profession. In order to ensure their competence in using English in legal contexts, students need to acquire not only the aspects of the meaning of the words or the phrases (synonyms, antonyms, translation, definition, and explanation), but also, their lexical form (spelling, pronunciation, part of speech), collocations and word formation (prefixes, suffixes, and compounds), etc.,. Nunan (1999), furthermore, argues that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary, it is impossible to use the structures and functions that may have been learned for comprehensible communication, particularly in terms of legal areas. Additionally, underscoring the importance of vocabulary acquisition, Schmitt (2000) emphasizes that "lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language" (p. 55). Therefore, exploring ways of enhancing legal English vocabulary more effectively is of a great necessity. Yet, due to the distinctive features of legal English vocabulary, it is such a challenge for learners to be keen on acquiring new legal English terms as it requires much time, patience and revision. Instead of finding ways to deeply understand the meaning and memorize the use of words in context, it seems that in this instant technological era, learning vocabulary comes down to looking up the meaning of the new words on the cell phone applications or simply googling them. For such reasons, engaging students' motivation in learning legal English vocabulary through various teaching methods, techniques and applications is one of the top solutions.

2.2. Quizlet Application in Vocabulary Learning

Among the many applications and websites that can be used, Quizlet is deemed to be suitable for learning English vocabulary in general and legal English vocabulary in particular. Quizlet is an online vocabulary application with internet-based and mobile- supported vocabulary learning sites and apps that can be freely used (Çinar & Asım, 2019). Specifically, these study sets let students acquire language and vocabulary through various interesting learning modes which include flashcards, gravity, write, speller, match, and live (Montaner-Villalba, 2019). Sari (2019) states the main function of Quizlet is to develop the students' linguistic intelligence or support other people who use it in terms of learning activities in all subjects. In addition, Ismailova et. al. (2017) views the Quizlet.com website as an online service that aims to assist students to quickly memorize a large number of new foreign words, which

establish not only visual contact but also auditory with the words. With its different options to review the learned vocabulary items, Quizlet helps students track their vocabulary learning, catering for users' requirements for a powerful vocabulary learning tool for the creation of different vocabulary activities, which best suit specific learning needs.

Recently, the usage of Quizlet application has attracted much attention from both language educators and researchers. It has been claimed that using Quizlet in the form of mobile application is an efficient way to motivate students in learning vocabulary (Rezaei et al., 2014). Similarly, Quizlet is regarded as such a useful tool that students desire to study vocabulary through that application (Dizon, 2016). In other words, students hold positive attitudes towards the utilization of Quizlet leading to their more engagement in their language learning process (Golonka et al., 2014). Sanosi (2018) adds that the assistance of Quizlet may facilitate autonomous learning as by using the Quizlet Application via a smartphone, students are likely to learn the vocabulary independently. It is similar to Wahyuningsih's study (2018) which states that Quizlet is considered one of the effective vocabulary learning tools that enable learners to take control of their lexical learning. Moreover, the Quizlet application is considered enjoyable by students using it while learning vocabulary (Lander, 2016). Christanti (2018) shows that the Quizlet is effective to increase the students' motivation in learning vocabulary. One year later, Çinar & Asım (2019) states that students' positive perceptions of the whole English course are raised with the application of Quizlet. In the same year, Hikmah (2019) denotes that most students respond positively to the Quizlet application and regard it as an interesting media. Accordingly, these successful findings prove that the Quizlet application is appropriate to be used to increase students' motivation in learning vocabulary. Sari et al. (2020) find out the features of various digital flashcards are the key reasons for its interesting and attractive learning media. Sharing the similar result, Başoğlu and Akdemir (2010) claim that mobile phone apps more effective in vocabulary learning than traditional paper flashcards (Lam et al., 2018).

Regarding ESP field, recent literature illustrates that the integration of technological tools in learning and teaching ESP produces the positive results for both learners and teachers (Kakoulli Constantino & Papadima-Sophocleous, 2020). Specifically, it is of great importance to utilize the teaching and learning strategy with the navigation of educational platforms in the form of games or apps such as Quizlet, Kahoot or Quizzes catering learning aims and needs. In fact, there have been a number of scholarly research into the viewpoints on the term of "needs" to clarify the suitable methods, strategies and applications (Carmen-Narcisa & Mudure-lacob, 2021). One of the most important and influential factors to enhance ESP students' motivation and engagement is clearly the competitive knowledge and skills acquisition along the educational route towards personal and professional development. It can be seen that Quizlet application is able to offer ESP students some of the most flexible and efficient solutions under the duress of academic life and time management constraints (Carmen-Narcisa & Mudure-Iacob, 2021). Quizlet's integration is recommended into ESP classes to make language learning more effective and appealing to students. The use of such a computer flashcard program should be accompanied by the thorough planning of such classes and their role in the foreign language course design, as denoted by Fursenko et al. (2021). Similarly, some researchers claim that educational platforms, i.e., Quizlet application should have a central position in learning ESP (Constantinou & Sophocleous, 2020).

Quizlet has its own advantages when it comes to catering for ESP students' learning needs of acquiring specialization-related vocabulary, the consolidation of the necessary

vocabulary for an efficient learning process, as well as strengthening the student's sense of professional self-confidence. Quizlet has been found as the most suitable in obtaining a highly efficient communicative situation characterized by ESP students' learning needs and corresponding acquired learning content and skills in different areas, which leads to noticeable results in ESP acquisition (Woodrow, 2018).

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Participants in the study were 123 English-majored senior students from the Faculty of Legal Foreign Languages (FLFL) at Hanoi Law University (HLU). Specifically, senior students were chosen because they have completed all compulsory modules of legal English in their education training, including Basic Legal English 1, Basic Legal English 2, Advanced Legal English 1, Advanced Legal English 2. Therefore, their responses on the effectiveness of Quizlet in their legal English vocabulary learning would be a reliable source of information for conducting this research.

3.2. Research Instruments

3.2.1. Survey Questionnaires

The aim of the research is to survey English majors' attitudes towards Quizlet application in legal English vocabulary learning at HLU. Therefore, an online survey questionnaire via Google Form was employed for data collection. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part 1 seeks demographic information of the participants, which are to be kept confidential. Part 2 includes a list of 26 statements designed on a five-point Likert scale (1.0-1.79: strongly disagree; 1.8-2.59: disagree, 2.6-3.39: neutral; 3.4-4.19: agree; 4.2-5.0: strongly agree; or Noted: 1.0-1.79: never/ extremely ineffective; 1.8-2.59: rarely/ ineffective; 2.6-3.39: sometimes/moderate; 3.4-4.19: often/effective; 4.2-5.0: always/extremely ineffective) to clarify the participants' overall views the necessity of Quizlet and its different modes on their legal English vocabulary studying.

3.2.2. Semi-Structured Interview

As the purpose of this research interview is to explore learners' views and beliefs on the use of Quizlet in their learning vocabulary process, qualitative methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires (Gill et al., 2008). Accordingly, a semi-structured interview was utilized as the supplementary instrument in this research to intensively investigate learners' perspectives on Quizlet applications in more detail. The interview in this study is made up of 10 open-ended questions to clarify students' general opinions about the different modes of Quizlet in legal English vocabulary acquisition.

3.3. Data Collection

After finalizing the questionnaire, the researcher contacted the participants via Messenger or emails in order to ask for their agreement to take part in the survey. The survey was carried out from 8th February 2022 to 22nd February 2022, by sending out a Google Form link with the assistance of either Messenger messages or emails to participants from the FLFL at HLU. The method of distributing online survey questionnaires was convenient and time-saving, especially when this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Due

to the fact that all participants were English major students, the survey was carried out in entirely the English language.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted via social networking sites. The researchers contacted 15 students with noticeable answers to confirm their agreement to take part in the interviews. However, only 10 of these students agreed to participate. Detailed information about time and method of communication for interviews were provided before-hand. The interviews were recorded, taken notes and transcribed onto writing. To ensure the clarity and reliability of the data, Vietnamese, participants' mother tongue, was used during the interview.

3.4. Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed with the utilization of Microsoft Office Excel and IBM SPSS 20.0 software. Specifically, the proportion of responses was calculated using Microsoft Office Excel to demonstrate the respondents' viewpoints on the legal English vocabulary learning via Quizlet application. The findings were displayed in figures and tables to clearly identify different aspects. Descriptive analyzing tool was used to calculate Mean, Range, and Standard Deviation value of learners' responses towards the use of Quizlet in their learning vocabulary process. To provide a deeper understanding of students' views the qualitative data from the interview were transcribed in the form of quote or saying that index its analytically relevant content.

4. Results and Discussion

Before seeking students' general opinions on Quizlet application in learning legal English vocabulary, a number of questions were raised to clarify the frequency of using Quizlet among learners.

Figure 1

The Frequency of Learning Legal English Vocabulary via Quizlet Application

2. How often do you use Quizlet to learn Legal English Vocabulary?
123 responses
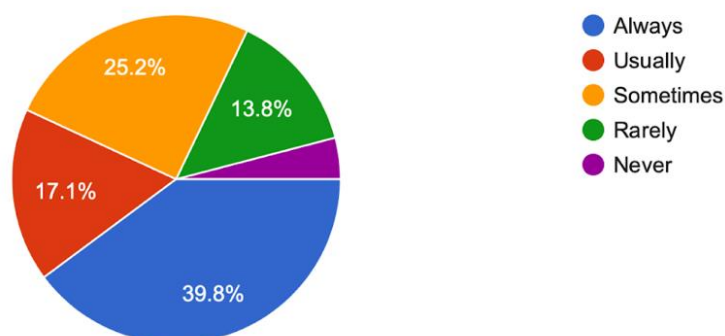
As illustrated in Figure 1., the proportion of students who always apply Quizlet to learn legal English vocabulary was deemed significant, at 39.8%. A similar pattern was observed in the rate of learners who usually and sometimes use this application to acquire Legal English vocabulary, which accounted for 17.2% and 25.2% respectively. However, there was only a small number of surveyed participants who rarely or never use Quizlet, as their recorded

percentage was not considered high. Accordingly, these figures revealed that there was a significant majority of students using Quizlet to learn legal English vocabulary at a high frequency. The reason why students used this application in such high frequency was partly revealed from the subsequent interview that by utilizing various kinds of technological devices such as Quizlet, language learners could gain a sense of freedom, motivation, and encouragement they need for learning (Clark, 2013). In particular, two interviewees stated that:

> I use Quizlet on a daily basis, especially for revision of end-of-term examinations of legal English in all modules. The reason why I keep this habit is that I have the autonomy in my learning process, where I can modify and edit any terms that I can, and I am able to keep track of my progress from time to time. Also, Quizlet has a daily reminder on notifications to remind me to study every day, so I feel extremely motivated and encouraged. (Interviewee 2)

> Personally, I apply this application to note all of the new legal English terms after every lesson and then revise them on weekdays. Even though I use Quizlet by myself, I am still able to be motivated by various interesting modes that existed in Quizlet. Since I am a visual learner, I feel encouraged that Quizlet enables me to add images to each legal English term, which makes my learning process more vivid than ever. In short, I would say that I can obtain huge motivation via Quizlet. (Interviewee 5)

Figure 2

The Respondents' General Viewpoints on the Effectiveness of Quizlet in Legal English Vocabulary

4. In general, what do you think about the effectiveness of Quizlet in Legal English vocabulary?
123 responses

- Very effective
- Effective
- Moderate
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

24.4%
14.6%
60.2%
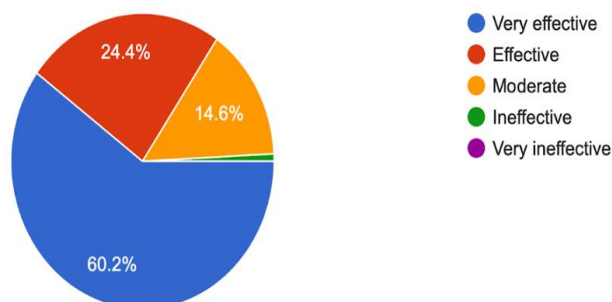
Figure 2. displays that more than half of the respondents believed that using Quizlet in learning legal English vocabulary was very effective (60.2%). Likewise, it can be seen that approximately a quarter of participants supposed that Quizlet was effective (24.4%). Besides, 14.6% of students held a neutral viewpoint regarding the usefulness of Quizlet. By contrast, there was a minority of learners expressing that Quizlet was ineffective in legal English vocabulary acquisition. Summarily, the number of respondents who accessed that Quizlet was effective constituted a large proportion, which dictated that most English majors in Hanoi Law University found Quizlet efficient for them to acquire legal English vocabulary. Additionally, this result is also similar to that of Ma & Truong (2016), whose majority of the participants agreed that Quizlet is an effective tool to learn lexical resources, given the fact that 63.64% of

their participants highly appreciate the experience with Quizlet.

Table 1

Students' General Views on the Application of Quizlet on Learning Legal English Vocabulary

Statements	N	Mean	SD
1. It is of utmost importance to apply Quizlet in legal English vocabulary acquisition as a major learning method	123	4.62	.723
2. Quizlet application is helpful, easy to use and make legal English vocabulary learning process more effective	123	3.53	.717
3. Learning legal English vocabulary via Quizlet is interesting, stimulating and encouraging	123	4.12	.635
4. It is enjoyable to learn legal English vocabulary via Quizlet, because it is like playing games rather than studying	123	4.24	.643
5. Quizlet application is neither effective nor ineffective in legal English vocabulary acquisition	123	3.13	.743
6. My opinion on Quizlet is neutral, because while it does not really help me, its modes' functions are undeniable to be efficient in Legal English vocabulary learning.	123	2.89	.563
7. Quizlet is difficult to use since there are a wide range of different modes that are hard to distinguish	123	2.73	.612
8. It is confusing to use Studying modes of Quizlet	123	2.59	.502

Noticeably, it was found that English majors at Hanoi Law University perceived the use of Quizlet in learning legal English vocabulary positively with a high mean score ranging from 3.01 to 4.62. The majority of the participants agreed that using the Quizlet application was stimulating, making them happy like playing games while studying (M=4.12; SD=.635; M=4.24; SD=.643). Clarifying their position, interviewees showed their opinions in the subsequent interview, as follows,

> The use of Quizlet as the online flashcard is useful and it helps me easier to comprehend the legal English terms of different topics. (Interviewee 1)

> Or The use of Quizlet can assist me in learning and memorizing legal English vocabulary. (Interviewee 9)

> Or I am not suppressed and hesitated while I learn legal English vocabulary through the Quizlet. (Interviewee 3)

Additionally, some of the respondents felt pleased because they could be entertained while learning, with pictures and descriptions and sound buttons along with each legal English term. One interviewee stated that: "*I'm happy because it's stimulating, there's a picture, there's a voice too, so it's more interesting to learn legal English vocabulary via this application.*" Similarly, the other expressed: "*It's fun, it can be like playing a game a little bit so it's not like studying legal English vocabulary in traditional methods.*" This result is supported by Worddive (n.d) as cited in Handayani (2018), which stated that through pictures, students get the most out of their memory, learn to think in the new language, achieve amazing results –

without stress, and learn the way that suits best. Sari et al. (2020) also affirmed that Quizlet is one of the most interesting and attractive learning media since it uses various digital flashcards and features. In the Quizlet application, with the learning media in the form of online flashcards containing images, descriptions of each picture, sound is one of the effective learning methods to stimulate students' minds and interest in the learning process.

Moreover, according to the students' opinion, they also felt that using this application helped them in learning because of the easily-used features in Quizlet. This is supported by the perceptions of students below:

It's easy, you just need to press and then a picture appears, there's a description written, there's a sound how to pronounce the legal English vocabulary. (Interviewee 4)

It is not difficult at all, but first I have to be given instructions on how to use it. (Interviewee 2)

These statistics and results are in line with Al-Malki (2020) and Wahyuningsih (2018), who stated that Quizlet is considered one of the efficient vocabulary learning tools that enable learners to take control of their lexical learning and could help second language learners effectively acquire vocabulary.

Nevertheless, a minority of respondents agreed that Quizlet is somehow difficult to use and they feel confused to apply it in their legal English learning process since there is a wide range of different modes that are hard to distinguish or confusing (M=2.73; SD=.612; M=2.59; SD=.502). Besides, certain learners expressed a neutral opinion in applying Quizlet in acquiring legal English vocabulary (M=3.13; SD=.743; M=2.89; SD=.563). To elaborate on these aforementioned opinions, it is revealed in the followed-up interview that:

I am newly exposed to Quizlet application, so in the first place I find it quite challenging and confusing to know all the existed modes. (Interviewee 2)

I prefer to search for existed legal English vocabulary list on Quizlet, but there are thousands of them and I find it a little but of confusing. If possible, I would love to have my lecturers giving instructions on how to access the right legal English vocabulary lists. (Interviewee 3)

Moreover, the difficulty may come from the familiarity of traditional ways of learning with paper and pens instead of modern technology. An interviewee stressed that:

I must admit that I find it neutral when it comes to learning legal English vocabulary via Quizlet, since I am not a person of technology, and I prefer traditional ways, by learning in paper and pens. However, I am fully aware of the effective functions of Quizlet that my friends tell me all the time.

In short, although certain participants felt that using Quizlet was not really helpful and there was no significant change when they learn, a great number of students expressed positive perceptions after using Quizlet, as explained above. Referring to this, it is concluded that a high proportion of respondents were interested in applying Quizlet in legal English vocabulary acquisition.

Concerning students' views on different modes in Quizlet, the data illustrated distinctive findings.

Table 2

The Respondents' Viewpoints of the Effectiveness of "Studying Set" Mode in Quizlet

Studying Mode	N	Mean	SD
9. Studying with Flashcards mode	123	4.50	.617
10. Studying with Test mode	123	4.27	.745
11. Studying with Write mode	123	3.89	.623
12. Studying with Spell mode	123	3.12	.596
13. Playing Match and Gravity (gamified vocabulary)	123	4.65	.730
14. Using Progress for targeted studying	123	3.06	.651

Table 2 demonstrate that four out of six distinctive "Studying" modes were deemed to be effective in legal English vocabulary acquisition from learners' perspectives with the high mean score of effectiveness ranging from 3.89 to 4.65. In particular, the respondents found that playing gamified vocabularies such as "Match" and "Gravity" were greatly effective (M=4.65; SD=.730). Studying with "Flashcard" mode and studying with "Test" mode stood on the next ranks of effectiveness with the mean score of 4.50 and 4.27 respectively. Similarly, other modes namely studying with "Write" mode and "Spell" mode also received a high proportion of effectiveness among participants, which were 3.89 and 3.12 correspondingly. Last but not least, most students believed that the mode of using "Progress" for targeted studying was neither effective nor ineffective. Generally, there is no doubt that a large number of English majors at Hanoi Law University found these 6 abovementioned "Studying" modes in Quizlet useful in their legal English vocabulary acquisition.

These aforementioned statistics can be explained that Quizlet has been regarded as such a useful tool for students to study vocabulary (Dizon, 2016). Especially, the reason why the "Flashcard" mode received such a high mean score of effectiveness can be explained by the fact that this mode promotes not only learners' productivity, but also their receptive vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001). In the case of playing gamified vocabulary like "Match" and "Gravity", this mode also received high rate of positive views, which is due to the fact that it requires students to actually type in the answer, the game pushes them to really learn the materials. These two games not only enable learners to practice recall and typing skills but also arouse competitiveness among them (Ma & Truong, 2016).

Table 3

The Respondents' Viewpoints of the Effectiveness of "Creating, Editing, and Saving Study Sets" Mode in Quizlet

Creating, editing, and saving study sets Mode	N	Mean	SD
15. Adding images to study sets	123	3.01	.623
16. Creating a study set by scanning or importing a document	123	4.83	.735
17. Combining study sets	123	3.14	.515
18. Organizing sets with folders	123	4.55	.545

In terms of the respondents' viewpoints of the effectiveness of the "Creating, editing, and saving study sets" mode in Quizlet, it can be witnessed that two out of four items received substantial agreement. Specifically, the surveyed students expressed their preference for the mode of "creating a study set by scanning or importing a document" and "organizing sets with folders" (M=4.83, SD=.735; M=4.55, SD=.545). However, the two other modes ("adding images to study sets" and "combining study sets") stood on quite humble ranks of effectiveness, with the mean value of 3.01 and 3.14 respectively. These statistics were affirmed in the followed-interviews:

> Whenever my legal English lecturers give us a specific vocabulary list after each lesson, I would immediately scan it and convert directly to Quizlet for later revision. It is of absolute convenient! (Interviewee 6)

> Since legal English mostly contains abstract topics, such as Company Law, Labor Law, Contract Law, I rarely have to add images to clarify each new legal term. Instead, I prefer to distribute the terms into different folders, corresponding to each topic. Therefore, it is easier for me to search for them later on. (Interviewee 4)

Table 4

The Respondents' Viewpoints of the Effectiveness of "Accessing and Sharing" Mode in Quizlet

Accessing and Sharing Mode	N	Mean	SD
19. Sharing sets and folders	123	3.32	.754
20. Protecting a set with a password	123	2.93	.526
21. Exporting sets	123	4.01	.644
22. Studying offline with Quizlet mobile apps	123	4.12	.703

With regards to the respondents' viewpoints of the effectiveness of the "Accessing and Sharing" mode in Quizlet, the participants found that the mode of "Studying offline with Quizlet mobile applications" was the most useful (M=4.12; SD=.703). Likewise, the mode of "Exporting sets" also received a relatively high rate of approval among surveyed students on its efficiency (M=4.01; SD=.644). Nevertheless, the two other modes of "Protecting sets with password" and "Sharing sets and folders" experienced were deemed not to be effective for learners in acquiring legal English vocabulary (M=3.32, SD=.754; M=2.93, SD=.526, correspondingly).

Analysis of the data collected from the interview, the majority of the learners believed the mode of "Studying offline with Quizlet mobile application" was the most useful thanks to its convenience. Learners were able either to acquire legal English vocabulary in any environment, even without an Internet connection or to convert their legal English vocabulary list into papers or other learning forms.

> I like to learn Quizlet in offline mode, because sometimes the Internet at my home is unstable. I think it is wonderful to use an application even without an Internet connection. (Interviewee 9)

Figure 3

The Respondents' Viewpoints of the Techniques Applied to Legal English Vocabulary Acquisition Through Quizlet

9. In your opinion, which of the following methods of Quizlet can be applied to Legal English vocabulary acquisition?
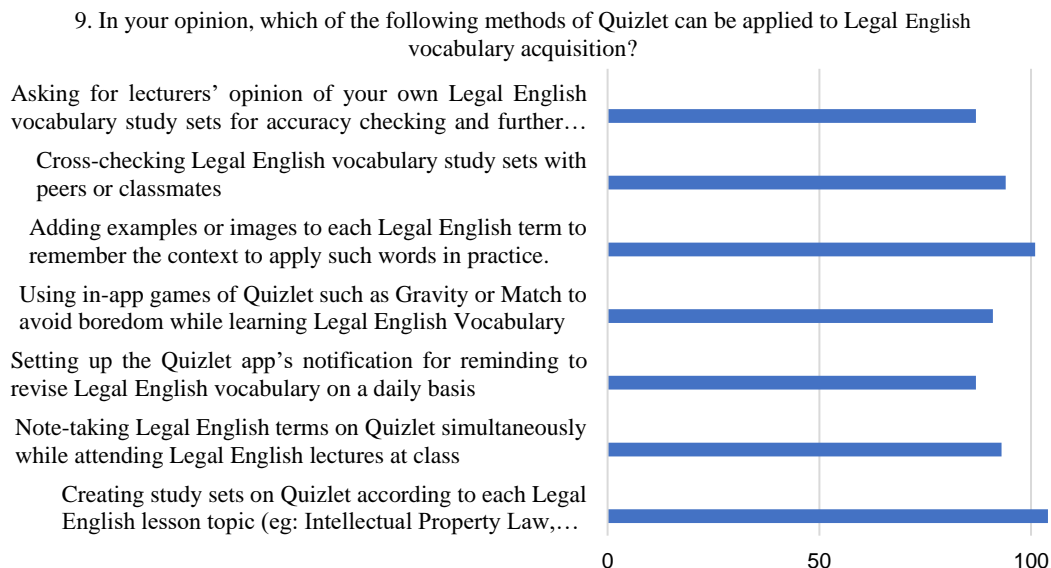
Regarding the participants' viewpoints on the Quizlet techniques that can be applied to legal English vocabulary acquisition, it can be dictated that most of the given measures all received a similarly high rate of responses from students. Remarkably, there were roughly 100 out of 123 students agreed that the solutions of creating study sets according to each legal English lesson topic and adding examples or images to each legal English term should be applied in legal English vocabulary acquisition. A similar pattern is seen in the methods of cross-checking study sets with classmates, note-taking legal English terms, and using in-app games in Quizlet with the choice of approximately 90 surveyed students. Furthermore, the figures for two other measures were also considerable, as they were selected by around 85 respondents of the survey. This finding is consistent with Ma & Truong's (2016) study, which indicated that since most students are in touch with modern technologies, the new methods are more likely to transform leisure activities into educational ones.

Table 5

The Respondents' Viewpoints on the Role of Students and Lecturers in Applying Quizlet to Enhance Legal English Vocabulary Acquisition

Items	N	Mean	SD
23. Students should actively utilize information technology such as Quizlet application in the process of learning Legal English vocabulary	123	4.23	.635
24. It is necessary for students to cooperate with peers via teamwork while using Quizlet to learn legal English vocabulary	123	3.98	.754
25. It is the responsibility of lecturers and teachers to encourage students to use Quizlet to improve the efficiency in legal English vocabulary learning	123	3.01	.563
26. Lecturers and teachers should incorporate Quizlet in their lectures to level up interest and motivate students to learn legal English vocabulary	123	4.14	.532

As depicted in Table 5, it can be noticed that the given solutions regarding applying

Quizlet in legal English vocabulary acquisition received different viewpoints. Noticeably, most of the respondents agreed that students should actively utilize information technology such as Quizlet application in the process of learning legal English vocabulary (M=4.23, SD=.635). Moreover, participants also contended that lecturers and teachers should incorporate Quizlet in their lectures to level up learners' interest and motivation in learning legal English vocabulary (M=4.14, SD=.532). The cooperation with peers while using Quizlet is deemed to be quite necessary (M=3.98, SD=.754). Notwithstanding, there was a minor proportion of respondents holding the view that it is the responsibility of lecturers and teachers to encourage students to use Quizlet to improve the efficiency in legal English vocabulary learning. This result is in line with Ma and Truong (2016), whose research also shares similar viewpoints on the role of students and lecturers in applying Quizlet to enhance legal English vocabulary acquisition.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the findings reveal that a great number of the respondents viewed that Quizlet is beneficial for their process of learning legal English vocabulary. The application of Quizlet is likely to boost learners' motivation, interest, and engagement in acquiring legal English terms. Such statistics depict that nearly three-quarters of the surveyed students highly recommend Quizlet utilization as an efficient way to enhance their learning process. However, Quizlet application in learning legal English in general and legal English vocabulary in particular, simultaneously, requires the efforts of both learners and lecturers. Regarding learners, first and foremost, they should be equipped with the techniques of effectively using Quizlet, including managing the amount and timing of practice, which can be implemented through explicit strategy instruction at the beginning of a legal English course. Furthermore, it is recommended that learners are required to use Quizlet to learn legal English vocabulary deliberately and actively outside the classroom. For example, after each session of legal English, students ought to transfer and organize all of new terms into a set with distinctive topics, i.e., intellectual property law, competition law, labor and employment law, contract law, criminal law, tort law, company law, etc on Quizlet application for later revision. In this way, students will probably find it more convenient and easier to search for each topic to revise later. Additionally, based on the analyzed findings, it is imperative that learners take note of legal English terms on Quizlet simultaneously while attending lectures in class to avoid missing out on any important terms. More importantly, the collaborative learning potential of Quizlet also needs to be mentioned. Previously, learning legal English vocabulary with flashcards is considered more of an individual task. However, learning through Quizlet can be repurposed for collaborative learning tasks to allow for better peer support among students. Several activities can be organized to encourage students cooperate and expose them to the interactive use of vocabulary, such as co-constructing vocabulary flashcards, testing each other on new legal terms, and negotiating word meanings in communication. Ideally, the proposed technique of learning legal English vocabulary deliberately with Quizlet should be utilized to provide collaborative learning opportunities for lexical development in and out of class. Additionally, as previously analyzed, thanks to the availability of online activities such as "Flashcards", "Match", "Learn", the students can improve their pronunciation, check what they have learned easily, and enjoy the games. Lecturers, clearly, are advised to utilize Quizlet as a supplementary source of providing learners with new legal English terms by means of incorporating gamified activities in their lessons. Furthermore, learning activities utilizing different modes in Quizlet can be designed as homework or a criteria for on-going assessment which builds up their learning efficiency.

6. Limitations

Due to time constraints, the study is not without limitations. One of the most noticeable weaknesses of this research concerns its scope, within which it was only carried out in the context of Hanoi Law University with the participants of English majors. Therefore, it is challenging to generalize the findings to participants in another frame of reference. In addition, the number of respondents in this research was 123 English majors, which is considered to be rather limited. To some extent, the analyzed results and statistics are not able to completely reflect the perspectives of a larger population. The next limitation concerns the methodology of this study, in which learners' perspectives on applying Quizlet to legal English vocabulary learning are figured out, while the actual experience of students' usage has not been clearly investigated. Based on the aforementioned limitations, it is vital that further studies avoid those shortcomings and come up with more comprehensive research with the participation of a larger population in an experimental method to clarify learners' actual practice and the effect of Quizlet in their legal English vocabulary acquisition process.

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QUAN ĐIỂM CỦA SINH VIÊN
TRONG VIỆC SỬ DỤNG ỨNG DỤNG QUIZLET
NHƯ MỘT PHƯƠNG TIỆN HỌC TẬP ĐỂ NÂNG CAO
QUÁ TRÌNH ĐẮC THỤ THUẬT NGỮ TIẾNG ANH PHÁP LÝ

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Tóm tắt: Đắc thụ thuật ngữ tiếng Anh pháp lý được coi là một trong những vấn đề được quan tâm nhất trong học tiếng Anh chuyên ngành bởi tiếng Anh pháp lý mang những đặc điểm khác biệt trong lĩnh vực pháp lý. Tuy nhiên, người học tiếng Anh pháp lý chưa thực sự chú trọng đến phương pháp, chiến thuật học tập để thúc đẩy quá trình học và đắc thụ thuật ngữ tiếng Anh chuyên ngành. Vì vậy, nghiên cứu này tập trung vào việc làm rõ quan điểm của người học đối với việc sử dụng Quizlet trong học thuật ngữ tiếng Anh pháp lý tại Trường Đại học Luật Hà Nội. Để đạt được mục đích trên, nghiên cứu đã sử dụng phương pháp định tính và định lượng với công cụ nghiên cứu là bảng câu hỏi khảo sát và phỏng vấn. Nghiên cứu đã cung cấp một số kết quả đáng chú ý, phù hợp với các kết quả nghiên cứu trước đó. Cụ thể, trong khi phần đông sinh viên nhận thấy được tính hữu ích của ứng dụng Quizlet trong quá trình học từ vựng, thuật ngữ pháp lý, một số khác vẫn chưa biết ứng dụng này. Dựa trên kết quả đó, Quizlet được đề xuất sử dụng kết hợp trong quá trình học tập và giảng dạy nhằm nâng cao khả năng đắc thụ từ vựng, thuật ngữ tiếng Anh pháp lý.

Từ khoá: từ vựng tiếng Anh pháp lý, Quizlet, quan điểm của người học, đắc thụ, Đại học Luật Hà Nội

EXPLORING LEARNING NEEDS
OF GIFTED EFL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN VIETNAM:
TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract: Gifted students are often characterized as those who demonstrate distinctive characteristics, both intellectually and emotionally. Thus, they may have learning needs that are distinctive from non-gifted ones. Failure to meet the needs of these learners may lead to their low motivation, low attention, and consequently low achievement in their learning processes. Although gifted education in Vietnam has got a relatively long history, gifted English as a Foreign Language (EFL) remained somewhat under-researched and poorly understood. Studies that focus on learning needs of gifted EFL students in Vietnam are almost undetectable. This study thus aimed at discovering learners' and teachers' perceptions of gifted EFL students' learning needs. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews with 137 gifted EFL students and five English teachers working with these students. Findings from the study suggest that: (1) among 7 key components of English language, oral skills including speaking, listening and pronunciation were perceived as most important, meanwhile output skills namely speaking and writing appeared to be most challenging; (2) teaching activities that focus on oral skills and self-directed learning (i.e., presentation, debate, discussion, self-study, projects, etc.) are considered most effective and engaging to this group of students; (3) students' commitment to study was generally high but motivation for advanced English lessons and National Talent Competitions, was not as high as expected. These findings contributed to the limited literature on gifted students, particularly gifted EFL students in Vietnamese context, highlighted the need to reconsider the *goals and missions of gifted education in Vietnam*, and had important implications for *curriculum and instructional design* for this unique group of learners.

Keywords: gifted EFL students, gifted education, students' needs

1. Introduction

The notion of giftedness has evolved continually, reflecting changes in societal needs and priorities (Catholic Education Melbourne, 2013). In its early days, giftedness was mostly linked to general intellectual ability (as measured by intelligence tests; Terman, 1926). In the 1960s and 1970s, the notion of giftedness was extended to include creativity (Renzulli, 2011). However, greater emphasis was still put on academic rather than non-academic domains (Pirrto, 2005). Towards the end of 20th century, as societal attitudes changed, a broader conception of giftedness encompassing outstanding achievements across academic, physical and cultural domains has become integral to the discourse on giftedness (Catholic Education Melbourne,

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2013). Pfeiffer (2012), for example, defined a gifted student as one who "demonstrates a greater likelihood, when compared to other students of the same age, experience, and opportunity, to achieve extraordinary accomplishments in one or more culturally valued domains" (p. 14). Similarly, according to Vialle and Rogers (2012), giftedness is the ability to demonstrate either extraordinary potential or extraordinary performance in one or more of the intellectual, academic, creative, leadership or visual and performing arts domains.

With their special characteristics, it can be inferred that gifted students may have learning needs that might be distinctive from their non-gifted peers. Failure to meet the needs of these learners may lead to their low motivation, low attention, and consequently low achievement in their learning process (Clinkenbeard, 2012; Schunk, 2012). Paradoxically, though a lot of efforts have been put in defining and identifying gifted learners, not so much has been done to ensure appropriate instructional programming for these individuals (Cao et al., 2017). The number of studies that examine the complex needs of academically gifted students is also very limited (Murdock-Smith, 2013).

2. Background to the Study

In Vietnamese context, gifted education has had a relatively long history. The first high schools for gifted students (also known as specialized schools) were established in the 1960s with the special purpose of identifying and nurturing talents in specific academic subjects (MOET, 2012). Presently, gifted education remains one important scheme in Vietnamese education system (i.e., policies for gifted schools have been well-established, a lot of investment has been put into gifted education, MOET 2012). Students need to go through a rigorous process in order to be accepted into gifted schools; and the level of competitiveness is generally very high. According to the Regulation of Organization and Operation of Gifted High Schools (MOET, 2012), students are recruited into gifted EFL classes based on test results of three subject areas: English, Vietnamese literature and Mathematics. As for English, students are required to sit for two tests (one general English test and one advanced English test). Scores of the advanced English test are doubled before being added to the scores of the other three tests to calculate the sum scores, which would then be used as a basis in the selection process (MOET, 2012). Normally, only the top 5-10% of the students in the exam could be admitted to the program. The selected students are then offered special educational programs which aim to help them successfully achieve their academic excellence in their majored subjects. In other words, although good English language skill is an obvious advantage for students in the selection process, students also need to do well in the other subjects (i.e., Mathematics and Vietnamese literature) in order to be accepted into the program for gifted EFL students.

The quality of educational programs at specialized schools, to some extent, is evaluated by several important testing events. At the first level, schools in the whole province or city select their top talented students to sit in a municipal exam, which aims to shortlist students into the national contests for talented students organized by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training. Students who achieve high results in the national contest might be selected to join the international competitions. Basically, the results of these exams are one of the crucial criteria to measure the effectiveness of educational programs at specialized schools and to promote or reward teachers. Many statistics show that specialized schools, in recent years, get high achievements in these competitions, and Vietnam is also recognized as one of the nations that obtain the highest results in international academic contests (Huu, 2018).

In short, although a clear definition of the term giftedness has not yet been articulated in Vietnam, the way of identifying and nurturing gifted students in Vietnam suggests that Vietnamese conception of giftedness is somewhat close to the definition of academically gifted learners, who are noticed due to their outstanding accomplishments in academic tasks (Pfeiffer, 2012). These students - as suggested by Pfeiffer (2012) - often demonstrate cognitive and/or affective characteristics that are distinctive from non-gifted ones, such as above-average academic performance, love for learning and persistence through difficult and challenging tasks. Educational program(s) for gifted EFL students in Vietnam also remained somewhat foreign and under-researched to not only Vietnamese scholars but also international counterparts. Studies that focus on learning needs of gifted EFL students in Vietnam is scarce (with Vu and Vu (2012) being the only exception). Vu and Vu (2012) investigated gifted EFL students' attitudes towards the effectiveness of one English learning program at a specialized high school in Hanoi - particularly in terms of students' language skills development, and the program's contribution to students' future jobs. Findings from the study revealed that students were generally satisfied with the quality of the program and perceived it as useful for their further studies and career development. However, students' specific needs and wants as well as reasons for their satisfactions were not identified.

Together with the scarcity of documents and studies about learning needs of gifted EFL students, there exist conspicuous problems with gifted education in Vietnam. Firstly, although gifted education in Vietnam has had a long history, received worthwhile investment from the government and obtained impressive achievements in national and international academic competitions, *the goal for gifted education has not yet been clearly defined* (Mai, 2007). Secondly, there is not yet a detailed guideline or a unified program for gifted students across the country (MOET, 2012). *Curriculums and learning materials for gifted learners are mostly independently designed by individual teachers working with these students.* Additionally, none of current teacher education programs in Vietnam at the moment offer training for those working with gifted students. The lack of clear educational goals for all gifted students together with the lack of standardized educational curriculums for students and the absence of training programs for teachers of the gifted raised the concerns about whether or not learning needs of Vietnamese gifted students have been clearly identified and sufficiently satisfied.

Overall, the present study was grounded on the assumption that gifted EFL students in Vietnam might demonstrate distinctive intellectual and/or affective characteristics. While these characteristics are essential for instructional design, they have not yet been adequately identified and addressed. This study was thus carried out with the aim of providing more insights into the learning needs of gifted EFL students in Vietnamese context. The big question that guided the research was: **What are learning needs of gifted EFL students in Vietnam?** It is expected that with better awareness of the learners' needs, better educational services for gifted EFL students could be provided.

3. The Theoretical Framework

The significance of needs analysis in language teaching and learning has led to the development of several influential approaches including *sociolinguistic model* (Munby, 1978), *systemic approach* (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977), *learning-centered approach* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), *learner-centered approach* (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989) and *task-based approach* (Long 2005). Among these, learner-centered approach (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989) appeared to be most comprehensive and advantageous as it offers three different ways to

look at learner needs namely: *perceived* versus *felt* needs; *product* versus *process*-oriented interpretations; and *objective* versus *subjective* needs. "Perceived needs" are assumptions made by experts or teachers about learners while "felt needs" are those articulated by learners themselves (Berwick, 1989). Product-oriented needs are concerned about variables required in the target situations which might affect the learning process while process-oriented needs focus on affective and cognitive characteristics of learners which might influence the learning process (Brindley, 1989). "Objective needs", as its name suggests, refers to factual information about learners (i.e., their real-life language use situations, their current language proficiency and difficulties) whereas "subjective needs" encompasses affective and cognitive factors (i.e., learners' confidence, attitudes, learning wants, learning expectations and learning strategies, etc.). In other words, *learner-centered* approach to needs analysis gives importance to both cognitive and affective variables, which are often neglected in other approaches like the sociolinguistics model or the systematic approach. The classification of *perceived* versus *felt* needs might help ensure that interpretations are made based on data from multiple perspectives (of both learners and teachers), which is important to ensure reliability of the analysis (West, 1994).

Moreover, *learner-centered* approach also addresses issues of interest to the *sociolinguistic* approach and the *learning-centered* approach. For example, needs in the *product-oriented interpretation* of learner-centered approach are similar to the concepts of *communication needs* (Munby, 1978) and *target needs* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Needs in the *process-oriented interpretation* of learner-centered approach also correspond to *learning needs* as defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). All in all, it can be inferred that learner-centered approach to learner needs analysis has proved comprehensiveness, extensive coverage and usefulness to instructional design and implementation.

With the above-mentioned advantages, *learner-centered* approach (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989) was adopted to identify learning needs of gifted EFL learners in this study. With the assumption that gifted EFL students in Vietnam might have distinctive cognitive and affective needs, a closer attention was paid to *learners's subjective needs*, which are very important and worth investigating before and during the implementation of a curriculum (Richards, 2001), and more importantly, encompasses cognitive and affective factors (i.e. learning confidence, learning priorities, learning difficulties, learning styles, learning attitude and motivation (Brindley, 1989). Thus, the following research questions were put forward:

1. *How **confident** are students about their English vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, reading, listening, writing and speaking skills?*
2. *What is the **level of importance** that EFL gifted students attach to the different language skills/ components?*
3. *What are the **difficulties** that gifted EFL students encounter when learning English?*
4. *What are gifted EFL students' **learning styles**? What are their preferred **learning activities**?*
5. *What is gifted EFL students' **level of engagement** with learning English at school?*

These needs are also investigated from both teachers and students' perspectives as a way of reflection in order to see whether exists any discrepancy between *felt needs* and *perceived needs*.

4. Research Design

This study utilized mixed method design, which involves gathering, analyzing, and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This approach was chosen to capitalize on the strengths of both methods, triangulate the findings, and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand (Greene et al., 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Klassen et al., 2012). The study was divided into two sub-studies; one aimed to investigate students' perceptions of their learning needs, and the other focused on teachers' perceptions of their students' learning needs. The results from the two sub-studies were then combined, compared, and contrasted to provide a more complete picture. The study design is illustrated below:

Figure 1

The Overall Research Design
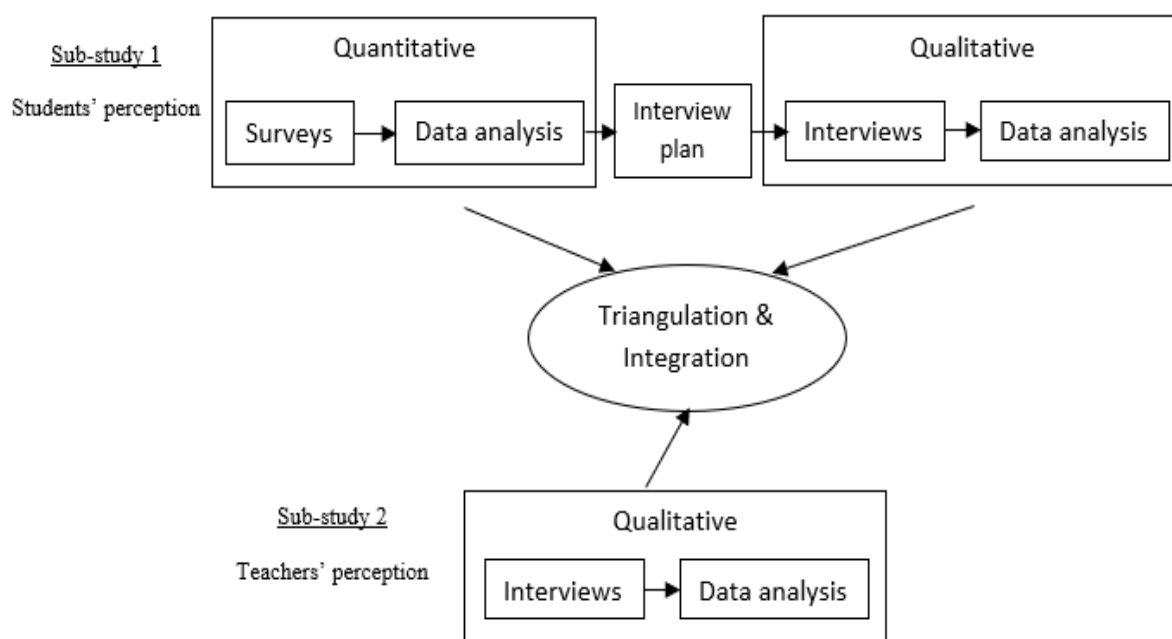
4.1. Sub-Study 1: Gifted EFL Students' Perception of Their Own Learning Needs

In sub-study 1, *Explanatory sequential mixed method design* was selected with initial use of quantitative questionnaire survey among a large number of students, followed by in-depth interviews with selected students (see Figure 2). The quantitative questionnaire aimed to identify the general trends in students' perceptions about different aspects of their needs, whereas follow-up interviews were to delve deeper into outstanding results. This design is commonly used when researchers need qualitative data to explain the quantitative results, or when researchers want to form groups based on quantitative results and follow up with groups through subsequent qualitative research (Klassen et al., 2012).

Figure 2

Design of Sub-Study 1
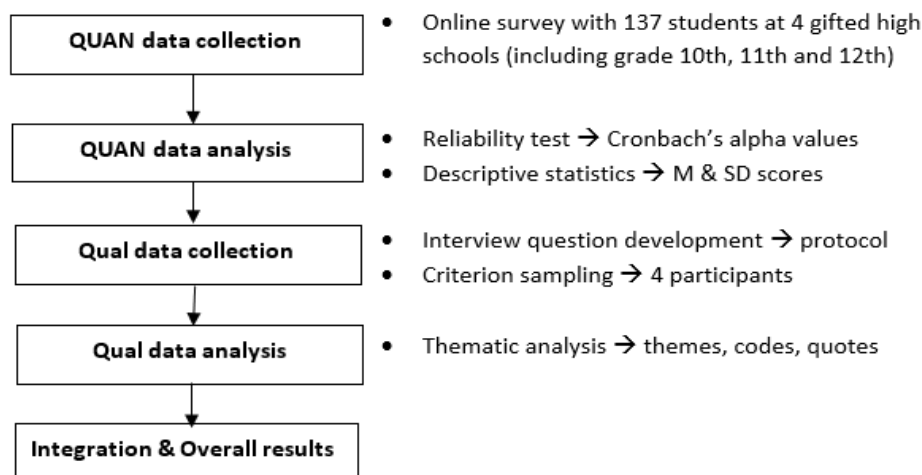
Quantitative Survey Study

Participants

The survey participants were 137 students studying at 4 gifted high schools in Hanoi and nearby provinces. Their ages ranged from 15 to 18 (grade 10 to 12). Majority of the participants were female students (78.8%). An initial analysis of the data did not find significantly differences among students from different schools or of different grades. Therefore, the student population as a whole could be considered homogenous.

Data Collection Instrument

The survey questionnaire was divided into two main parts: the first part required participants to provide information about their background (gender, grade, school); the second part, which comprised six sections (A to G), aimed to assess the six constructs of interest namely: *learning confidence, learning priorities, learning difficulties, learning styles, learning attitudes and engagement*. These constructs are developed based on the factors concerned in the learner-centered approach (Brindley, 1989), which was adopted as a guide for this study.

In section A and B, the researchers chose Kaharuddin et al.'s (2017) scale since it helps to measure students' confidence and priorities in different key components of the English learning content at high schools in Vietnam, which are vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and four language skills.

A. Learning confidence sub-scale: The learning confidence scale was adopted from Kaharuddin et al.'s (2017 "language ability" questionnaire. The sub-scale consisted of 8 items that required students to rate their level of confidence in terms of *vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation*, four skills (*reading, listening, writing, speaking*) and their *overall English competence*.

B. Learning priorities sub-scale: The scale was taken from Kaharuddin et al.'s (2017) "learning priorities" questionnaire. It consisted of 7 items, which requested participants to rate the level of importance of those English components and skills to themselves.

C. Learning difficulties sub-scale: The researcher employed the scale developed by Kaharuddin et al. (2017) in order to measure the *level of frequency* at which student participants encountered some potential obstacles while using English, some of which are psychological

problems, lexical resources, mother tongue interference, and topical knowledge. For example, the psychological problems included items such as *"Feel shy of speaking English", "Fear of making mistakes"*, the lexical resources included *"Vocabulary limitation", "Pronunciation mistakes"* and *"Grammar mistakes"*.

D. Learning styles sub-scale: This sub-scale aimed to identify learners' preferred learning activities. Participants were asked to rate the level of usefulness of common classroom activities according to them. Activities listed in the questionnaire corresponded to four types of learning styles: Visual, Auditory, Reading/ Writing, and Kinesthetic (The VARK model; Fleming & Mills, 1992). The model was chosen since it was most likely to reflect the experiences of teachers and students.

E. Learning attitudes and engagement sub-scale: The sub-scale was adapted from the PISA survey (OECD, 2004**)**, which aimed to measure students' attitudes and engagement with learning in Mathematics. This scale was widely used in more than 40 countries and proved to be a valid and reliable measure of learning attitudes and engagement (OECD, 2004). Students' learning attitudes and motivation were measured via five subscales, which are *"Interest", "General self-concept", "Instrumental motivation", "Attitudes towards schools"* and *"Sense of belonging at school"*, with 26 items in total. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement to these 26 items on a 4-point likert scale.

For sections A to E, a four-point Likert-type scale was utilized (refer to Appendix 1). For more details about specific items in the questionnaire, please refer to Appendix 2.

Data Analysis

In the current study, IBM SPSS software (Version 20.0) was employed to handle quantitative data. Specifically, descriptive statistics (M, SD) were generated to identify key features of the data set. Besides, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated to ensure reliability/ consistency of multi-item scales (i.e., section D and E). According to George and Mallery (2003), scale reliability is considered acceptable if the alpha value is higher than 0.60 and unacceptable if the alpha value falls under 0.50. The reasonable goal is noted to be alpha of 0.80. In section D and E, the Cronbach's α of all scales are above 0.60 (see Table 1). Therefore, the conclusion was reached that each scale had a fair to good reliability.

Table 1

Cronbach's α Reliabilities of Sub-Scales

Section	Sub-scales	Items	Cronbach's α
D. Learning style	Visual	D1, D2	0.61
	Auditory	D3, D4, D5, D6	0.64
	Reading/Writing	D7, D8	0.61
	Kinesthetic	D9, D10	0.66
E. Learning attitudes and engagement	Interest	E1, E16, E20, E22	0.77
	General self-concept	E2, E4, E6, E9, E10	0.77
	Instrumental motivation	E12, E15, E19, E21	0.69
	Attitude towards school	E3, E5, E7, E8, E11, E18	0.77
	Sense of belonging at school	E13, E14, E18	0.84

Qualitative Interviews

The Interview Protocol Development

After analyzing data from the questionnaire, the researchers found the need to further understand (a) why EFL gifted students were least confident with speaking and writing skill, (b) why pronunciation, listening and speaking were considered most important, (c) how students experienced vocabulary limitations and the speaking anxiety, (d) whether in-class activities are interesting/ motivating to student. To better understand these issues, an interview protocol including four open-ended questions was developed to elicit students' explanation for those problems (please refer to Appendix 3).

Participants

Criterion sampling method was used to purposefully select prospective students from the survey respondents. Four students were selected for the interviews (coded as S1-4). These students were approached because their answers in the questionnaire implied that they (1) had low confidence in *speaking* and *writing*, (2) attached high importance to pronunciation, listening and speaking, and (3) frequently encountered vocabulary limitation and speaking anxiety.

Data Analysis

Transcriptions of the interviews, after being checked by student participants, were manually coded using thematic analysis method, which is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In other words, this method is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about, and of making sense of those commonalities (Joffe & Yardley, 2004), and especially appropriate when researchers wanted to generate new insights from the raw data as existing theory or research literature on a phenomenon is limited (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Each interview transcript was read and re-read several times, then annotated to generate a list of initial codes. These codes were collated across participants to find similar patterns in their answers, and if a pattern appeared among more than 50% of the participants, it would be considered a theme. Those themes together with participants' exemplifying quotations were also reviewed for further explanation of the problems from quantitative surveys.

4.2. Sub-Study 2: Teachers' Perceptions of Their Gifted EFL Students' Learning Needs

The purpose of this phase was to examine teachers' perception of their students' needs. To achieve that aim, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers of gifted EFL students. Data from teacher interviews were also analyzed using thematic analysis. Details of the research procedure and expected outcomes are present in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Design of Sub-Study 2

QUAL data collection	• Semi-structured interviews with 5 teachers working with students in sub-study 1
QUAL data analysis	• Thematic analysis → themes, codes, quotes
Discussion	
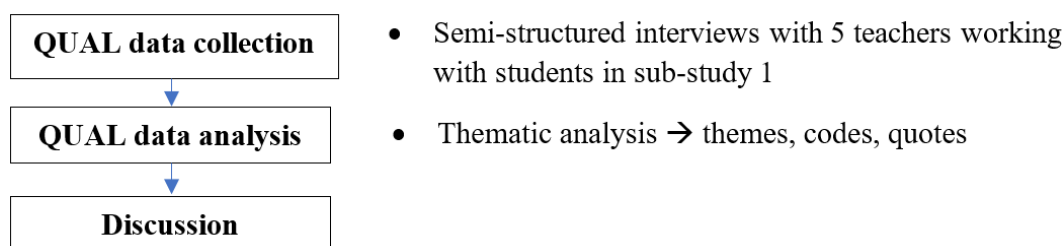
Participants

Five teachers (coded as T1-5), who participated in the study, were all experienced teachers who had from seven to twenty-five years of working with EFL gifted students. With that amount of time, it was expected that these teachers had gained proper understanding of their students' characteristics and needs.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore their perceptions of students' learning needs. These interviews also covered themes previously addressed in sub-study 1 (i.e., students' language ability, learning priorities, learning difficulties, learning styles/ preferred activities, learning attitudes and engagement). Details of the interview protocol could be found in Appendix 2.

Data Analysis

Similar to the qualitative component in sub-study 1, thematic analysis was chosen as the data analysis method in this sub-study with the purpose of identifying teachers' perceptions about different domains (A – E) of students' needs. Codes, together with noteworthy quotations, were identified and synthesized to identify common themes. These findings were then incorporated with findings from sub-study 1 (students' perceptions) to create a more comprehensive picture of learning needs of gifted EFL students.

5. Research Findings

Research Question 1: How Confident are Gifted EFL Students About Their English Language Ability?

Confidence in Overall English Ability

Students were surveyed about their confidence levels in different areas of English language proficiency, including Vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation, Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking. Figure 4 presents the mean ratings for each area. Overall, students demonstrated high levels of confidence in their English competence (M = 2.80, SD = 0.55). This result was supported by interviews with the students' teachers, as four out of five reported that the students' overall English competence was good and that their proficiency in the four language skills had improved compared to previous cohorts.

> In the last 5 years, students who entered EFL gifted classes, especially Foreign Language Specialized School, showed much higher abilities in four English skills. (T4)

Lower Confidence in Speaking and Writing

A closer look at students' responses to specific English skills and components, however, suggested that students appeared to be least confident about the two productive skills namely Writing and Speaking (M = 2.28 and 2.40 respectively; see Figure 4). This was consistent with the feedback provided by teachers, T3 and T4, who noted that their students struggled the most with writing. T4 also estimated that as many as 60 to 70 percent of her students faced difficulties with writing. When interviewed, three out of four students cited "insufficient practice" as the main reason for their lack of confidence in Writing and Speaking, both in class and at home.

> The main reason is that we do not have much practice time. In class, we mostly learn vocabulary and grammar so (our) speaking skills are not very good. Writing skills are not our focus at school, either. (S3)

Figure 4

Level of Confidence in Specific English Areas
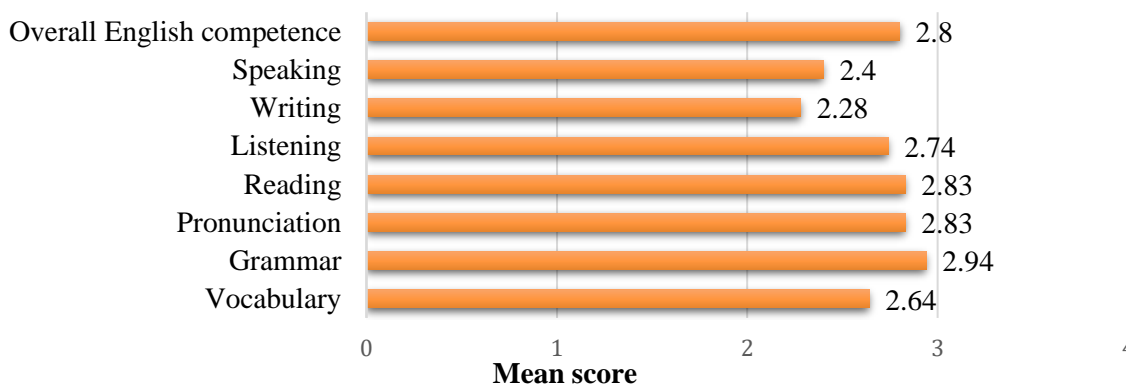
Research Question 2: What is the Level of Importance That Gifted EFL Students Attach to the Different Language Areas?

Higher Level of Importance Attached to Auditory-Oral Skills

In response to part B of the questionnaire, participants rated all language skills and components as important (mean scores greater than 3.1; see Figure 5). However, speaking, listening, and pronunciation (M = 3.86, 3.76, and 3.62, respectively) were considered the most important. Notably, these skills are all related to oral proficiency.

Figure 5

Level of Importance Attached to Specific English Areas
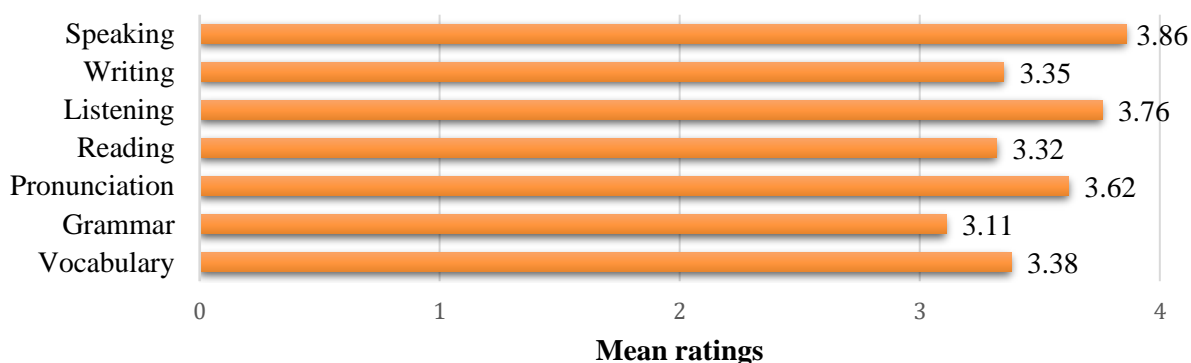
In the interviews, three students, who gave high rating scores for pronunciation, listening and speaking, believed that these aspects were more practical in daily communication (as compared to other skills), and thus were regarded as being more important.

> For me, the most important thing when learning a language is to be able to use it in daily communication, therefore pronunciation and speaking is most important… And you must also be good at listening to understand what foreigners say […] I think oral skills are important because I will use these skills more often than writing or reading. (S3)

> Listening and speaking are most important because they are widely used in daily communication. (S4)

Main Focus on Vocabulary, Grammar and Reading

Although the explanations that these students have for their high appreciation of oral skills were understandable, the findings suggested a mismatch between what students considered important and what they spent more time on. Both S2 and S3 - who were in grade 12 - admitted that they did not have enough time practicing and improving their speaking, listening, and/ or pronunciation because they were preparing for the National High School Graduation Exam. Interviews with teachers also revealed similar results. Four out of five teachers (T1, T2, T3 and T5) thought that gifted EFL students, except for a small minority who aimed to study abroad, would need to perform well in this exam to secure themselves a place at university. Since this high-stake exam mainly focused on vocabulary, grammar and reading, they naturally had the urge to put more time and effort on these components.

> Gifted EFL students also have to take the National High School Graduation Exam. Therefore, they also need to spend more time on vocabulary, grammar and practice tests, just like non-gifted students. (T3)

> Of course, they want to be good at all skills but, er…, grade 12th students, for example, need to prioritize vocabulary, grammar and reading to prepare for the National High School Graduation Exam. (T2)

> When I taught those skills (listening, speaking, writing) many students did not really pay attention and (they) only focused on vocabulary, grammar, and reading skills to have high scores on the national high-school graduation exam. (T1)

Research Question 3: What are Students' Difficulties in Using English?

Psychological Obstacles in Speaking

In questionnaire section C, students rated the frequency of encountering difficulties using English (as seen in table 2 below). Mean scores ranged from low to moderate levels (M between 2.25 and 2.60), indicating these students could generally use English without much encounter with the given difficulties. The issue with the highest mean scores was shyness of speaking (C1, M = 2.60), followed by limited vocabulary (C5, M=2.58), limited topic knowledge (C8, M=2.56), fear of making errors (C2, M=2.55), and fear of criticism (C3, M=2.51). Additional responses specified by students were *shyness*, *afraid to be judged by others*, *eye contact*, etc. Interestingly, most of the above issues/ key words (except for C5 and C8) were pointing towards shyness and fear of speaking. However, this problem seemed not to be well recognized by teachers. Only one teacher (T2) mentioned students experiencing embarrassment and anxiety due to pronunciation mistakes, while other four teachers claimed students were confident and did not encounter any psychological hindrance.

Table 2

Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of Difficulties in Using English

Item		M	SD
C1	Feel shy of speaking English	**2.60**	0.72
C2	Afraid to make errors	**2.55**	0.71
C3	Afraid to be criticized	**2.51**	0.78
C4	Can't avoid using Vietnamese	2.36	0.72
C5	Limited vocabulary	**2.58**	0.61

C6	Bad grammar	2.25	0.53
C7	Bad pronunciation	2.31	0.63
C8	Limited knowledge of the topic	**2.56**	0.67

Limited Academic Vocabulary and Background Knowledge

Besides psychological barriers, student participants in the current study also acknowledged that they had problems with "limited vocabulary" (C5) and "limited knowledge of the topic" (C8; as could be seen in the table above). In addition to the pre-listed categories, students also added difficulties with lexical resources, such as slangs, technical words, paraphrasing ability, etc. In the interviews, students were asked to give more details about their vocabulary resources; and three participants shared that they did not have enough academic words to fully and precisely express their ideas in complicated topics.

In sub-study 2, teachers were also asked to comment on their students' vocabulary. T2 and T5 stated that their students just encountered difficulties expressing their ideas about academic and highly complicated topics. T4 also specified that the proportion of students encountering this problem were 60% - 70% for writing skills and around 30% for speaking skills. The reasons, as explained by T2, were the insufficient academic vocabulary and background knowledge, which was in line with students' responses.

Research Question 4: What are EFL Gifted Students' Learning Styles and Preferred Learning Activities?

Preference for Auditory-Oral Activities

Gifted EFL students' learning styles were assessed by evaluating the usefulness of common learning activities in four categories: Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, and Kinesthetic. Figure 6 displayed the mean ratings of each group, revealing that the Auditory group was the highest rated (M=2.92, SD=0.81), followed by Kinesthetic (M=2.80, SD=0.89) and Reading/Writing (M=2.76, SD=0.83). Students found "watching video" (M=3.23, SD=0.76), "listening to podcast" (M=2.87, SD=0.86), and group discussion (M=2.80, SD=0.85) most useful, probably indicating that they learned best through listening and speaking activities. Furthermore, when asked to specify their own preferred learning methods, eleven out of eighteen responses recorded were also listening and speaking activities (i.e., "self-talking in English", "debating", "listening to audio-books"). Those responses strengthened the belief that most of gifted EFL students appeared to be auditory learners.

Figure 6

Level of Usefulness of Four Learning Styles
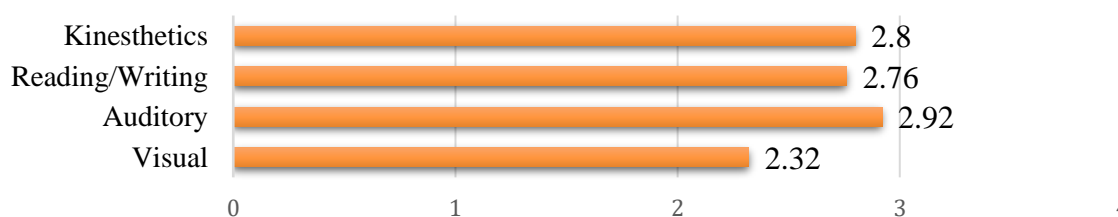
Teachers' opinions were also in line with this finding. Among the wide range of activities in their lessons, all teachers thought that activities focusing on oral skills, such as "group-discussion", "presentation", "debates" or "projects" were most effective and engaging

to students. For instance, T5 stated that her gifted EFL students showed strong interest in discussing and sharing opinions or applying what they had learnt in joint projects. However, most of those activities could not be done on a regular basis due to time constraints in class.

> Students seem to prefer projects, erm, it seems so… time-consuming they are, but (we) still have to do them because they are included in the textbooks. (T1)

> The activities can be getting the students to do a presentation using PowerPoint, to role-play, to have a talent show or a fashion show, all in English. [...] Generally students enjoyed those, but those activities took a lot of time and effort so we couldn't have more than two (activities) in a semester, other than that we also organize, for instance, learning the basis of grammar, practicing tests for gifted students, etc. (T3)

This idea was confirmed by S2 and S4, who asserted that their teachers did carry out presentations, debates and projects during a school year, however, not frequently (once or twice in a semester mainly in grade 11th and 10th). In class, students mostly had tests and worksheets (S2; S3), which were considered as quite boring to students (S3; S1).

Preference for Self-Directed Learning

Another finding from interviews with teachers was that self-directed learning/ student-centered learning appeared to be highly effective and motivating to gifted EFL students. All teacher participants agreed that activities that allowed students to plan and organize their own learning were highly welcomed. T1 even stated that self-directed learning activities were most effective for students of this level.

> The most important thing to bear in mind when teaching gifted students is to instruct them how to self-study and self-research. (T1)

> They (students) prefer planning and carrying out learning projects by themselves. Normally, I would just play the role of a facilitator. (T3)

> They like to read about the problems at home and when they come to class, they're very excited to present what they've learnt to teachers and other friends. (T5)

Research Question 5: What is EFL Gifted Students' Level of Engagement With Learning English at School?

Positive Attitudes Towards Learning

Students' learning attitudes and engagement were measured in five different aspects "interest in English", "general self-concept of English ability", "instrumental motivation", "attitude towards school" and "sense of belonging at school". Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of each sub-scales. The results showed that mean scores of all sub-scales were relatively high (ranging from 2.86 to 3.62) and the standard deviations were low (from 0.49 to 0.57), suggesting that students generally have positive attitudes towards learning English at school.

Table 3

Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) on Learning Attitudes and Engagement

Sub-scales	M	SD
Interest	2.86	0.57
General self-concept	2.90	0.53

Instrumental motivation	3.62	0.49
Attitude towards school	2.93	0.53
Sense of belonging at school	3.06	0.53

The results obtained from interviews with teachers also supported this assumption. All interviewed teachers complimented their students' learning attitudes. Most of the positive comments included "serious commitment to studying", "high interest in English", and "positive attitude towards school".

Low Motivation for the Advanced Curriculum

Beside the positive comments, teachers also identified some students' lack of motivation for advanced English lessons, which aimed to nurture gifted EFL students' language ability and select candidates for national/municipal level contests for gifted students. These classes normally followed a more demanding curriculum, which might sometimes make students feel discouraged and overwhelmed:

> When (we) have to give difficult tasks to prepare for the national advanced English exam for gifted students, some students were demotivated… (T1)

> Attending the national contest is somewhat strenuous. They have to put much time and effort on it… So the number of students attending this competition has been decreasing significantly in recent years. Their parents tell them that they don't need to study that much but still pass the university entrance exam so why (they) need to join in the contest. That's also a difficulty for teachers when selecting candidates for the national contest. (T2)

> We sometimes have to find ways to, erm, persuade or even force them to attend (the contest). (T5)

Low Motivation for Non-Challenging Tasks

"Too basic lessons" was found to be another source of demotivation for gifted EFL students. This could probably be linked to students' high self-concept about their English ability. T1, T4 and T5 reported that some students, due to their overconfidence, usually became careless and underestimated the importance of "basic lessons" - those that follow the mainstream curriculum. Teachers, as a result, needed to frequently remind them to be careful and focused while studying. T5 also commented that gifted students easily got bored with simple and tedious tasks so teachers always need to find ways to keep them engaged in the lessons.

6. Discussion and Implications

Findings from this research provided better insights into gifted EFL students' characteristics and problems, in terms of both academic and affective aspects.

When it comes to the key elements of English learning curriculum, the greater role that student participants placed on *speaking, listening and pronunciation,* which aim to develop oral communication skills, was understandable and in line with current trends in English language teaching and learning as well as the context of globalization and internationalization, where the need to use English for communication is emphasized. In fact, the new English textbooks for high school students in Vietnam have also put more focus on oral skills and overall

communicative competence (Quyen, 2019). However, the way the textbooks are implemented may need further investigation to measure their effectiveness in enhancing students' communicative competence.

While the greater importance was attached to oral communication skills (speaking, listening, pronunciation), what students actually prioritized in learning seemed different (vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension). Such inconsistency was somewhat unexpected but could probably be explained by the washback effect of the National High School Graduation Exam in Vietnam, in which listening and speaking are not included. In fact, the impacts of exams on students' learning and teachers' teaching have been well-documented. Exams can affect both students' learning and teachers' teaching, potentially leading to a focus on test preparation rather than instructional goals (McKinley & Thompson, 2018). In order to develop students' communicative competence, especially their oral skills, the assessment content and methods should be adjusted accordingly.

While oral English skills should receive more attention since they were considered as essential components, students' concerns over *speaking and writing* implied that these output skills should be more focused on as well. Difficulties in performing speaking and writing tasks are apprehensible and in compliance with recent literature, which have chorally regarded these skills as most difficult for EFL learners (Al Hosni, 2014; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Richards & Renandya, 2002) as they require control over numerous academic, psychological and cognitive aspects (Olshtain & Celce-Murcia, 2016).

When it comes to these output skills, student participants seemed to be well-aware of the specific hindrances such as *shyness*, *inadequate background knowledge*, *lack of academic vocabulary*, etc. However, teachers did not seem to have full understanding of their students' difficulties, particularly speaking shyness. Therefore, improving teachers' awareness and understanding of gifted EFL students' psychological problems should be targeted. Besides, teachers might also benefit from trainings on strategies and techniques to support students with anxiety in the language classroom, such as: establishing a learning community and a supportive learning environment, providing indirect rather than direct correction, accepting the need for self-worth protection, offering teacher immediacy/ reducing distance between teacher and student, and providing praise appropriately (Neumeister et al., 2007; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009).

Besides, findings from the study also provide better understandings about gifted EFL students' learning process, or in other words, the most effective ways for them to learn English. To be more specific, the potential of *self-directed learning* to gifted EFL students was clearly highlighted by the teacher participants. This result has also been supported by both research and practice in the field of gifted education (i.e., Riley, 2004; Kronborg & Cornejo-Araya, 2018; Gross et al., 2001). It is thus highly recommended that to better meet the needs of gifted students and at the same time motivate them to learn, the curriculum for gifted EFL students should be carefully planned, in a way that allows students to take initiative in choosing and conducting learning activities. To this end, Project-Based Learning (PBL) has been considered an ideal option for the gifted classrooms as it allows gifted students to structure their own learning, establish their own deadlines, and work to their full capabilities (Stanley, 2012; Diffily, 2002). It also encourages active student learning, cooperation, creativity, critical thinking, and effectively prepares students for the 21st century (Bell, 2010; Takeda, 2016).

Another finding about students' learning styles also suggested that gifted EFL students learn best through auditory-oral activities. It is consistent with previous findings on learning

styles of gifted language students (Rubin, 1975). Therefore, it is recommended that teachers incorporate more activities like presentations, debates, group discussions, and projects into their lessons. Nonetheless, such activities are mostly time-consuming and require careful preparation, thus could not be done on the regular basis. Instead, to save time and effort, teachers could consider assigning daily listening reflective journals and speaking portfolios as homework to encourage students to strengthen their English habits.

Last but not least, affective problems about students' engagement should be taken into consideration to improve their overall learning outcomes. Specifically, there are demotivating factors that affect gifted EFL learners, including a lack of interest in national advanced English contests. To many, the academic competitions at different levels (i.e., provincial, national, international) appeared to be the most important goals for gifted students (including gifted EFL students) and their teachers, since students' performance in these contests are often used to evaluate teaching and learning quality (Huu, 2018). Although the desire to compare oneself to others is innate, and competition has irrefutable benefits to an individual's development (Verhoeff, 1997), solely focusing on competition as a goal is irrational and counterproductive for gifted education, including gifted foreign language programs. Therefore, the researchers are of the belief that both the goals set for gifted education in Vietnam and the curriculum for gifted EFL students need substantial revision to make learning more motivating and relevant for students, and better prepare them for the modern workforce. This is crucial to ensure the success of gifted foreign language programs in Vietnam.

7. Conclusion

Findings from the present research provided insights in different aspects, from students' academic concerns to affective problems, with the aim of answering the central question "What are the learning needs of gifted EFL students?" These findings suggested that gifted EFL students in Vietnam demonstrated several unique needs in both academic and affective domains. Regarding the former, these students attached relatively high importance as well as engagement to auditory-oral skills, which might suggest that learning and assessment content and method should be adapted with more focus on these areas. Besides, a closer attention should be paid to speaking and writing as well, since these skills remained daunting among gifted EFL students, even though their English competence was generally good. Some of the common problems that might need more attention included speaking anxiety and insufficient academic vocabulary. Moreover, teaching activities that focus on oral skills and self-directed learning (i.e., presentation, debate, discussion, self-study, projects, etc.) are considered effective to this group of students, and therefore, should be utilized to keep them engaged in the learning process. With reference to affective needs, gifted EFL students showed relatively high commitment to study but motivation for advanced English lessons seemed to be rather low. This implied that gifted education in Vietnam in general and the curriculum for gifted EFL students in particular may need substantial reforms. It is believed that goals and missions of gifted education, once clearly defined, would guide the whole process of curriculum development, assessment, teacher development, and lesson planning for gifted EFL students.

8. Limitations of the Study and Recommendation for Further Research

Despite researchers' efforts in designing and conducting the research, this study still has unavoidable limitations. Firstly, due to the difficulties in recruiting participants during the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam, the survey in phase one of the study was conducted entirely

online using convenience sampling. Since the sample just consisted of students from four gifted high schools in the North of Vietnam, the results might not be representative of all Vietnamese gifted EFL high school students. Moreover, the number of students from different schools and grades were unproportioned, which probably skewed the results to a certain extent; therefore, care should be taken when interpreting results from the current study. Secondly, due to the scarcity of research related to gifted EFL students in Vietnam, findings reported in the current study could not be directly related to any previous studies, and thus remain solely valid for the sample studied within its scope. Thirdly, due to time and resource limitation, some domains of students' needs have not been investigated thoroughly. For example, findings about students' ability, difficulties and learning activities were still general and might have benefited from additional methods such as classroom observation or curriculum evaluation. Future studies, given more time and resources might either expand the scope of the current study or delve deeper into specific areas of needs. It might be also be worthwhile to compare and contrast learning needs of gifted EFL students with other gifted groups and/ or non-gifted population.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire

DISCOVERING LEARNING NEEDS OF GIFTED EFL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Background information:

Age:

Gender:

Grade:

School:

SECTION A: Learning abilities

Please rate your confidence in terms of the following English areas?

1 = Not confident at all   2 = Not very confident
3 = Confident   4 = Very confident

	1	2	3	4
B1. Vocabulary				
B2. Grammar				
B3. Pronunciation				
B4. Reading				
B5. Listening				
B6. Writing				
B7. Speaking				
B8. Overall language proficiency				

SECTION B: Learning priorities

How important is each of the following language components/ skills to you?

1 = Not important   2 = Less important   3 = Important   4 = Very important

	1	2	3	4
C1. Vocabulary				
C2. Grammar				
C3. Pronunciation				
C4. Reading				
C5. Listening				
C6. Writing				
C7. Speaking				

SECTION C: Learning difficulties

How often do you experience the following difficulties in your English classes?

1 = Never   2 = Seldom   3 = Often   4 = Always

	1	2	3	4
D1. Feel shy of speaking English				
D2. Afraid to make errors				
D3. Afraid to be criticized				
D4. Can't avoid using Vietnamese				
D5. Limited vocabulary				
D6. Grammar mistakes				
D7. Pronunciation mistakes				

D8. Limited knowledge of the topic				
Other reasons: (please specify) ……………………………………… ………..………………………………				

SECTION D: Learning styles

How helpful are these activities to you in your English language learning? Rate them according to their level of helpfulness by ticking the appropriate column.

1 = Not helpful at all   2 = Somewhat helpful   3 = Helpful   4 = Very helpful

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
D1. Pictures				
D2. Mindmaps				
D3. Watching videos				
D4. Discussions				
D5. Lectures				
D6. Podcasts				
D7. Wordlists				
D8. Textbooks				
D9. Role-plays				
D10. Projects				
F11. Others (please specify): ……………………………………. …………………………………….				

SECTION E: Learning attitudes and engagement

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Please tick the appropriate column.

1 = Strongly disagree   2 = Disagree   3 = Agree   4 = Strongly agree

Statements		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
E1	I enjoy learning English.				
E2	I have always believed that English is one of my best subjects.				
E3	I feel like I belong to this school.				
E4	I get good marks in my major subject.				
E5	I feel lonely at school.				
E6	In my English class, I understand even the most difficult work.				
E7	Other students seem to like me.				

E8	I feel awkward and out of place.				
E9	I learn English quickly.				
E10	I am just not good at learning English as a major.				
E11	I feel like an outsider at school.				
E12	School has taught me things that could be useful in my future study/work.				
E13	English is an important subject for me because I need it for further study (i.e., going abroad).				
E14	I will learn many things in English that will help me get a job.				
E15	My school helped give me confidence to make decisions (i.e., decision about my future education/ career).				
E16	I look forward to my English lessons.				
E17	I make friends easily at school.				
E18	Making an effort in learning English is worth it because it will help me in the work that I want to do later.				
E19	Studying (English) at school has been a waste of time.				
E20	I am self-motivated when studying English as a major.				
E21	My school has done little to prepare me for life after I leave school (i.e., university, work life).				
E22	I learn English because I enjoy it.				
E23	I am interested in the things I learn in English.				

Appendix 2

Overall Construct of the Questionnaire

Section/ Domain	Factor	Item #	
A. Learning ability		A1	Vocabulary
		A2	Grammar
		A3	Pronunciation
		A4	Reading
		A5	Listening
		A6	Writing
		A7	Speaking
		A8	General English ability
B. Students' priorities		B1	Vocabulary
		B2	Grammar
		B3	Pronunciation
		B4	Reading

		B5	Listening
		B6	Writing
		B7	Speaking
C. Learning problems		C1	Feel shy of speaking English
		C2	Afraid to make errors
		C3	Afraid to be criticized
		C4	Can't avoid using Vietnamese
		C5	Limited vocabulary
		C6	Bad grammar
		C7	Bad pronunciation
		C8	Limited knowledge of the topic
D. Learning styles	Visual	D1	Using pictures
		D2	Using mindmap
	Auditory	D3	Watching videos
		D4	Group-discussion
		D5	Listening to lecture
		D6	Listening to podcasts
	Reading/ Writing	D7	Using wordlists
		D8	Reading books
	Kinesthetic	D9	Role-play
		D10	Doing projects
E. Learning attitudes and engagement	Interest	E1	I enjoy learning English.
		E16	I look forward to my English lessons.
		E20	I am self-motivated when studying English as a major.
		E22	I learn English because I enjoy it.
		E23	I am interested in the things I learn in English.
	Instrumental motivation	E13	English is an important subject for me because I need it for further study (i.e., going abroad).
		E14	I will learn many things in English that will help me get a job.
		E18	Making an effort in learning English is worth it because it will help me in the work that I want to do later.
	Attitude towards school	E12	Specialized school has taught me things that could be useful in my future study/ work.
		E15	Specialized school helped give me confidence to make decisions (i.e., decision about my future education/ career).
		E19	Specialized school has been a waste of time.
		E21	My school has done little to prepare me for life after I leave school (i.e., university, work life).
	Sense of belonging at school	E3	I feel like I belong.
		E5	I feel lonely.

	E7	Other students seem to like me.
	E8	I feel awkward and out of place.
	E11	I feel like an outsider (or left of thing).
	E18	I make friends easily.
General self-concept	E2	I have always believed that English is one of my best subjects.
	E4	I get good marks in my major subject.
	E6	In my English class, I understand even the most difficult work
	E9	I learn English quickly.
	E10	I am just not good at learning English as a major.

Appendix 3

Câu hỏi phỏng vấn học sinh

1. Tại sao em lại không tự tin vào kỹ năng Nói/ Viết ?

2. Tại sao em lại cho rằng Phát âm/ Nghe/ Nói là quan trọng nhất?

3. Em hãy mô tả cụ thể hơn về những khó khăn

4. Thiếu tự tin khi nói tiếng Anh: (tại sao em thiếu tự tin, thiếu tự tin trong hoàn cảnh nào, về vấn đề gì?)

5. Vốn từ vựng hạn chế (tại sao vốn từ của em hạn chế, em thiếu vốn từ trong những hoàn cảnh nào?)

6. Trên lớp, thầy/ cô thường tổ chức những hoạt động gì? Những hoạt động này có gây hứng thú cho em và các bạn trong lớp không?

Appendix 4

Câu hỏi phỏng vấn giáo viên

I. Năng lực và ưu tiên trong học tập của học sinh

1. Thầy/cô đánh giá thế nào về ***năng lực tiếng Anh*** của học sinh các lớp chuyên Anh trường mình (trong những năm gần đây)?
   - Năng lực tiếng của các học sinh trong cùng lớp có đồng đều nhau không?
   - Năng lực của học sinh các khóa trong những năm gần đây có đồng đều nhau không?

2. Thầy/cô đánh giá như thế nào về ***năng lực*** và ***mức độ chú trọng*** của học sinh trong từng nội dung học tập như: *từ vựng, ngữ pháp, ngữ âm*, và 4 kỹ năng *nghe, nói, đọc, viết?*
   - Phần nào học sinh học tốt và phần nào học không tốt? Tại sao?
   - Học sinh có xu hướng chú trọng vào nội dung nào hơn? Tại sao?

II. Phương pháp giảng dạy

1. Khi dạy học sinh chuyên Anh thì thầy/cô thường tổ chức những **hoạt động giảng dạy** gì? Mức độ hứng thú của học sinh và tính hiệu quả của từng hoạt động này ra sao?
   - Theo thầy/cô, những hoạt động nào sau đây sẽ gây hứng thú và đem lại hiệu quả cho việc học tập của học sinh: *sử dụng tranh ảnh, sơ đồ tư duy, thảo luận nhóm, xem video,*

tự đọc tài liệu, diễn kịch, tham gia những dự án thực tế có sử dụng tiếng Anh

III. Các khó khăn trong việc dạy và học

1. Trong quá trình giảng dạy, thầy/ cô nhận thấy học sinh của mình thường gặp các khó khăn gì? Thầy/ cô đã có những giải pháp gì giúp học sinh vượt qua được những khó khăn đó?

2. Bản thân thầy/cô đã gặp những khó khăn gì trong quá trình giảng dạy học sinh chuyên Anh và thầy cô có giải pháp gì để giải quyết những khó khăn đó?

IV. Đánh giá của giáo viên về thái độ và động lực học tập của học sinh

1. Từ quan sát của mình, thầy/cô có nhận xét gì về **thái độ học tập và mức độ hứng thú** của học sinh đối với môn tiếng Anh?

2. Theo thầy/cô thì **động lực và mục tiêu** của học sinh khi chọn theo học chuyên Anh là gì? Với phần lớn học sinh chuyên Anh thì mục tiêu nào là quan trọng nhất?

   - Có phải là vì những mục tiêu như *thi học sinh giỏi quốc gia/ đi du học/ thi vào các trường đại học lớn/ tìm một công việc tốt trong tương lai*?)

3. **Các hoạt động hướng nghiệp/ định hướng ngành học tương lai** cho học sinh chuyên Anh đã được trường mình tổ chức như thế nào và đem lại hiệu quả ra sao?

4. Theo thầy/cô thì học sinh cảm thấy như thế nào về **môi trường học tập** tại trường chuyên nói chung và tại các lớp chuyên Anh nói riêng? (ví dụ: *sự thoải mái, sự thân thiện, sự gắn bó* với trường lớp/ thầy cô/ bạn bè của các em)

VI. Những góp ý nhằm nâng cao chất lượng giảng dạy:

Từ những kinh nghiệm trên, thầy/ cô có đề xuất gì nhằm nâng cao chất lượng giảng dạy tiếng Anh cho học sinh chuyên không? (về nội dung chương trình, phương pháp giảng dạy, xây dựng môi trường học tập, v.v)

NHU CẦU HỌC TẬP MÔN TIẾNG ANH
CỦA HỌC SINH CHUYÊN ANH BẬC THPT TẠI VIỆT NAM: GÓC NHÌN CỦA GIÁO VIÊN VÀ HỌC SINH

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Tóm tắt: Học sinh chuyên/ học sinh giỏi thường có những đặc điểm nổi trội hơn về mặt trí tuệ và cảm xúc so với học sinh bình thường. Do vậy, trong học tập, những em này có xu hướng thể hiện những nhu cầu riêng, đòi hỏi giáo viên phải nắm bắt được, nếu không thì hiệu quả giảng dạy cho những học sinh này sẽ không cao. Tại Việt Nam, mặc dù hệ thống trường chuyên đã tồn tại từ lâu, song hầu như chưa có một nghiên cứu chính thức nào về hệ thống giáo dục cho học sinh chuyên nói chung và cho học sinh chuyên Anh nói riêng. Vì vậy, trong nghiên cứu này, các tác giả muốn tìm hiểu quan điểm của một số giáo viên và học sinh chuyên Anh về các nhu cầu trong việc học tập môn chuyên của những học sinh này. Dữ liệu được thu thập từ phiếu điều tra và câu hỏi phỏng vấn với 137 học sinh chuyên Anh và 5 giáo viên trực tiếp giảng dạy các em. Kết quả từ nghiên cứu cho thấy: (1) Trong 7 nội dung của chương

trình học tiếng Anh phổ thông (từ vựng, ngữ pháp, phát âm, nghe, nói, đọc, viết), các kỹ năng giao tiếp bằng lời thoại (nghe, nói, phát âm) được cho là quan trọng nhất, trong khi đó, nói và viết được cho là hai kỹ năng khó nhất; (2) Trong quá trình học, các hoạt động tạo được sự hứng thú và hiệu quả học tập cao là các hoạt động chú trọng vào kỹ năng nghe-nói như thảo luận nhóm, tranh luận, thuyết trình, và các hoạt động lấy người học làm trung tâm như tự học, tự nghiên cứu, làm dự án, v.v..; (3) Học sinh chuyên, nhìn chung, có thái độ hăng say và nghiêm túc trong học tập, tuy nhiên, niềm đam mê và động lực với những giờ học bồi dưỡng tiếng Anh để phục vụ cho kỳ thi học sinh giỏi quốc gia, là không cao. Những kết quả trên chỉ ra sự cần thiết nên chăng phải thay đổi lại mục tiêu và sứ mệnh đào tạo của hệ thống trường chuyên ở Việt Nam, cũng như sự điều chỉnh nội dung, chương trình học và cách thức kiểm tra đánh giá đối với nhóm đối tượng người học đặc biệt này.

Từ khóa: học sinh chuyên, hệ thống trường chuyên, nhu cầu của học sinh

MALE REPRESENTATION
IN *SUPER BOWL COMMERCIALS 2019*

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Abstract: Gender, especially female, representation in advertising has been extensively studied in recent decades; however, few studies have looked into male representation in the current media landscape. This article presents a multimodal critical discourse analysis (CDA) study on the contemporary depiction of men in Super Bowl commercials. Focusing on 57 advertisements aired during *Super Bowl 2019*, the research finds that male representation in TV advertisements is still largely confined by traditional male norms, despite the recent transformation in societal male roles. Besides, the findings also suggest that in negotiation with the rise in female power, male power does not decline, but varies in manifestation. Other findings include the dualistic view in male portrayal, and the normalization of men as the target of jokes. The study serves as an appeal for the reinvention of masculinity in today's world, and for more visible, creative efforts to challenge traditional male stereotypes in advertising and media.

Keywords: male representation, multimodal CDA, masculinity, advertisement

1. Introduction

Mass media have evolved with the invention of the Internet and other advancements of technology, but TV commercials are still the primary sources of product promotion. This is because the Internet itself has become a platform for TV commercials, as most television networks have applications that operate on mobile phones or computers which allow users to watch television programs online. Over-the-top television has demonstrated its impressive potential in advertising sales, with a whooping eight-fold year-over-year increase by 2018 (Munson, 2018). In addition to the large scale of TV connected advertisements, other compelling reasons for advertisers to pour investment in TV commercials include a safe environment for brands, high-quality commercials, and correct demographic targeting (Wolk, 2018).

Among the major TV programs that attract advertisers, the US Super Bowl was by far one of the most popular, ranking as the most-watched television program in US history (Bon, 2015). The Super Bowl commercials have become a phenomenon themselves, especially when a significant share of the audience reported watching the commercials only (Siltanen, 2014). The commercials are exposed not only to an unprecedented viewership, but also a diverse demographic. Since 2010, Super Bowl has recorded an annual audience of around 100,000

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million (Gough, 2019), and a roughly balanced distribution of viewership by gender (Marketing Charts, 2018). Super Bowl commercials have been featured in numerous studies, yet most of these studies focused on advertising impacts (e.g. Hatzithomas et al., 2010), gender stereotypes of both males and females (e.g. Vierra, 2014; Hatzithomas et al., 2016). Studies that pay exclusive attention to male depiction are few and far between.

This article, therefore, aims at investigating how men are represented in Super Bowl commercials from a multimodal critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective. The research question is:

How are men represented multimodally through Super Bowl TV commercials 2019?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language and Gender

The realm of research into the relationship and intersections between gender and language crosses various disciplines, notably applied linguistics, linguistic anthropology, cultural studies, feminist studies, sociolinguistics, and media studies. This could be attributed to the fact that gender studies per se is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry (McConnell-Ginet, 2012). Scholarly works had been connecting gender and language prior to the inception of the second-wave American feminism, as early as the 1920s (Sunderland, 2006). However, it was not until the 1970s that the study of genders in linguistics, precipitated by the second wave of Women's Movement, began to thrive. Accordingly, McConnell-Ginet (2012) pointed out that the topics of gender research at this stage were "women's language" - how women spoke in ways that indicated their feminism, and "ways of speaking about women" - that is, how society spoke of women. The focus of studies was, therefore, on how social norms shape women's speech, and "women" were mostly those of white, middle-class Americans. Needless to say, the apparent lack of male-focus gender studies during this period was not because scholars arbitrarily found women a more interesting subject of research, but due to the influence of the American feminism, which by that time had started to gain visibility for women in all aspects, including academia.

Regarding early research on gender and language, one of the most prominent names is American linguist Robin Lakoff. Her 1975 book *Language and Woman's Place* was said to be the starting point of study of gender and language in sociolinguistics and gender studies (Lakoff, 2004). Though being questioned of its empirical validity, her work marked the milestone of gender studies in linguistics since it adopted an innovative approach - switching the focus from grammar and phonetics towards syntax, style, and semantics (Wright, 2002). Other researchers, since then, have attempted to remedy the deficiencies of Lakoff's studies, which were based on the assumptions that one gender is inferior to another and that linguistics behaviors are male - norm. Single-sex studies instead of mixed sex studies have been conducted, and gender stereotypes have been questioned rather than enforced (Wright, 2002). Scholars challenged Lakoff's arguments and carried out research that helped enlarge the field of gender and language studies, for example, the deficit approach of Lakoff was later refined by O'barr and Atkins (1980) (as cited in McConnell-Ginet et al., 1980) as the dominance approach, which states that the discrepancy in linguistic behaviors between genders are the results of the power imbalance perpetuated in society.

Jennifer Coates presented the history of the approaches to gendered speech, namely the deficit, dominance, difference, and dynamic approaches in her book *Women, Men, and*

Languages (Coates, 2004). The deficit approach categorizes men's speech as standard, and women's as deficient. This approach came under a barrage of criticism, as it uses men's language as a benchmark for women's and thus posits that there is something inherently wrong with women's language (Coates, 2004). The dominance approach establishes a dichotomy, which views women as the subordinate group and men as the dominant group, and researchers who employ this model subscribe to the notion that the varied styles of speech between genders reflect the male supremacy. Meanwhile, the difference approach is based on the argument that men and women belong to different subcultures, resulting from the growing resistance of women to being categorized as the subordinate group: "Women began to assert that they had 'a different voice, a different psychology, and a different experience of love, work, and family from men" (Humm, 1989, as cited by Coates, 2004, p. 6). The merit of this approach is that it liberates the study of women's speech, allowing it to be conducted beyond a framework of oppression or powerlessness, and shows appreciation of women's linguistic strategies. Its limitations, however, stem from the problems when it is applied in mixed - group talk analysis, which can be explained by humans' tendency to accommodate the style of language to the person with whom they are communicating. For instance, a study of Thomson et al. (2001) revealed that in mixed-gender talk, people accommodate to the other gender. Accordingly, gender differences are less pronounced in mixed-gender groups, making the difference approach controversial. The forth approach, also the most current one, is referred to as the dynamic approach. It sees gender identity as a social construct instead of putting speech into a natural gendered category, and researchers who adopt this approach take a social constructionist perspective. That means, according to West and Zimmerman (1987, p. 135), speakers should be seen as "doing gender" rather than statically "being" a particular gender.

There are perhaps separations among scholars as to which approach is the most appropriate for doing research on the relationship between gender and language, but it should be noted that there is no such thing as a distinct division among the four approaches, because more often than not researchers are exposed to and influenced by more than one theoretical framework. However, among these four paradigms, the deficit approach is considered to be backward by the majority of current researchers, the dominance and difference approaches exerted the most influence in the 1980s and the 1990s and have fallen in popularity since then, while the dynamic approach, or social constructivism, now prevails. "What has changed is linguists' sense that gender is not a static, add-on characteristic of speakers, but is something that is accomplished in talk every time we speak" (Coates, 2004, p. 7).

2.2. Masculinity Ideologies

As a major part of media, advertising contributes significantly to the media representations of genders. Menvertising - the use of norm-breaking men's portrayals in advertising - does not fare as well as femvertising: Google Search generated only 214 search results related to "menvertising," compared to 43000 for "femvertising." Little has been done in the media to empower men, and this unbalance can be traced back to belief that men are the advantaged gender; hence, there is no pressing need to challenge male stereotypes. Meanwhile, the majority of male-oriented advertisements still set an unattainable image of what it means to be a man: sharp jawlines, well-toned muscles, physical and athletic strength, intelligence, and invincibility - the message for young men still is the same "strong, silent" ideal image of men in the 1970s (Maitland, 2018). This outdated perception of advertisers cannot represent men in this modern-day era, and as a result, many brands become out of touch with their targeted audience (Maitland, 2018).

Early masculinity ideologies were established on two basic themes: men should be accomplished on their own, and incompetent in all feminine activities (Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Indeed, a powerful social norm that influenced the male roles was the "anti-femininity standard" (Hartley, 1959). Generally, seeking achievements and suppressing emotions are the behaviors expected of men. In contrast to the standards that women are socially expected to uphold, the four major principles of masculinity include avoiding feminine characteristics ("No Sissy Stuff"), gaining power and status ("Be a Big Wheel"), being tough and self-reliant ("Be a Sturdy Oak"), and being aggressive and violent ("Give 'em Hell") (Debonah & Brannon, 1976, p. 12). Though the ideals of both femininity and masculinity did experience some changes in the later part of the twentieth century, the image of men seemed to be more constant than that of women (Mosse, 2010).

The ideals of masculinity can be reflected or projected in recent advertising images (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004). This is because social norms can be both reflected and generated by advertising: advertising can shape how people perceive themselves and the world around them, their available choices, and the standards by which they judge themselves and others (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004). Accordingly, advertisements are the reflection of how society perceives men, but they also construct social expectations of men. Therefore, the impact of the masculinity ideologies built by advertisements on how men think of themselves is significant, but perhaps without their conscious awareness of it.

Advertisements influence how we conceptualize masculinity, men's sexiness, and their desirable traits. The most common types of advertising usually portray men as the superior gender, whether it is in physical, financial, or psychological aspects (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996; Nixon 2003; Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998). OASIS (Organization Against Sexism and Institutionalized Stereotypes) believed that like women, men have to suffer from impossible comparison to the ideal male body in advertisements (Nakayama, n.d.). For example, advertisements that depict men as having extraordinary physical prowess often put men under pressure of living up to such an unrealistic image (Danna, 1992).

The masculinity ideologies delivered by advertisements are mainly hyper-masculinity, which has pernicious influences on both men and society (Krans, 2013). Hyper-masculinity was first coined by Zaitchik and Mosher (1993) as a gender-based ideology of exaggerated beliefs on how to be a man, such as "toughness as emotional self-control, violence as manly, danger as exciting, and callous attitudes towards women and sex" (Vokey et al., 2013, p. 562). The promotion of hyper-masculinity in advertisements can lead to an internalization of hegemonic masculine ideals, detrimental to men's social and health issues, especially when the advertisements target young men. Hyper-masculinity beliefs and behaviors have been found to be associated with "interpersonal violence, drug and alcohol abuse, dangerous driving, accidents, treatment program drop-out rate, medical mistrust, and high-risk sexual behaviors". (Vokey et al., 2013, p. 573). Men are constantly told to "be a man," or "man up," refrain from expressing their emotions and conceal their weakness. However, these behaviors go against the natural, biological part of being a human, and can damage the male psyche (Maff, 2018). The concept of "masculine men" in advertisements that defines a desirable man as having perfectly sculpted muscles, wearing expensive outfits, and being surrounded by women can be a societal pressure. It threatens men's self-confidence, and causes them to construct unhealthy self-images (Maff, 2018).

In addition, as hyper-masculinity is perpetuated and reinforced by advertisements, the consequences can be extended to women and society. Hyper-masculinity ideologies tell men to

treat women as inferior, which is the fundamental cause of domestic violence, and violence against women and girls in general (Mbabazi, 2018). If boys are not allowed to show their emotions, they might have healthier and more positive relationships with their co-workers and spouses. Stopping men from communicating their feelings can also lead to a breakdown of the society, as sharing emotions contributes to the construction of the community (Maff, 2018). Hyper-masculinity also has implications for economic growth - when men are opposed to the idea of women being financially independent because they believe the breadwinning role is for men (Mbabazi, 2018).

2.3. Male Representation in Advertising

According to Hall, representation is part of the process of producing and exchanging meaning through language. He argued that representation is a concept that "connects meaning and language to a culture" (1997, p. 5). Male representation, therefore, is the production and transmission of what it means to be a man in a culture. Since language is a system of representation and can shape our understanding of the world, the gendering of languages can influence our perception, and the gendered language systems may not just reflect but also reinforce the disparity in male and female social and cultural roles (Prewitt-Freilino et al., 2012).

Over the years, stereotypes of both men and women in Super Bowl commercials have been inclining towards the egalitarian side (Hatzihomas et al., 2016). Though traditional masculinity still commands the depiction of men, its influence seems to abate gradually. The most common male stereotypes in two decades (1990-1999 and 2000-2009) both were "authority figures," "career-oriented," and "activities and life outside the home," but the later decade saw a sharp decline in male representation as "authority figures" (Hatzihomas et al., 2016, p. 897). Men, according to Hatzihomas et al. (2016), appear to have lost their power status in Super Bowl commercials. Yet, on the whole, advertising still continues to represent men in their iconographic stereotypical roles despite the considerable changes in male roles since the millennium (Gentry & Harrison, 2010).

Regarding male representation in different product categories, studies into commercials of food and drinks, alcoholic beverages, and cars also illustrated the changes in the depiction of men. The food and drinks and alcoholic beverage category showed a visible decrease in men's power, while commercials of automobiles and food and drinks demonstrated a shift from men in the corporate world to men in outdoor activities (Hatzihomas et al., 2016). Men started to be depicted as losers in beer and liquor Super Bowl advertisements in 2002 and 2003 (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005). In 2010, men as losers were still depicted, but they were portrayed as silly and miserable, rather than lovable and happy (Green & Van Oort, 2013). This stereotype of men as losers appeared highly frequently in commercials of alcoholic beverages, with stupid behaviors and public humiliation (Hatzihomas et al., 2016). In brief, the loss in power, a tendency to detach from the corporate environment, and ridiculous behaviors are the recent changes in male representation in Super Bowl commercials.

In a sense, changes in male depiction are predictable as societal male roles have become more diverse and less traditional (Oláh et al., 2018), and Super Bowl advertisements are supposed to reflect that change. However, it appears that Super Bowl advertisers have been quick at catching up with any trend but the transformation in male roles so far: the changes in male representation of these commercials seem inadequate, disappointing, and leave a lot to be desired.

2.4. CDA

CDA is well suited for investigating gendered discourses. "The starting point for CDA is social issues and problems, and it does not begin with text and interaction" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 229), and "one such social issue is gender, which is a problem for women and girls; in different ways, for men and boys; and accordingly for gender relations" (Sunderland, as cited in Atanga, 2010, p. 31). Remlinger (as cited in Atanga, 2010, p. 31), also claimed that CDA can help language and gender study through "a critical examination of discourses and can provide it with a particularly developed understanding of the linguistic constitution of gender ideologies". More importantly, CDA focuses on the intrinsic relation between language and power, and how social domination is demonstrated in discourse. "CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2001, as cited in Tannen et al., 2018, p. 352). Therefore, CDA is an appropriate approach for research in gender ideologies and inequality.

Van Dijk (2001) pointed out the requirements for doing CDA. In order to achieve its objectives, CDA must give fundamental focus on social problems or political issues, which are critically analyzed with a multidisciplinary perspective. Besides, CDA must also try to provide explanation, not just description, of discourse structures in relation to social interaction and social structure. In particular, CDA primarily investigates how discourse structures "enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge" relations of power and dominance in society (Van Dijk, 2001, as cited in Tannen et al., 2018, p. 353).

The basic principles of CDA are summarized by Fairclough and Wodak. These include "CDA addresses social problems", "power relations are discursive", "discourse constitutes society and culture", "discourse does ideological work", "discourse is historical", "the link between text and society is mediated", "discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory", "and discourse is a form of social action" (Tannen et al., 2018, p. 353).

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

The data of the study consists of 57 advertisements aired during Super Bowl 2019. Each advertisement lasts from 30 seconds to 60 seconds. The advertisements feature a wide range of products, namely automobiles, food and drinks, and technological gadgets. Movie trailers and TV program teasers are excluded, as well commercials that have no distinctive human visibility. The 57 advertisements are numbered and coded randomly from AD1 to AD57 (e.g., AD1: advertisement numbered one). The list of the synopses of all commercials is presented in the appendix of this study. I examined the visual and linguistic factors in both the characters in the commercials and the voiceover based on Fairclough's CDA model (2001) and Kress and van Leewen's framework (1996).

3.2. Data Analysis

This study approaches the data from a multimodal perspective, drawing on CDA as the main method to analyze linguistic elements and using Kress and van Leewen's (1996) framework for the analysis of visual factors. CDA aims to elucidate on how discourse appears in dialectical relations with other social factors, in social processes and changes (Fairclough, 2013). In this study, these changes are related to gender ideologies and gender inequality.

Fairclough's (2001) CDA model organized CDA into three dimensions including **description**, **interpretation**, and **explanation** for every discursive event. The first dimension - the **description of texts** involves different analytical steps, from grammar, vocabulary to textual structures. The second dimension addresses discourse processes and their dependence on background common-sense assumptions. The third dimension is concerned with the social context of the discourse. In this stage, discourse is regarded as a social practice or a social process, and is seen as part of social struggle processes, within "a matrix of relations of power" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 135). The social effects and social determinants of discourse should be investigated at three levels of social organizations, which include the societal level, the institutional level, and the situational level.

Kress and van Leewen (1996) proposed that the analysis of the visual features should be a vital part of the critical discipline. Adopted the theoretical viewpoint of Michael Halliday, the framework includes three meta-functions of visual images: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The **ideational meta-function** refers to the ability of a semiotic mode to represent the world as it is experienced by humans. The **interpersonal meta-function** refers to the ability of a semiotic mode to represent the social relations between the producer, the viewer, and the object represented. The **textual meta-function** refers to the ability of a semiotic mode to possess cohesiveness, which coheres the different parts of the visual and with its context.

In this study, each advertisement is analyzed individually based on Fairclough's CDA model (2001) with Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) visual grammar incorporated within the Description stage of Fairclough (2001). Patterns, or themes, are identified thereafter based on latent thematic coding. The thematic analysis of data is conducted with constant reference to current cultural context. An illustration of the procedure to treat the data and categorize the results is presented below. AD40 is picked as the analysis prototype as it can demonstrate clearly the analysis process.

Step 1. Individual analysis of each advertisement – AD40

Description of texts with the incorporation of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) visual grammar:

AD40 is the advertisement of an expense management system. The advertisement voiceover is in the form of a song's lyrics, which is commissioned for this commercial to fit the expense management software that it advertises:

"Whip too refined for the horsepower/ Got it runnin' off a seafood tower/ Know that I'm here for a reason/ Car so cold that it's sneezin'/ Day in the life of a baller [interrupted]/ 'Cause I had to snap it with Expensify/My garage, abracadabra/ Ice whip, two chicks that look like Cleopatra." (AD40)

Visually, the man is represented as the main character. He is dressed in white designer clothes with swaggering confidence. As he walks through his surreal, enormous ice-covered garage, he keeps rapping and boasting about his material possessions, which are placed as ornaments around his garage. Regarding how the man is depicted against the women around him, it can be seen that he takes the dominant position as the center of all video frames, while the women are dressed in golden ancient-Egyptian attire constitute the background. Besides, his camera gazes are downward, which indicates that he is in a higher position than viewers. Throughout the commercial, the most salient point is that the man is shown with luxurious items surrounding him, which seems to accentuate his material wealth. The camera angle continuously emphasizes how he stands above these items, or at the center of these items in all frames.

Interpretation:

The song lyrics contain phrases that can fall under the category of wealth and financial power: "refined whip", "seafood tower", "car", garage". It also emphasizes that this lifestyle is not an exaggerated display, but is just a normal "day in the life" of the male baller. The part "Ice whip, two chicks that look like Cleopatra" uses the derogatory term "chick" which refers to a young woman, together with the parallel structure "ice whip, two chicks" which implies that these young women are put in the same category as the ice whip of the car. The visual of the video also objectifies the women as it makes them look like some sort of decoration of the man's garage.

Explanation:

On the whole, the male baller is depicted as being financially powerful, and having women as his possessions. This could be explained by the persistence of gender inequality, which often favors men and gives them superior status.

Step 2. Identify a theme – AD40

The commercial repeatedly uses words and phrases which point at material wealth: refined whip", "seafood tower", "car", garage". In other words, the commercial plays up the financial power of the man. In addition, the man is seen to be in a superior position in comparison with the female characters. In fact, the women can be classified as part of his possessions. This makes the man having dominance over female characters, or having power over them. Therefore, this commercial can be put under the theme of Men of Power.

4. Findings & Discussion

Table 1

Summary of Main Themes

Number	Themes	Advertisements
1	Men as experts and leaders	AD11, AD15, AD20, AD23, AD30, AD42, AD45, AD46
2	Men as heroes	AD6, AD7, AD14, AD15,AD17, AD19, AD28, AD36, AD57
3	Men of power	AD5, AD11, AD29, AD32, AD40, AD43, AD51
4	Men as competitive individuals	AD9, AD21, AD46, AD52, AD11, AD22, AD26, AD33, AD53, AD35, AD36, AD55, AD41
5	Men as the subjects of ridicule	AD1, AD46, AD13, AD38, AD12, AD18, AD48, AD50, AD39

4.1. Men as Experts and Leaders

A recurring theme regarding male representation in these advertisements is men as experts and leaders. Men are shown to have high job positions or work in professions requiring a high level of expertise. They are portrayed to be football legends (AD11, AD23), coaches (AD15), home security professionals (AD20), technological experts (A23, AD42), cleaning

experts (AD30), dentists (AD46), jurors (AD46), masterminds (AD45). They are often dressed in uniforms, suits and ties, but they also appear in casual clothes such as T-shirts, jeans and bomber jackets. This correlates to the "CEO Casual" trend in recent years, whereby managers and executives of high positions, especially in creative or high-tech enterprises, donned casual clothing instead of suits, which they believe signal old-fashioned inflexibility (DeNinno, 2012). Even when the experts in the advertisements are animated characters, such as the animated bespectacled fox in (AD27), their genders are also assigned as male. On two occasions where men work as waiters (AD24), and bellhops (AD46), they are shown to work in high-end restaurants or hotels. Their fast reactions, great dexterity, and self-confidence indicate that they are highly skilled and have significant experience in their professions (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Professional Male Bellhop

Linguistic evidence of men being the experts and leaders can be seen in the data. The conversational style of three out of seven male experts in the advertisements includes imperatives indicating their higher power status and more domineering role in conversation. For example, in AD20, the title reads "When it Comes to Smart Home Security, Trust the Pros," and the two main famous real estate experts introduce a professional home security system and state that it is the "number one name in security." The imperative "Trust the Pros" is employed to persuade viewers to follow the lead of the two men in the advertisement. The classic motif of having male experts as brand representatives and the emphasis on the word "pro/professional" are reiterated in AD30: "Persil-Proclean." In this advertisement, the male professional also employs imperatives: "Keep it clean." Though the use of imperatives in advertisements is seen as a linguistic strategy for persuading and engaging the audience (Myers, 1997), it also refers to the high power status of the experts in the advertisements, who happen to be males.

4.2. Men as Heroes

The portrayal of men as saviors, protectors, and superheroes appears in all eight advertisements that employ the heroic theme. Men are celebrated for their noble sacrifice and special abilities as first responders (AD6, AD15), soldiers and main guards (AD7), inspirers (AD14), silent heroes (AD19), animated male superhero character (AD28), knights (AD36), and journalists who sacrifice their lives in dangerous assignments (AD57). The male heroes portrayed in the advertisements can be either solemn heroes or comedic heroes.

Five out of eight commercials use narrative strategy to represent men as solemn heroes solving a problem in the form of a modern tale. By employing the heroic stories, the advertisements seem to presuppose that their male audience has experienced similar situations or desired to undertake the same heroic tasks. Below are some of the examples for the heroic narratives in the commercials:

When we go off to war, when we exercise our rights, when we soar to our greatest heights, when we mourn and pray, when our neighbors are at risk, when our nation is threatened, there's someone to gather the facts, to bring you the story no matter the cost." (AD57)

We're not famous. There are no stars on the sidewalk for us. No statues in our honor. We're just a small Georgia town of complete unknowns. The closest thing to a world stage is 81 miles away in Atlanta tonight. Our movie stars, our football careers, they never took off. Because we are not known for who we are, we hope to be known for what we do, what we build. This thing we resemble, it has the chance to be remembered. No, we're not famous, but we are incredible. And we make incredible things. (AD19)

Hero-themed narrative advertisements thus emphasize the sacrifice of men for "the greater good" - that is, men conducting honorable acts such as taking risks to protect others or devoting themselves to excellence.

Besides, advertisements also portray the heroic male with a touch of humor. Instead of being serious and determined, these heroic-comedic characters are funny and carefree in their missions to protect the world (AD17 and AD28). For instance, in AD28, the superhero is an animated peanut called Mr. Peanut. Wearing a monocle and a black top hat, he maneuvers his peanut-shaped, legume-laden van along the streets, sending obstacles flying off his path, before successfully reaching his destination to save a man from eating a kale chip. His comedic, unorthodox appearance of a savior coupling with the typical flamboyant car driving scenes of action movies can induce laughter from the audience (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Mr. Peanut-Animated Male Superhero
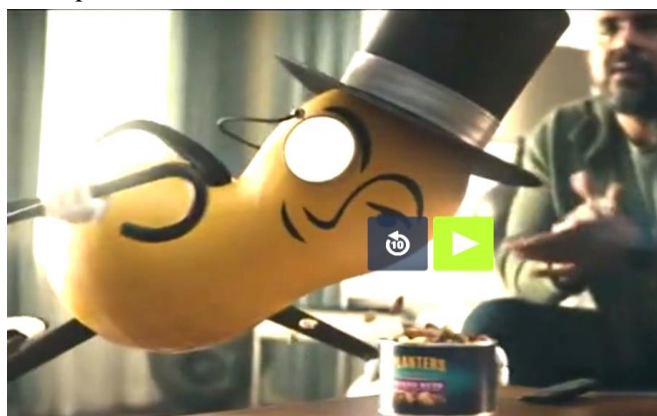
In terms of language, the advertisement uses multiple wordplays to amplify the humor. For example: "And people think I'm **nuts**.", "Go get them, **nut** man!", "Mr. **Peanut** is always there in crunch time." These double entendre operate based on the two different meanings of the word "nuts" as either the literal legume seeds or being crazy, and of the phrase "in crunch time" as either time to eat something crunchy, or in difficult time.

This relaxed attitude seems opposite to the heroic male image, but it exemplifies the

common male role that men should not be serious or emotional (Harrison, 2008). The multiple wordplays and jokes might have been created under the assumption that masculinity should go hand in hand with humor. This association of humor with the male gender probably originates from Western stereotype of male being the canonical humor initiator, or the bias whereby men are considered the "funnier sex," irrespective of how their humor is judged (Mickes et al., 2011; Hooper et al., 2016, as cited in Tosun et al., 2018, p. 1).

Male representation as heroic figures in advertising is not new. In the media world in general and in advertising in particular, *men as heroes* have become a cliché exploited in countless media products. Heroic masculinity is one of the most salient ideologies in the American catalogue of masculine ideologies (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Heroic masculinity is the coming together of two contending models, "one emphasizing respectability, organized achievement, and civic virtues, and the other emphasizing rebellion, untamed potency, and self-reliance" (Holt & Thompson, 2004, p. 427). These seemingly contrasting models partly resemble the two types of heroes identified in this study.

4.3. Men of Power

In these advertisements, men are often portrayed as being physically, emotionally, financially powerful, or having the ability to influence and intimidate others. They are seen to be trend setters (AD5), rich technophilic footballers (AD11), men with superpowers (AD32), wealthy extravagant men (AD40), spicy food lovers (AD43), villains (AD44), monsters (AD51), and bullies (AD29). A prominent image in the commercials is a rich man boasting about his material wealth and properties (AD11 and AD40). If the power of men is not shown in his financial status, it can be interpreted as other stereotypically masculine abilities, for example, the strength to endure spiciness (AD43).

Men's power is also portrayed in evil form. In AD44, AD51, and AD29, men are represented as fearful characters with frightening and hideous appearance. In AD44, the lurking creature scaring the couple is a masked man in a nasty muddy raincoat and pointy creepy fingernails (Figure 3). To make the fearsome look of the man even more noticeable, the man is placed in contrast with a woman having "killer skin," but not because she looks frightening, but because her beautiful skin can stun even a killer. This contradiction in outward appearance between men and women can also be seen in AD51 (Figure 4). As the voiceover states "**he drinks a Coke, and she drinks a Coke**," the animated man is a huge hairy monster with protruding fangs, while the woman is in a flowery dress, with careful makeup and well-manicured hands. Clearly, both men in AD44 and AD51 appear to be ugly, unnerving and evidently the bad guys, and their appearance is made even more unsettling when placed in contrast with the stereotypical female beauty.

Figure 3

Creepy Masked Man

Figure 4

Male Monster

In AD29, the portrayal of men is slightly different from AD44 and AD51 since it features young boys instead of grownup men. AD29 makes a detour from the majority of Super Bowl commercials pitched towards men. This advertisement recreates a scene in which she as a small girl is bashed and bullied by a group of taller boys when they play football on the street (Figure 5). This group of male bullies is shown to be much taller than the girl and completely dominates the whole scene. The contrasting depiction of the young boys and the young girl seems to imply two assumptions. One is that boys usually have stronger appearance than girls, and the other is that when it comes to bullying, the bully is often of the male gender.

Figure 5

Male Bullies

4.4. Men as Competitive Individuals

The typical competitive fields such as sports, games and adventures are often overrepresented by men. Men appear in all advertisements promoting competitiveness except AD29 and AD47 featuring women only. Men are seen as gamers (AD9, AD21, AD46, AD52), sport enthusiasts (AD11, AD22, AD26, AD33, AD53), competitors (AD35, AD36, AD55), and adventurers (AD41).

Specifically, AD21, AD46, AD52 show grownup men with their attention completely devoted to the games they are playing. The setting of AD21 is a life-size game of pinball, and the main character is a grey-haired middle-aged man. He wears an ever-present smirk on his face and confidently maneuvers the car through the course of the game, successfully dodging attacks and earning several dings along the way. Meanwhile, AD46 offers a glimpse into the

unpleasant experience of travelling on a six-hour flight next to a loud inconsiderate male gamer. The man is in his late thirties, completely absorbed in the tablet computer, laughing out loud and totally oblivious of the inconvenience he is causing other passengers. In AD52 showing a father and his son playing video games, the father gets upset and swats the game consoles out of his son's hands when the son takes advantage of the father's shift of focus and wins the game (Figure 6). All these grown men play their childish games with attention and seriousness.

Figure 6

Father and Son Playing a Console Game

Linguistic evidence for the presumed obsession of men over gaming can be taken from AD52 with the slogan: "**Level up** with the 5$ lineup" (AD52). This double entendre refers to both the types of meals provided by the restaurant and the level advancement in a game. Generally, the importance of gaming is portrayed to retain over time and stages in the life of a man; gaming is integrated into men's daily life, from meeting up with their friends, travelling, father-and-son bonding, and even in what they eat every day. In addition, men are frequently seen in other competitions, including a parody of a dog show in which humans instead of dogs are lined up to compete for a prize (AD35), and a duel between two knights (AD36).

Besides, men in the commercials are seen as individual sports players (AD11-golf), team sports players (AD22, AD55-American football), and extreme sports participants (AD 26-skydiving, car racing, AD33-mountain hiking). If they are not part of the game, then they will be watching it as passionate spectators (AD33-football, AD53-American football). A recurring scene in the sport-themed commercials is the victory moment- whether it is the selfie of an all-male group on the top of a mountain (AD33), or the goal celebration of a male football team and their male supporters (AD33, AD53). Men are portrayed as winners swelling with pride in the most sensational, glorious moments of a sport event. No men are depicted as indifferent to sports, or struggling with this common pastime. The emphasis on winning and the lack of the acknowledgement of the other end (losing) implies that for men, competitions are of great significance, but what makes them visible and appreciated is the winning part. This could bring about the invisibility of and unfair judgment towards men who do not have any interest in sports, or those who cannot be winners. Thus, in the commercials, sports are depicted as one of the most crucial parts of a man's life; sports are not just a means of entertainment, but also a way to express men's crave for competition and winning.

4.5. Men as the Subjects of Ridicule

Men are seen as helpless and embarrassing (AD1, AD46, AD13, AD38), incompetent

and unconfident (AD39), and weirdoes (AD12, AD18, AD48, AD50). For example, AD38 derives humor from the male carelessness and helplessness (Figure 7). The commercial shows a male office worker choking on a cashew, and his near-death experience brings him to a dreamy state where he has a tearful encounter with his late grandfather and gets to drive the fancy car of the Cashew brand. When one of his co-workers helps him to dislodge the cashew, he comes back to reality, looking entirely disappointed as his illusion is shattered. This gives the impression that the man is careless and helpless (lack of physical power); and that he is unable to afford the fancy car (lack of financial power). Mocking underachieving men in terms of physical strengths and financial status may result from the influence of the traditional masculinity supposing men to assume the role of breadwinners or main providers of their families, which can lead to distress, violence, or depression (Kutsch, 2016).

Figure 7

Helpless Man Choking on a Cashew
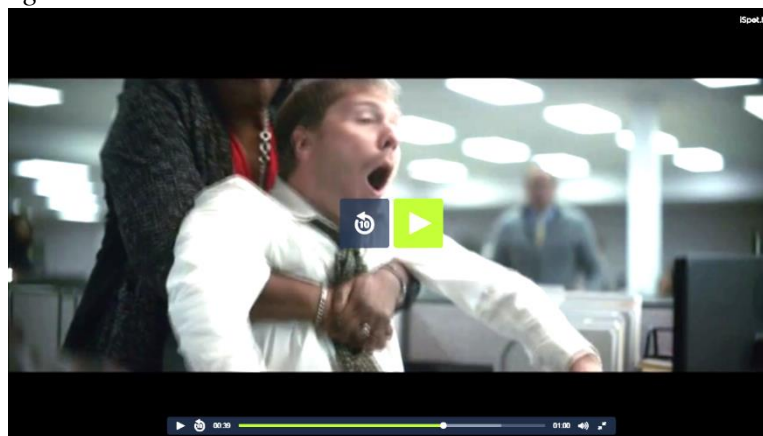
In an attempt to be humorous, AD13, advertising frozen food, employs the belief that men are likely to succumb to addiction (Adams, 2019). This commercial is a depressing narrative of a woman whose boyfriend has an addiction to frozen food. Despite her multiple efforts, she cannot cure him of the addiction. Under a completely negative light, the man is portrayed as a hopeless addict who ruins his life and becomes a burden to his girlfriend. He appears weak and dependent, with his eyes averted from the camera, disheveled hair, hunched shoulders, and his girlfriend comforting him. He is portrayed as a loser whose posture shows that he has given in and has no intention of fighting back the disorder. His embarrassing behaviors are told by his girlfriend in a sad, desperate tone of voice:

> My boyfriend has an **addiction**. Ever since it started, he has turned into a **3-minute man**. I tried to **spice things up**, but it didn't really work. Now we are into **amateur** food videos. This addiction can happen to anyone. It's hard to resist. (AD13)

This advertisement uses sexual innuendos to liken frozen food to pornography. It sticks to a stereotype that men crave sexual intercourses and are much more attracted to pornography than women (Kim, 2019). Accordingly, it uses the risqué double entendre to illustrate the man's utter defeat under the appeal of frozen food as men surrendering to sexual imagery. The sexual innuendos can be explained as follows:

Addiction: Since the girlfriend does not state what addiction her boyfriend has, it seems to be embarrassing and cannot be stated directly. The addiction here may refer to the addiction to either frozen food or pornography.

3-minute man: This uttering is accompanied by the scene where the man is using the

microwave oven to heat the frozen food in 3 minutes, hence the nickname. However, the phrase "3-minute man" can also have the derogating meaning referring to men who cannot satisfy their partners during sexual intercourses.

Spice things up: The setting is a romantic candle-lit dinner, and she is also wearing a sensual satin gown. This gives the impression that the woman is trying to add excitement to their sexual life, one interpretation of the phrase "spice things up". Yet, as the commercial focuses on the man's addiction to frozen food, this phrase can also be understood as adding spices to make the food taste better.

Amateur food videos: Besides its literal meaning, the phrase also bears semantic resemblance to amateur pornography videos. To make the resemblance more obvious, the couple is positioned in bed and mumbles phrases such as "Hmm", and "So good", which indicate satisfaction in an erotic manner.

In brief, the innuendos emphasize the embarrassing obsession of the man with frozen food, and perpetuate the stereotype that men are addicts especially to pornography. This negative portrayal of men, when put in context, is even more disturbing. At the time the commercial was released, the US was in the middle of an opioid epidemic (Adams, 2019); in this context, such an attempt to derive humor from addiction could be seen as unseemly. This trivializes and normalizes addictions in men and desensitizes the public in perception of male addictions. Thus, the contemptuous, negative view of men as losers because they lack competence, or that they are more prone to addiction is a very narrow and stereotypical representation.

4.6. Consistency and Changes in Male Representation in Super Bowl Commercials

The findings reveal the consistency in several aspects of male representation in Super Bowl commercials during the first two decades of the 21st century. Firstly, the **overrepresentation of men** in the commercials stays virtually unchanged. Men still dominate the scene in Super Bowl 2019 commercials, even when females contribute nearly half of the audience. This is consistent with the findings of Drewniany (2003). Secondly, the **portrayal of male power** remains constrained by traditional masculinity, most notably by men's dominance in physical, financial, and psychological aspects. Among the four **traditional masculinity** standards listed out by Debonnah and Brannon (1976), the concept of "Be a Big Wheel," referring to the achievement of power and status, stands out as the most influential and long-lasting principle. For example, Super Bowl commercials 2019 still demonstrates men's desirability in their physical strength, socioeconomic status, and emotional toughness. In addition, Super Bowl commercial 2019 arguably reinforced male aggressiveness and violence – or the concept of "Give 'em Hell" (Debonnah & Brannon, 1976). In a sense, this concept has evolved into male competitiveness in various aspects instead of male physical violence or superiority since the latter might be frowned upon by the current public. This concurs with the findings of recent research which suggest that Super Bowl advertising largely portrays men in their stereotypical roles, despite the marked shift in societal male roles since the start of the new millennium (Gentry & Harrison, 2010). Thirdly, Super Bowl commercials 2019 are a continuation of the shifting construction in **male representation as losers and as the targets of jokes**. They are portrayed as miserable, stupid, and humiliated by the public, which is consistent with findings of Green and Van Oort (2013) and Hatzihomas et al. (2016).

However, the research also adds nuances to findings of previous studies into male representation in Super Bowl commercials. While Hatzihomas et al. (2016) interpreted the

decrease in male authority figures as the decrease in male power, it could be argued that **male power has varied in manifestation instead of decreasing**. On the one hand, male authority figures still are a predominant theme in Super Bowl commercials 2019, with the omnipresence of male experts and celebrities. This indicates a continuation of the portrayal of men with real or apparent positions of power. On the other hand, male power is expressed in other forms, including unachievable, imaginary types of power such as those of superheroes, or negative, disapproving types of power such as those of monsters or outlaws. One particularly worth-noting type of male power in Super Bowl commercial 2019 is one that derives from their ugly and frightening appearance, which is juxtaposed to the female power gained from their iconographic physical beauty.

4.7. The Dualism of Male Representation in Super Bowl Commercials

The findings support previous studies indicating that men are more prone to dualistic representation than their female counterparts, including the findings of Baldwin et al. (2014), which claimed that men are usually portrayed as either dependable and stoic or weak and dependent. Similarly, In Super Bowl commercials 2019, men are represented as either powerful and respectable or powerless and ridiculous. Men who conform to traditional masculinity standards are perceived as desirable, whereas men who stray from traditional masculine norms are demeaned and humiliated. Additionally, in Super Bowl commercials 2019, gay men are unsurprisingly absent from the scene. This substantiates the claim of Balwin, et al. (2014) which pointed out that masculinity is largely encircled by heterosexuality, and thus gay men's masculinity is not acknowledged. The dualistic view of men as either powerful or powerless, respectable or humiliating, losers or winners, homosexual or heterosexual is accentuated in Super Bowl commercials 2019. This dichotomous point of view regarding masculinity was also previously mentioned in Balwin et al. (2014), which suggested that this false dichotomy prevents men from embracing gender multiplicity, as well as restricts their diversity of choices.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated male representation in the American advertising world by examining the commercials of Super Bowl 2019. The data was analyzed from a multimodal CDA approach which considered the visual and linguistic elements of the advertisements. The findings revealed that men are overrepresented in comparison with women, and their ideal images are still confined by traditional masculinity. Most frequently, men are represented as authority figures, heroes, and powerful individuals, with their superiority in expertise, financial capacity, physical prowess, and emotional toughness. Competition is seen as an indispensable part of the world of men. In addition, the depiction of men as pathetic losers is continued and normalized, highlighting the polarization of male representation as either winners or losers, and the dualism of male portrayal which limits men's choices. The research also shows the normalization of men as the targets of jokes.

The findings suggest that traditional masculinity ideologies still play a decisive role in the depiction of men in advertising. This points to a disconnection between male representation in advertisements and the current transformation in societal male roles. The traditional masculinity stereotypes persisting in today's advertisements can render the masculinity picture narrow and confining. These masculine norms may not only result in discrimination against those who fail to adhere to them, but also create hurdles for men trying to realize their full potential as human beings. While women are increasingly portrayed in a less stereotypical way,

men seem to struggle inside the pincers of traditional masculinity. With their significant role in influencing the public, advertisements also have the power to send out societal messages and present a more complete depiction of manhood. Advertisements in general and TV commercials in particular, therefore, should enlarge the number of options for men and provide a bigger picture of who they can be.

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Appendix

List of advertisements

Retrieved from https://www.ispot.tv/, 2020, March 20

I. Forth-Quarter commercials:

1. T-mobile -Dad

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS6p/t-mobile-super-bowl-2019-dad-song-by-dean-martin

2. Michelob ULTRA Pure Gold: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'The Pure Experience' Featuring Zoë Kravitz

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS6S/michelob-ultra-pure-gold-super-bowl-2019-the-pure-experience-featuring-zo-kravitz

3. Amazon: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Not Everything Makes The Cut' Featuring Harrison Ford

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS6g/amazon-super-bowl-2019-not-everything-makes-the-cut-featuring-harrison-ford

4. Budweiser: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Wind Never Felt Better' Song by Bob Dylan

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS6T/budweiser-super-bowl-2019-wind-never-felt-better-song-by-bob-dylan

5. Burger King Whopper: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Andy'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS66/burger-king-whopper-super-bowl-2019-andy

6. Verizon: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'The Team That Wouldn't Be Here'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS61/verizon-super-bowl-2019-the-team-that-wouldnt-be-here

7. Bud Light: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Trojan Horse Occupants'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS62/bud-light-super-bowl-2019-trojan-horse-occupants

8. WeatherTech CupFone: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Dropped Call'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS6q/weathertech-cupfone-super-bowl-2019-dropped-call

9. Microsoft Xbox Adaptive Controller: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'We All Win'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS6b/microsoft-xbox-adaptive-controller-super-bowl-2019-we-all-win

II. 3rd Quarter Commercials

10. Bud Light: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Medieval Barbers'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS6L/bud-light-super-bowl-2019-medieval-barbers

11. SKECHERS: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Romo Mode' Featuring Tony Romo

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS59/skechers-slip-on-sneakers-super-bowl-2019-featuring-tony-romo

12. Colgate Total Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Close Talker' Featuring Luke Wilson

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS5P/colgate-total-super-bowl-2019-close-talker-featuring-luke-wilson

13. DEVOUR Foods: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Food Porn'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS5i/devour-foods-super-bowl-2019-food-porn

14. NFL: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Inspire Change' Ft. Brandon Marshall, Sam Acho

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS5h/nfl-super-bowl-2019-inspire-change#

15. Verizon: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'The Coach That Wouldn't Be Here: Anthony Lynn'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS58/verizon-super-bowl-2019-the-team-that-wouldnt-be-here-anthony-lynn

16. Michelob ULTRA: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Robots' Featuring Maluma

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS5e/michelob-ultra-super-bowl-2019-robots-featuring-maluma

17. Wix.com Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Let People Find You' Featuring Karlie Kloss

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS5a/wix-com-super-bowl-2019-tv-commercial-let-people-find-you-featuring-karlie-kloss

18. Bubly Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Michael Bublé vs. bubly' Featuring Michael Bublé

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS5_/bubly-super-bowl-2019-michael-bubl-vs-bubly-featuring-michael-bubl

19. 2020 Kia Telluride: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'The Great Unknowns'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS5c/kia-telluride-super-bowl-2019-the-great-unknowns-t1

III. Half-time Commercials

20. ADT Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'When it Comes to Smart Home Security, Trust the Pros.' Featuring Jonathan and Drew Scott

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS5G/adt-super-bowl-2019-trust-the-pros-featuring-jonathan-and-drew-scott

21. 2020 Toyota Supra GR: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Wizard' Song by The Who [T1]

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS5g/2020-toyota-supra-gr-super-bowl-2019-wizard-t1

22. NFL: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'The 100-Year Game' Featuring Marshawn Lynch, Tom Brady, Joe Montana, Peyton Manning

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS55/nfl-super-bowl-2019-dinner-fight

IV. 2nd Quarter Commercials

23. Sprint: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Best of Both Worlds' Featuring Bo Jackson

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS19/sprint-super-bowl-2019-best-of-both-worlds-featuring-bo-jackson

24. Stella Artois: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Change Up The Usual' Ft. Sarah Jessica Parker, Jeff Bridges

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1U/stella-artois-super-bowl-2019-change-up-the-usual-ft-sarah-jessica-parker-jeff-bridges

25. TurboTax Live Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'RoboChild'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1v/turbotax-super-bowl-2019-robochild

26. Norwegian Cruise Line: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Good to Be Free' Song by Andy Grammer

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1c/norwegian-cruise-line-super-bowl-2019-good-to-be-free-song-by-andy-grammer

27. Mint Mobile Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Chunky-Style Milk? That's Not Right'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS13/mint-mobile-super-bowl-2019-chunky-style-milk-thats-not-right

28. Planters: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Mr. Peanut Is Always There in Crunch Time' Ft. Alex Rodriguez, Charlie Sheen

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1Q/planters-super-bowl-2019-mr-peanut-is-always-there-in-crunch-time-ft-alex-rodriguez-charlie-shee

29. Toyota RAV4 Hybrid: Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Toni' Featuring Antoinette Harris [T1]

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS18/toyota-rav4-hybrid-super-bowl-2019-toni-featuring-antoinette-harris-t1

30. Persil ProClean Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'The Deep Clean Level'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1e/persil-proclean-super-bowl-2019-the-deep-clean-level

31. T-Mobile Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'What's for Dinner?' Song by Fine Young Cannibals

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1i/t-mobile-super-bowl-2019-whats-for-dinner-song-by-fine-young-cannibals

32. Mercedes-Benz A-Class Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Say the Word' Featuring Ludacris [T1]

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1a/mercedes-benz-a-class-super-bowl-2019-say-the-word-featuring-ludacris-t1

33. Google Translate Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, '100 Billion Words'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1x/google-translate-super-bowl-2019-100-billion-words

34. Pringles Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Sad Device' Song by Lipps Inc.

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1X/pringles-super-bowl-2019-sad-device-song-by-lipps-inc

35. Avocados From Mexico Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Top Dog' Featuring Kristin Chenoweth

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1W/avocados-from-mexico-super-bowl-2019-top-dog-featuring-kristin-chenoweth

36. Bud Light Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'HBO: Game of Thrones: Jousting Match'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1E/bud-light-super-bowl-2019-jousting-match

V. 1st Quarter Commercials

37. SimpliSafe Home Security Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'A World Full of Fear

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IyDq/simplisafe-home-security-super-bowl-2019-a-world-full-of-fear

38. Audi Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Cashew' Song by Norman Greenbaum [T1]

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1s/audi-super-bowl-2019-cashew-song-by-norman-greenbaum-t1

39. Pepsi Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'More Than OK' Featuring Steve Carell, Cardi B, Lil Jon

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1N/pepsi-super-bowl-2019-more-than-ok-featuring-steve-carell-cardi-b-lil-jon

40. Expensify Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Expensify This' Featuring 2 Chainz, Adam Scott

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1R/expensify-super-bowl-2019-expensify-this-featuring-2-chainz-adam-scott

41. Bud Light Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Special Delivery'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1y/bud-light-super-bowl-2019-corn-syrup-journey

42. PetComfort by WeatherTech Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Scout'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1K/petcomfort-by-weathertech-super-bowl-2019-scout

43. Doritos Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Now It's Hot' Feat. Chance the Rapper, Backstreet Boys

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1S/doritos-super-bowl-2019-now-its-hot-feat-chance-the-rapper-backstreet-boys

44. Olay Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Killer Skin' Featuring Sarah Michelle Gellar

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1G/olay-super-bowl-2019-killer-skin-featuring-sarah-michelle-gellar

45. Turkish Airlines Super Bowl 2019, 'The Journey'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1B/turkish-airlines-super-bowl-2019-teaser-the-journey-ii

46. Hyundai Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'The Elevator: Shopper Assurance' Featuring Jason Bateman [T1]

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1T/hyundai-super-bowl-2019-the-elevator-shopper-assurance-featuring-jason-bateman-t1

47. Bumble Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'The Ball Is in Her Court' Feat. Serena Williams, Song by Rita Ora

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS16/bumble-super-bowl-2019-the-ball-is-in-her-court-feat-serena-williams-song-by-rita-ora (all women)

48. M&M's Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Bad Passengers' Featuring Christina Applegate

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS15/m-and-ms-super-bowl-2019-bad-passengers-featuring-christina-applegate

49. BON & VIV Spiked Seltzer Pear Elderflower Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'The Pitch'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS11/bon-and-viv-spiked-seltzer-pear-elderflower-super-bowl-2019-the-pitch

50. McDonald's Cheesy Bacon Fries Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Fry Show' Ft. Ken Jeong, J.B. Smoove

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1o/mcdonalds-classics-with-bacon-super-bowl-2019-bacon-ovation-feat-ken-jeong-jb-smoove

51. Coca-Cola Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'A Coke Is a Coke'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1Y/coca-cola-super-bowl-2019-a-coke-is-a-coke

52. Pizza Hut $5 Lineup Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Level Up With the $5 Lineup'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1k/pizza-hut-5-lineup-super-bowl-2019-level-up-with-abe

53. Pizza Hut $5 Lineup Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Get All the Wings'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS1V/pizza-hut-super-bowl-2019

54. The UPS Store Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'Every Ing on a Date

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS2e/the-ups-store-super-bowl-2019-speed-dat-ing

55. NFL Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'It's Time'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS2P/nfl-super-bowl-2019-its-time

56. Rakuten Super Bowl 2019 TV Commercial, 'How Do You Say "Rakuten"?'

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS2a/rakuten-super-bowl-2019-pronunciationchallenge

57. The Washington Post: Democracy dies in darkness

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IS6j/the-washington-post-super-bowl-2019-democracy-dies-in-darkness

SỰ THỂ HIỆN NAM GIỚI
TRONG QUẢNG CÁO *SUPER BOWL 2019*

Vũ Thị Phương Quỳnh

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

Tóm tắt: Sự thể hiện giới trong quảng cáo, đặc biệt là sự thể hiện nữ giới, đã được nghiên cứu nhiều trong những thập niên gần đây. Tuy nhiên, các nghiên cứu về sự thể hiện nam giới trong truyền thông ngày nay vẫn còn khá ít. Bài báo này trình bày một nghiên cứu phân tích diễn ngôn phê phán đa phương thức về sự thể hiện của nam giới trong quảng cáo *Super Bowl*. Qua phân tích 57 quảng cáo trong chương trình *Super Bowl 2019*, nghiên cứu nhận thấy sự thể hiện nam giới trong các quảng cáo truyền hình hầu như vẫn bị bó buộc bởi những quan niệm truyền thống về nam giới, bất chấp những thay đổi về vai trò của nam giới trong xã hội hiện đại. Ngoài ra, nghiên cứu cũng cho rằng trong quá trình hiệp thương với một quyền lực nữ giới đang ngày càng tăng, quyền lực nam giới không những không giảm đi mà còn trở nên đa dạng về cách thức biểu thị. Nghiên cứu cũng chỉ ra một số kết quả khác như: quan điểm nhị nguyên về chân dung nam giới và sự bình thường hóa của việc coi nam giới là mục tiêu trêu chọc. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy đòi hỏi phải tái định tính nam trong thế giới ngày nay và phải có những nỗ lực sáng tạo, mạnh mẽ hơn nữa để phản biện định kiến nam giới truyền thống trong quảng cáo và truyền thông.

Từ khóa: sự thể hiện nam giới, phân tích diễn ngôn phê phán đa phương thức, tính nam, quảng cáo

USE OF COHESIVE DEVICES IN PARAGRAPH WRITING BY EFL STUDENTS AT ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTERS IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: This research explores Vietnamese EFL students' use of cohesive devices in paragraph writing. Eighty Vietnamese EFL learners in four pre-intermediate English classes at two English centers in Vietnam each wrote five paragraphs about five different topics via learning blogs, yielding a corpus of 400 paragraphs. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion taxonomy was employed to identify and analyse the cohesive devices used. The results of the study show that the learners employed a wide range of cohesive markers in their paragraphs and the large majority of them were grammatical in nature; lexical cohesive means were used to a much smaller extent and mainly involved repetition. Of the grammatical cohesive types, use of reference and conjunction was common while substitution and ellipsis were infrequently used. The study provides important pedagogical implications for EFL writing instruction in regard to the employment of cohesive devices in written language production.

Keywords: cohesive devices, paragraph writing, Vietnamese EFL learners

1. Introduction

Writing in English as a foreign language (EFL) is a complex meaning-making and problem-solving process (González, 2017) which could be very challenging for EFL learners. The challenges could be associated with a lack of vocabulary, grammar, word choice (Derakhshan & Shirejini, 2020; Enneifer, 2021) or idea organisation and connection (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2022). The quality of a written text, among many other factors, depends on how ideas are connected within it, and the connectivity of ideas is thus very important. As such, building cohesion properly would help learners to improve their writing ability by articulating their ideas clearly and logically. Cohesion has been found to correlate with effective writing (Cho & Shin, 2014; Crossley & McNamara, 2016; Nasser, 2017).

Many studies have been conducted in the field of cohesion around the world (e.g., Bahaziq, 2016; Chanyoo, 2018; Saputra & Hakim, 2020; Yang & Sun, 2012), but they tend to focus on essay writing and students in university. In Vietnam, to the best of our knowledge, there is limited research in the form of unpublished thesis related to cohesion, namely errors in using cohesive devices (Tran, 2005), cohesive devices in English textbooks (Bui, 2011; Cao, 2012), or EFL teachers' written texts (Bui et al., 2021). Little has been known about the use of

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cohesive devices in paragraph writing by learners at English centers in Vietnam. This group of learners are also under-represented in research of this kind in the world as well. Therefore, a study on cohesion in paragraphs produced by EFL learners at English centers is a necessary response to this empirical gap in extant research. The present study was thus set out to investigate the use of cohesive devices in paragraph writing by Vietnamese EFL pre-intermediate learners at two English centers. In particular, it aimed to answer the following research question: What types of cohesive devices are used by Vietnamese pre-intermediate EFL students in paragraph writing? The research has hoped to provide important pedagogical recommendations for both teachers and students in writing paragraphs and inform further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Cohesion

The introduction of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy about cohesion in English has drawn much attention to the issue of cohesion in written language production. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 4), "the concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and define it as a text. Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another." In this sense, cohesion essentially denotes the semantic interrelationship which could be achieved through cohesive devices (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). In Reid's (1992) words, cohesive devices are "words or phrases that act as signals to the reader; those words or phrases make what is being stated relate to what has already been stated or what soon will be stated" (p. 81). In simple terms, cohesion is the explicit use of cohesive devices to indicate the semantic ties in a text to enhance the links between what precedes and what follows (Rahman, 2013) and as such, cohesion enhances the quality of the written text (Cho & Shin, 2014; Crossley & McNamara, 2016; Nasser, 2017). In other words, it is the connectivity between the pieces of a given text that is established through the use of devices that make them to be inter-related and inter-dependent (Kwan & Yunus, 2014).

In particular regard to paragraph writing, a paragraph is centered around one main idea which is typically the topic sentence of the paragraph (Hogue, 2008). Although there are different types of paragraph writing (e.g., descriptive, argumentative, expository, narrative, process) (Savage & Shafiei, 2007), to achieve textual linkage within the paragraph, the topic of the paragraph and its supporting ideas need to be connected to allow the reader to perceive their semantic relationships. Research has shown that use of cohesive devices enhances the quality of the written text (e.g., Crossley & McNamara, 2016; Liu & Braine, 2005) as its readability depends on how the semantic relations are established within it beside the reader's background knowledge (Tabari & Johnson, 2023).

2.2. Cohesive Devices

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesive devices fall into two broad types: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. The former consists of subcategories of reference, substitution and ellipsis, whereas reiteration and collocation are subsumed in the latter.

In the category of grammatical cohesion, *reference* is described as "the relationship between an element of the text or something else by reference to which it is interpreted in the given instance" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 308). Three types of reference are personal reference, demonstrative reference and comparative reference. Firstly, as its name indicates,

personal reference is often expressed through personal pronouns (e.g., *I, you, she, he, it, we, they*), possessive (e.g., *mine, yours, hers, theirs, his, ours),* and possessive determiners (*my, your, our, their, her, his)*. Secondly, demonstrative reference is "essentially a form of verbal pointing. The speaker identifies the referent by locating it on a scale of proximity" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 57). As such, it is achieved by determiners (e.g., *the, this, there, that, those*) and demonstrative adverbs (e.g., *here, there, then*). Lastly, comparative reference shows comparison between one thing and another. Comparative reference is often realised through the use of adjectives and adverbs for comparison such as *similar, different, more, less,* etc. (He is very talkative, but his sister is *different.* She is quiet.).

One more form of grammatical cohesion is *substitution* which is the replacement of one item by another. Three types of substitution are nominal (-Could you pass me the book? -Which **one**?), verbal (Linh likes pop music and so **do** I) and clausal (He thinks children should not be allowed to use smart phones, but I don't think **so**).

Ellipsis refers to the omission of an element that is mentioned earlier in a text (Bahazig, 2016). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), ellipsis could be viewed as a form of substitution where the omitted item is still understood. Ellipsis is divided into three main types: nominal, verbal and clausal. In nominal ellipsis, the noun is omitted (My parents love Japanese very much. Both want to travel to Japan one day.) while verbal ellipsis involves the omission of the verb (-Have you finished? -Yes, I have.*)*. As its name suggests, clausal ellipsis occurs when a clause is dropped (-When will you return? - (I will return) Next week.).

As Halliday and Hasan (1976) described, *conjunction* is a special type of cohesion being mainly grammatical but with a lexical unit in it. According to these authors, "conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the proceeding (or following text), but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in discourse" (p. 222). They are categorised into four groups: 1) additive (e.g., *and, or, furthermore, similarly, in addition*), 2) adversative (e.g., *but, on the other hand, nevertheless*), 3) casual (e.g., *so, consequently, for this reason, it follows from this*) and 4) temporal (e.g., *then, after that, an hour later, finally, at last*).

Lexical cohesive devices are composed of reiteration and collocation in Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy. *Reiteration* is defined as two items that denote the same referent and could be repeated or have similar meanings in a text. Reiteration is displayed through repetition, synonyms, antonyms, superordinates and hyponyms. The last two can also be referred to as 'sense relations' between more general and specific expressions. For example, 'animal' is a superordinate of 'dog' and 'cat' while 'dog' and 'cat' are hyponyms of 'animal'. Similarly, 'flowers' and 'fountains' are hyponyms of 'garden' in this sentence: *"She knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest **garden**. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright **flowers** and those cool **fountains**."*) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 648).

Collocation is a combination of lexical items that co-occur. It means the co-occurrence of words in certain contexts. It could be verb-noun collocation, adjective-noun collocation, noun-noun collocation, etc. Examples of each type and sub-type of cohesive devices are further presented in the methodology section.

Overall, the cohesion framework by Halliday and Hasan (1976) provides a comprehensive and explicit guide for exploring text connectivity since it "helps to analyze the association between text and its context or the way in which a text is organized" (Yang & Sun,

p. 32). It has thus been selected as a theoretical foundation for analysing cohesive devices in written texts produced by ESL/EFL learners over the decades (e.g., Cho & Shin, 2014; Liu & Braine, 2005; Nasser, 2017; Nirwanto, 2021; Yang & Sun, 2012). Although recent research might shed light on how formulaic language or lexical bundles which are not addressed in Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework could enhance textual cohesion (e.g., Boers, 2020; Kim & Kessler, 2022), the use of such multi-word items or expanded categories of collocations, might not be present in all kinds of texts, especially those produced by low proficiency learners. The cohesion scheme by Halliday and Hasan (1976) is particularly useful for exploring overall textual cohesion and quantifying cohesive devices for its explicitness and multi-dimensional components. Following the above-mentioned researchers, it was therefore employed in the current research to investigate how Vietnamese EFL learners at a low proficiency level used cohesive devices in their written paragraphs.

2.3. Previous Studies

There have been two lines of research on cohesion: one is on the errors associated with use of cohesive means and the other is on the occurrence of cohesive devices in EFL writing of different types. Relevant to the scope of the present study, this review is confined to research that has explored the different categories of cohesive devices used in EFL learners' writings.

A number of studies have investigated the use of cohesive devices in essay writing. For example, Liu and Braine (2005) examined the use of cohesive devices by collecting 50 argumentative compositions created by Chinese undergraduate non-English majors. The results show that the students used a variety of cohesive markers in their writing with lexical devices being most common, followed by reference and conjunction. This contradicts what was found in Bahaziq's (2016) study that there was little evidence of students' use of lexical devices while reference was frequently used, followed by conjunctions.

In another EFL context, Alarcon (2013) examined lexical cohesion used by undergraduate Filipino students and found that repetition was most frequent, followed by antonyms, superordinates and hyponyms while collocations were used less frequently. Furthermore, there was no significant relationship between lexical cohesion and writing quality. Similarly, the findings of Chanyoo's (2018) study revealed that Thai university students used reiteration most, especially repetition and synonymy. Reference was the second most popular type, followed by conjunction and ellipsis. Clearly, reference was one of the most frequently used cohesive devices across groups of learners in these studies.

This trend could be further seen through the works of other researchers who focus on EFL learners in other contexts. For example, Saputra and Hakim (2020) studied types of cohesive devices used in argumentative essays written by high-achieving college students in Indonesia. The results showed that various kinds of cohesive devices were employed, particularly reference with the definite article '*the*'. In terms of lexical cohesion, students used synonyms more than other cohesive markers. Another recent study on Indonesian EFL learners (Nirwanto, 2021) also found reference, conjunction and repetition were most common while ellipsis and substitution were not used at all in opinion essays.

The findings so far on the use of cohesive devices in essay writing have been mixed, with certain types of cohesive markers being used more frequently than others. This could be due to the different groups of EFL learners whose first languages are not the same and the different types of essay writing involved.

In relation to paragraph writing, research has been carried out with undergraduate

students in universities. For example, Saadat and Alavi (2018) examined the use of grammatical cohesive devices in two types of paragraphs (cause-effect and chronology) written by Iranian EFL university learners and native speakers. They used the taxonomy of Halliday and Hasan (1976) to guide their data analysis and found that reference was widely used, followed by conjunction, ellipsis and substitution in both types of paragraph. In the same vein, reference and conjunction also topped the list of the most frequently used means of cohesion for native speakers. Similar findings were also found in a recent study by Nurhidayat et al. (2021) where undergraduate students at an Indonesian university frequently employed reference, conjunction and repetition of the same words.

The studies which are reviewed above largely focused on university students and essay writing. The common findings were that certain types of cohesive ties were employed more than others and the frequency of use of different types of cohesive devices somehow varied among context-specific groups of EFL learners. The different types of writing such as essay or paragraph writing could be an influence and so do the topics of the writing tasks. More research is clearly needed into the use of cohesive devices by learners in different contexts to better understand how cohesion is established, especially in paragraph writing.

In Vietnam, there have not been many studies related to this field. Studies in Vietnam are mainly in the form of unpublished theses and tend to focus on university or high school students. This line of research has examined errors in using cohesive devices (Tran, 2005) and use of cohesive devices in English textbooks (Bui, 2011; Cao, 2012) or in EFL teachers' written texts (Bui et al., 2021). Little empirical knowledge is known about Vietnamese EFL learners at English language centers using cohesive devices in their paragraph writing. The present study thus fills this gap. To do so, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion taxonomy was employed to identify the cohesive devices used in students' paragraphs.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Eighty pre-intermediate level students who enrolled in an English communication course intended for an A2 level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), participated in this research on a voluntary basis. They were informed of the research and of the fact that their information would be kept confidential and they could withdraw from the study any time without any consequence. They all gave their consent before data collection began.

The eighty participants were from four different classes of the same above-mentioned course at two English centers in a city in Vietnam. Five were high school students and 75 were adults who worked in different job areas. They were aged from 14 to 32, with 34 males and 46 females and had learned English since they were in Grade 6. They were studying *Face2Face –PreIntermediate level* by Chris Redston and Gillie Cunningham – Cambridge University Press as the coursebook. Although the learners were in the same course, their language proficiency levels varied from A1 to B1, as observed by their teacher.

3.2. Data Collection Procedure

The written paragraphs were collected through blogs as a channel for students to practice writing. According to Zhang (2009, p. 67), blogs "though not originally created for use in language education, have formidable potential as a useful tool for the teaching of EFL writing class." In this research, blogs were used at the time of data collection by the teachers in charge

as they were an appropriate platform for students to practice writing in the Covid-19 pandemic situation (of the periods from March to June, 2021). In addition, Collins (2014) mentioned that blogs could help students produce their work in a comfortable manner.

The procedure of collecting samples of written paragraphs was as follows. Firstly, a teacher-student blog was created on the website *www.blogger.com*. Next, explanations were given to the learners in the four target classes on how to use the blog as a tool for paragraph writing and the learners were guided to create an account. Then they accessed the blog and wrote one paragraph with the topic given on a weekly basis. Each student wrote five paragraphs in five consecutive weeks. The length requirement of each paragraph was from 80-90 words. Students wrote their paragraphs as assignments at home, so the time was unlimited and they also could use any resources as they wished. These assignments were for the purpose of additional practice, not for formal grading. That being said, students were reminded that their paragraphs i) should be relevant to the topic, ii) have a clear topic sentence, iii) should flow well, and iv) should be well written without many lexical/grammatical errors. No specific requirements related to cohesion were made known to students for these assignments so that they could write as they normally did. However, for the in-class progress test, students' writing was evaluated in terms of Content, Organisation and Language. Regarding the organisational dimension, the requirement for cohesion at the target A2 level focused on the employment of 'basic, high-frequency linking words and text connectivity was rated on a scale from one to five (from unconnected text, though with very occasional use of simple linking words such as "and" to well-connected text with appropriate use of numerous high-frequency connectors.

In total, 400 paragraphs were collected for the analysis of cohesive devices. The mean length of the paragraphs were 90 words on average. Below are five topics students were required to write about. These topics were selected because they were specified in the course book in use at the time of data collection. As can be seen from the task prompts, the written paragraphs were generally texts for both academic and communicative purposes as they were required in the syllabus.

Topic 1: Write a short paragraph (from 80-90 words) about the causes and effects of water pollution.

Topic 2: Write a short paragraph (around 80-90 words) about a wild animal that you know.

Topic 3: Write a short paragraph (around 80-90 words) about a special holiday that you like.

Topic 4: Write a short paragraph (around 80-90 words) about one of your special experiences that make you remember the most in your life.

Topic 5: Write a short paragraph (around 80-90 words) about a special place that you have traveled to.

3.3. Data Analysis

The analysis of use of cohesive devices in learners' writing was based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion framework. This framework has been employed by many researchers (e.g., Cho & Shin, 2014; Liu & Braine, 2005; Nasser, 2017; Nirwanto, 2021; Yang & Sun, 2012) since it is considered comprehensive, explicit and easy to understand and as such, it enhances the reliability of data coding.

The first author and an experienced researcher who had a Master degree in Theory and

Methodology in English Language Teaching with an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score of 7.5 (or C1 equivalent, according to the CEFR) coded 100 randomly selected paragraphs (25% of the data) for the frequencies of cohesive devices independently. The latter acted as the second coder who had been trained to identify cohesive markers in students' essays by using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion framework before official coding started. The inter-rater reliability results calculated by agreement percentages were from 83% to 100% for identification of each of the categories of cohesive devices. These are considered acceptable inter-reliability values, according to Yin (2015). The first author then coded the remaining paragraphs for the occurrence of cohesive devices.

Analysis of the cohesive devices in learners' paragraphs is as follows:

i) The written paragraphs were read and reread at least three times to identify the cohesive devices used in each paragraph. Cross-checking was conducted to ensure accuracy.

ii) The cohesive devices used were noted and manually tagged for their types, according to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion taxonomy.

iii) The data from each paragraph and all the paragraphs were entered into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets for automatic calculation of frequencies.

Below are examples of categories of cohesive devices as they were from the data:

3.3.1. Grammatical Cohesion

3.3.1.1. Reference

Demonstrative reference:

There is a big tree in city's centre and people can pray **there**. (S15, Class 2)

During Tet, most families enjoy **this** special holiday by preparing dishes such as Chung cake, Tet cake, braised meat and eggs, etc. **These** are considered as traditional and typical dishes of Vietnam. (S1, Class 4)

Personal reference:

Tet is an important traditional day of Vietnamese people and **it** is a beautiful time of the year. (S4, Class 3)

Dolphins are carnivores, and **they** eat meat. (S8, Class 4)

Comparative reference:

I really enjoy traveling, it seems to be **bigger** than all my other hobbies. (S6, Class 1)

3.3.1.2. Substitution

Nominal substitution:

The young members will wish the elderly for healthiness and long life, and then, they will receive meaningful red envelopes from the aged **ones**. (S20, Class 4)

Verbal substitution:

Most of wild animals here roam around the highland and so **does** it. (T2, S71, Class 4)

Tourists love this city and you **will**, too. (S40, Class 2)

3.3.1.3. Ellipsis

Nominal ellipsis:

My friend and I like Valentine very much and **both** always looking forward to this special day. (S65, Class 4)

3.3.1.4. Conjunction

Additive: This forest is beautiful **and** has many kinds of animals **and** many ancient trees. (S27, Class 2)

Adversative: I have had the opportunity to visit many countries, **but** Thailand is the most impressive place for me. (T1, S15, Class 1)

Causal: I really like Tet holiday **because** it is one of the most meaningful festivals I have known. (S12, Class 1)

Temporal: **Half an hour later**, there were no one left in the classroom. (S18, Class 1)

3.3.2. Lexical Cohesion

Reiteration:

Repetition: If they do not process the waste properly, that waste will be dangerous to human if we drink the water contained it. (S3, Class 2)

Synonym: It also has some advantages for the government. These benefits could be a reason for water pollution. (S 14, Class 3)

Antonym: It has many high and ancient trees… We can climb some low ones. (S74, Class 4)

Superordinate/Hyponym: They enjoy some featured foods like Banh Tet, Banh Chung and many Tet's sweets. (S50, Class 2)

Collocation:

We **ran out of fuel** at that time. (S8, Class 1)

The percentage of each type of cohesive devices used was calculated out of the total cohesive items in the paragraphs.

4. Results

Table 1 presents the different types of cohesive devices used in students' written paragraphs. In total, 4,237 cohesive devices were used and a majority of them were grammatical in nature (90.7%), leaving lexical cohesion accounting for 9.3% (4% and 5.3% for reiteration and collocation respectively). Reference, one form of grammatical cohesive markers, was the most popular, accounting for 51%, followed by conjunction (38.5%). Substitution and ellipsis were used but to a very small extent, 1% and 0.2 % respectively. In the following sections, each type of cohesive means is presented in greater details.

Table 1

Frequency of Cohesive Devices Used by Students

Types of cohesive devices		Frequency	%
Grammatical	Reference	2,162	51
	Substitution	43	1.0
	Ellipsis	8	0.2
	Conjunction	1,633	38.5
	Total	3,846	90.7

Lexical	Collocation	168	4.0
	Reiteration	223	5.3
	Total	391	9.3
	TOTAL	**4,237**	**100**

4.1. Use of Reference

Table 2 shows that students used different types of reference. Of the totality of 2,162 reference devices in use, personal reference (49.6%) was more frequent than the other reference types. Demonstrative reference followed (46.1%) and comparative reference was least used (4.3%).

Table 2

Students' Use of Reference

Type of reference	Frequency	%
Demonstrative	996	46.1
Comparative	94	4.3
Personal	1,072	49.6
Total	**2,162**	**100**

4.1.1. The Use of Demonstrative Reference

In total, there were 996 instances of demonstrative reference. The frequency of each demonstrative device was calculated out of the total demonstrative devices as shown in Table 3. Most common were demonstrative reference items such as "the" (57.3%), "this" (15.7%) and "that" (11.3%). There were only 8 instances of "these" (0.8%) whereas "those" was not used at all. In addition, "which" and "there" were used at 5.2% and 9.7% respectively.

Table 3

Students' Use of Demonstrative Reference

Demonstrative reference	Frequency	%
The	571	57.3
This	156	15.7
That	112	11.3
These	8	0.8
Those	0	0
Which	52	5.2
There	97	9.7
Total	**996**	**100**

4.1.2 The Use of Personal Reference

The frequency of each personal reference was calculated out of the total cases (1,072) and the results are shown in Table 4. The students used various personal reference items, of which "It/Its" and "Their" were common (36.3% and 22.2% respectively). The remaining

examples of personal reference were used with a low frequency (from 1% to 5.9%) except "Me/My" (11.8%). In addition, "Us' was infrequently used (only 0.3%).

Table 4

Learners' Use of Personal Reference

Personal reference	Frequency	%
I	48	4.5
Me/My	126	11.8
She	24	2.2
Her	15	1.4
He	34	3.2
Him/His	19	1.8
We	11	1
Us	3	0.3
Our	63	5.9
They	39	3.6
Them	45	4.2
Their	238	22.2
You/Your	18	1.7
It/Its	389	36.3
Total	**1,072**	**100**

4.1.3. The Use of Comparative Reference

The results (Table 5) revealed that of the 94 cases of comparative reference, students used certain items more often than others: "So" (34.1%), "Like" (13.8%), "As" (22.3%) and "More (10.6%). Other examples of comparative reference were also used, though not frequently: "Much" (6.4%), "Less" (4.3%) and "Better" (8.5%).

Table 5

Students' Use of Comparative Reference

Comparative reference	Frequency	%
Like	13	13.8
As	21	22.3
So	32	34.1
Much	6	6.4
More	10	10.6
Less	4	4.3
Better	8	8.5
Total	**94**	**100**

4.2. The Use of Substitution

The frequency of substitution devices is shown in Table 6. There were 43 instances of substitution in total, of which verbal substitution was employed more often than the nominal type, 58.8% and 41.2% respectively. No clausal substitution was used at all in the data.

Table 6

Students' Use of Substitution

	Frequency	**%**
Nominal	19	41.2
Verbal	24	58.8
Clausal	0	0
Total	**43**	**100**

4.3. Students' Use of Ellipsis

There were only 8 instances of nominal ellipsis in all the paragraphs and students did not use any items in the category of verbal or clausal ellipsis.

4.4. Use of Conjunction

The results in Table 7 show that of the 1,633 cases of conjunction, students tended to use additives (60%) more frequently than other devices. The order of frequency of use of the other types was temporal (24.6%), causal (9.1%) and adversative (6.3%).

Table 7

Students' Use of Conjunction

	Frequency	**%**
Additive	979	60
Adversative	103	6.3
Causal	149	9.1
Temporal	402	24.6
Total	**1,633**	**100**

Table 8 indicates the frequency of use of specific conjunctions in students' paragraphs. "And" was most common (58.5%) while "For example", "such as", "Also" and "Besides" were used with a much lower frequency (5.3%, 6.5%, 7.7% and 9%). Some items were infrequently used such as "In addition", "For instance", "Moreover", "Furthermore", "Or" and "Then", from 1.1% to 3.4%.

As shown in Table 7 mentioned earlier, students used adversative conjunction to a smaller extent than the other types (6.3%). In particular, Table 9 reveals that of all types of adversative conjunction, "Although" and "but" were more frequent than others (54.4% and 43.7% respectively). On the other hand, the adversative "In fact" was used just two times (1.9%) and there was an absence of other adversative conjunctions such as *even though, despite, in spite of, whereas* and so on.

As for the use of causal conjunction, the results (Table 10) show that students used mostly "Because/because of" and "So" (55% and 34.3% respectively). In addition, they used "Therefore" (4.7%) and "For/For this" (6%) much less frequently.

In terms of temporal conjunction, the results (Table 11) show that there were 402 instances of temporal conjunction. In particular, "First/Firstly/First of all", "Second/Secondly", and "Third/Thirdly" were used with a larger proportion than others (20.6%, 20.1%, and 18.7% respectively). Next common were "Finally" (9.5%), "Now" (9.2%), "In conclusion" (6.5%), here (5.7%) and "In general" (4.5%). The remaining "then" and "after" were used to a far smaller extent, 2.2 % and 3% respectively.

Table 8

Types of Additive Conjunction Used by Students

Types of additive conjunction used	Frequency	%
And	573	58.5
In addition	28	2.7
For example	52	5.3
For instance	14	1.4
Moreover	33	3.4
Furthermore	11	1.1
Such as	63	6.5
Also	75	7.7
Besides	88	9.0
Or	17	1.8
Then	25	2.6
Total	**979**	**100%**

Table 9

Types of Adversative Conjunctions Used by Students

Types of adversative conjunctions used	Frequency	%
Although	56	54.4
But	45	43.7
In fact	2	1.9
Total	**103**	**100**

Table 10

Types of Causal Conjunction Used by Students

Types of clausal conjunction used	Frequency	%
Because/because of	82	55.0
So	51	34.3
Therefore	7	4.7
For/For this	9	6.0
Total	**149**	**100**

Table 11

Types of Temporal Conjunctions Used by Students

Temporal conjunctions used	Frequency	%
First/Firstly/First of all	83	20.6
Second/Secondly	81	20.1
Third/Thirdly	75	18.7
Finally	38	9.5
Then	9	2.2
After	12	3.0
In conclusion	26	6.5
In general	18	4.5
Now	37	9.2
Here	23	5.7
Total	**402**	**100**

4.5. Students' Use of Lexical Cohesion

Table 12 shows the frequency of lexical cohesion used in students' paragraphs. It can be seen that reiteration (57%) was used more often than collocation (43%). Nearly half of the reiteration cases involved repetition (45.8%) while the remaining (synonyms, antonyms and superordinates or hyponyms) were used with a lower frequency (17%, 14.8% and 22.4% respectively) (Table 13).

Table 12

Students' Use of Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesive devices	Frequency	%
Collocation	168	43
Reiteration	223	57
Total	**391**	**100**

Table 13

Students' Use of Types of Reiteration Lexical Devices

Types of reiteration used	Frequency	%
Repetition	102	45.8
Synonyms	38	17.0
Antonyms	33	14.8
Superordinates/Hyponyms	50	22.4
Total	**223**	**100**

5. Discussion

The present study set out to explore the use of cohesive devices in 400 paragraphs written by EFL learners in an English communication course at two English centers in Vietnam.

The results show that students used mainly grammatical cohesive devices to connect ideas within their written paragraphs whereas they used lexical cohesion tools much less frequently. Particularly, reference and conjunction were most common while substitution and ellipsis were used very occasionally. The findings generally agree with those of prior studies on paragraph writing (e.g., Nurhidayat et al., 2021; Saadat & Alavi, 2018). This could be because establishing cohesion through lexical means was perhaps more challenging to the students in the present study. They were not at an advanced level of proficiency, thus they may have lacked lexical means to connect ideas within their paragraphs. At the same time, the findings of the present study differ from other research (e.g., Chanyoo, 2018; Liu & Braine, 2005; Rahman, 2013) which found that lexical cohesion was dominant in argumentative writing. This could perhaps be explained by the difference in the students' proficiency levels in the two studies and the nature of paragraph writing and argumentative essay writing. The latter could entail complex concepts to encode, which might have inclined use of relevant lexical words in argumentation. Though lexical cohesion was used much less frequently than grammatical cohesion, of the lexical cohesive devices, repetition was prevalent. This has been a common finding across studies (e.g., Alarcon, 2013; Chanyoo, 2018) and could be related to students' limited vocabulary size, and their lower proficiency level, which led to repetition.

Notably, the students in the present study used mostly personal reference followed by conjunction. This result is broadly in line with those of previous research (Bahaziq, 2016; Nirwanto, 2021; Nurhidayat et al., 2021; Saadat & Alavi, 2018). It could be that students tended to use reference to express their personal experience or tell stories as all the writing topics except Topic 1 were related to personal experience. It is worth noting that students employed certain items in each category of cohesion more than others. This echoes findings of Saputra and Hakim's (2020) research and might indicate a role of writing types in eliciting the use of different cohesive markers. Further research is clearly needed to shed light on the potential effects of writing types.

Finally, ellipsis and substitution had very small proportions of use, which is in agreement with other previous studies (e.g., Nirwando, 2021). An explanation for very low frequency of ellipsis and substitution might be due to the fact that they are used more often in spoken language than written language, as Halliday and Hasan (1976) pointed out. It could be that the students in the present study might not be aware of ellipsis and substitution as cohesive tools. In other words, these cohesive means might be new to them and research has shown that students only use cohesive devices that they are familiar with (Rahman, 2013). Another possible explanation could be related to how cohesion is assessed at this low level of proficiency. The students in the present study employed 'high frequency' or 'basic' linking words perhaps because these were required of their target level (A2) in this course. This might point to the finding that more advanced learners tended to use more implicit cohesive cues to build cohesion in their written text (Crossley et al., 2011). Yang and Sun (2012) also found that lower proficiency learners used simple cohesive tools that could be found in oral discourse than higher proficiency counterparts. That said, variation of use among individual learners should need further attention in future research.

6. Implications and Conclusions

The current study examined the types of cohesive devices that the Vietnamese EFL students at two English centers in Vietnam employed in their paragraph writing. It found predominant use of grammatical cohesive ties, of which reference and conjunction were more

common than the other types and certain items were more frequently employed than others. Of the lexical cohesion markers, re-iteration was employed with a higher frequency than collocation, and repetition was the most common of all reiteration means. The findings of the study suggest some implications for both teachers in teaching and students in learning and using cohesive ties in writing.

First of all, that students used lexical cohesive devices to a much smaller extent than grammatical cohesive means could suggest that teachers might need to introduce lexical cohesion as a way to link ideas in writing to students. This could be done through explicit teaching through exercises or through exposure to language input samples which illustrate how to establish cohesion through use of vocabulary, synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms and collocation in writing. Note that for low proficiency learners, specific guidance on how to use these lexical means should be provided and lexical cohesion should additionally target their level. Semantic mapping which helps students to visualise a concept, their categories and word networking (Dilek & Yuruk, 2013) could be a useful point of reference for teachers. In this respect, asking students to label the different categories in a semantic map (Johnson & Pearson, 1984, as cited in Dilek & Yuruk, 2013) could be a practical pre-writing activity to build cohesion through lexical means. In so doing, students can expand their vocabulary to avoid repetition of the same words in writing. Equally important, opportunities should be created for students to use means of lexical cohesion that are not quite often used in their writing. In addition, absence or little use of certain grammatical cohesive devices such as substitution and ellipsis might suggest a lack of attention or awareness of how they could help build connection within the paragraph, suggesting training students through language-focused activities as well as writing practice. Finally, teachers should provide more writing models embedded with cohesive devices to raise students' awareness of the ways grammatical and lexical items could enhance the connectivity of the ideas within a text. That being said, again, the teacher should consider learners' proficiency levels in order to inform them of how cohesion could be appropriately achieved in writing. For the low proficiency students in the present study, as text connectivity was evaluated via the use of basic or high-frequency connectors, they might have focused on using those 'basic' linking words only. Yet, the teacher might need to provide an explicit taxonomy of cohesive devices that their target students should be able to use, including lexical means as long as they align with students' level. Even in the same course, students might differ in proficiency levels, which thus makes it pedagogically practical to introduce various tools to build cohesion within a paragraph for low proficiency and advanced students to draw on as needs arise. It is equally important that the teacher consider the different types of paragraph writing to guide students appropriately through using cohesive devices.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, it was carried out with a quite small sample of 80 learners and they wrote their paragraphs as homework tasks, which could have allowed them access to different resources. The results therefore could not be generalised to other settings and testing conditions. Furthermore, the present study only documented the occurrence of the different types of cohesive devices, the quality of their use (errors) should be an additional avenue for future research that could inform teacher feedback in writing classes. Topic might have an impact on language use in written language production (Lee et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022; Yoon, 2017), so further studies that examine the occurrence of cohesive devices in paragraph writing based on different topics would provide further insights. The paragraphs collected for analysis in the present study did not focus on one particular type, but covered a wider range of writing types including cause-effect, expository and descriptive writing. A more fine-grained approach to analysis could entail examining how students use cohesive markers in

each kind of paragraph writing to obtain richer insights. In addition, paragraphs in the present study were collected via learning blogs, which could have provided different results from other conditions. Future studies could consider other platforms for students to write. Finally, other factors affecting students' writing such as psychology, teaching materials, and writing genres should be paid attention to in future research.

Despite the shortcomings, the study has contributed to existing scholarship on use of cohesive devices in paragraph writing by low proficiency EFL learners at English centers, an underrepresented group in research of this kind.

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VIỆC SỬ DỤNG PHƯƠNG TIỆN LIÊN KẾT TRONG VIẾT ĐOẠN VĂN CỦA NGƯỜI HỌC TIẾNG ANH TẠI TRUNG TÂM TIẾNG ANH Ở VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu việc sử dụng phương tiện liên kết (cohesive devices) trong viết đoạn văn của người Việt Nam học tiếng Anh. Dữ liệu được thu thập từ 80 người học tiếng Anh ở bốn lớp học tiếng Anh tiền trung cấp tại hai trung tâm tiếng Anh ở Việt Nam. Mỗi người học viết 5 đoạn văn về 5 chủ đề khác nhau qua nền tảng nhật ký học tập trực tuyến (learning blogs), và tổng khối dữ liệu thu được gồm 400 đoạn văn tiếng Anh. Mô hình phân loại phương tiện liên kết của Halliday và Hasan (1976) được sử dụng để phân tích phương tiện liên kết mà người học sử dụng. Kết quả cho thấy đa số phương tiện liên kết được sử dụng là liên kết ngữ pháp, trong khi đó, phương tiện liên kết ngữ vựng được sử dụng với tần suất ít hơn nhiều và chủ yếu là lặp lại từ (repetition). Trong phương tiện liên kết ngữ pháp, tham chiếu (reference) và từ nối (conjunction) được sử dụng khá phổ biến, trong khi đó, thay thế (substitution) và tỉnh lược (ellipsis) hiếm khi được sử dụng. Từ kết quả thu được, nghiên cứu thảo luận hàm ý sư phạm cho việc dạy kỹ năng viết và sử dụng phương tiện liên kết trong bài viết đối với người học tiếng Anh.

Từ khóa: phương tiện liên kết, viết đoạn văn, người Việt Nam học tiếng Anh

TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES
TO THE IMPACT OF ORAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK
ON STUDENT'S SPEAKING PROFICIENCY
IN ENGLISH SPEAKING CLASSES

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Abstract: Helping students to promote their communication skills in this globalized world is one of teachers' main concerns in English teaching. The ways that teachers give oral corrective feedback (OCF) to students' errors also have influenced students' language proficiency improvement. There has been some research on how teachers and students perceive OCF in language classrooms, but little has been conducted on teachers' and students' perceptions of the impact of OCF on students' speaking ability through the lens of sociocultural theory. This qualitative study investigates teachers' and students' perspectives regarding the impact of OCF on student's speaking proficiency in English speaking classes at the tertiary level in Vietnam. Data were gathered from five semi-structured interviews with five EFL teachers and five focus group interviews with 35 first-year students. Findings showed teachers' and students' support of the impact of OCF on helping students to notice their errors, to be more responsible for their own study, and to increase students' learning motivation and linguistic knowledge as well. On the basis of the findings, pedagogical implications are discussed.

Keywords: perspective, oral corrective feedback, impact, speaking proficiency, sociocultural theory

1. Introduction

In language education, oral corrective feedback (OCF) in speaking classes plays a pivotal role in developing students' oral ability. As such, OCF has caught the attention of many second language and language pedagogy researchers over the past few decades (Ellis, 2009; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Sheen, 2010). While there have been a number of studies on how OCF has been perceived and preferred by teachers and students in ESL and EFL contexts, limited research on this topic has been conducted in the context of teaching and learning English in Vietnam, especially in Vietnamese higher education. This study aims to explore teachers' and students' perspectives towards the impact of OCF in improving students' speaking skills.

Feedback has been viewed through the lens of cognitive theoretical perspectives such as the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983, 1996), Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995) or Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1995). This study was conducted to explore OCF from a different theoretical lens, that is from the perspective of sociocultural theory. In sociocultural theory (SCT), feedback is regarded as "an interactive process in which teachers and peers help

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learners use their zone of proximal development (ZPD) to progress to the next step in their learning" (Sardareh & Saad, 2012, p. 343) and the effectiveness of corrective feedback "lies in its propensity for scaffolding interaction to construct the learner's ZPD" (Sheen, 2010, p. 170). It means that in such ZPD, learners are supported to perform a linguistic item (linguistic utterance) that they cannot handle on their own. Through such scaffolding, learners are able to notice their incorrect use of language forms and improve their language awareness.

In accordance with the globalized world, EFL teachers in Vietnam have applied various teaching approaches in English classes in order to enhance students' English capacity. More specifically, pedagogical strategies like OCF to develop students' oral ability have drawn more attention and been frequently used in the classrooms. Through OCF, students can also co-construct their knowledge and more importantly, improve their English proficiency. Theoretically, through the lens of sociocultural theory, the researcher could understand how OCF which acts as scaffold support can impact students' language ability as well as their speaking competence in tertiary level EFL classrooms in the sociocultural context of Vietnam. More specifically, ZPD and scaffolding - the key sociocultural constructs of SCT- were used as a theoretical framework to guide the data analysis and interpretation in this research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definitions of OCF and the Role of OCF

Recently, OCF has been paid much attention by language scholars and language researchers as it supports learners' language development (Lyster & Saiko, 2010). OCF is regarded as teachers' utterances that determined learners' errors and suitable responses to their errors (Schachter, 1991) or the strategies that teachers employ to correct students' errors in their spoken performance (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Researchers have questioned whether learner errors should be corrected and whether OCF facilitates learner language development. There are claims that OCF can negatively impact learners' feelings, and thus their subsequent language achievement (Chaudron, 1977; Truscott, 1999). Chaudron (1977) doubted the effectiveness of OCF on language development and Truscott (1999) stated that OCF should be abandoned as it could cause learners' embarrassment, frustration or demotivation. In short, these scholars argued that language can be obtained only through positive evidence, while negative evidence is inessential and even detrimental to language learning acquisition and development as it might make students hesitant and anxious in their language learning.

On the other hand, many researchers also confirmed the beneficial role of OCF in language acquisition and development. The role of OCF as a response to learners' incorrect utterances through interactions between the teacher and students, or among students is believed to be beneficial and valuable (Ellis, 2009; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster & Saiko, 2010). Through OCF, learners are able to realize the gaps between their interlanguage and target language, which is important to their language acquisition (Long, 1996). OCF helps to develop language acquisition, as it fosters a modified output (McDonough, 2005). Additionally, OCF can raise learners' sense of fulfilment and persistence and is useful to motivate students' learning (Basturkmen et al., 2004). Furthermore, Lyster and Saiko (2010) stated that "it is effective to employ corrective feedback in response to students' non-target-like production because it contributes to target language development" (p. 294).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

In this paper, Vygotskyian social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) has been used to approach the data. The sociocultural perspective looks into the roles that social relations, community, and culture play in learning and development (Rogoff, 1995). Vygotsky (1978) viewed learning as a constant movement from the current academic level to a higher level that gradually reaches the learner's capacity. This transition takes place in the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as a result of social interaction. It highlights the role of learners as active constructors in the learning process and the importance of communication between them with other people in the society (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). In this perspective, learning is viewed as a constant movement from the current academic level to a higher level that gradually reaches the learner's capacity. Through ZPD, the learners are likely to reconstruct and internalize the learning, and able to obtain a skill that is beyond their current capacity through the mediation and regulation (Rogoff, 1995).

A key concept of SCT is scaffolding which is regarded as a kind of assistance for children and young people's learning and development (Rasmussen, 2001). Scaffolding always takes place in the ZPD. Within this zone, the more knowledgeable other (MKO) provides the activities and scaffolds so that the learner can complete (with support) the given tasks that they could not otherwise perform (Bransford et al., 2000; Olson & Platt, 2000). Scaffolding "facilitates a student's ability to build on prior knowledge and internalize new information" (Van der Stuyf, 2002, p. 2). Hence, it is regarded as an inter-psychological support structure that can arise from interaction with more capable others, equal or less capable peers, and even oneself (Walqui & Van Lier, 2010). In language classrooms, as scaffolded assistance is provided to learners, it supports learners' learning in social interaction and assists the subsequent internalization of new linguistic forms. That means, according to this theory, CF gives dialogically negotiated assistance to learners as they move from other regulations towards self-regulation (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). Consequently, with teachers' OCF scaffold, students are able to realize their ill-formed utterances and then gradually learn how to use them correctly. With the assistance (scaffolding) through the ZPD, learners are assisted by objects in the environment (object-regulation) or others (other-regulation) until they can perform the tasks independently (self-regulation). Proper scaffolding support can help to increase students' responsibility (Donato, 1994), build up their independence and learning autonomy (Rassaei, 2014) as well as their learning motivation (Kim, 2009). The ability to notice the inconsistencies in students' interlanguage is suggested to be the first stage of language learning (Thorne & Tasker, 2011). It is believed that giving corrective feedback to learners' errors is likely to contribute to the transition of learners from their current level of language learning ability to the desired level of second language competence (Ellis, 2009). This could lead to an increase in responsibility which made students more autonomous, confident, and independent along with the gradual reduction of teachers' assistance in the CF process (Shahidzade, 2017).

2.3. Research on Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of the Impact of OCF on Language Teaching and Learning

Research into teachers' attitudes towards OCF suggests that teachers positively regard errors and error correction as a vital part of students' language development. It also plays a key role in the improvement of their linguistic competence (Karimi & Asadnia, 2015; Ní Aogáin, 2019; Rahimi & Zhang, 2015; Tesnim, 2019) and supports learners to avoid confusion with the target language (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015). However, it may cause students to have negative

feelings such as humiliation (Kamiya, 2014).

Studies showed students' positive views on the error correction (Abukhadrah, 2012; Agudo, 2012). It is also believed that error correction would not have any negative effect on students' motivation (Kavaliauskiené & Anusiené, 2012) and it played a crucial part in promoting students' linguistic development (Abukhadrah, 2012). Students regard OCF as a valuable tool for improving their language proficiency, which emphasized its importance in preventing the fossilization of oral errors (Alhaysony, 2016).

Research showed the consistencies between teachers' and students' perceptions of OCF. In general, teachers and students considered error correction as a part of language learning and held positive views on OCF as they believed it was an essential and significant part in language classrooms (Abukhadrah, 2012; Fajriah, 2018; Ní Aogáin, 2019; Roothooft & Breeze, 2016). OCF can also raise students' awareness of language use and their responsibility in error correction and language learning (Abukhadrah, 2012; Ní Aogáin, 2019). More importantly, OCF is a significant part in students' linguistic development (Abukhadrah, 2012; Fajriah, 2018).

Understanding how both teachers and students perceive OCF can help promote teachers' practice in real classrooms, hence, improve teaching quality. In Vietnam, there have been some studies on this area such as Tran and Nguyen (2018), Tran and Nguyen (2020), Ha and Murray (2023), Luu (2020), Nhac (2020), Ha and Murray (2021). With the aim of examining the strategies that teachers use to correct students' errors within an EFL context, Tran and Nguyen (2018) conducted a study in a private high school in the Mekong Delta region in Vietnam. Data were gathered from classroom observations of two teachers and 50 students. Findings showed recast and explicit correction were the commonly used OCF types. Furthermore, clarification requests, recasts and metalinguistic feedback helped students notice their errors. Among these OCF types, the metalinguistic cue was the most successful strategy for eliciting student uptake. In a similar context, Ha and Murray (2020) examined Vietnamese ELF teachers' beliefs and practices of OCF using semi-structured interviews and observations with six EFL teachers at six public primary schools. The results reported that pronunciation errors were regarded as the most essential to address. Prompts were favoured more by teachers than reformulations, however, their frequent use of didactic recasts did not match that preference. This mismatch was related to contextual factors and the impact of different beliefs on practices. At the tertiary level, Tran and Nguyen (2020) investigated teachers' perceptions of OCF and their preferences for utilizing different OCF types in EFL speaking classes in the Mekong using questionnaires with 62 EFL teachers. The study found that showed teachers' positive attitudes towards OCF and elicitation was their most favored and commonly used technique, followed by metalinguistic feedback. Luu (2020) also found both consistencies and inconsistencies between teachers' and students' preferences regarding OCF strategies at a Vietnamese university. Data were collected through observations and two parallel questionnaires with five EFL teachers and 138 students. Both groups preferred repetition and disliked elicitation. However, students also expected to receive more explicit OCF even though the teachers did not actually provide this OCF type in their OCF practices. Furthermore, the teachers mostly preferred to use clarification requests and recasts while the students did not value these OCF types at all. In a similar vein, Nhac (2022) study reported teachers' and students' positive views on OCF. They also had similar opinions and preferences regarding the necessity of OCF, error types which need to be addressed and OCF timing despite mismatches concerning OCF types.

Every Vietnamese study reviewed stressed the importance of correcting students' oral errors in English teaching and learning in EFL contexts, and they raised the need to further investigate current practices of OCF as well as teachers' and students' perceptions and preferences in this area. However, there is a dearth of research carried out in a sociocultural context such as Vietnam's on both teachers' and students' perspectives of the impact of OCF. Therefore, this "two-sided" study seeks to occupy these gaps in the literature as it provides deep insights into teachers' and students' perspectives and experiences of the impact of OCF in EFL classes at tertiary level in Vietnam through the lens of sociocultural theory.

To achieve this aim, the following research question was formulated:

What are teachers' and students' perspectives to the impact of OCF on students' speaking proficiency?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Setting

This study adopted a qualitative case study which aims to investigate what teachers and students perceived the role of OCF in students' learning progress, especially their speaking proficiency. In the current study, the research site selected is a public university located in the north of Vietnam. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews with five EFL teachers and focus group interviews with 35 first-year students from these five EFL teachers' classes. Descriptions of research participants will be elaborated in the next section.

3.2. Research Participants

3.2.1. Teacher Participants

Five EFL teachers participated in this study on a voluntary basis. All of them have a related Master's degree in education areas such as Applied Linguistics or English Language Teaching. Four of them earned their Master's degrees in Vietnam and one had just finished her Master's course at a university in Australia. Their English teaching experiences varied from five to 15 years. All had taken part in several professional development programs, training workshops or seminars on English teaching methodology. However, they had not attended any training courses on feedback generally or OCF in particular.

The researcher contacted the teachers who agreed to take part in the study to arrange a meeting at their most convenient time. In order to make the participants relaxed and comfortable in the interviews, a noise-proof meeting room at university was chosen as the site of the interviews. The data would be treated confidentially and all participants would be given pseudonyms (Teacher 1-5).

3.2.2. Students Participants

In this research, the student participants were English-majored students from the classes of the five EFL teachers described in the previous subsection. These students are in their second semester of a four-year Bachelor program of English Language Studies. Seven students from each of the above teachers' classes were selected to be interviewed in each focus group on a voluntary basis. More specifically, five groups of first-year students took part in the focus group interviews (so 35 students in total), each group participating in one focus group interview. The researcher contacted the students via mobile phone or email to find the most convenient time for them to join the focus group interview. The participants were asked to keep the discussion

confidential and not share its contents with anyone outside the group. Each student in focus group was also given an identification (ID) number from S1 to S7 (seven students in each group) and Ss refers to all students.

3.3. Data Collection

3.3.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

In qualitative research, interviewing is one of the frequently used methods for data collection (Creswell, 2012). The interview is the process that the researcher and participant engage in conversations which are focused on questions related to the research. Qualitative interview, as such, "capture an individual's perspectives, experiences, feelings, and stories with the guidance and facilitation of an interviewer" (Billups, 2021, p. 2). In this study, semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to investigate perspectives, attitudes, experiences, and motivations of EFL teachers in regard to OCF, provided the EFL teachers opportunity to express their views, explain answers, give examples of their OCF practice, and describe their experiences related to OCF. During semi-structured interviews, an interview guide including open-ended questions was used with all teacher participants. Each interview lasted for approximately 30-45 minutes.

3.3.2. Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interview is a valuable tool for qualitative data collection which encourages participants to co-construct meaning of given phenomenon. This data collection method allows the researcher to achieve valuable opinions, views and experiences from the participants as the interactions among them would produce the perfect evidence (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, when participants are gathered in groups for focus group interview, they may feel assisted by other group members. More importantly, through focus group interview, the researcher was able to get information from different perspectives at the same time. In this study, five groups of first year students from these five teachers' classes were randomly recruited to participate in focus group interviews, seven students were chosen from one participating class to form a group. Each group of students participated in one focus group interview. The focus group interviews lasted for approximately from 60 to 90 minutes each.

3.4. Data Analysis

In this study, data were analyzed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which includes six stages of thematic analysis: (1) familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report.

In the first stage, all data from teacher semi-structured interviews and five student focus group interviews were transcribed and analyzed relevantly at the same time. In the second stage, the researcher first made a list of codes based on the transcripts and then tried to reduce the number of codes by looking for similar codes and redundant ones. From the data that were initially analyzed, the initial codes formed were: influence of OCF, strengths of OCF, challenges of OCF, satisfaction of OCF, expectations of OCF, factors that affect OCF, language improvement, change in responsibility, etc. In the third stage, repeated codes from teachers' semi-structured interviews and the student focus group interviews were then categorized into prominent themes. The following themes emerged from the coding process: awareness of language, transfer of responsibility, students' learning motivation, language development. Stage 4 involved reviewing, labelling and refining the newly arranged categories and sub-

categories related to the impact of OCF. They were: language awareness, responsibility transfer, students' learning motivation, linguistic language development. In the fifth stage, all the key themes were defined and named. The majored themes were the perceptions for the following: cognitive language awareness, responsibility transfer, learning motivation and linguistic language development. The last stage involved producing the report that would be brief, accurate and rational to describe the common occurrence of the determined themes (Awareness of language use, responsibility transfer, learning motivation, linguistic language development).

4. Research Findings

Themes emerged from data analysis were: *awareness of language use*, *responsibility transfer*, *learning motivation*, and *linguistic knowledge development*.

4.1. Awareness of Language Use

All five participating teachers confirmed that there was an increase in students' cognitive consciousness of their errors as the result of teachers' error correction. They claimed that error correction could make students notice their errors and gradually become more aware of the errors during their speaking performance. This view was reflected by T1's response:

> I must say, teacher's support in correcting errors make students be more careful of their use of language. For example, after being corrected pronunciation errors, students become more aware of the way to pronounce that word and whenever they wonder the pronunciation of a new word, they may check the pronunciation by looking it up in the dictionary or asking their teachers or friends for confirmation of the right pronunciation. (Teacher 1-Interview)

It could be noted from Teacher 1' s view that error correction would be useful for error recognition and it helped students pay more attention to their linguistic use such as grammatical structures, the choice of vocabulary and pronunciation in their oral production. That showed a sign of students' language awareness in learning process. In addition to that, Teacher 2 confirmed that the implementation of OCF in speaking classes would show students their language weaknesses and "when students become more linguistically aware of the importance of using correct language, the number of their ill-formed utterances would be reduced" (Teacher 2-Interview).

Data from student focus group interviews also revealed that in most cases, students did not recognize that they were committing errors until teachers pointed out the errors, corrected or let them self-correct or peer-correct. They claimed that they highly valued their teachers' feedback on their oral production because teacher's error correction would make them pay more attention to their oral utterances, notice the errors and be careful of language use.

> Usually, we do not recognize that we are making a mistake. Maybe it is because we are too concentrated on what we are saying. Teacher's correction would make us pay more attention to oral errors when we are speaking. We also pay more attention to our peers' performance. We think more about what we are going to say before we say it. When we avail of accurate linguistic items, we could become more aware of our language use and those of our peers (Teacher 1-Ss-Focus group interview) (Teacher 2-S3, S7-Focus group interview).

Students believed that teachers' error correction would help reduce the occurrence of errors as it raised students' consciousness of their oral utterances. More importantly, it drew students' awareness of accurate linguistic use and their peers' speaking performance.

Absolutely, OCF has not only affected positively their use of oral language, but also influenced students' general learning outcomes.

4.2. Responsibility Transfer

There was the same perspective shared among all five teachers that they could witness the increase in students' responsibility in their learning in general and in the process of error treatment in particular. Teacher 4 claimed that:

> When I repeat the wrong parts of the utterances or give students clues or signals to figure out the answer themselves, it means they have to think over to have the right versions of the erroneous utterances. When students can correct themselves, they are not dependent on teachers' support any more. (Teacher 4-Interview).

In this extract, the teacher mentioned that students could be offered the opportunities to find the well-formed utterances with the prompts provided. That meant teachers gradually reduced their assistance, which led to the transfer of responsibility from teachers to students in the process of error treatment. Furthermore, students would be more proactive by figuring out the corrections themselves. Hence, their learning independence could be constantly improved. More importantly, recognizing their language weaknesses, students might set their new goals for their learning. They would look for any English courses or programs to achieve their learning objectives. Consequently, they can make decision on their own for the learning outcomes to fulfill that gap.

Sharing the same view with their teachers, some students from focus groups agreed that the transfer of responsibility from teachers to students in the error treatment process would increase their duties in English learning and their correction in particular. Such a finding initially resonated among student participants from five focus groups as one student said:

> Usually, I always wait for my teachers to give the correct answers to my errors. However, I appreciate the elicitation from teachers to help me give my own answers for the erroneous utterances. Maybe it is not the right version of the utterance but it is a chance for me to practice with language. Sometimes, the teachers ask me to correct my fellows' errors. By this way, I feel a bit nervous but more responsible for the correction and try to figure out the errors. (Teacher 4-S3-Focus group interview).

This excerpt eloquently illustrated that there was a shift in responsibility from teachers to students as students were encouraged to reflect their own linguistic forms through teachers' prompting techniques. Students began to engage more in mediating their own language use rather than relying on the teachers. Teachers continuously supported students until they could achieve the new knowledge. The teachers then gradually removed their support and transferred the level of control to students. Hence, students became progressively independent in their correction in particular and in their English learning in general. More importantly, some students shared the same view on the development of self-determination in learning "we became decision-makers in their study, more responsible for their learning plans and objectives as we were able to take ownership and implement the procedures of their study" (Teacher 5-S1, S4-Focus group interview).

4.3. Learning Motivation

All teachers believed OCF could have both positive and negative influence on students' learning motivation. They asserted that students' motivation could rely much on the way teachers give feedback. Their perspectives towards the effects of OCF on students' motivation

were illustrated in the following excerpt:

> I think my students are likely motivated by the way I give feedback to their errors, I always try to support my students' errors in a way that minimizes their embarrassment, enhance their willingness to receive feedback and participate in speaking activities. I am happy to see how my students are inspired in their learning through their responses to feedback and their learning progress. (Teacher 2-Interview)

In the above data, Teacher 2 suggested that the positive effects of error correction would foster students' learning motivation. When students were provided adequate feedback in their speaking classes, they could learn new things, speak English correctly and use English in a better way. Gradually, students found more inspiration in their language learning. Furthermore, the negative effect of OCF on students' motivation was mentioned by teacher 3 as "it can hurt students' feelings, especially shy and low ability students" (Teacher 3-Interview). More specifically, she stated that OCF may make students feel negative and unwilling to participate in the learning process. She also raised more concern on the reduction of students' frustration and demotivation through teachers' OCF.

All teachers also regarded linguistic confidence as a feature engaged students' motivation. The more confidence that the linguistic achievement brought to students, the more motivation in learning that they attained. This can be seen in what Teacher 4 said:

> When students pronounce words correctly, use accurate grammatical items, and adequate word choice, they could feel more motivated and confident in learning. They would participate more in the lessons and be willing to provide comments and feedback. Therefore, their learning styles would be changed and they seem to be more active in their learning (Teacher 4-Interview).

Despite the fact that sometimes error correction brought them the feeling of anxiety, a majority of students revealed that their learning benefited much from teachers' OCF. The following excerpt reflected their positive views in this regard:

> At first, I feel shy and a little demotivated. However, I gradually get used to teacher' OCF and becoming more willing to receive, response and participate in the lessons. I become more competent in linguistic items when I speak something. To some extent, the sense of confidence positively does affect the speaking, especially the fluency. Pointing out and giving feedback on our friends' ill-formed utterances help us to practice more on the linguistic items and have chance to exchange knowledge. Yes, the feeling was so good (Teacher 4-S4, S5-Focus group interview).

This piece of data showed that although teacher's OCF actually brought them with the sense of knowledge fulfillment and self-efficacy in language learning, OCF sometimes made students feel anxious. The data also reflected the willingness of receiving, responding to feedback from the students and their participations in the lessons. The more competent at using language they were, the more confident they were in their speaking skills. Importantly, it expressed the inspiration of learning that students could gain when they achieved new knowledge and shared this with each other.

4.4. Linguistic Knowledge Development

The same perspective shared by all five participating EFL teachers in their interviews confirmed that linguistic awareness and students' concern on language use would have positive effect on students' speaking outcomes and their overall linguistic development. Teacher 1 offered the following explanation for this view:

OCF is beneficial to students' oral errors in speaking lessons as speaking skill relates to a variety of aspects such as pronunciation, grammatical items, lexical use, ideas, speaking strategies, etc. With teachers' support in correcting errors, students would gradually avail of grammatical structures, word choice and pronunciation correctly so that their oral utterances would be much better. Without error correction, students cannot fulfill their lack of linguistic knowledge. (Teacher 1-Interview)

According to the above excerpt, Teacher 1 mentioned the possibility that students could achieve knowledge from teachers' error correction and produce oral speech with accurate linguistic items. The development of students' linguistic knowledge would lead to the increase of students' speaking competency and overall language development. Definitely, OCF had the facilitating role on students' learning as "If errors are not treated, students may repeat the same errors and might not develop their linguistic competence" (Teacher 5-Interview). Similarly, Teacher 3 emphasized that "students with adequate knowledge could produce accurate utterances and better speaking production" (Teacher 3-Interview). In general, teachers all confirmed the role of OCF in promoting students' speaking ability and language proficiency.

A majority of student participants further reiterated this sense of increased linguistic knowledge shared among teachers:

We really need OCF as it helps us avail of English linguistics items in a right way in our speaking. Teachers show our inaccurate utterances and then, instruct us to correct target language form. When we can use linguistic items well, we can speak English correctly. (Teacher 4-Ss-Focus group interview)

The above data showed the benefit of OCF in students' language development. Students strongly believed that OCF gave them sufficient and appropriate support to enhance their linguistic forms and speaking skills as well. In alike manner, some of the students showed their agreement on this issue:

Well, we can fulfill our lack of linguistic knowledge with teachers' assistance. Furthermore, it is possible for us to get to know new grammatical structures or lexical usage. New linguistic knowledge can make our English much better. Importantly, this will increase speaking' accuracy and fluency. (Teacher 1-S3, S5, S6-Focus group interview), (Teacher 3-S1, S4-Focus group interview)

These students stressed that they could achieve new knowledge with teacher's error correction, gain more experience in their speaking and constantly master their English oral skills. That was to speak English accurately and fluently. Apart from the increase of speaking ability, students also believed that "with the help from teachers, they could gradually fill the linguistic gap and be gradually competent at their English proficiency". (Teacher 4-Ss-Focus group interview)

5. Discussion

Data showed the shared agreement of both teachers and students on the increase of students' consciousness of their oral utterances and language use due to teachers' OCF. Without OCF, errors might be unnoticed by students and they repeated their deviant forms in their next speaking practices. Relevant support from teachers could facilitate students' error recognition and enhance their language awareness. In fact, OCF could students to notice the gap between the correct and incorrect form of the target language. This finding was also in line with some current studies (Abukhadrah, 2012; Ní Aogáin, 2019). Students in Abukhadrah's (2012) study

believed that OCF improved their awareness in their target language, especially when teachers asked them to correct the errors on their own. It also provided learners with guidelines to avoid making errors in the future. On the other hand, all the teachers considered OCF as an effective strategy to raise students' language awareness and ability to correct themselves and subsequent language development.

The results from the findings indicated both teachers and students confirmed the transfer of responsibility from teachers to students in the process of error correction. They asserted that OCF could enhance students' ability of controlling their English learning, especially their error treatment. This view seemed to be consistent with the result derived from Abukhadrah's (2012) and Ní Aogáin's (2019) studies. Ní Aogáin (2019) found that all six teacher participants in the CF treatment groups claimed that students became more independent in their learning process and had begun to take responsibilities for their erroneous linguistic utterances rather than relying on the teachers. Similarly, teachers and students from Abukhadrah's (2012) study also agreed that OCF would make students more independent and responsible for their learning.

The results from the data analysis also revealed that all EFL teachers and the students strongly agreed that error correction did play a key role in enhancing students' motivation in English learning, even though teachers found sometimes OCF could make students feel confused and lessen their participation in language classrooms. This view was in line with current studies (Abukhadrah, 2012; Kavaliauskiené & Anusiené, 2012). For instance, in Abukhadrah's (2012) study, while teachers provided mixed responses to the possibility of raising students' anxiety of OCF, the majority of students stated that anxiety mainly depended on learners' beliefs and believed that OCF did not necessarily raise anxiety. Similarly, error correction was not expected to have influence on learners' motivation or their willingness to perfect language skills (Kavaliauskiené & Anusiené, 2012). This finding partly supported Roothooft and Breeze's (2016) research, which revealed that while the teachers thought OCF could lead to students' inhibition or demotivation, a majority of students felt happy and grateful with teachers' OCF support. When they spoke something wrong, teachers' feedback made them to notice their errors and encouraged them to use language accurately. It seemed that all participant students felt comfortable with teachers' error treatment, which showed the sense of satisfaction and the increased learning motivation. The reason for it might be the confidence of accurate language implementation that resulted from the increase of linguistic competence with the support of OCF.

It could be noted from the data analysis that the consciousness of making errors and appropriate error treatment encouraged students in their language use. When students understood that making errors was a part of process, and that their teachers tried to help them learn target forms, they were likely to take risks and build up confidence through practice. Constantly, students' linguistic gaps could be fulfilled. This would lead to the improvement in accuracy and fluency of students' speaking performances. Obviously, both teachers and students in this study could witness the significance of OCF and all of them supported the role of OCF in students' language learning and development. This concurred with the findings of some current research (Abukhadrah, 2012; Fajriah, 2018; Tesnim, 2019). For example, in Fajriah's (2018) study, teachers indicated that giving corrective feedback was a vital part of language learning since it could contribute to the development of students' second language acquisition. Consequently, students expected to receive corrective feedback from teacher as it helped them to speak English properly. Similarly, in Abukhadrah's (2012) study, the vast majority of students and teachers indicated that OCF was effective for improving and learning

the target language. Students also showed that OCF promoted both accuracy and fluency of the target language. Furthermore, findings from Tesnim (2019) indicated that learners' accuracy and fluency could be promoted by teachers' OCF provision. Teachers made students successful in learning the language through instructing them to use appropriate vocabulary or linguistic structure.

Theoretically, from SCT perspectives, the study showed teachers and students' views on the impact of OCF in speaking classrooms. Firstly, both teachers and students stressed that error correction did raise the language awareness, which could be the first step for their cognitive development and language improvement. This result was similar to the findings in Thorne and Tasker's (2011) research. They indicated that a student's ability to notice discrepancies in their interlanguage was the first crucial stage of language learning. As stated by Vygotsky (1978), the influence of the cultural-historical context on education was crucial not because it was where students were scaffolded, but, rather, it encouraged them to develop greater awareness of themselves, their language, their role in the world order. More specifically, the ZPD refers to new forms of awareness that takes place in on learning. It could be inferred that, through corrective feedback provided by the teacher or their peers, students may notice that there was something wrong with the utterance or the expression that they just provided. If students do not get feedback on their oral production, they may not be able to enhance their language skills. Feedback definitely encourages students to have a close and critical look on their language performance and ultimately, enhance error correction.

Findings showed that teachers and students' views on error correction could raise students' responsibility as teachers gradually removed their assistance. It might enhance the students' self-control of their linguistic capacities within their ZPD zones. This transfer level of control from teachers to students mirrored handover feature of scaffolding which clearly showed the increase of students' role as their language capacity and confidence improved significantly. From a sociocultural perspective, scaffolding feedback provided within students' ZPD zones could help students move from dependence on the teacher to independence and autonomous performance. In language teaching process, teachers gave continuous support to students and when they removed their assistance gradually, there was an increase in students' ability to take control of their own process. When students had more control in their own learning, there was a shift of responsibility from teachers to them (Donato, 1994). Broadly speaking, in an educational context, the teachers modeled the desired learning strategy or tasks then constantly transferred responsibility to students. The increasing responsibility of students in their learning highlighted the positive outcomes of teachers' assistance in correcting students' oral errors, which made them gradually competent, confident in their speaking performances and subsequently self-improved their English learning. The finding also mirrored the argument of Shahidzade's (2017) who maintained that relevant scaffolding/ assistance from teachers made students autonomous and independent in their language learning.

The finding showed the overall positive attitudes of both teachers and students towards the impact of OCF on students' motivation. Teachers and students believed that the relevance of teachers' OCF played a vital role in motivating students' language learning. That meant, from sociocultural perspective, appropriate linguistic scaffolds provided by more capable others within students' ZPD could support students to maintain or even increase their learning motivation. Importantly, different students might have different ZPDS in using the same structure and the same student might have different ZPDS in using different structures. As such, teachers should give support at different levels so that students would obtain enough motivation

to continue their learning (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994).

The perspective of linguistic development can also be supported by concepts of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). More specifically, in the process of error correction, students were provided with feedback from more knowledgeable others (MKOs), ultimately, they became internalized the linguistic rules or principles and can figure out the right forms of the utterances. This can reflect the transformation of students' knowledge when they had appropriated the experts' instructions, consequently, they were able to understand the new concepts and skills, organize their thoughts, and control their actions (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). More importantly, the development of students' language proficiency occurred in ZPD which involves the level of potential development of the learners (Ellis, 2009). That was, within ZPD, the learners could do with the assistance of others (teachers or peers) what they did not do before. With the gradual removal of teachers' support, students then became competent in their English learning, which led to the improvement of their speaking competence. The role of OCF in students' language development made the researcher view it as a psychological tool which was beneficial to mediate students' language learning process and promote students' language proficiency as well.

6. Conclusion

This study focused on teachers' and students' perceptions of how OCF influences on language teaching and learning process. Four aspects were found about the impact of error correction in language classes. They were: awareness of language use, responsibility transfer, learning motivation, linguistic knowledge development. The results from students' focus group interviews also reported that students were not aware of error correction much in their English lessons. Since the more consciousness of OCF students have, the more benefit they can receive from OCF, it is also teachers' responsibility to raise students' awareness of the purpose, necessity and importance of OCF which help them to have positive views on OCF and willingness to get engaged in the process of OCF. More importantly, as students have different levels of English proficiency, teachers should give relevant support in order to maintain students' English learning motivation. Theoretically, Vygotskian sociocultural perspective which views cognitive processes as socially and culturally mediated activities that ultimately become internalized, served as a useful framework for a deeper understanding of teachers' OCF provision as well as the position of teachers and students (as MKOs) in social interactions in the classrooms.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guide – Teachers

1. Have you ever considered to OCF provision? How crucial is OCF while teaching speaking in English?
2. To what extent does OCF improve your students' English learning process?
3. To what extent does OCF hinder students' English learning process?
4. What factors do you take into consideration when giving OCF?
5. How satisfied are you with the way you give OCF in your English classes?

Appendix 2

Focus Group Interview Guide – Students

1. To what extent is OCF important in your oral learning process?
2. How was your feeling with teachers' OCF provision? (Comfortable, uncomfortable, satisfied, unsatisfied, etc). Can you explain in more detail?
3. Are you satisfied with your teacher's OCF provision? Can you explain in detail?
4. What might be influential factors in the process of OCF?
5. How can OCF encourage and hinder your speaking learning? Can you clarify your answer?

QUAN ĐIỂM CỦA GIÁO VIÊN VÀ SINH VIÊN VỀ ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA SỬA LỖI NÓI ĐỐI VỚI NĂNG LỰC NÓI CỦA SINH VIÊN TRONG LỚP HỌC NÓI TIẾNG ANH

Lê Mai Vân

Trường Ngoại ngữ - Du lịch, Trường Đại học Công nghiệp Hà Nội,
298 Cầu Diễn, quận Bắc Từ Liêm, Hà Nội

Tóm tắt: Hỗ trợ sinh viên nâng cao kỹ năng giao tiếp trong thế giới toàn cầu hóa là một trong những mối quan tâm của giáo viên. Cách giáo viên sửa lỗi cũng ảnh hưởng tới sự phát triển về năng lực ngôn ngữ của sinh viên. Đã có một số nghiên cứu về quan điểm của giáo viên và sinh viên về sửa lỗi nói, nhưng rất ít nghiên cứu về cả quan điểm của giáo viên và sinh viên về ảnh hưởng của sửa lỗi nói đối với khả năng nói của sinh viên dưới góc nhìn của thuyết văn hóa xã hội. Nghiên cứu định tính này nhằm tìm hiểu quan điểm của giáo viên và sinh viên về ảnh hưởng của sửa lỗi nói trong lớp học nói bậc đại học ở Việt Nam. Số liệu thu thập từ 05 phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc với giáo viên và 05 phỏng vấn nhóm với 35 sinh viên năm thứ nhất. Kết quả cho thấy sửa lỗi nói giúp sinh viên phát hiện ra lỗi và có trách nhiệm hơn với việc học, tăng động lực học và mở rộng kiến thức về ngôn ngữ. Từ đó, nghiên cứu cũng đưa ra những gợi ý cho việc sửa lỗi nói của giáo viên.

Từ khóa: quan điểm, sửa lỗi nói, ảnh hưởng, năng lực nói, thuyết văn hóa xã hội

BOOK REVIEW

A DISCUSSION OF THE BOOK
EXTENDED CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY
By Zoltán Kövecses
Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. XI + 196

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Abstract: The book first provides an overview and criticisms of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and then elucidates Kövecses's responses to the five criticisms, basing on which an extended version of CMT was built termed *Extended CMT*. Generally, the framework consists of different layers with the grounding space on meaning, conceptual structure, ontological level, and context. The value of the book lies in the gestalt components of the framework to account for the activation and meaning of a particular conceptual metaphor, shedding light on the way humans construe a reality/ the world.

Keywords: CMT, Extended CMT, context, conceptual structure, meaning

1. Introduction

Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Kövecses consists of eight chapters divided into three main parts: (i) a brief introduction to the "standard" version of CMT (chapter one), (ii) responses to the five issues of CMT (chapters two-six) and, (iii) the shape of Extended CMT (chapters seven and eight) in comparison with the dynamic view of metaphor proposed by Gibbs (2017).

Chapter one initiates by giving the definition of the standard version of CMT, according which "A conceptual metaphor is understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete)" (Kövecses, 2020, p. 1). Evidently, this definition entails the one-way mappings from the source domain to the target domain, and the mechanisms of CMT are based on the similarity between two compared concepts (Kövecses, 2020, p. 8). However, this definition also entails different arguments concerning the issue of methodology, direction of analysis, schematicity, embodiment, the relationship between

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metaphor and culture synthesized by Kövecses (2017, 2020).

From the second to the sixth chapters, the author addresses to those issues summarized in the following table:
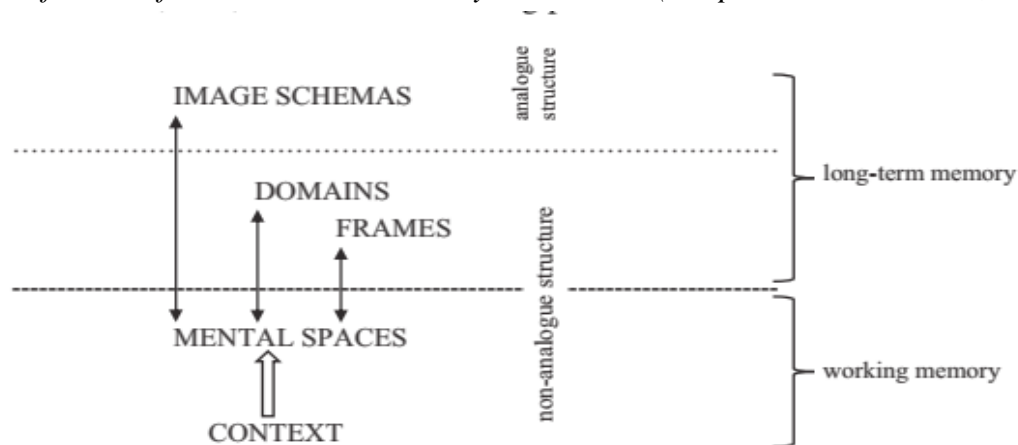
Table 1

Responses of Extended CMT to Issues of CMT (Adapted From Dong & Duan, 2020)

Issues/Debate	Extended CMT
1. The abstract understood figuratively, the concrete understood literally, but the concrete understood figuratively?	Both concrete and abstract concepts have embodied content ontology and figurative construal and that people can profile the ontology part in some cases and the figuratively construed part in others.
2. Direct or indirect emergence? whether the primary metaphor that is the foundation of CMT emerges directly or through a metonymic stage	Metonymies are, to some degree, more primary than primary metaphors. It is suggested that correlation-based metaphors emerge from frame-like mental representations through a metonymic stage.
3. CMT has difficulty in identifying appropriate conceptual structures to participate in the formation of conceptual metaphors	By proposing the "multilevel view of conceptual metaphor," Kövecses argues that each conceptual metaphor is characterized by four levels, with the highest being that of image schemas, the lowest, that of mental spaces, and in between, that of domains and that of frames.
4. "Conceptual or Contextual," addresses the neglect of context within CMT	Kövecses elucidates the assumption that conceptual metaphors are not simply conceptual but are necessarily contextual.
5. "Offline or Online?," responds to CMT's inability to account for meaning in actual occurrences of metaphorical language in real discourse	Conceptual metaphor is both an offline and online phenomenon simultaneously.

In view of the schematicity in the light of Extended CMT, the following figures illustrate the influence of context:

Figure 1

The Influence of Context on Schematicity Hierarchies (Adopted From Kövecses, 2020, p. 105)

In chapters seven and eight, Kövecses figures out the shape of Extended CMT, and its key ideas are presented in the following table:
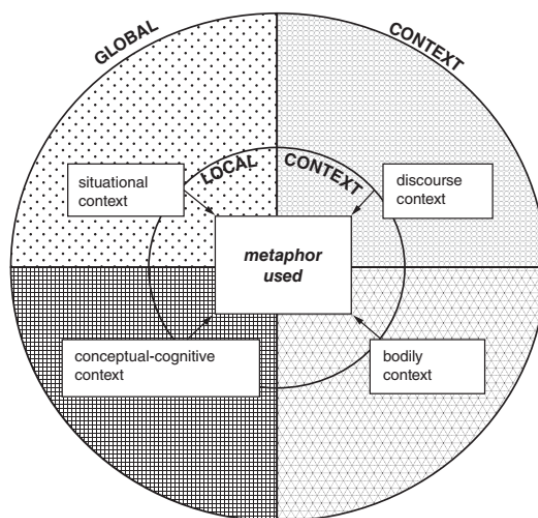
Table 2

Summary of Key Ideas of the Extended CMT View (Adopted From Kövecses, 2020, p. 107)

Kind of Meaning	Kind of Conceptual Structure	Kind of Metaphor	Ontological Level
Meaningfulness	Image-schema metaphor	Long-term memory (Analog structure)	Subindividual level
Decontextualized meaning	Domain metaphor Frame metaphor	Long-term memory (Propositional structure)	Supraindividual level
Contextual meaning	Mental-space metaphor	Working memory (Propositional structure)	Individual level

Concerning the context, Kövecses proposes that there are four types of contexts:

Figure 2

A Summary of Context Types (Adopted From Kövecses, 2020, p. 101)

The context types can be explained via the following table:

Table 3

Four Context Types and Their Contextual Factors (Adopted From Kövecses, 2020, p. 107)

Situational context	Discourse context	Bodily context	Conceptual-cognitive context
Physical environment	Surrounding discourse (co-text)	Correlations in experience	Metaphorical conceptual system
Cultural situation	Previous discourse	Bodily conditions	Ideology
Social situation	Knowledge about the speaker, topic, hearer	Body specificities	Concerns and interests
	Dominant forms of discourse		History

Finally, the framework elaborates that the selection of a particular metaphor can be illustrated in the following process:

Figure 3

A Process Model for Conceptual Metaphors (Adopted From Kövecses, 2020, p. 167)

THE EMERGING CONTENT PART OF THE METAPHOR IS SUPPLEMENTED BY A
PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OR EFFECT
↑
THE APPROPRIATE METAPHORICAL VEHICLE FOR THE CONTEXTUAL
MEANING EMERGES ON THE BASIS OF THE SCHEMATICITY HIERARCHY
↑
A SCHEMATICITY HIERARCHY IS ESTABLISHED AS A RESULT OF THE
INFLUENCE OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS
↑
AN IMAGE SCHEMATIC METAPHOR IS IDENTIFED THAT SUPPORTS THE
CONTEXTUAL MEANING
↑
THE NEED FOR THE EXPRESSION OF A PARTICULAR METAPHORICAL
CONTEXTUAL MEANING EMERGES
↑
A LARGE BODY OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IS ACTIVE IN WORKING MEMORY
↑
PRESENCE OF DISCOURSE CONTEXT - SITUATIONAL CONTEXT - BODILY
CONTEXT - CONCEPTUAL-COGNITIVE CONTEXT

2. Discussion

To the best of my knowledge, the book has been reviewed by Dong and Duan (2020) in which the lack of a clear elaboration of dynamic nature of metaphor, communication between disciplines with psycholinguistic experiments, and metaphors in different languages was raised. However, what should be taken into consideration is the capacity of Extended CMT to remedy the "feed-forward bias" in analyzing image-schema. In fact, Extended CMT clearly elucidates how context ignites the image-schematic metaphors, one issue raised by Kövecses (2000, pp. 160-163) (cf. Kimmel, 2005, p. 299). Within the scope of this book review, I would focus on illustrating the way to exploit Extended CMT to account for the emergence of two conceptual metaphors in Vietnamese. The way I exploited Extended CMT would be systematically presented as follows:

Stage 1: Identifying a Metaphor in Context

The identification process is termed "Metaphorical Identification Procedure" introduced by Pragglejaz Group (2007).

Table 4

Metaphorical Identification Procedure (Adapted From Pragglejaz Group, 2007)

Step 1.	Read the entire sentence or sentences, or discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
Step 2.	Determine the lexical units in the sentence(s)
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. (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 our purposes, 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: Identification of the Four-Layered Metaphorical Activation

If a metaphor is identified, the four-layered activation process must be explained basing on context. The mappings from the source domain to the target domain must be found.

In the following paragraph, two conceptual metaphors serve as examples. The first one is the conceptual metaphor "DỊCH LÀ GIẶC" (COVID-19 IS AN ENEMY) in the speech[1] delivered by Vietnam's President Nguyễn Xuân Phúc on September 22nd, 2021 at the United Nations summit meeting held by US President Joe Biden[2]. The blended set of correspondences, or mappings of the metaphor can be represented as follows:

Figure 4

Mappings of "COVID-19 IS ENEMY"

In the following table, all layers of Extended CMT would be exploited to explain such mappings and the correlation between the source and target domains.

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[1] The Vietnamese version of the speech can be found at https://www.vietnamplus.vn/bai-phat-bieu-cua-chu-tich-nuoc-tai-hoi-nghi-thuong-dinh-ve-covid19/742660.vnp

[2] I believe that it is unnecessary to translate the whole speech into English. Only relevant sections containing the metaphor "COVID-19 IS ENEMY" are translated.

Table 5

Explanation of "COVID-19 IS AN ENEMY" Within Extended CMT

Conceptual metaphor "COVID-19 IS AN ENEMY"	
Kind of meaning: decontextualized meaning Kind of conceptual structure: Domain metaphor Kind of memory: Long-term memory Ontological level: Supraindividual level Context: Four types of contexts	This metaphor has long been stored in human mind[3]. Therefore, the use of this metaphor carries decontextualized meaning; however, this is also dependent on situational context in the year 2021 when human kinds were facing Covid-19 pandemic. Or in other words, the experiences of the speaker with the real world are the departure for the selection of the metaphor when comparing the pandemic with the disease.

It can be seen that contexts, together with correlation stored in human mind are crucial factors in choosing the metaphor, and Extended CMT can explain how a certain metaphor emerges and its meaning.

The second example is the use of the metaphor "HUMAN LIFE IS A DAY" in Cát Bụi by Trịnh Công Sơn (Long & Huyen Trang, 2022). Here are the mappings of the HUMAN LIFE IS A DAY metaphor:

Figure 5

Mappings of the HUMAN LIFE IS A DAY Metaphor (Long & Trang, 2022, p. 291)

Source domain: A DAY		**Target domain:** HUMAN LIFE
Một mai - Morning	=>	Vươn hình hài lớn dậy - Birth and growing up (early stage of a human life)
Một ngày – A Day	=>	Một kiếp – A human life span
Một chiều – One afternoon	=>	Tóc trắng – White hair (Twilight life)
Một mai – Sunset	=>	Trở thành cát bụi - Death

Concerning the activation of the metaphor in the song, the following activation route:

Table 6

The Activation of the Metaphor "Life is a Journey" in Cát Bụi

Mental spaces level:	THE FALLING LEAVES FROM HIGH ABOVE SIGNIFIES DEATH; ⇩
Frame /domain level:	A NEW BORN PERSON IS GROWING, A PERSON WITH WHITE HAIR IS AT HIS TWILIGHT LIFE. ⇩
Image-schema level:	A HUMAN LIFE IS A DAY.

Apparently, *context* together with cultural, embodied experience plays an important role in the selection of a particular conceptual metaphor. Extended CMT framework cleverly combines different components, making the explanation of the activation process of a conceptual metaphor easier. What has been presented in this book review argues that Extended

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[3] For more information about the metaphor in Vietnamese, consult: http://redsvn.net/tuc-cung-tong-on-duoi-dich-benh-cua-cu-dan-xu-nam-ky-xua2/

CMT has bridged the gaps left by the standard version, and to some extent, the framework is feasible in Vietnamese.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, Extended CMT is not a totally novel view of conceptual metaphors; however, the way that Kövecses approaches the activation of a conceptual metaphor is comprehensive with a solid grounding space on five components: meaning, conceptual structure, kind of memory, ontological level, and context. The framework tends to be feasible not only in English but also in Vietnamese via the two examples discussed in the above section.

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THẢO LUẬN VỀ CUỐN SÁCH
LÝ THUYẾT ẨN DỤ TRI NHẬN MỞ RỘNG

Đỗ Tuấn Long[1], Vũ Thị Huyền Trang[2]

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*[2] Khoa Tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội,
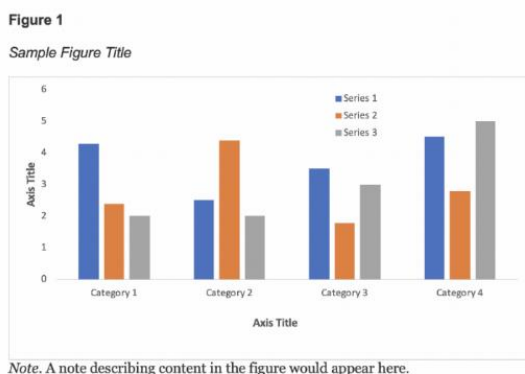Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

Tóm tắt: Cuốn *Lý thuyết ẩn dụ tri nhận mở rộng* của Kövecses giúp độc giả có cái nhìn tổng quan cũng như những điểm hạn chế của lý thuyết *Ẩn dụ tri nhận* phát triển bởi Lakoff và Johnson (1980). Trong phần đầu cuốn sách, năm phản biện và những "hồi đáp" về khung lý thuyết *Ẩn dụ tri nhận* được Kövecses giới thiệu chi tiết và qua đây, ông dựng xây khung lý thuyết *Ẩn dụ tri nhận mở rộng*. Nhìn chung, khung lý thuyết này gồm nhiều thành tố với nền tảng là nghĩa, cấu trúc tri nhận, mức độ bản thể, và ngữ cảnh. Giá trị của cuốn sách nằm ở khung lý thuyết tổng hợp đa thành tố nhằm kiến giải quá trình tri nhận của một ẩn dụ xuất phát từ ngữ cảnh đến không gian tinh thần - miền/ khung và hình ảnh lược đồ neo đậu trong tâm trí con người, góp phần làm sáng tỏ cách thức thế giới thực được tri nhận.

Từ khóa: ẩn dụ tri nhận, ẩn dụ tri nhận mở rộng, ngữ cảnh, cấu trúc tri nhận, nghĩa

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)

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[*] ĐT.: (Sđt của tác giả liên hệ)
Email: (Email của tác giả liên hệ)